



*YAYASAN LEUSER
INTERNASIONAL*

THE LEUSER ECOSYSTEM : WILDLIFE PARADISE



The Leuser Ecosystem is named after the next highest mountain in Sumatra, namely Mount Leuser (3,404 m). Leuser originates from the Gayo word Leusoh meaning “covered by clouds”. Another meaning of the word is “the last wildlife paradise”.



The Leuser Ecosystem



Leuser Forest

1. Landscape

The Leuser Ecosystem constitutes the third largest tropical rainforest complex in the world, after the Amazon forest in Brazil and the Zaire forest



Peak of Mount Leuser in Gayo Lues



Singkil swamp wildlife sanctuary in Aceh Singkil

in Africa. Located in the northern part of the Sumatran island, authoritatively this area belongs to the provinces of Aceh and North Sumatra. More precisely the geographical position of the Leuser Ecosystem is 2.250 – 4.950 North and 96.350 – 98.550 East. The average rainfall per year is 2544 mm and the average temperature is 26 degrees Celsius during the day and 21 degrees Celsius at night. The Leuser Ecosystem covers an area of 2,634,874 hectares. The bigger part is located in Aceh (2,255,577 hectares) and the rest in North Sumatra (384,297 hectares). The area stretches over 13 districts including 875 villages in Aceh and 4 districts including 128 villages in North Sumatra.

The Leuser Ecosystem landscape consists of a wide range of habitats including beaches, swamps, rivers, lowlands, highlands and mountains covered in clouds. According to the decree of the Minister of Forestry concerning the borders of the Leuser Ecosystem, the area consists of:



Sumatran Rhino (*Dicerorhinus sumatranus*)

- ❖ Protected forests (\pm 941,713 hectares)
- ❖ The Mount Leuser National Park (\pm 602,582 hectares)
- ❖ Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve (\pm 102,370 hectares)
- ❖ Lingga Isaq Hunting Park (\pm 29,090 hectares)
- ❖ Limited production forest (\pm 8,066 hectares)
- ❖ Production forest (\pm 245,676 hectares)
- ❖ Other Uses Area (\pm 326,080 hectares)
- ❖ Lakes (\pm 145 hectares)
- ❖ Ocean/rivers/water (\pm 3,721 hectares)



Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*)

2. Biodiversity

Research conducted by experts show that at least 45% of the total estimated number of plant species in the West Indo-Malay region, 85% of the total estimated number of bird species and 54% of the total estimated number of animal species in Sumatra can be



Sumatran Elephant (*Elephas maximus*)



One of Leuser's unique plant



Thomas leaf's monkey (presbytis thomasi)



Rafflesia (Rafflesia atjehensis)



Sumatran Orangutan (Pongo abelii)



Chameleon (Colotus jubatus)



Kind of Snake in Leuser

found in the Leuser Ecosystem. The Leuser Ecosystem stores 4,500 flora and fauna species comprising a huge germ plasm resource. The documented species includes 710 animal species (including 128 mammalian species, 424 bird species, 96 amphibian species and 24 fish species) amongst which 180 varieties have been declared as endangered species. Leuser is unique as it is the only ecosystem in the world where five rare wildlife species live side by side in the same region, i.e. the Sumatran Elephant (*Elephas maximus*), the Sumatran Rhino (*Dicerorhinus sumatranus*), the Sumatran Tiger (*Phantera tigris sumatrae*), the Sumatran Orangutan (*Pongo abelii*) and the Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*).

The Leuser Ecosystem is also rich of rare plants such as the tallest flower in the world (*Amorpophalus titanium*), the largest flower in the world (*Rafflesia atjehensis*) and the giant palm (*Johannesteijsmania altifrons*). Besides these, thousands of plant varieties including moss, fungus, ferns, orchids and various giant three species grow affluently in the Leuser forest. Because of its richness in biodiversity, this forest compound has a special attractiveness and is famous worldwide.



