

# Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



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## Code RED

An e-newsletter from your friends in Borneo

Exciting progress is being made within all of our programs! We are delighted to share updates with you from our Environmental Education program, Customary Forest Initiative and Sustainable Livelihoods work. With the addition of a new elementary school to our program we are continuing to expand the reach of our school program, bringing quality environmental education into the formal school system, cultivating future generations of conservation leaders. Under our Customary Forest Initiative, we work to protect forests by supporting the legal transfer of management rights to those communities that have traditionally managed the land. Late last month, one of our Habitat Protection Field Officers, Desi Kurniawati, and the village chief of Laman Satong, Mr. Victor Sriyanto, attended a National meeting in Jakarta, connecting with many other implementers of Customary Forests from all over Indonesia, broadening their network. We were very pleased to have the opportunity to present a film on the village of Laman Satong at this meeting, gaining further exposure for their customary forest efforts on the national stage.



Last month we brought you a story on our Non-Timber Forest Product Artisan Groups, sharing with you some of the many beautiful items

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### **New Markets for our NTFP Artisan Groups**

GPOCP attended a workshop with the NGO Craft Kalimantan late last month where we discussed marketing strategies and production quality for the products made by the Non-Timber Forest Product Artisan Groups we support. Our efforts have resulted in a recent increase in demand for woven mats from these groups. A local national

they make from sustainably sourced forest products. We are very excited to see our efforts paying off as they are gaining increased market access throughout Indonesia for the woven mats they produce. A buyer in Pontianak has recently placed orders for large quantities of mats created by the groups. Our focus this year has been on helping the groups gain increased market access for their products, while also providing training in business and product quality to help secure this as a viable and sustainable income source for communities surrounding Gunung Palung National Park.

We hope you enjoy reading this month's issue and following our efforts to protect the orangutans of Gunung Palung through our community conservation work.

As always, thank you for your support! Without you, our work would not be possible.

Cheryl Knott, Executive Director  
[Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program \(GPOCP\)](#)

## Environmental Education Activities at SDN 15 Ketapang Elementary

By Desi Kurniawati, Yayasan Palung (GPOCP)

We are very excited to welcome a new elementary school into our environmental education school program. Last month, SDN 15 Ketapang, a local elementary school, invited GPOCP to give a lecture to students from their level five and six classes. A total of 30 students attended to listen to our introductory lesson on locally important environmental topics such as biodiversity, the functions and benefits of forests and the way all life is linked together through ecosystems. The class also learned about orangutans and other protected species, and the threats that human activities pose to species, forests, and the whole natural environment.



Through a slide show, puppet show and stories, the GPOCP Environmental Education Team delivered engaging and interactive material that the students were able to easily connect with.

Frans Suma, the school principal, was pleased to be increasing his students' level of environmental knowledge. Students and teachers alike were so excited by GPOCP's presentation that they have asked us to make regular school visits throughout the year. We are very happy to welcome SDN 15 Ketapang into our program, and look forward to now expanding upon our initial introductory lecture, providing further educational materials and activities to this new group of students living around Gunung Palung National Park.

park authority has placed orders for a buyer in the capital city of Pontianak for large quantities of these mats. Meetings between the artisans and the buyer are scheduled to take place in the coming month where exact quantities and price will be determined.

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*"Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who does nothing because he could only do a little."*

~Edmund Burke~

Our lesson ended with the GPOCP staff giving the students a challenge - to immediately start caring about the environment around them by initiating a trash-clearing project on the school grounds. Students were thrilled to have a way to directly put their new knowledge to work and quickly see the impact of their efforts.



The lesson at SDN 15 Ketapang is a classic example of our classroom-based Environmental Education work. Although classroom presentations and activities are our most frequent activity, our impact also stretches well beyond the classroom and includes field trips, youth group activities and after school clubs that collectively reached an incredible 5,816 young people in 2012. When GPOCP began 14 years ago, environmental education made up the backbone of our work, serving as our initial conservation program within West Kalimantan. Since then, we have steadily built a solid base of local students and teachers, throughout the regencies of Ketapang and Kayong Utara, who are dedicated to environmental education. Each year we strive to maintain, strengthen and expand this base by refining current educational practices and implementing new approaches to involve young people in conservation and environmental issues in the region.

