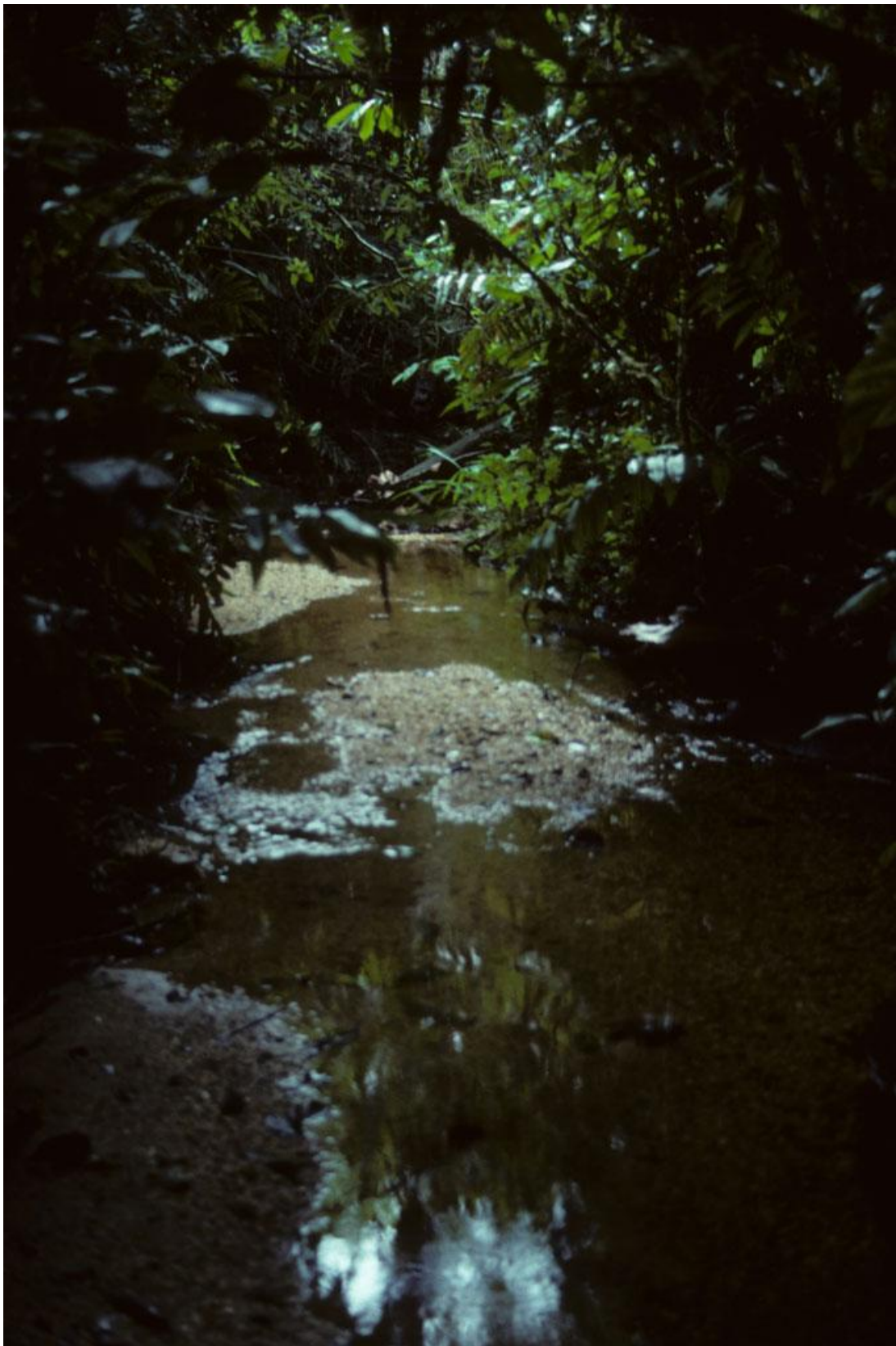


Ecuadorian rainforest stream

Ecuadorian rainforest stream

A shallow stream extends into the Ecuadorian rainforest. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy to expose a small rocky island in the stream. Ecuador is commonly divided into three regions—the coast on the west, the Andes in the middle, and the Amazon rainforest to the east. In fact, the rainforest area of Ecuador is commonly referred to as el Oriente, or "The East." The Ecuadorian rainforest contains almost twenty million acres of tropical rainforest. The Oriente is one of Earth's most biodiverse regions, with more than twelve thousand plant species. This region of Ecuador is sparsely populated but also a popular destination for ecotourism. A major threat to this area is deforestation caused by logging companies and the ever-increasing search for oil. The roads and facilities built by oil companies are threatening the existence of the Ecuadorian rainforest.



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