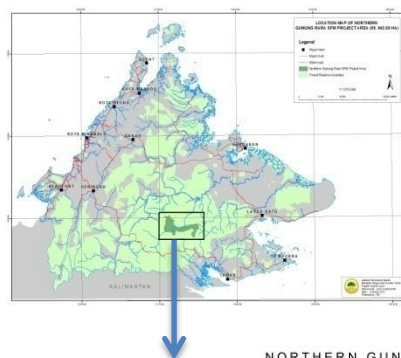


# **NORTHERN GUNUNG RARA SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (NGR SFM) PROJECT: A SPECIAL REPORT.**

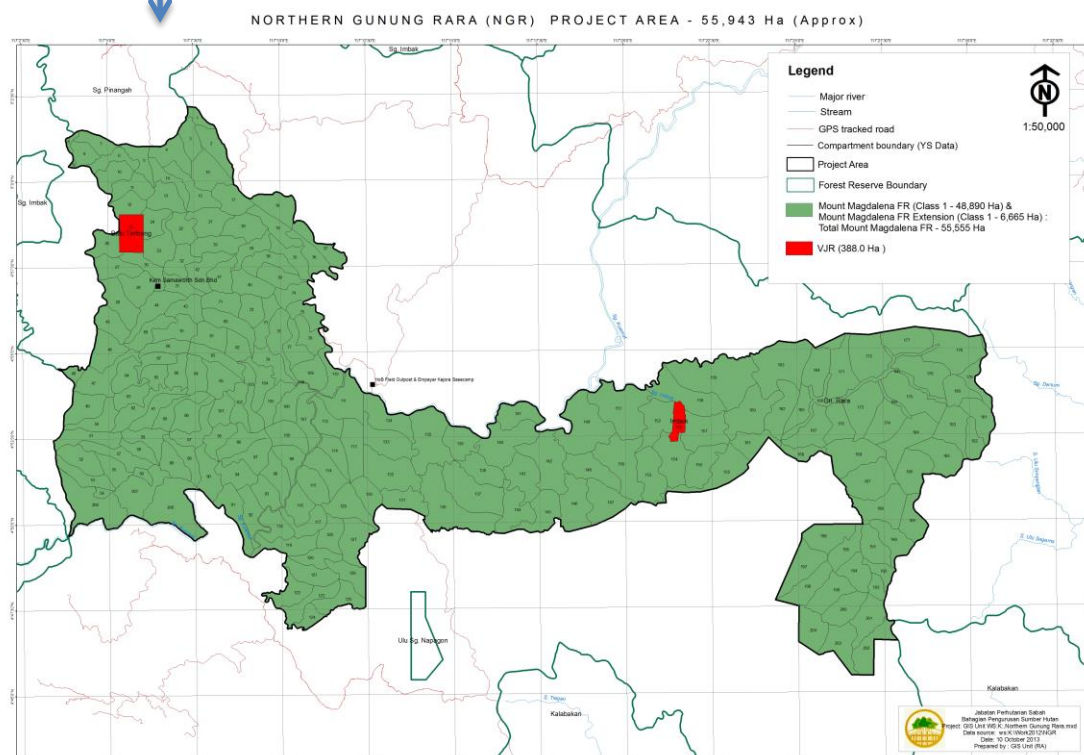
## **INTRODUCTION:**

In the past, the State's forests were managed purely for timber production. However, this has changed over time, particularly in 1989 when the Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) introduced sustainable forest management (SFM) concept in Deramakot Forest Reserve (DFR).

Based on the success in DFR, the SFM concept was expanded in other forest reserves (FR) throughout Sabah in 1997 either to be managed by the Sustainable Forest Management License Agreement (SFMLA) Holders or directly managed by the SFD. The latest forest reserves to be managed directly by the Sabah Forestry are Mount Magdalena Forest Reserve - Class I (55,555 ha), and two (2) other small Virgin Jungle Reserves (VJR) Class VI, that are, Batu Timbang VJR (261 ha) and Imbok VJR (127 ha), herein known as the **Northern Gunung Rara Sustainable Forest Management Project Area** or in short - the **Project Area**.