Sumatran Tiger (Phantera tigris sumatrae)



Coucang (Nycticebus coucang)

3. Source of Life

Besides housing animals and plants, the Leuser Ecosystem also constitutes an important source of life for about 4 million people living in



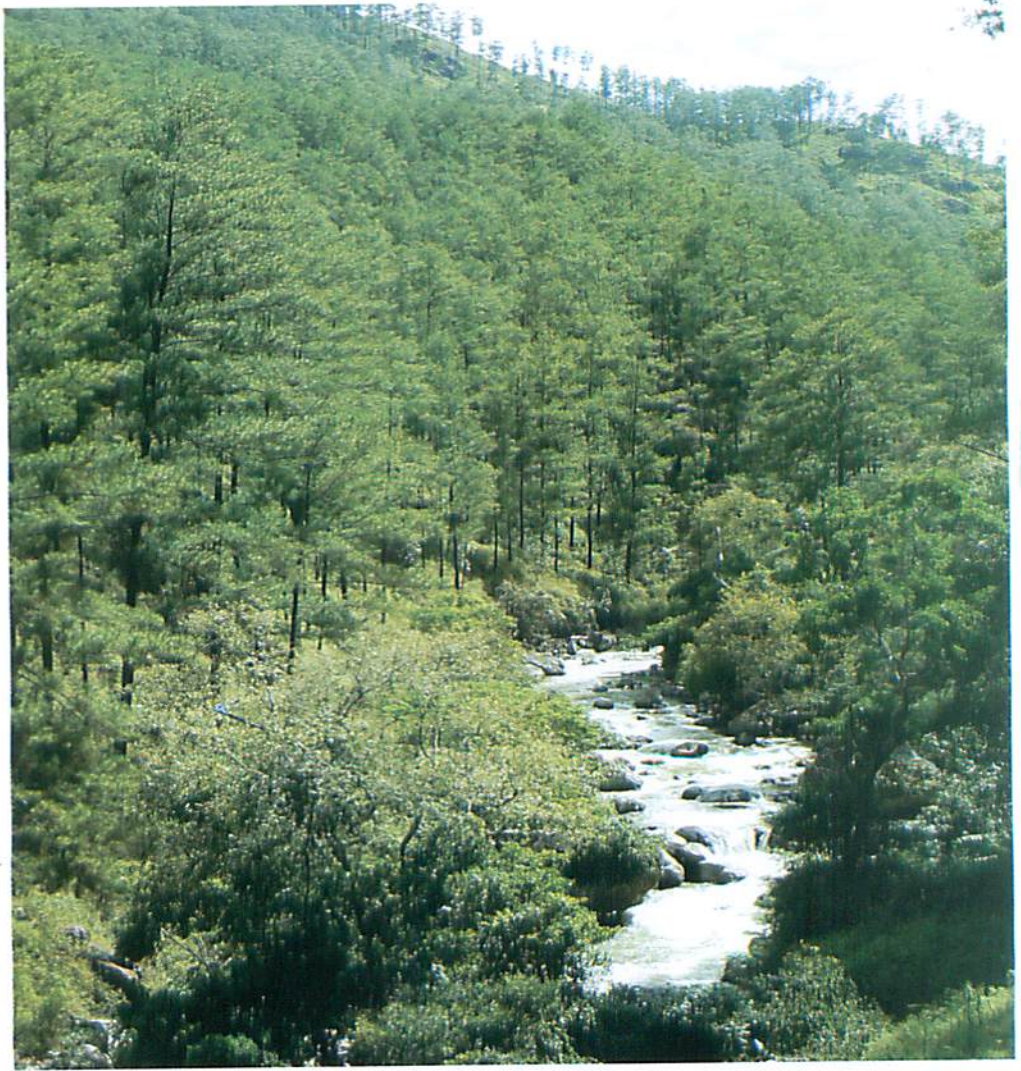
Farm



Activity by the river side



The Agusan river in Gayo Lues



Pine forest in Leuser Ecosystem

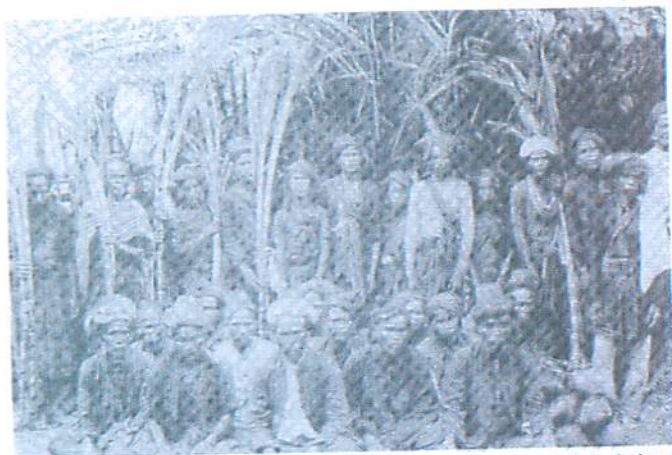
the area. The Leuser Ecosystem is very important for maintaining harmony and balance in the surrounding environment, especially in Aceh and North Sumatra, as the forest area contains the upstream of several vital rivers

sustaining life through irrigation, industry and water supply for human-beings and animals. The Leuser Ecosystem forest landscape constantly supplies water to 106 rivers in the area. Hence, the conservation of this area is very important considering its role as a life support system, biodiversity preserver and potential source of knowledge.

The Leuser Ecosystem is a national asset of immeasurable value. Ecologists have proved that the Leuser Ecosystem is an important natural component (and an integrated link) of interrelated life cycle that in a very proper and organised way protects the life of living organisms in its surroundings. Years of environmental research shows that the Leuser Ecosystem is a very unique, complete and extensive tropical rainforest area. The Leuser National Park (Taman Nasional Gunung Leuser) has been recognised as “World Heritage Site” by UNESCO.

4. The conservation history of Leuser

