

A Report on the Workshop on Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary: Sharing Experience in Conservation Management and Community Participation.

This workshop, jointly organized by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and Sarawak Forest Department was to share the experiences of Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary (LEWS) in conservation management and community participation. The managements of Betung Kerihun National Park (BKNP) and Danau Sentarum National Park (DSNP), West Kalimantan, Indonesia were invited to participate and share their experiences as well, as the workshop also aims to promote better understanding and cooperation in transboundary conservation management between LEWS and Batang Ai National Park (BANP), and BKNP. Forty-eight participants from the various relevant agencies, from Sarawak, and 13 of their counterparts from Indonesia took part in this workshop, which was held in Kuching from 16 – 17 March 2009, at the Multipurpose Hall, STIDC, Wisma Sumber Alam.

The workshop was divided into four sessions, lasting one and a half day.

Session 1

Theme 1.1: Managing Totally Protected Areas (TPAs): Challenges and Opportunities

Paper 1: Totally Protected Area (TPA) Management: Constraints and opportunities for co-management with local communities by Nickson Joseph

Paper 2: BKNP Management: Potential, Opportunity and Future Challenge by Ahmad Yani

The first two papers presented dealt with the challenges and opportunities in co- managing TPA with the local community as experienced by LEWS and BKNP.

Local communities living in the peripheries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries often view such conservation projects with distrust and deem them as interfering with their traditional ways of life. Their continuing dependence on the forest for subsistence living is often in conflict with the many restrictions that are enforced in these TPAs in the name of conservation.

Among some of the common challenges faced by LEWS and BKNP were:

1. Reconciling the conflict between conservation management and meeting the aspirations and needs of the local communities;
2. Overcoming and allaying the inherent suspicions and distrust of the local communities towards conservation;
3. Lack of funds and manpower by the Executing Agency;
4. Settlements that are scattered in remote areas with difficult access; and
5. Negative community perceptions towards conservation, particularly when influenced by outsiders.

Common opportunities for co-management with the local communities include:

1. The TPAs being a source of training and employment;
2. Improving their income and reducing their dependence on the forest through successful implementation of community development projects;
3. Raising their awareness and appreciation of the importance of conservation efforts;
4. Roles as co-partners in monitoring and protecting the TPAs against intrusions by outsiders, especially TPAs such as BKNP (800,000 ha) which would otherwise be impossible to adequately covered due to their size; and

5. Local communities are a source of expert knowledge of the TPAs and their resources.

LEWS has Ranger Stations in Ulu Mujok and Ulu Ngemah, besides the State-wide Honorary Wildlife Ranger Programme and Special Wildlife Committee, both made up of members of the local communities. They all act as the “eyes and ears” of LEWS’s management. Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) has recently also started a mini project in LEWS to assess the impacts of local communities’ entries into the Sanctuary by monitoring number of entries and their purposes. Suggestions were made to increase the scope to include not only the number of wildlife taken but also the species, sizes and methods or equipments used. BKNP is also similarly involving its local communities in joint patrols to monitor and prevent intrusions.

Theme 1.2: Community-based Activities: Challenges and Lessons Learned

Paper 3: ITTO & Community-based Activities: Challenges & Lessons Learned by Zarina Haji Shebli

Paper 4: Model Conservation Village by Nur Rohman

Both LEWS and BKNP agree that community development projects are important tools in meeting conservation objectives, as they:

- Help to increase the income of the local communities;
- Reduce the local communities’ dependence on the resources of the TPAs;
- Promote the sustainable use of resources by the local communities; and
- Raise awareness of the local communities on the importance of conservation and gain their support and involvement in conservation management.

Fish culture and crop cultivation were among the community-based activities carried out by the ITTO project in LEWS. BKNP, after limited success in past efforts, has introduced its Model Conservation Village, which involved an undertaking by the community in that village to participate in conservation management which includes agro-forestry development. Important aspects in the development of Conservation Village are agriculture, fisheries, adequate facilities, strong collaborative management and traditional cultures.