Location of the Project Area:



*Northern Gn. Rara Project Area*

\*Map image courtesy from K(FRM) SFD HQ

Mount Magdalena FR was gazetted as a Protection FR - Class I (48,890 Ha) on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 vide GN 7/2012, and later additional gazetted area of Mount Magdalena FR Extension Protection Forest - Class I (6,665 Ha) on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013, vide GN 1/2013. It was formerly under Gunung Rara FR, which is a commercial FR - Class II. Gunung Rara FR is under the Sabah Foundation (SF) Concession Area. Mount Magdalena FR is dedicated to protection and maintenance of biological diversity and is managed and accorded full protection by the Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) through legal means.

The Project Area (55,943 Ha), which is located in the east coast of Sabah, is also part of the larger 261,264 Ha of the United Nations Development Program-Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF) Project on “*Biodiversity Conservation in Multiple-Use Forest Landscapes in Sabah*”; and also within the Heart of Borneo (HoB) initiative. Although the Project Area has been logged in the past, it remains an important watershed for the Kuamut River and key habitat for endangered Orangutans, Bornean clouded leopards, Sumatran rhinos, and pygmy elephants. It is also found to be a crucial wildlife corridor of global significance linking the world-renowned Danum Valley FR, Imbak Canyon FR and the Maliau Basin FR, which are both Protection Forest Reserves – Class I.

After the announcement made by the SFD, a first meeting of the project's management committee for the Project Area, chaired by the Department's Deputy Director (Development) Mr. Fidelis Edwin Bajau, was held in Sandakan on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2012. The meeting agreed that the management committee of the Project Area is to be headed by SFD Deputy Director (Development) Mr. Fidelis Edwin Bajau, and the Kalabakan District Forestry Office is in charge of the planning, implementing and managing the Project. The meeting also agreed that the SFD would develop a 10-Year Forest Management Plan (FMP) as a reference document that provides essential guidelines for the future management of the Project Area. Subsequently, a FMP Team was formed in July 2012 with the Head of the SFM Division as the Team Leader. The FMP Team comprises of experts in various disciplines or expertise such as botany, silviculture, catchment management/hydrology, high conservation value forest, entomology, wildlife, recreation planning and Social.

The scope and key management objectives in the Project Area are as follows:

- i. To conserve and protect the biodiversity, watershed (quality, quantity and the ecological integrity of streams and Kuamut River and their associated flora and fauna) and other environmentally sensitive areas in the Project Area;
- ii. To maintain the stability and to enhance and restore the biodiversity, ecological, and environmental conditions of the Project Area;



- iii. To promote conservation education and awareness for local populations and decision makers regarding the roles and importance of the Project Area.
- iv. To conduct research and development (R & D) and monitoring activities;
- v. To explore the mechanisms for compensation and rewards from environmental/ecosystem services; and
- vi. To obtain “Green Certification” for conservation under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) criteria for sustainable forestry.



*Imbak Canyon*

\*picture taken by Adrian Rawlenes, Sept 2012



*Kuamut River*

\*picture taken by Adrian Rawlenes, August 2012





*Gunung Rara beneath the clouds* \*picture taken by Adrian Rawlenes, Nov 2012 aerial surveillance



*Aerial View of the Forest within NGR Area* \*Picture taken by Adrian Rawlenes, Dis 2012

## ACTIVITIES, PROJECT COMPONENTS & ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE:

The activities for this project were planned according to the Northern Gunung Rara SFM Project 10 year Forest Management Plan (FMP) - from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2022, which was approved on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013 by the Director of Forestry. Annual Work Plan (AWP) for this project is prepared every year and activities were done with specific target. The achievements for activities and works done in the Project Area must be in compliance with the target set for that specific year. Compliance Report is to be submitted every year-end. The components for this Project are as follows:

