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# THE TALE OF PARNAGUÁ



A lake agonizes due to abandonment in one of the oldest and most traditional Brazilian legends. So many people here have heard the story marked by these words: "here is the Lagoa of Parnaguá, clean as a mirror and beautiful as an adorned bride," which grew and gained such magnificence by enchantment. So magical, full of lights and voices, echoed the cries of a child who his mother had abandoned. For many years, the locals told the story of the appearance of a young man with a red beard, who would only fail to fulfill his fate when a brave woman appeared to disenchant him. The crying must have stopped, and the boy stopped appearing, not for magical reasons, but for reasons that go beyond the local legend: the Lake of Parnaguá, stage of real and literary stories, which has already lost more than 94% of its water area and suffers again because of abandonment,

now it survives as it was only in the memory of the population of southern Piauí. Rivers that flow into the Lake, such as Paraim, are ceasing to exist, even with the efforts of some people who have been trying for years to stop environmental destruction. But the fight is constant against rampant deforestation that disregards the future and the source of livelihood for many.

"It's part of me," this is how Carlos Sobral, one of the residents of Parnaguá, describes the Lagoa, which, according to him, was a source of work and subsistence for many. People who worked with irrigation had to stop, and it used to have eight types of fish and reduced to just one, which completely destabilized the economy of the entire region.

*"(...) The Lake has dried up twice, and the people who live exclusively from fishing have suffered." told Carlos, who likes to call himself a son of Parnaguá.*

Carlos's dad was a fisherman, and the Parnaguá lake was where he would find a way to provide for his children and wife. Below, we can see a picture taken from Carlos's archive that shows how the fishing and the water level in the Lake was highly different from what it looks right now:



Carlos grew up around the Lake, playing in the water, seeing his dad fishing, and having the unique Caatinga and Cerrado nature as his backyard. Back then, the Lake was huge (12 km long and up to 6 km wide). During the interview, he expressed a wish: "Can you imagine a place with so much fish that it took a truck a week to transport those to neighboring towns?". The answer to the question above from the Eden team having the first time in Parnaguá is: no, it's hard even to imagine. So, seeing the Lake dry up thoroughly twice (the last one in 2015) was extraordinarily revolting and sad for him and especially all the older people in the city.

What made Carlos decide to fight for what he calls "a national patrimony." That's why he worked as the municipality's Secretary for the Environment for many years, but even before that, back when Carlos was only a proud resident, he called the Environmental Police twice. He found fences two kilometers long already inside the Lagoa.

Even now, he continues to fight for the Lake. His wife Ciça has already asked him to give up and leave town, as he has received many threats over the years. But he says: "I'm sure I'm not here by men's will, but because of a greater force, which makes me want to fight for our Lake, that's why I was one of the first to embrace the Eden project."

During all the time that Eden was in Parnaguá, Carlos was willing to help with everything he could: contacting the city hall and the landowners, visiting areas, and telling the region's story. But, for him, saving the Lake goes even further. Before he died, Carlos' father asked him to continue fighting for the Lagoa de Parnaguá. The promise continues to be kept.