Common challenges faced in carrying out community development projects include:

1. Poor/slow response from the communities, especially at the initial stage;
2. Weak community leadership and lack of co-operation among the community members;
3. Migration to urban centres
4. Lack of manpower and funds;
5. Lack of skill, knowledge and experiences;
6. Shortages of seedlings and fry
7. Poor communication links due to remoteness and difficult access; and
8. Bad weather

Among the lessons learned were:

1. Effective leadership at the community level is important;
2. It took a lot of patience and efforts to convince the locals to participate in the projects, with BKNP stressing that coercion is not an option as it is not conducive to success. Success being an effective tool of persuasion, a strategy to bypass uninterested communities and letting the subsequent

success of the pioneers attract them was implemented successfully in LEWS and is the concept behind BKNP's Model Conservation Village;

3. A need for adequate support staff; and
4. Support from the relevant government and private agencies are essential.

Session 2

Theme 2.1: Community-based Projects: Fish Culture and Crop Cultivation in LEWS, Agro-Forestry in BKNP

Paper 5: Fish Culture and Fruit Cultivation in the periphery of TPAs by Staban Lanjang

Paper 6: Development of Agro-forestry in the buffer zone of BKNP by Irawan Hadi Wijay

In order to move the locals away from the so called "subsidy mentality" and to get them more committed, the projects in LEWS were carried out on a "gotong- royong" or community effort basis. All works were carried out by the participants themselves with ITTO only supplying the materials, supervision and training, seedlings and fry without any cash being paid out.

The participation of an entire longhouse community was emphasized for fish culture, with a committee being formed to run the operation and earnings shared equally, after setting aside 50% for saving and 25% for maintenance. Both projects were also designed to be self-sustainable both in terms of overheads and operations. To date more than 89 plots have been planted with the selected crops and more than 23 ponds built for fish culture.

The buffer zone of BKNP, where the agro-forestry projects were located, lies outside the boundary of the National Park and beside nursery and crop cultivation; fish culture is also carried out. Ecotourism and its related activities such as traditional cultures and handicrafts are also promoted.

Challenges faced and lessons learned were as per discussed in the earlier two papers.

All these projects have succeeded in improving the cash income of active participants in their respective locations and generally reduce both their dependence on the forest and the amount of time they can spend in the forest. They have also helped to raise the awareness of the local communities to the importance of nature conservation and encourage them to play complementary roles in co-management and enforcement.

The success of the pioneers in indigenous crop cultivation and fish culture in valley ponds projects in LEWS attracted such an overwhelming response in its Phase IV that the projects was not able to cope with the demand for tree seedlings and fish fry.

The Sarawak State Government has continuously supported these local community development activities by providing expertise in training and supplies of additional materials through its various agencies.

Theme 2.2: Views/Perspective of Local Community

Paper 7: Views of Local Community on benefits of ITTO projects and ITTO-supported Project as co-partners in TPA management by Anthony Bau

Paper 8: Conservation Area Management of Local Community Perspective by Antonius Dolek

These two papers were presented by the representatives of both LEWS and BKNP, who gave their views and perspectives on the subject. They are proud of their achievements and are generally appreciative of the efforts of those involved in implementing these projects. The benefits they bring are both tangible, Rh Anthony Bau has earned more than RM3,421.00 even in its beginning three years of fish culture while Gerasie Kapi, a crop cultivator from Ulu Mujok has earned RM4,068 since 2003; and intangible such as helping to promote unity among their communities. Their wish is for more new projects to be implemented in future.

The local community in LEWS preferred to rear tilapia and callosoma as they are easy to care for as well as being fast growing. Besides they were advised that they are not a threat to the native fish. On the other hand, high valued fish such as semah and empurau needs a lot of care, especially in feeding, and the growth rate is very slow, taking about a year to reach marketable size. However, they do have plans to rear these species in future. Among the indigenous fruit trees planted in LEWS were dabai, petai, isau and pulasan.

The local communities in BKNP also benefitted from the community development projects that were implemented there which include the likes of settled agriculture, development and preservation of the indigenous cultures including handicrafts and projects that cater specifically for women and children.

Theme 2.3: Environmental Education/Public Awareness Programme

Paper 9: Environmental Conservation Education Programme in LEWS by Jacqueline Henry

Paper 10: Public Awareness Programme in Supporting Conservation by Arif Kristanto

Both LEWS and BKNP also have outreach programmes, Environmental Conservation Education Programme in LEWS and Public Awareness Programme in Supporting Conservation for BKNP. Besides just the local communities, BKNP is also reaching out to a wider audience of all stakeholders including the youths (Conservation Cadet Programme), who will assist and continue the conservation work.

Their objectives are to inculcate a love for the environment, awareness and enhanced interest in conservation and to encourage local community participation in the co-management of TPAs.

Mediums used include slide presentation, posters, field trips and camps, dialogues, PR campaign in the mass media.