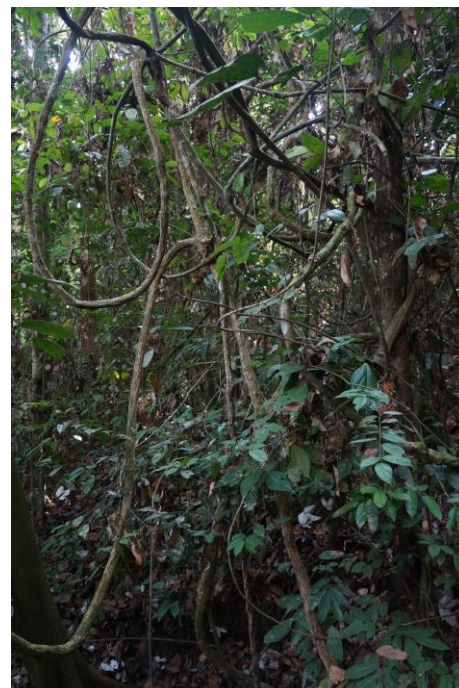
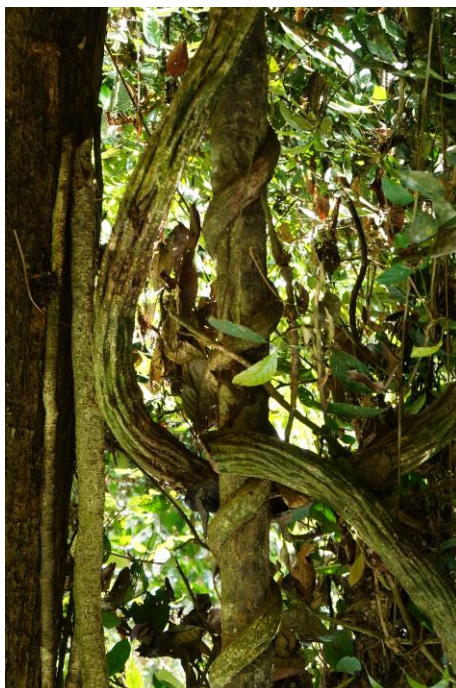
### ***Forest Rehabilitation***

Two main activities under this component are Silviculture Tending Operation and Forest Restoration Program (Re-Planting), which are on-going throughout the FMP period.

#### *Silviculture Tending Operation*

Silviculture treatments are carried out to liberate standing trees (regardless of species), and to release young regeneration of trees by removing and eradicating competing climbers and climbing bamboos, which endanger the survival of regeneration groups.

More often, silviculture treatments are carried out in active harvesting areas/coupes. However, this Project Area consists of Class 1 Protection Forest and Class 6 Virgin Jungle Forests, which means no harvesting activities within this area. The true purpose for conducting silviculture tending works in this area is to improve the forest stand. This Project Area was once a Class 2 Commercial Forest, and it is a logged-over forest. By conducting silviculture treatments in this logged-over area, it should improve the forest stand and thus, improving the overall quality of this forest, ensuring and promoting better forest biodiversity as well as ecological and environmental benefits.



*\*Pictures of climbers*



### *Achievements*

Silviculture tending operation started on the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the year 2012. During that year, a total of 1000 Ha of silviculture tending works was done successfully by SFD's appointed contractor, Fresh Mumus Enterprise. The contractor goes on to complete another 2000 Ha of silviculture tending works in 2013. In this year 2014, newly appointed contractor, EW Constuction will do the silviculture tending operation through a contract agreement No. JP/TN/KLBKN-D11/01/2013, specifically to complete 10,000 Ha of silviculture area treatment (2000 Ha annually) for a period of five years from 2014-2018. To date, more 600 Ha of forest area had been treated by the contractor EW Construction and is still on-going works.



