The standard retail price for an Amazon guitar strap is $50. Other pricing can be arranged for multiple orders. Select models can be purchased at select concerts and the box office at The State Theatre in State College, PA. See all the straps (and photos of artisans) at www.amazonecology.org/coppermine. These and new models will be available online through the Amazon Forest Store. Please contact CACE at info@amazonecolog.org or call 814-238-5148 to arrange a purchase.

The Guitar Strap: Product details

- The strap has a practical two-piece design that makes it strong, comfortable and flexible. It is made of two-inch wide woven chambira palm fiber that is adjustable from 45 to 55 inches long with a brass-plated buckle. Both ends are tightly sewn to a tan or black leather tab that snugly fits over a standard guitar strap button. Each strap has a design inspired by a specific Amazon snake or creative jungle snake pattern. Most models are prepared with natural plant dyes. The strap comes with an information tag detailing the plants used to make it and the names of the artisan, community and location. CACE will email a digital photo of this artisan to a buyer for no extra charge.

Buying an Amazon Guitar Strap

- Our main project partner is the Handicraft Association of the Ampiyacu Region of Peru. We have assisted this group to brainstorm new designs, set fair prices, organize skill-sharing workshops, create a quality control committee and ensure long-term supply of plants used in making crafts. We also coordinate with the Federation of Native Communities of the Ampiyacu that represents 14 Bora, Huitoto, and Ocaina native villages in the watershed. Other partners in Peru are the Instituto del Bien Comun, Institute for the Investigation of the Peruvian Amazon, (IIAP), National University of the Peruvian Amazon (UNAP), Project Amazonas and the Rainforest Conservation Foundation.
The Story of the Amazon Guitar Strap

The Center for Amazon Community Ecology (CACE) began working with native communities in northern Peru in 2008 to use their traditional methods to develop innovative handicrafts from sustainably harvested local plants. The next year artisans from the Bora village of Brillo Nuevo wove their first batch of belts from chambira palm fiber with patterns of jungle snakes. These belts inspired a Millheim, PA musician and carpenter to ask if these women could also make guitar straps. He liked the prototypes and helped CACE refine the designs. The Brillo Nuevo artisans have now produced more than fifteen strap models including the anaconda, boa constrictor, coral snake and green tree pit viper. CACE is offering these natural material straps to musicians all over.

How are the Amazon guitar straps made?

The process of making a guitar strap begins by harvesting one spiny spear of a multi-stem chambira palm tree from their farm field or nearby forest. The artisan strips out, soaks and cleans the strong fibers from the stem, and dries them in the sun. The dried fibers are then boiled with roots, leaves, berries or bark and sometimes mixed in mud to dye them. She twines the colored strands to the proper thickness and spends a full day or more to weave the strap. A veteran shoe-maker finishes the product by attaching leather tabs to the strap with an industrial sewing machine.

How can people support this project?

Buy an Amazon guitar strap, show it off, and encourage your friends to get their own. We welcome reviews, photos and videos of people playing their instrument with these straps on our website, YouTube, and Facebook. Please contact us to help sell these straps at a store, fair or special event. CACE also greatly appreciates donations, grants, and volunteers.

How does buying these guitar straps help forest conservation and communities?

Selling handicrafts is often the main source of income for native women and their families. This livelihood strengthens cultural traditions and offers an alternative to unmanaged logging and clearing forest for cash crops. CACE exceeds usual Fair Trade practices by returning 20% of craft sales to partner communities to support their health, education and conservation needs. Craft sales also help fund our projects to sustainably harvest and market value-added non-timber forest products including handicrafts and copal resin.