



MEDIA RELEASE

RESTORASI EKOSISTEM RIAU PROGRAMME CONTINUES TO BOOST BIODIVERSITY ON RIAU'S KAMPAR PENINSULA

Pangkalan Kerinci, Riau, April 12, 2018 - The return of rare and endangered birdlife, the growth of sustainable forest-related alternative community livelihoods, and the continued absence of fire are just three of the highlights included in the [2017 Restorasi Ekosistem Riau \(RER\) Progress Report](#).

Prefacing the [report](#), Bey Soo Khiang, Chairman, RER Advisory Board, said: "These achievements illustrate our model where RER is complemented by production forestry, which provides the financial resources to fund restoration, as well as the protection provided by an actively managed ring of fiber plantations".

Established by APRIL Group in 2013, [RER](#) is an ecosystem restoration programme that works to protect and restore ecologically important peatland forest within Indonesia's Riau Province.

Located on Sumatra's eastern coastline, RER is comprised from five government ecosystem restoration licenses totalling 150,000 hectares of peatland forest, with 130,000 hectares located on the Kampar Peninsula and an additional 20,000 ha located on nearby Padang Island. The peatland restoration area at Kampar Peninsula is twice the size of Singapore.

Another notable highlight was the discovery of the restoration area's 300th bird species. Known as the Blue-winged Pitta (*Pitta Mollucensis*), it joins several IUCN-listed endangered or rare species, and now means that representatives of 18 per cent of Indonesia's [bird species](#) have found safe haven inside RER.

The Annual Report reflects that at the end of the year, RER's technical staff had identified 718 species of fauna and flora, 70 species of mammals, 107 species of amphibian and reptile, 89 species of fish and 112 different types of tree and 40 non-tree species within the restoration area.

Many of these species are rare, threatened or endangered, with no fewer than 48 classified as globally threatened by IUCN, with 79 listed in the CITES Appendices, and 101 listed as a protected species under Indonesian law.

The report further adds that no hotspots were detected inside the RER area in 2017, nor were any fires recorded for the third consecutive year. This positive result was largely due to the presence of RER personnel at each of the main access rivers into the restoration area, ongoing socialisation efforts with communities to encourage alternatives to fire as a land management tool, as well as the implementation of [APRIL's Fire Free Village Program](#) with communities neighbouring or associated with RER.

Hydrological and forest restoration demonstrated steady progress in 2017. RER produced over 39,000 seedlings in its nurseries which contain over 70 different tree species, utilising over 1,900 seedlings on 12.5 ha of degraded land for planting and assisted natural regeneration.

Since 2015, nine old drainage canals measuring 29.5 km in length have been [closed using 25 hand-built dams](#). The objective of damming is to maintain the water table to reduce peat drying during the twice annual dry season. Maintaining peat moisture is necessary to allow for growth of peat forming plants and minimising the hazard of fires.

The report also devotes attention to community relations. Approximately 17,000 people live in nine villages within the Kampar Peninsula, while another 24,000 people live in 10 villages on Padang Island.

As part of its efforts to educate the community about the importance of environmental and biodiversity conservation, the RER team invests time and resources to promote traditional activities such as farming, fishing and [gathering Riau Forest Honey](#) or *Madu Hutan Riau*, where RER provides support to market and sell production output and return profits to the community.

In thanking team members, partners and advisory board members for their contribution, Bey Soo Kiang, added: “We have made good progress in 2017, while at the same time understanding that we need to maintain momentum into 2018 and beyond”.

About Restorasi Ekosistem Riau

In 2013, APRIL Group set up Restorasi Ekosistem Riau, an ecosystem restoration programme aimed at protecting, restoring and conserving ecologically important peatland forest within Indonesia’s Riau Province. It is located along Sumatra’s eastern coastline, and spans 150,000 ha, of which 130,000 ha are located in the heart of the Kampar Peninsula while another 20,000 ha is located on Pulau Padang.

There are five concessions: PT. Gemilang Cipta Nusantara, PT. Sinar Mutiara Nusantara, PT. The Best One Unitimber and PT. Global Alam Nusantara operating under 60-year ecosystem restoration licenses granted by the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The restoration programme is part of APRIL’s commitment to conserve one hectare of natural forest for every hectare of plantation. To date, APRIL has met 83% of its goal with more than 400,000 hectares of natural forest protected and conserved. In 2015, APRIL dedicated USD100 million to support and secure the long-term conservation and restoration programme.

APRIL works closely with partners, such as FFI and BIDARA, who bring social and scientific expertise to the implementation of the programme. Restorasi Ekosistem Riau also contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 15 – Life on Land: “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.” For more information, visit www.rekoforest.org and follow [Twitter @RER_official](#) and [Instagram @RER_Riau](#).

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](#).

Media Contact:

Nyoman Iswarayoga

Director of External Affairs, Restorasi Ekosistem Riau

Nyoman_Iswarayoga@aprilasia.com