

Orangutan TIMES

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program

November 2010



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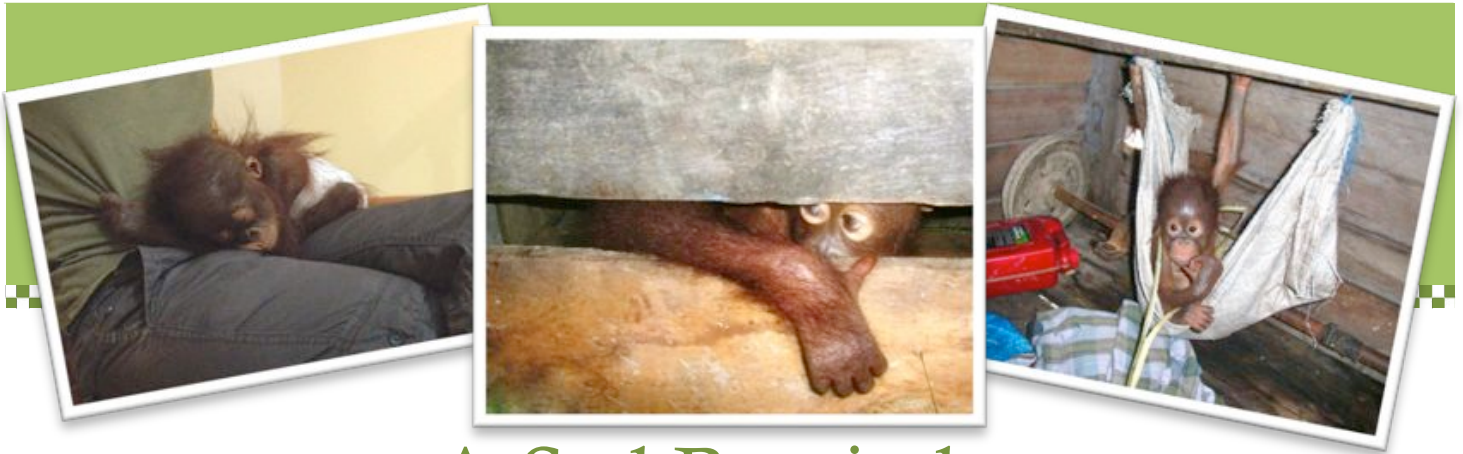
Environmental Education Center Makes Room for More Programs

Thanks to the generous support of Delores Janet Mason and Orangutan Conservancy, GPOCP is putting the finishing touches on a beautiful new wing of its Environmental Education Center in Sukadana, giving staff and visitors some much-needed breathing room for an ever-expanding array of public programs.

For the past year, GPOCP staff and volunteers have been working, cooking, sleeping and holding meetings in a basic one-room structure. Today, the Center is headquarters for REBONK, GPOCP's Kayong Utara Conservation Volunteers Club, as well as RBL, the cooperative of bamboo artisans comprised of members of three villages bordering Gunung Palung National Park. The new wing will enable GPOCP to expand education activities, especially for elementary school students who have a difficult time accessing the more challenging nature trails inside the Park.

While construction of the building is now complete, plans are underway to add a hand-painted orangutan mural to the wall of the front porch (photo at left), to craft resource-friendly bamboo furniture (thanks to RBL), and to officially dedicate the new wing with a plaque that reads, *"The Delores Janet Mason Multimedia Room, Dedicated by Orangutan Conservancy."*





A Sad Reminder Of the High Cost of Palm Oil

Since January, GPOCP's Animal and Habitat Protection Team has been working with local authorities and partner NGOs to address the confiscation of six orangutans and one Malay sun bear illegally held in Ketapang district. All involved were heartbroken when two orangutans, identified as being illegally-held on palm oil plantations, died in June. A badly wounded female orangutan, estimated to be 20 years old, was dying from infected wounds and dog bites when the rescue team arrived at the palm oil plantation in Kendawangan. Rescuers believe the orangutan had been wounded in an attempt by palm oil workers to

abduct her offspring. They soon found a baby orangutan at a neighboring plantation, which confirmed their suspicions. Sadly, the baby was in poor health (above left photo) and died upon its transport back to Ketapang.

In September, GPOCP's team worked with International Animal Rescue to confiscate a nine-month old baby orangutan in Muara Pawan (above right photo). The team's investigations indicated the animal had originated from within a forest that was actively being cleared for the Limpah Sejatera oil palm plantation; investigators worked with local journalists to expose the incident in regional papers.

GPOCP also continues to spearhead a legal case against an orangutan trader in Pontianak who, as a result of GPOCP's collaboration with West Kalimantan authorities and international NGOs, was caught in the very first successful sting operation against the orangutan trade in Indonesia.

The trial against the orangutan trader has now begun, and GPOCP continues to work with local journalists to maximize news coverage, hoping to act as a deterrent to other animal traders. Look for updates in future issues of *Orangutan TIMES*.

Be an Orangutan-Friendly Consumer

Orangutans are seriously threatened by illegal logging and the rapid expansion of oil palm agriculture by large-scale industries producing consumer goods (including wood and palm oil). Many traditionally harvested forest products are growing scarce, while human conflicts with wildlife—including a sharp increase in the illegal killing and trade of orangutans—are on the rise.

