



MEDIA RELEASE

FFVP 'NO BURN REWARD' A SUCCESS FOR RIAU COMMUNITIES AS FIRE SAFETY FOCUS TURNS TO RESILIENCE

Pangkalan Kerinci, Riau, April 5, 2018 - A record number of participants in APRIL Group's Fire Free Village Programme (FFVP) will receive the maximum No Burn Village Rewards, following the completion of the programme's third year. The annual review, conducted by independent NGO Carbon Conservation, can be downloaded [here](#).

Conceived, initiated and managed by APRIL, the FFVP was developed in response to the devastating annual fire seasons that had resulted in significant loss of life, environmental damage and destruction of property, as well as being a threat to the health of communities throughout Indonesia and neighbouring countries.

For a third year, Carbon Conservation has been commissioned to undertake an independent review of [APRIL's Fire Free Village Programme](#), in line with [APRIL's sustainability policy](#), specifically its commitment to reducing the significant risks historically associated with forest burning practices.

The No Burn Village Rewards is one of five programme stages, where participating villages are rewarded with funding for community infrastructure projects if they do not burn to clear land. Carbon Conservation's report found that 15 of the 18 villages participating in the FFVP in 2017 received the full reward. According to APRIL's Strategic Fire & Protection Manager Craig Tribolet, this demonstrates increased community acceptance of the importance of fire prevention.

"The rewards are an important indicator that communities are experiencing the full value of the programme. It shows that the education and capability building elements of the programme that encourage communities to take ownership and become fire resilient are working," he says.

"It's also important to acknowledge the support of government, whose increased focus on fire prevention and law enforcement has helped generate behaviour change at village level," says Tribolet.

Since its establishment in 2014, the project has partnered with 27 villages, identified through a fire risk assessment process, with nine new villages added in 2017 bringing the total area covered by the project to 622,112 hectares, all situated in Riau Province. A further 50 villages with lower risk profiles have participated in an education-based Fire Aware Communities programme.

"Community ownership of the programme has seen 18 villages graduate as Fire Resilient Communities in 2018, setting a mark for other communities," says Tribolet. "While standing on their own feet having made significant changes, these communities remain part of our fire prevention community connected through digital and social media apps that support communication and encourage knowledge and resource sharing."

In reviewing the progress of the project, Carbon Conservation found that the area of burnt land decreased from 390.6 hectares in 2016 to 159.3 hectares in 2017, representing a reduction of 42.6% and a fraction of the total area covered by the project's Memorandum of Understandings with the

village communities. This year's result also represents an overall reduction of 97% since 2014, when 618 out of 352,146 hectares were burnt.

The review's authors added that the area affected was largely due to two fires that occurred in remote areas, largely outside the control of the villages concerned and difficult to contain. When excluded, this meant that other fires contributed just 5 hectares of burnt area across the programme.

The review notes the continuous improvement in fire management practices at a community level, education and coordination with local communities and schools, as well as broader acceptance of the importance of fire prevention strategies among local government agencies and local NGOs as contributing success factors. Each contributed to the continued progress toward a fire free landscape. It also acknowledges the important role played by community leaders and APRIL's team.

"APRIL employees play a vital role in coordinating and continuing to engage with local leaders and their respective communities," says the report. "Successful implementation and consolidation efforts to date are in large part due to their ability to very effectively navigate local cultural sensitivities and nuances."

In summary, the review notes that the programme's quantitative and qualitative results have demonstrated a successful short-term impact, specifically Rewards, Crew Leader and Community Awareness Projects which have had a powerful positive impact on the participating communities. The successes here will provide persuasive case studies for future communities throughout Riau and Indonesia.

About The Fire Free Village Programme (FFVP)

Established in July 2015, the [Fire Free Village Programme \(FFVP\)](#) is a fire prevention project in Riau, Indonesia, founded in close collaboration with local communities and in partnership with NGOs, the government, police, military and Riau's Disaster Mitigation Agency, to address the underlying causes of fires through a process of socialisation, education and increased awareness of the negative impacts of burning. The FFVP is the second stage of a three-stage programme designed to support communities to develop their social, economic, health, education and environmental capabilities, without using fire as a tool for land clearance and preparation. The three stages are:

- **Fire Aware Community (FAC):** Preliminary socialisation and engagement before entering the FFVP, focused on relationship building and initiatives such as the school awareness program. Currently, 50 villages across Riau are at this initial stage of engagement.
- **Fire Free Village Program (FFVP):** Spanning five project areas (see below) over two years, this stage is focused on educating, equipping and supporting villages, initially via the offer of economic rewards and other assistance, to adopt No Burn agricultural practices. Currently, nine villages are actively participating at this stage in the FFVP.
- **Fire Resilient Community (FRC):** These are villages, which have 'graduated' from the FFVP and are no longer eligible for rewards, but continue to have ongoing engagement with APRIL (including continued support for local Crew Leaders). For the first time, eighteen villages have now moved into the FRC stage of engagement.

The Fire Free Village Programme has five elements:

- **No Burn Village Rewards:** Incentivising villages to abandon traditional agricultural methods that employ fire as a land clearance and preparation tool, by awarding funding to community infrastructure projects for communities that do not burn on land areas within their control.

- **Village Crew Leader:** Recruiting individuals from local communities as APRIL contractors to act as fire prevention advocates and fire suppression specialists at the village level. This role covers fire monitoring, reporting and sharing the knowledge/training provided to them by APRIL.
- **Agricultural Assistance:** This involves providing help to adopt a range of sustainable agricultural alternatives, including the use of mechanical land clearing tools and No Burn methods, for land management activities. This has also included assistance in the form of education, equipment, funding and labour.
- **Community Fire Awareness:** Raising awareness of the dangers of land clearing by fire, and the negative impact on community health. Overlapping with the FAC program, this aims to achieve longer-term socialisation and changes in attitude/behaviour.
- **Air Quality Monitoring:** Installation in 2016 of seven <PM10 detectors, to regularly monitor air quality in the Riau area in and around the APRIL concession areas.

You can download the [FFVP 2017 Annual report here](#).

About Carbon Conservation

Carbon Conservation is a privately held company established in 2007 in Australia, now based in Singapore. Specialising in conservation, sustainability and environmental finance, Carbon Conservation brought the first world reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) carbon credits to market with an Australian project, as part of the Greenhouse Friendly Scheme, selling carbon credits to global giant Rio Tinto Aluminium. Carbon Conservation is best known for its innovative 50,000ha Ulu Masen Ecosystem Avoided Deforestation Project in Aceh, Indonesia, which won the Carbon Finance Deal of the Year award. It was also the subject of an award-winning documentary, “The Burning Season”, narrated by Hugh Jackman, which explained how orangutan conservation and avoiding deforestation could be tied together to generate alternative monetary incentives.

About APRIL Group

APRIL Group is a leading producer of fibre, pulp and paper with manufacturing operations in Pangkalan Kerinci, Riau Province, Indonesia. APRIL is a pioneer in the implementation of sustainability best practices in Indonesia’s pulp and paper industry, including the elimination of deforestation from its supply chain. APRIL Group is working towards conserving, protecting and restoring one hectare of high value conservation forest for every hectare of renewable plantation concession. Today, APRIL Group conserves more than 250,000 hectares with a further 150,000 hectares undergoing ecosystem restoration. For more information, visit www.aprilasia.com and follow Twitter @aprilpulp.