Silviculture workers

\*Picture by Adrian Rawlenes



Climber cutting works, Block L





*\* Silviculture works – field inspection by Forestry Staff*



## ***Forest Restoration Program***

Forest Restoration Program will be done in phases. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase of this program started in August 2013. SFD had appointed EZ Enterprise as the contractor to the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of 50 Ha restoration areas, Contract No. JP/SN/KLBKN-D11/01/2013, within a period of 2 years starting from August 2013 to August 2015. This program will target open area of ex-camp sites, ex-stumpings and landing sites, ex-sawmill sites and other degraded forest gaps. Forest restoration program consist of several work specification i.e preliminary works, site preparation, supply raising and maintenance of seedlings, fertilizing, constructing temporary nursery and placing restoration signboards and also road maintenance within planting blocks.

As of now, the contractor had completed raising and planting a total of 13,090 seedlings in a total area of 50 Ha. The seedlings planted were Batai and Telisai. Planting was done in 6m x 6m distance, approx. 278 seedlings per Ha. The first maintenance round (circle weeding + replacing dead saplings) was done in 2013, and another 3 maintenance rounds will be conducted in 2014. Application of 50 grams at time of planting and one round of application of 100gm each during the first maintenance round, and another three rounds of fertilizer application of 200 grams during maintenance round year 2. This program is still in-progress and the contactor are working on the first round of maintenance and fertilizing Year 2.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of restoration program will commence this year 2014, with pre-planned 70 Ha of area to be restored.



*Restoration program at the Project Area*



## ***Forest & Wildlife Protection (enforcement, monitoring & control)***

### ***Wildlife Protection Unit***

The Kalabakan Forestry District greatly emphasize on the protection aspects within the Project Area. Routine aerial surveillance and patrolling were done more often so that no illegal encroachment and poaching activities left unseen. Furthermore, the DFO Kalabakan took the initiative to create and implement anti-poaching operation, namely *OPS BURU*, more towards eradicating illegal poaching activities within Northern Gunung Rara Project Area, as well as the whole of Forest Reserves within the jurisdiction of Kalabakan Forestry District.

The operation turned out successful, with a series of arrests and prosecutions of illegal poaching activities, in possession of illegal firearms '*bekakok*', and entering forest reserves without any approval.

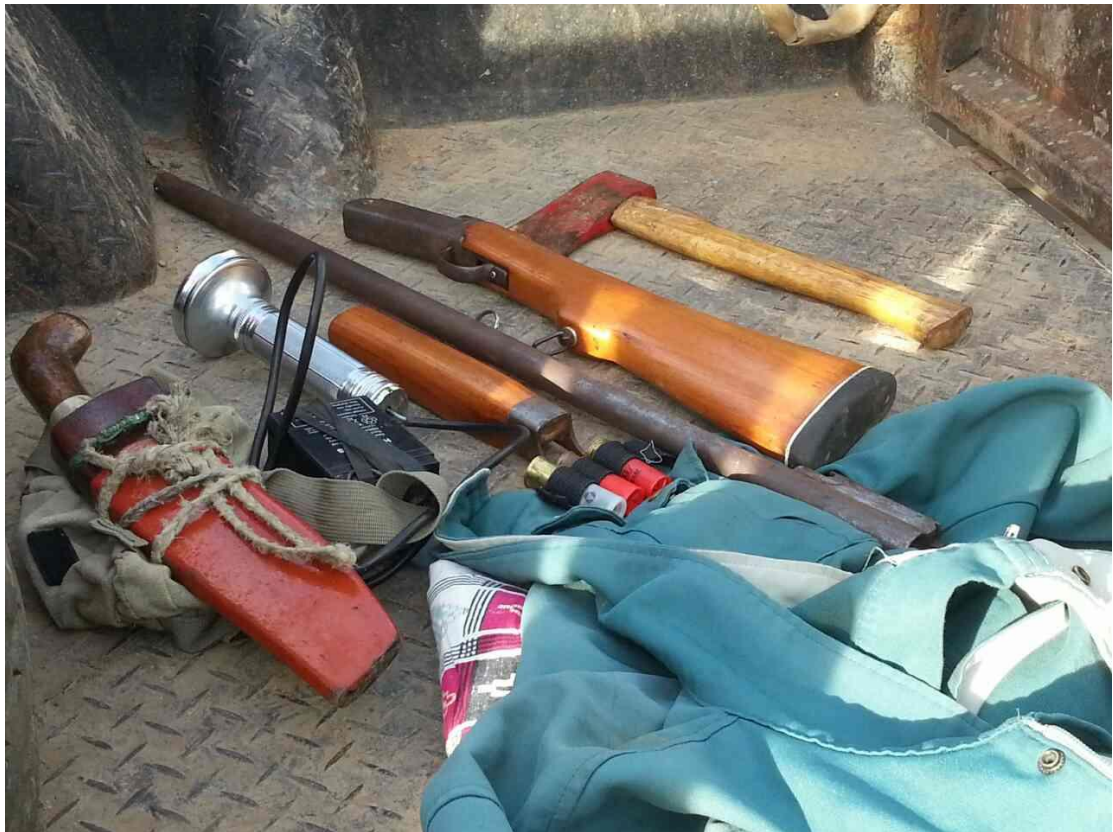
This operation was carried on to gate enforcement, where Forestry uniform staffs were stationed at several particular gates, making spot-checks on vehicles suspected to be poachers and carrying hunted wild animals.