You can help save orangutans by avoiding products that come from Southeast Asia and are not sustainably harvested. Visit our website at www.saveGPorangutans.org to learn about ways you and your friends and family can shop wisely.



Strengthening Government's Commitment to Conservation



In Indonesia, the government land use planning process determines the regional governments' development activities for many years. This process is conducted at various levels, the most important of which is at the regency level known as RTRWK.

In addition to planning infrastructure development such as ports, roads, and electricity grids, the RTRWK determines which areas are given protected status, and which forests are open to logging, palm oil plantations, mining and other activities.

With the election of a new administration in the Ketapang Regency in August, GPOCP has been participating in a multi-stakeholder revision to the Ketapang RTRWK. We are leading a coalition of local groups to provide input to identify areas of highest conservation value, advocating for the conservation of all

remaining deep peat forests, which are prime orangutan habitat as well as essential carbon sinks in the fight against global warming. While we are pleased to see our input being considered, we know palm oil and mining companies are aggressively trying to influence the process in an opposing direction. The fight is far from over.

In recent months we have also been working to stop the illegal logging of durian trees being conducted both inside the national park and in the forests surrounding it in Kayong Utara. After an extensive field investigation, we found that several people were logging with questionably-obtained permits issued by village heads. The local forestry

department and the Bupati (Regent or administrative head) were alerted to these activities by GPOCP and other organizations operating in the area. The Bupati responded to our complaints by issuing an order forbidding all logging of durian trees, and called in federal police helicopters to deter loggers. As part of our Conservation Awareness Program, we helped to disseminate the order through local newspapers and other mass media. Although some logging continues today, we are pleased to see growth in political support to end it.

New Online Video "Yayasan Palung: Saving the people to save the forest"

Rob Little, Bates College class of 2012, wanted to get out of the classroom and tackle "something that would result in more than just a grade." And he knew where he wanted to go: Indonesian Borneo, "to learn everything I could about their environmental struggles, and then present this to an outside audience" through video.

In Borneo, Little worked with the Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program (known locally as Yayasan Palung) where he saw first-hand the diminishing orangutan habitat, and how skilled

men with chainsaws can fell centuries-old trees in minutes.

"After living among these people, I understand why they cut the forests," Little says. "Not because they don't care, but because they are worried about surviving tomorrow and the next day. Cutting the forest is destroying their future. But making it to the future depends on them cutting the forest."

Little has come to understand that "no simple solution exists to stop the destruction. But it released a new level of determination within me and

gave me a deeper understanding of the issues I am studying at Bates."

The groundwork for Little's work was the course "Conserving the Great Apes," taught by Dr. Sonya Kahlenberg, a visiting assistant professor of biology who is an expert in primate ecology and behavior, as well as GPOCP's Treasurer.

(Thanks to Bates College for this article)

To view Rob Little's video visit:
www.vimeo.com/15099996

Helping Children See the Forest for the Trees



For several years, GPOCP has been working with leaders and villagers of Riam Berasap Jaya, located on the southern border of the Gunung Palung National Park, helping them conserve their forest resources. When the village started its first kindergarten program earlier this year, GPOCP's Environmental Education Program staff were delighted to respond to the community's request for help in making their new kindergarten a place for children to learn about protecting the forest around them.

At the request of Riam Berasap Jaya's village head—a former logger-turned-conservation-champion—GPOCP arranged for a local artist to paint murals on classroom walls depicting native flora and fauna, including orangutans, proboscis monkeys and other animals that share their forest. The murals are a beautiful daily reminder to children to care for their environment. In recent months, GPOCP staff joined students in their classroom, introducing them to the orangutan and its habitat.

GPOCP also continued to work with several other schools in the region. With the help of a group of teachers, GPOCP is planning ahead for a special environmental education training for junior high and high school teachers in the Ketapang area. Koen Setyawan, who leads the Indonesian Environmental Education Network, will help facilitate the training workshop, which aims to build a strong network for local educators to help motivate and support each other in advancing environmental education in their respective schools.

Many Thanks to Our Recent Funders & Donors!

Recent Funders: American Association of Zookeepers of Cheyenne Mountain Zoo • American Society of Primatologists • Ape Conservation Effort-Zoo Atlanta • Arcus Foundation • Conservation, Food & Health Foundation • International Primatological Society • Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund • Mohamed bin Zayad Conservation Fund • National Geographic • Orangutan Conservancy • SeaWorld/Busch Gardens Conservation Fund • Tides Foundation • The Nature Conservancy • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Great Apes Conservation Fund • Woodland Park Zoo

Recent Donors: Dorothy Burbank • Silvano Gai • Robert Mauri in honor of LeeAnn Fox • Isabel Walsh

Celebrating a Sustainable Forest

Riam Berasap Jaya becomes first village in region to declare their “Customary Forest”



“Approximately four years ago, GPOCP began working with area communities to build local management and protection of their customary forests—a legal designation that gives them more control over *their* forest resources.”

