**Badas**

**Location**: Northern Belait District Brunei Darussalam

**Characteristics:** Badas Forest Reserve is a protected area (76ha) made up of alternative bands of Peat Swamp Forest and Heath Forest.

**Threats:** forest fires caused by arson, or the drainage of peat swamps alongside the coastal highway, which makes the area more susceptible to fire. These fires then spread into the neighbouring heath forest which is very fragile(\*see below).

As Brunei is an oil rich state (GNI of over 50 000 US$ per capita), based mainly on offshore deposits and with a relatively small population (400 000) the forests of the country are not being exploited. There is a ban on exporting timber or timber products and the country has no palm oil plantations. Over 70% of the land is under natural forest and 58% has been pledged to the Heart of Borneo Initiative, to remain under forest.

**Reason for conservation**

The Badas Forest reserve is part of the 58% of Brunei’s land which has been pledged to the Heart of Borneo initiative (A conservation scheme spearheaded by WWF and in which Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia have committed themselves to protecting 220 000sq km across Borneo Island – almost one third of the islands area)

The forest here is home to rare species including pitcher plants and orchids, and supports fauna such as wild cats, flying foxes and hornbills. It is easily accessible for research teams (and it is hoped to develop eco-tourism opportunities here in the future.

The planting of trees here will also help to plug gaps left by recent forest fires and help create a continuous strip of forest from the highland montane forest of the interior, through mixed dipterocarp forest (tropical rainforest), through the heath forest and peat swamp forest and on to the coastal mangrove forest); thus making it a particularly valuable section of the Heart of Borneo initiative

**Rehabilitation:** 10ha of the Heath Forest have been replanted with 50 000 trees (part of The International School of Brunei’s ‘million trees project’ which aims to plant 1million trees across Borneo). The native species involved include Agathis Borneensis and Gaharu (valuable sandlewood)

ISB liaised with Brunei’s Forest Department. The forest dept agreed to supply young trees (saplings) from their nursery at Sungai Liang and ISB said it would provide organise for a private contractor to help plant and maintain the trees for 2 years (From 2009 to 2011). ISB then coordinated a fundraising initiative to raise B$5 a tree from schools and private companies to fund the scheme. Those donating money were also invited to help with the tree planting.

The initiative was successful in financing the planting of 50 000 trees as planned, with banks (HSBC, Standard Chartered) and oil companies (Brunei-Shell) contributing amongst others. High profile visitors to the area include members of Brunei’s royal family as well as Britains Prince Charles who planted tress here, raising the profile of the scheme.

However, so far only 20% of the trees have survived. \*Heavy tropical rains (3000mm a year) wash through the sandy soils, leaching valuable nutrients and leaving the area dry and infertile (posolisation). Consequently one the forest cover was lost it is difficult for new growth to be re-established. The forestry department are now looking into making greater use of pioneer species to try and simulate natural plant succession, involving seral stages with species such as the more resistant Simpur, in the hope that conditions can be improved to the point that climax species can survive. This will take time.