The efforts to conserve Leuser started in the 1920's. Back then a geology expert from the Netherlands named F. C. Ven Heurn explored the prevalence of oil and mineral resources in Aceh. The local customary leaders became worried about the preservation of Leuser, as they considered the Leuser Mountain a holy and sacred place.



Datoek and Oeloebalang

Van Heurn didn't find the minerals he was searching for and instead he started to help the local customary leaders (the Datoek and Oeloebalang) to persuade the Dutch Colonial Government to grant Leuser a wildlife

sanctuary status. After discussions with the Netherlands Commission for Conservation of Nature in August 1928, it was proposed to assert conservation status to an area stretching from Singkil (upstream of the Simpang Kiri River) in the south, along the Bukit Barisan mountain towards the direction of the Tripa River valley and the coastal swamp in northern Meulaboh. On the 6th of February 1934 a customary community meeting was held in Tapaktuan that resulted in "the Tapaktuan Declaration". This was the first formal agreement concerning the conservation of Leuser.

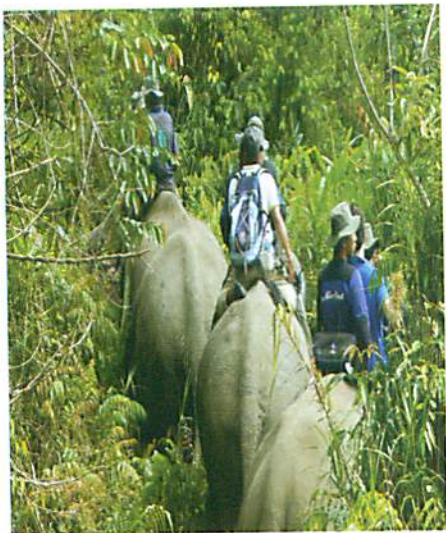
Following this, constant efforts have been undertaken to strengthen the protection of Leuser, among other things: marking the boundary of Mount Leuser Wildlife Reserve (1940), incorporation of the Kappi, Sikundur and Sembala highlands into the Mount Leuser Wildlife Reserve (1970's), reassigning the Mount Leuser Wildlife Reserve as a National Park (1980), and initiating collaboration between the Indonesian Government and the European Union to conserve Leuser (1991).