“Ensuring communities have permanent access to their own forests to support traditional needs will weaken the temptation to encroach upon the biologically rich buffer zones outside the national park, and will help to create a strong and lasting bond between people and nature—essential elements of a successful orangutan conservation movement. “

*Andrew de Sousa
GPOCP Field Director*

In July, Riam Berasap Jaya became the first village in Kayong Utara to formally declare their customary forest, passing a decree demarcating their forest borders and creating a council to sustainably manage their forest resources. It was cause for celebration of a hard-earned victory that will enhance the well-being of all villagers, today and tomorrow, and help to ensure a permanent home for many wildlife species, including the orangutan.

Riam Berasap Jaya’s victory is serving as a model for other villages. With GPOCP’s help Lamong Satong, located in Ketapang Regency, recently submitted a request to the Ministry of Forestry asking for official

recognition of their customary forest. In the meantime, GPOCP continues to work hand-in-hand with village leaders to create their own forest management capacity. All involved eagerly await the opportunity to celebrate a commitment to long-term sustainability.



Suggest a catchy new name for our e-newsletter...

And win a beautiful framed 8 x 10 color photo of an orangutan signed by award winning photographer Tim Laman*

Dear Orangutan TIMES Reader,

We love sharing news and photos about our work to save the endangered orangutan of Borneo, and are pleased to see our readership has grown after just one issue—thanks to you! As a new e-newsletter, we’re still searching for the perfect name. Have ideas? Send them to us at hollispocp@gmail.com by December 31, 2010. If your suggestion is selected, you’ll win Tim Laman’s beautiful orangutan photo and be acknowledged in a future newsletter. Good luck and thanks!

*www.timlaman.com



Mission:

The Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program's mission is to develop a human community that is aware and motivated to conserve and protect the orangutans, its habitat, and biodiversity within the forest.



Visit our website at www.SaveGPorangutans.org to learn more about ways you can help protect the endangered orangutan



Newsletter prepared by:
Hollis Burbank-Hammarlund,
U.S. Administrative Director
Andrew de Sousa, Field Director

Please forward this newsletter to your friends. To subscribe, send an email to hollisgpocep@gmail.com



Photo Credits:

Orangutan photographs copyright Tim Laman; pg. 2 baby orangutan in lap Rob Little; other photographs GPOCP staff.

GPOCP Staff News: Networking, Coalition Work & Research

In July, GPOCP Environmental Education Manager **Mariamah Achmad** participated in the *Borneo Conference on Forests, Climate Change and Energy* in Sarawak, Malaysia. The four-day meeting brought together representatives of indigenous peoples from all regions of Borneo, as well representatives of forest peoples from other tropical countries. Participants gave presentations on the threats facing their communities from palm oil plantations, mining, and hydroelectric dams; Mariamah was part of the delegation of groups representing efforts to conserve forests in West Kalimantan.

Listening to each others' experiences, they discussed strategies and tactics to protect indigenous rights and promote long-term sustainable forest management. GPOCP joined other participants as founding members of the Borneo Indigenous Peoples Alliance, calling for a moratorium on all development projects that are being conducted without the free, prior and informed consent of the affected communities.

Tito P. Indrawan, Andrew de Sousa, Edi Rahman and Dr. Cheryl Knott were recent participants in the *International Workshop on Orangutan Conservation*, with approximately 200 others from around the world. GPOCP presented on current conservation efforts in West Kalimantan, and facilitated the participation of relevant government officials from the province. Representatives from dozens of NGOs and government bodies across Borneo and Sumatera discussed strategies on how to advance the Indonesian National Orangutan Action Plan and other conservation efforts.

GPOCP also participated in the *2010 International Meeting of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation*, held for the first time in Indonesia. GPOCP Executive Director **Dr. Cheryl Knott** organized a symposium on *Conserving Primates through Research and Habitat*

Protection and presented on her research into wild orangutan health and energy levels. Andrew de Sousa also presented GPOCP's work as part of a panel on *Engaging Local People for Conservation in South-East Asia*.

GPOCP continues to look for ways to develop the conservation capacity of its staff as well as the capacity of its partners around the region. In September, Assistant Field Officer **Tri Nugroho** attended a training in Pontianak on identifying and classifying orangutan nests, aimed at developing a common nest identification standard for West Kalimantan NGOs. **Agus Lujito** attended a three-day training on identifying protected wildlife, and understanding how the Indonesian legal system can be used to combat wildlife trade. Two other GPOCP Field Assistants, **Herie Handoko** and **Mulyono Yusup**, are currently spending two months with the Gunung Palung Orangutan Project to conduct a field survey of the orangutan population in Gunung Palung National Park, spearheaded by researcher **Josephine Beck**. This will be the first time in almost ten years that a population survey is completed across the park. Data will be key to informing GPOCP's future conservation activities.

ORANGUTANS NEED YOU!

Interested in supporting our work with a tax deductible year-end gift?

Donate by Check:

Checks should be made payable to Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program and mailed to: PO Box 2250, Brattleboro, VT 05303. Include your name and mailing address so we can acknowledge your gift.

Donate by Credit Card:

Visit our website at www.SaveGPorangutans.org, which will take you to a secure PayPal page.

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