Our Environmental Education Program gives the participating youth and teachers a chance to understand their environment, become connected with local nature, and learn the importance that the natural world plays in their lives - providing clean water, food, medicines and other ecosystem services. With a national syllabus that is inadequate in environmental issues, and with forest destruction in West Kalimantan continuing at an alarming rate, opportunities for young people to learn about, experience and understand nature dwindle. Therefore, GPOCP plays a vital role in fostering a love of nature in local youth, ultimately developing a populace that will make the choice to save local habitat and resources.

## Customary Forest and Community Forest National Meeting

By Desi Kurniawati, Yayasan Palung (GPOCP)



From April 24-25, 2013 a National Meeting on Customary and Community Forests was held in Jakarta. Desi Kurniawati, one of our Habitat Protection Field Officers together with the village chief of Laman Satong, Mr. Victor Sriyanto, traveled to Jakarta to introduce Laman Satong's Customary Forest at the national level, and meet with other Customary Forest managers from all over Indonesia. In the spirit of

presenting Laman Satong's proposal, they carried a large display board covered with photos from past forest activities and several Non-Timber Forest Product crafts produced by artisan groups from that village.

Laman Satong is one of the original three villages we have been working with since 2010 under our Customary Forest Initiative. Our program helps communities obtain an official declaration that gives them the rights to manage their Customary Forests. Since Indonesian law does not recognize traditional land ownership, community forests are at continual risk of conversion to commercial agriculture, destroying not only biodiversity and orangutan habitat but also traditions and natural resources. To counter this, GPOCP established the Customary Forest Initiative that works to legally transfer forest management rights back to the communities who traditionally managed the land.

The Customary Forest of Laman Satong is one of a few in Indonesia that has achieved ratification for their 1,070 hectares of forest at the district, provincial and national level. However, the struggle to complete the full administrative process is still not finished, as they are now awaiting approval of their Customary Forest Management Board, which is one of the reasons for Desi and Mr. Sriyanto's trip to Jakarta.



The first day of the meeting started early as attendees prepared their displays, getting ready to present their cases. After the opening ceremony, there were several presentations from various speakers;

among them were representatives from the Directorate General of Watershed Management and Social Forestry, the Indonesian State Ministry of Forestry, the Chief of West Sumatra Agriculture and Forestry Office and the Indonesian State Ombudsman. During the lunch break, our staff member Desi seized the opportunity to screen a movie about Laman Satong's Customary Forest, which was a wonderful opportunity for their forest to receive some extra attention and spotlight. Later in the day, Desi and Mr. Sriyanto attended a group discussion about Community Forestry and Customary Forest issues, where three separate groups discussed the problems at the proposal level that hinder the establishment of Customary Forests and Community Forest working areas, proposal and permit issues, as well as post-establishment issues, including monitoring and evaluation of the Customary Forests.

Day two began with presentations from various stakeholders: experts from the State Ministry of Forestry, the Department of Inter-Institutional Cooperation, the Governor of West Sumatra and representatives from Bantaeng District. They reviewed the struggle for obtaining rights to manage forests, something they have done in the past with their indigenous wisdom. Under a program within the Ministry of Forestry, they have a plan to establish 500,000 hectares of Customary Forests by 2014; however they have only achieved 21% of this goal so far.



After the presentations concluded, participants learned that the Minister of Forestry could not attend the meeting as scheduled, upsetting most participants. They had expected clarification from this meeting on why it took so long for the State Ministry of Forestry to process their proposals for Customary Forests or Community Forests, and why there has never been a written response of any kind regarding their proposals. They were further frustrated and confused because this National meeting was held in the building that houses the Ministry of Forestry, so it was hard to understand why the Minister could not attend the meeting, especially after the participants learned that he was in the building at the time.

As a result of the Minister's absence, some participants went to the office of the Indonesian State Ombudsman to report the Minister of Forestry on mal-administration. This report has been submitted and now is under investigation.

Unfortunately, this is how the meeting closed, leaving participants

with no other concrete results or progress made. This was a very disappointing end to the meeting. However, it did provide Mr. Sriyanto and us the opportunity to broaden our network with other implementers of Customary Forests and Community Forests from all over Indonesia. Sadly, we are used to setbacks like this, as we have been working with Laman Satong and other villages around Gunung Palung since 2010 trying to help them secure their Customary Forests. Although in Indonesia the Customary Forest process is bureaucratically intensive, we will continue to stay positive, and are encouraged that the process is still moving forward in small steps.

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program  
(GPOCP)



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