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HUTAN HARAPAN

NEWSLETTER

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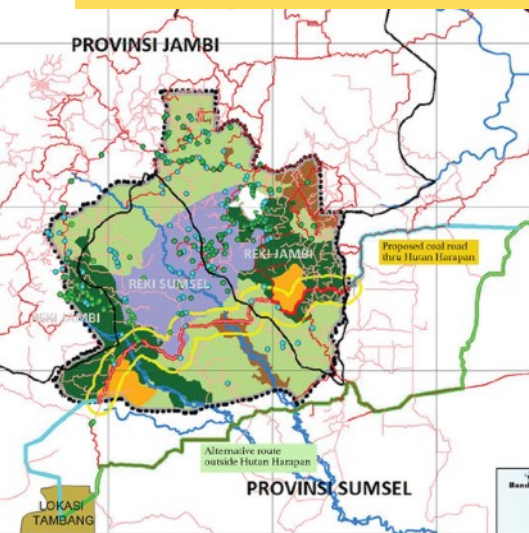
Hutan Harapan Says No to Proposed Road to Haul Coal

For the second time the ecological integrity of Hutan Harapan is threatened by the development of a road to haul coal. A coal company has proposed to the government to develop a road to transport coal from North Musi Rawas to Musi Banyuasin that would cut through the Hutan Harapan concession area - 10 km in Jambi and 22 km in South Sumatra.

Lisman Sumardjani, Director of Operations of REKI formally delivered a letter of rejection to the Minister of Environment and Forestry (MEF) at the end of 2017. Such a road would spell the end of Hutan Harapan's valuable ecosystems. In fact, a road could be built without going through Hutan Harapan.

PT Reki has received support from the Civil Society Coalition of Jambi and South Sumatra who also reject the proposed road. Musri Nauli, a lawyer and environmental activist from the Jambi People's Justice Foundation emphasized that existing regulations prohibit the construction of a road in ecosystem restoration concession.

Dicky Kurniawan of KKI Warsi noted that, "the concession area is of high biodiversity value and high conservation value due to the presence of the Sumatran tiger, Sumatran elephant, Tapir and Sun Bear. Therefore, we reject a mining road cutting across the region". The MEF has yet to respond to PT Reki's rejection letter.***



PT Reki's Annual Meeting

In early January 2018, the management of

PT REKI, led by President Director, Dr Tonny Soehartono, gathered at the Hutan Harapan camp to draw up the 2018 work plan that is part of the company's Action Plan for 2018-2022. The year 2018 is considered important because it marks the beginning of the second decade of PT REKI.

PT REKI is facing a number of formidable challenges as it enters its second decade of operations. During the first ten years (2008-2017) PT REKI was setting the pace for other ecosystem restoration concessions (ERCs) in creating a regulatory framework to meet the specific needs of an ERC. In the second decade (2018-2027) will continue to work with the other ERCs to propose innovations to the regulatory framework especially in the area of ensuring the financial viability of ERCs. This is of particular importance to PT REKI in the coming years as it seeks to decrease its dependence on donor funding and ultimately become financially independent.

In addition to developing a work plan to lead the company to financial independence, the PT President Director stated unequivocally that deforestation due to encroachment, burning and illegal logging must be halted. "Not even an inch more of Hutan Harapan is allowed to be damaged," said Tonny. This is no doubt a challenge for the Forest Protection Team who, in some circles, has been criticized for violating human rights in the course of their work in securing Hutan Harapan's concession boundaries. Dr Tonny Soehartono emphasized that law enforcement efforts to protect Hutan Harapan from all forms of illegal activities is not a violation of law let alone a human rights violation. The MEF commissioned PT REKI to restore Hutan Harapan which includes protecting it from illegal activities. ***

Adding Value to Hutan Harapan's Rubber Agroforests

As part of its commitment to improve community livelihoods, PT REKI is now constructing a rubber latex processing unit to produce ribbed smoked sheets (RSS). Processed in this way will give the farmers a better price for their latex rather than selling the latex at a lower price d c r u m b r rubber which is the common practice in this region.

There is considerable potential to generate income from rubber processing as communities have already planted 325 ha and PT REKI is targeting to plant nearly 3,000 ha over the next few years. Two rubber processing units will be built, one on Bungin River and the other on the Kapas River, each with a production capacity of 140 kg per day. Solar panels will be used to generate the energy needed for the two processing units.

According to Yusup Cahyadin, Head of the Ecosystem Management Division of Hutan Harapan, the processed rubber will be sold directly to producers of rubber products. It is expected that with the income from the rubber agroforests people will have an alternative business that is environmentally friendly and does not destroy the forest. ***

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.



Handicrafts for the European Market

There are 228 indigenous Batin Sembilan families who live in and depend on Hutan Harapan for small scale swidden agriculture, gathering non-timber forest products, rubber tapping and hunting. As part of PT REKI's program to strengthen their livelihoods, PT REKI in collaboration with Kingfisher Plc from the United Kingdom invited eco-environmental product specialist, Emily Readett-Bayley, to visit the Hutan Harapan in January 2018, to explore the feasibility of developing handicrafts that may be marketed by Kingfisher.

The Batin Sembilan produce a number of products using rattan such as baskets, hats, and brooms. They also make various types of spoons and ornaments from wood. To date they have only produced their handicrafts on a small scale and products are sold to visitors.

Emily, has considerable experience supplying Indonesian ethical products to international markets through the Fair Trade trading system. Her most recent high profile export was of two containers of rattan baskets from Indonesia to the UK which were sold to Pinewood Studio's to be used in Star Wars 7: The Force Awakens. She believes there are many unique products produced by the Batin Sembilan, as well as those found in nearby markets, can be sold in Europe and elsewhere in the world. ***



Hutan Harapan Restoration Co-operative

After long discussions, the Hutan Harapan Restoration Cooperative (HHRC) was established on April 6th 2017. It is designed to provide PT REKI staff and the surrounding communities with easy access to some basic food items such as rice and kitchen spices as well as snack foods. In the past these items had to be bought in Bahar or Jambi at higher prices. Since the cooperative belongs the employees, the goods can be sold at cheaper price with an annual dividend to the members. To date the cooperative is meeting expectations with the provision of food stuffs and other items. It now has a total capital of IDR 80 million (USD 7,000), with a monthly turnover of around IDR 60 million (USD 5,000) and an estimated profit of IDR 10 million (USD 900.00). ***