The modules for the students in LEWS were adopted from the Education Department of Malaysia and support for the programme also comes from other Sarawak Forestry Corporation's staff. Certain aspects of BKNP's programme such as its wider audience and the Conservation Cadet Programme could be adopted by LEWS. The BKNP's Programme is already in its fourth year of implementation while LEWS only started its, last year. They have been successful in raising awareness on the importance of conservation among the targeted groups of school children and the locals and get them to play complementary roles in co-management and enforcement.

Some of the constraints faced by LEWS and BKNP in carrying out these programmes include:

1. Lack of training and experience among the facilitators in the initial stage (LEWS);
2. Difficult and time consuming access due to the remoteness and variable weather and water level;
3. Poor communication links;
4. Students who are weak in language and writing skills (LEWS);
5. Inconsistent power supply lead to damages in some equipment with others inoperable (LEWS); and
6. This being a one off project by ITTO, there is also the question of the sustainability of the programme (LEWS).

Session 3

Paper 11: Importance of forested areas in community zones as a wildlife corridor by Wilhemina Cluny

Areas affected by human activities, including settlements, farms and logging, in the periphery of LEWS were found to be important habitats for wildlife, including protected species. These community-use zones play a key role in wildlife conservation by serving as corridors and migration routes for numerous species as well as breeding sites for some, and should be managed as an integral part of LEWS. This would require the cooperation and active participation of the local communities living in these zones, who have assisted in the surveys and have local knowledge of the wildlife found here. It was commented that due to the high detection index of hornbills within these zones, they have high potential to be developed for eco-tourism as what have been done in BKNP.

Paper 12: Development of Honey Bee as Non-Timber Forest Product/NTFP in Danau Sentarum National Park by Ade Jumhur

DSNP is rich with a wide variety of plants that blooms with attractive and colourful flowers all at the same time, after the dry season, the reason behind the abundant honey bees found here. The project to manage the production and collection of wild honey started in 2001. Forests that were burnt in the fire of 1997 were also reforested to produce more honey. As these bees are attracted by the scent of the tembesu trees, the bee keepers induced them to build hives on their trees by hanging pieces of wood of the tembusu tree on them. There are about 500 honey bee keepers, organized into 33 traditional honey collector guilds and between them, produced 25 to 30 tons of reputedly Indonesia's best wild honey a year.

Collaborative management is successful in this case as the forest is protected by the local communities who get to enjoy the economic benefits.

Session 4

Group Discussion on TPA Conservation Management

The group discussing "TPA Conservation Management (including Wildlife Corridor)" recognize the importance of local communities in collaborative management of conservation areas, citing examples such as the Special Park Committee, Special Wildlife Committee and Honorary Wildlife Ranger in Sarawak. The importance of community-use zones was also taken note of and it was proposed that ordinances be amended to cater for the inclusion of these zones into the TPA system. The advancement of socio-economic development into TPAs such as land alteration due to logging/plantation and illegal activities inside the TPAs by outsiders were also discussed. The conclusion was lack of fund and manpower is a serious impediment in TPA conservation management.

Group Discussion on Community Participation

The group on “Community Participation” focus on ways to improve the socio-economics status of peripheral communities so as to reduce their dependence on the resources of the TPAs and get them involved in co-management. Strategies discussed include ecotourism and agro-forestry projects (both new and enhancing existing ones). Important considerations include the need to identify the right product for the right community, resource availability, capital/funding and marketing. The target group and responsible implementing agencies were also deliberated on at length.

Group Discussion on Awareness Education Programme

The third group with the topic of “Awareness Education Programmes” proposes to widen their target audience to include businessmen (illegal traders), the political masters, government servants, and enforcement agencies. Modules used are to include community empowerment, sustainable use of natural resources, public commitment, and law and policy. Tools to employ in reaching out include IT, joint education/awareness programme, interactive forum and strengthening the laws/ordinances. A reward system, both intrinsic and extrinsic, was also proposed and discussed.

Conclusion

With most participants acknowledging that they have benefited from this workshop, it was proposed that more workshops be held in future. Besides, the workshop, which saw active and keen participation, also served as a very useful forum for the exchange of ideas and information and allowed all participants to get to know their counterparts better which boded well for future cooperation and undertakings.

Both LEWS and BKNP also agreed to work together in resubmitting the nomination of the Transboundary Conservation Area (TBCA) as a World Heritage Site.