**Kinabatangan Corridor of Life**

**Location**: East Malaysian state of Sabah on Borneo Island

**Features**: The Kinabatangan River is the longest river in Sabah. It flows for 560km through eastern Sabah to the Sulu Sea on the east coast. Its water catchment area captures 16,800 sq km, about 23% of the total land area of Sabah - a vital water and food source for its people and their livelihood as well as a sanctuary for its diverse flora and fauna.

**Lower Kinabatangan:** The lower 70 – 100km of the river meanders through low-lying ground, forming the Kinabatangan Floodplain. It is the arguably the last forested alluvial floodplain in Asia. It is one of the two places on earth where ten primate species are found together, including the orang-utan, proboscis monkey and the Bornean gibbon. It is also home to over 250 bird, 50 mammal, 20 reptile species and 1056 plant species.

**Threats:**

1950s: Logging 1970s: Cash crops (rice, coffee, rubber) 1980s-today: **Oil Palm**

* Malaysia is currently the number one producer of oil palm worldwide.
* Sabah is the largest producer of oil palm in Malaysia with a big portion originating from the Kinabatangan region.
* 85% of the flood plain is now covered with palm oil plantations.
* Oil palm is an important source of income for the state and the country,

As well as reducing biodiversity, such development is also causing soil erosion, water pollution (from agricultural chemicals), which impacts on the livelihood of local people (fishermen).

**Forest Conservation**

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A Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) initiative which aims to establish a forest corridor along the Kinabatangan, connecting the coastal mangrove swamps with the upland forests, where people, wildlife, nature-based tourism and local forest industries thrive and support each other.

KCoL was officially launched by the chief minister of Sabah in 2002

There were already a number of scattered forest reserves in the river basin

* In 2005, the state government declared a total of 26,000ha in the river basin as the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS). The KWS is now under the protection and management of the Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD).

However, there are still numerous gaps in the Kinabatangan ecological corridor and there remains underlying conflict between people, wildlife and industry.

The **KCoL management strategy** is seeking to

1. link thefragmented protected areas (Forest Reserves & KWS areas)
2. achieve sustainable development for the Kinabatangan.

<http://proboscislodge.com/plbm/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/corridor-edition-1.pdf> See map pg 5

**Benefits to wildlife and stakeholders involved**

K-CoL, will enable wildlife to roam between protected forest areas by filling in gaps caused by planting of oil palm trees too close to the riverbank. This will mean wildlife will not be forced onto plantations and so, help reduce human-wildlife conflict in the area.

With the K-CoL maintained as a healthy habitat for wildlife, the area can be promoted as a top site for eco-tourism, which will help stimulate the local economy.This will reduce dependency on natural resources such as logging and harvesting of forest products and further enhance the rehabilitation of the ecosystem.

**Stakeholders:** WWF-Malaysia is engaging stakeholders and partners (government agencies, oil palm companies, tour operators and the local community) to address the issues of reforestation, protection and management of the area.

Government: In Malaysia, export value of palm oil and its derivatives = USD16.5 billion (7.5% of GNP/ 4th largest contributor to national economy in 2009)

Oil Palm Companies: WWF-Malaysia works closely with palm oil companies and campaigns for the adoption of sustainable practices/principles such as those advocated by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil Production.

see pg 7: <http://proboscislodge.com/plbm/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/corridor-edition-1.pdf>)

Also <http://www.myeulink.org/MYEUHLSNET/IPPTN%20HLS/ppt/RSPO%20Presentation.pdf>

Some of the plantation owners have agreed to allow parcels of their land to revert back to forest, committing land for conservation and reforestation.

Local Communities

The local communities living in the lower Kinabatangan are known collectively as the the Orang Sungai, or River People. They are among the 66 ethnic communities of Sabah. Their settlements are scattered along the Kinabatangan and the river is their main means of transportation, water supply and food. Traditionally, the Orang Sungai are fishermen, supplementing their fish diet with small cultivations of 'dry rice' and orchards. Hunting is not practiced much as adjacent lands are taken over by private oil palm plantations. Other remaining lands are within the Wildlife Sanctuary where hunting is prohibited.

Many programs have also been conducted by WWF with various local agencies in the Kinabatangan to help promote sustainable development. Such as Komuniti Anak Pokok Kinabatangan (KAPOK) project which trains and supports the local communities to supply native tree seedlings for forest restoration

**E.g. Mescot/Kopel community in Batu Putih area.** Here the villagers:-

* Collect seedlings from natural forest, keep a nursery, plant trees next to the river to fill the gaps created by plantations, maintain areas. (through KAPOK)
* Some problems with elephants eating the leaves from the young trees, experimenting with chilli plants to keep them away.
* Used to plant trees 3m apart, but too many vines grew and strangled the young trees. Now plant 1m apart and later thin out and replant extra trees. (need 10000 trees per ha)
* Eco-Fobissea have 30 ha to plant with Mescot/Kopel (JIS have pledged to pay for 1ha)
* (Nestles have also pledged 25ha in KCoL)
* Take tourists on boat trips up the river to view wildlife. Give talks to tourists about KCoL and give them the opportunity to donate money(Voluntary Conservation Levy) /plant trees
* Have homestays & and Tungog Rainforest Eco-lodge