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The Heart of Borneo Initiative is transforming decision making, biodiversity protection & natural resource management to address climate change

Heart of Borneo & Climate Change

Real Challenges, Real Solutions

The Heart of Borneo covers more than 20 million hectares of equatorial rain forest across the countries of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia. It includes some of the most biologically diverse habitats on earth, and is one of only two places on earth where elephants, orang-utans, rhinoceros and clouded leopards share the same territory. It is also a mysterious place, with an astounding average of 3 new species discovered every month between 1995-2005.

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Climate drivers

Indiscriminate logging, rapid oil palm expansion, and expansive mining threaten the unique values of the Heart of Borneo. More than 80% of the total carbon emissions in Indonesia and Malaysia come from deforestation and landuse change, therefore protecting these high conservation value and carbon-rich forest landscapes are central to achieving local, national and global goals of climate change. Conserving the contiguous forests in Borneo will help to ensure that their multiple roles of carbon storage, livelihood provision, ecosystem goods and services, as well as biodiversity protection can be maintained well into the future.

Climate innovation

A paradigm shift in how the Heart of Borneo's shared resources are valued and managed by governments, the private sector and communities is essential if predictions of continued rapid deforestation are to be avoided. Given the rate and scope of pressure being placed on its resources, traditional conservation approaches are unlikely to succeed.

The Heart of Borneo Network Initiative is bringing about innovative mechanisms to address climate change by transforming decision making, biodiversity protection and natural resource management.

Climate Successes

- o In April 2008, a Presidential Decree on island spatial planning was issued in Indonesia. This new regulation officially recognizes Heart of Borneo as a "conservation landscape" and WWF is working with the government to develop a new land-use plan for all of Kalimantan. This plan will set rational guidelines for the drivers of climate change within the Heart of Borneo: forest management, oil palm plantations, mining and infrastructure development for the next 20 years.
- o In order to deliver the goals of the Indonesian Heart of Borneo Action Plan, WWF has signed three MoUs with key District governments. These new agreements enable WWF to work directly with the local authorities in the design of green economic development strategies that take into account climate change science.
- o Nearly half of the Heart of Borneo area is currently licensed for forest production or conversion to plantations. The status of the concessions vary widely and many do not have management plans, necessary infrastructure or proper permits. WWF continues to bring more forests under certification, however this is not a feasible solution for all concessions. Inside the Heart of Borneo we are exploring the feasibility of a new policy to establish 'restoration concessions' that will result in low carbon forest management.

Below: The Heart of Borneo is a critical landscape for REDD pilot projects

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Influencing business

o In order to meet the rapidly growing global demand for edible oil and alternative fuels, the extent of palm oil plantations in Indonesia and Malaysia could double in the next decade. WWF has been working with Cargill and other partners in and around the Heart of Borneo to assess the potential for expanding production to the vast existing degraded lands. The research concludes that a combination of increased productivity through improved management practices, new oil palm development on degraded lands, and a complete ban on oil palm development on peat and forest lands, provides the most viable means to achieve the interrelated goals of palm oil supply, mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, and biodiversity conservation.

HoB Peatlands Action Plan, a new partnership...

o A new WWF partnership with Standard Chartered Bank and the UK government for the Heart of Borneo Brunei program, is expanding cooperation between the three countries to develop common solutions to the problems of peatland degradation. The ultimate goal of this project is to lead to a reduction in CO₂ emissions, fire and haze from degraded peatlands. The Action Plan will recommend policy changes, develop innovative restoration practices and transfer knowledge and technology across the three countries to ensure rehabilitation and conservation of the carbon-rich peatland ecosystems.

Carbon baseline and prepaREDDness

o In preparation for the December 2009 UNFCCC COP in Copenhagen, WWF is working with world-class research partners to develop an initial carbon baseline for the Heart of Borneo. This work will set the parameters for developing REDD methodologies within key carbon-rich landscapes. Additionally, the Heart of Borneo teams in Indonesia and Malaysia are beginning to build effective capacity in governmental agencies, private sector companies, financial institutions and local partners for the implementation of REDD plans and policies. This work is closely linked with other Network Initiatives, such as the Forest-based Carbon and Global Deal.

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)

o Adequately valuing and compensating for the ecosystem services offered by forests is a means of ensuring their protection and sustainable management in the face of rapid climate change. A two-year old PES pilot project in the Kapuas Hulu District in the Heart of Borneo is now providing the knowledge and lessons of how to effectively link revenue generation from ecosystem services for both communities and local governments to protection and sustainable management of natural resources.

Securing carbon-rich landscapes

o Through new partnerships with various government and private sector partners, new funding is being directed at securing carbon-rich landscapes in the Heart of Borneo. Work is underway in both Indonesia and Malaysia to reforest degraded concessions that contain critical populations of orangutans and pygmy elephants. Similarly, enhanced protection of national parks through buffer zone management to reduce forest fires and encroachment will significantly reduce carbon emissions.

Right: Segama Forest Reserve, Sabah, Malaysia

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WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

For more information
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