

A monthly digital magazine

HUTAN HARAPAN

NEWSLETTER

FOREST POLICE ARREST ENCROACHERS IN HUTAN HARAPAN

Encroachment and illegal logging are just two of the daily pressures that are putting stress on the ecological integrity of Hutan Harapan. Over the past 12 months PT Restorasi Ekosistem Indonesia's (REKI) management has been revamping its forest protection strategy in an effort to meet the target of zero deforestation. But this will not be an easy task as evidenced by the arrests made in late February.

On Wednesday February 28th, 2018, the Forestry Police from the Jambi Provincial Forestry Office arrested 3 encroachers who were planning to clear 200 ha

of Hutan Harapan's forest to plant oil palm. The police also seized an excavator, 1 chainsaw, some timber and other equipment. Twelve forestry police took part in the raid, supported by PT REKI's Forest Protection team. The three perpetrators were taken to Jambi for further questioning by the Forestry Police.

The PT REKI Forest Protection team had received information from the Kunangan Jaya 1 community that encroachers were planning to clear land. Based on unconfirmed information from the field, the heavy equipment was rented by a financier from Jambi who wanted to illegally plant oil palm in Hutan Harapan. This was not PT REKI's Forest Protection team's first encounter with the encroachers. On February 14th 2018 they were given verbal and written warnings by the protection team which were ignored, until finally they were arrested by the Forestry Police. PT REKI is working closely with the Forestry Police as part of its commitment to stop any encroachment and destruction of Hutan Harapan's forests. ***



DENMARK'S AMBASSADOR VISITS HUTAN HARAPAN

The government of Denmark has been one of Hutan Harapan's principal partners over the past 8 years. The financial support provided by the



Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) has been crucial to making ecosystem restoration concessions a reality in Indonesia. PT REKI had the pleasure of hosting the visit on February 20-21st of the Danish Ambassador to Indonesia, Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen along with the Director of Copenhagen Zoo, Carl Traeholt and Per Rasmusen, the National Program Advisor for DANIDA's Environmental Support Programme. Ambassador Kristensen and his team had a busy two days visiting a number of activities underway Hutan Harapan. They visited the water and sanitation facilities constructed in 2016 for the Batin Sembilan indigenous people at Simpang Macan Luar. A water facility with a tank capacity of 10,000 litres was built to provide clean water including 9 bathing, washing and toilet facilities (MCK) for 30 Batin Sembilan families. According to Hutan Harapan's Community Partnership Manager Jomi Suhendri Saputra, "the clean water and sanitation facilities have greatly improved health conditions for the Batin Sembilan."

They also visited the agroforestry demonstration plot at Simpang Koni and Kelumpang River which is part of 6 agroforestry sites developed by REKI for the people who have signed agreements with the company. The agroforest is planted with rubber, melinjo nut (*Gnetum gnetom*), jengkol (*Archidendron pauciflorum*), petai bean, fruits and various types of wood such as White Jabon (*Anthocephalus cadamba*) agarwood, Blackboard tree (*Alstonia scholaris*), meranti (*Shorea sp.*) and areca nut. A total of 31,000 superior rubber seeds, 2,000 fruit seedlings and garden seedlings have already been planted.

Their field visits also took them to one of the field offices to check the preparedness of the forest fire team, followed by a stop at the primary school and health clinic. Ambassador Kristensen planted a tembesu tree (*Fragrae fragments*) on the shore of Lake Harapan and two other trees at the agroforestry site and camping ground.

In his departing remarks, the Danish Ambassador conveyed his thanks to his hosts and the opportunity see work underway to restore the forest. He also stressed the need for further efforts to preserve forests with such rich biodiversity. He suggested that ecotourism could be developed as means for adventurers to visit one of the most beautiful parts of the planet. ***



PT REKI AND UNIVERSITY OF JAMBI SIGN A NEW CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

Tropical rainforest research is an important component of PT REKI's vision and mission. To this end, PT REKI and Jambi University (UNJA) entered into a new phase of their cooperation with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for the period 2018-2023 by the Director of Operations of PT REKI Lisman Sumardjani and Vice Rector of Jambi University Zulkifli Alamsyah on Tuesday 13 February 2018.

The MoA opens the door to cooperation in a number of areas: education and human resource development; social, economic and ecological research; improving the quality of life both socially and economically in the surrounding communities. The two institutions will collaborate on the research project "Ecological and Socioeconomic Functions of Tropical Lowland Rainforest Transformation Systems in Sumatra, Indonesia".

This MoA also covers the work of the consortium of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 990 EFForTS Project Indonesia that includes Bogor Agricultural University and Tadulako University of Palu, together with the University of Göttingen, Germany. From 2012-2017, under the auspices of the CRC program, at least 40 researchers from various countries such as Germany, France, Russia, the Netherlands, Austria, India and Indonesia, and more than 60 research assistants took part in a variety of research projects. ***

Hutan Harapan is the first ecosystem restoration concession in Indonesia managed by PT REKI as a result of joint initiative of Burung Indonesia, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and BirdLife International. Of total 98,000 ha, 52,000 ha lies in South Sumatera and 46,000 ha in Jambi. Hutan Harapan is aimed to conserve natural habitat of globally threatened species, the critically endangered lowland rainforest, and collaborate with local communities in managing Hutan Harapan as a productive landscape

MITIGATING HUMAN – ELEPHANT CONFLICTS

Elephants throughout Sumatra are experiencing fragmentation of their habitats as they are increasingly being squeezed into smaller and smaller areas due to population pressures and expanding demand for agricultural land. This invariably results in human-elephant conflicts which in the end are costly for both sides.

There is a herd of 7 elephants (*Elephas maximus sumatranus*) that range through the western portion of Hutan Harapan's concession as well as into the surrounding concession areas and villages. Up until January 2018, 33 farmers have seen their crops trampled by the elephants, with 20 farmers having been in the unenviable position of facing the herd on their farmland. According to Elva Gemita, PT REKI's Environment Monitoring Manager about 100 hectares of crops have been trampled by the elephants and nearly every week there is a report of an elephant destroying crops.

To mitigate the conflicts, Hutan Harapan field staff implemented a Community Based Conflict Mitigation (CBCM) plan in two villages, Dusun Sungai Meranti and Pemusiran, that are particularly affected by the elephants. With the support of Hutan Harapan, the villagers have reactivated the patrol group (Kelompok Jaga) that is tasked with reducing conflicts with elephants through education in the communities and keeping elephants out of fields. ***



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