Other protection activities involve placing security gates on roads, which were a 'hotspot' for illegal poaching, placing several warning signs at strategic areas.



One of the arrests made, seen with bakakok.

\*Picture courtesy by Noordin Musa (OPS Sadang)



Hunting tools, Bakakok (home-made rifle), bullets, machete, axe, torchlight.  
\*Picture courtesy by Noordin Musa (OPS Sadang)



Arrest made by the MCEE Tawau, Zulkifli Suara, DFO Kalabakan Eddie G. Bungkoris and Noordin Musa (Ops Sadang)



## *Wildlife Survey/ Monitoring*

Wildlife monitoring and survey started on April 2014, with two newly appointed Forestry staff specializing in wildlife surveys, joining our NGR team. Wildlife monitoring and survey works will emphasize in obtaining a general overview of the wildlife biodiversity and abundance within Northern Gn. Rara Project area, to justify one of the objectives of this Project, that is to be the link between Maliau Basin, Imbak Canyon and Danum Valley as wildlife corridor. Three methodologies will be in use that is through camera-traps placed in strategic locations, through survey by car and recce walk/ survey by foot.



Elephants found in the Project Area during one of the surveys

\*Picture by Adrian Rawlenes



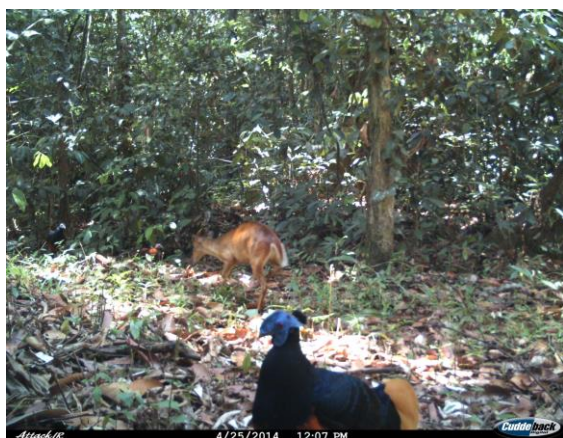
Elephant footprints

\*Picture by Adrian Rawlenes





Installing of camera traps by Forestry Staff



Crested fireback & borneon-red muntjac



Tembadau



Elephant



Sambar Deer



## ***Boundary Demarcation and Re-Brushing***

As of now, the recently gazetted boundary of Mount Magdalena FR Class I, has not been marked yet, but it is still not in urgent need to demarcate the boundary because we can adopt the coupe boundaries of adjacent licensees. Field inspections are still on going to identify which part of Mount Magdalena FR's boundary in critical need of demarcation. In the meantime, re-brushing of adopted boundaries will be sufficient enough for monitoring purposes.



Signboards placed along the boundary of the Project Area.