F.C. Van Heurn

The Leuser Ecosystem was legalised through a decree of the Minister of Forestry No. 227 / KPTS-II / 1995 and was further strengthened by Presidential Decree No. 33/1998, the Minister of Forestry's Decree No. 190 / Kpts - II / 2001 (concerning the Leuser Ecosystem boundary in North Sumatra), law No. 11/2006 concerning the Acehese Government and the Government Regulation No. 26/2008 establishing the Leuser Ecosystem as a national strategic area.

As a continuous effort to conserve the Leuser Ecosystem, inspired by the enthusiasm of the local Acehese leaders during the Dutch-Indies era, some Acehese figures in Jakarta established the Leuser International



Aceh Tamiang Forest Protection and Monitoring Unit (ATFPMU)

Union (1995-2004). The LIF has also got support from various other donors including ExxonMobil Foundation, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), US Fish and Wildlife, Secours populaire Francais, Rotary Club of England and Denver Zoo. The latest funding comes from the Multi Donor Fund (MDF) through World Bank

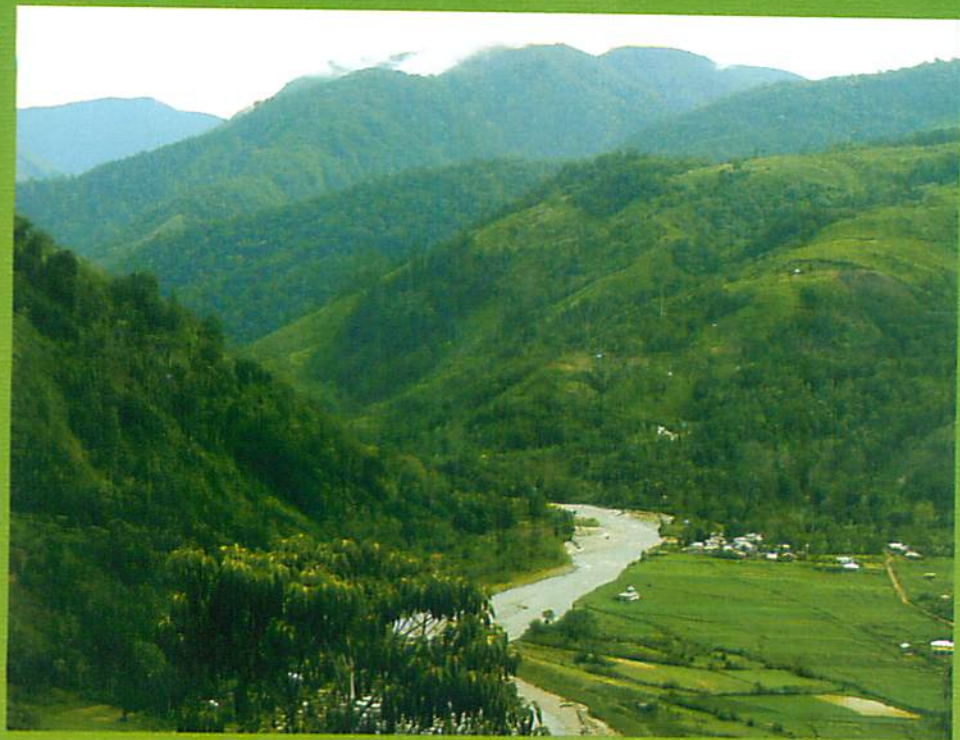
for implementing the Aceh Forest and Environment Project (AFEP) and from the New Zealand International Aid and Development Agency for implementing the Programme for Watershed Protection in Aceh.

Foundation (LIF) on the 23rd of July 1994. The founders of the LIF include H. Bustanil Arifin, SH, H. Abdul Rachman Ramly, Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Hasan, MBA, Prof. Dr. Syamsuddin Mahmud, Drs. H. Sayed Mudhahar Ahmad, Drs. Nurdin Abdul Rachman, Drs. H. Teuku Iskandar and Mike Griffiths.

Since the beginning the LIF has been fully supported by the Indonesian Government and the international community, in its effort to assist the government in managing the Leuser Ecosystem. The largest program that has been implemented so far is the Leuser Development Program (LDP) with funding from the European



Monitoring Team



Conserving
Forests -
Protecting
Life

AFEP

Aceh Forest and Environment Project



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