## ***Infrastructure Development***

Northern Gunung Rara (NGR) SFM site office and staff quarters is located at Empayar Kejora's main complex, constructed and built by the company in 2012. There are plans to add additional Mobile Field Outposts within the Project area for enforcement and safeguarding purposes. The proposed Mobile Field Outposts will be similar to Ulu Segama-Malua Forestry District's Field Outpost.



Northern Gn Rara's Field Outpost (Office & Quarters)

## ***Logistics***

One of the most important components of this project is logistics. Patrolling, surveys, routine monitoring of silviculture works and restoration program, require logistics. Currently, two 4WD vehicles were provided for this purpose specifically for NGR SFM Project. We are supported by a number of vehicles from Kalabakan Forestry District to accommodate insufficient transportation vehicles. We also ensure that these vehicles are well maintained. Furthermore, point-to-point radio calls and walkie-talkie provided us with ease of communication during field works.

### ***Road Maintenance***

Accessibility to and within silviculture tending blocks and planting blocks must be maintained. Road maintenance ensures that monitoring works are continued without difficulty. In the year 2013, a total of 9,000 meters of road access to and within planting blocks and silviculture blocks were maintained, ensuring continuity in monitoring works. Those aside, there are still many old road accesses that need maintenance, especially road access to future silviculture blocks.

### ***Administration and Field Works Management***

This component ensures administration and management works runs smoothly. Office utensils, equipment, printers and photocopiers were bought so that NGR staffs can work efficiently at site office. Site office can now be utilized at full, thus ensuring the fluency of reporting within NGR SFM Project. Forest Resource Management (FRM) Unit also provided us with GPS and compass, as well as maps of the area.

### ***Capacity Building and Training***

Trainings for staffs as well as for contractors are an important aspect to ensure the success of this project. It is also a requirement needed in the process of getting this project certified for FSC Certification. From the start of this project May 2012 until early 2014, our officers and supporting staffs were sent to numerous trainings organized by Sabah Forestry Department and by other agencies such as NIOSH, WWF and HUTAN/KOCP. NGR SFM Field Manager, Mr. Adrian Rawlenes were selected to take part in Basic Train The Trainer (OSH) by NIOSH in October 2013, and NIOSH also (with joint organizer by Sabah Forestry Department), organized Basic Introduction to Occupational Safety & Health Course, and also Basic First Aid Training. Forestry staffs as well as representatives from contractors within FMU's participated in that course. Other noted courses and trainings are Camera Trap and SMART Patrolling Course by WWF, as well as Wildlife Monitoring Phase 1 and 2 by HUTAN/KOCP.



Occupational, Safety & Health (OSH) Basic First Aid Training





Wildlife Survey & Monitoring Course

### ***Certification***

This perhaps will be one of this project's main objective and target within a period of 2 planning years until the mid-term FMP period. The SFD intends to become FSC certified to demonstrate that we are managing the Project Area responsibly. We want to ensure that the products (environmental/ecosystem services) come from the Project Area as a well-managed forest.

In order for the SFD to obtain the "Green Certification" for the Project Area by 2014, the certain management actions must to be carried out during the Plan period. It is an uphill task that requires all the resource and commitment of SFD, particularly Kalabakan Forestry District Office and the support from SFD Headquarters and Committee as well as all relevant stakeholders.

This will be in two-part process, the Pre-Assessment will identify all gaps that needs to be closed and rectified, and then comes the Full-Evaluation which will determine whether this Project can be awarded a Green Certification.



### **Visitors to the Project Area**

1. Visit by the Director of Forestry, YBhg. Datuk Sam Mannan on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2013.
2. Visit by UNDP-GEF Technical Working Group (TWG) led by Mr. Jeflus S. Sinajin on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2013.
3. Visit by the Deputy Director of Forestry (Forest Sector Planning), Mr. Frederick Kugan on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2014.



Visit by the Director of Forestry to the  
Silviculture Area within NGR SFM



Visit by UNDP-GEF TWG led by Mr. Jeflus S. Sinajin



Visit by the Deputy Director (Forest Sector Planning), Mr. Frederick Kugan