

HCV 2 LANDSCAPE LEVEL FOREST

Any forested area that forms or is part of a linkage between larger forest complexes, and can thus provide connectivity between fragments or act as a wildlife corridor for the movement of animals from one complex to another, is considered HCV 2. This HCVF can also serve as a buffer zone to protected areas (WWF-Malaysia, 2009). Further guidance from the HCV Resource Network (Brown *et al.*, 2013) states that HCV 2 includes ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are sufficiently large and relatively undisturbed enough to support viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species and (implicitly) the great majority of other environmental values occurring in such ecosystems.

Findings

Trusan Sugut FR is separated by the Sugut River from FMU 2 (Sugut Forest Reserve, Class II), which is under the management of Pitas Forestry District (Figure 19). FMU 2 is still managed for production purposes although logging activities have been put on hold; some areas are slated for industrial tree plantations (ITP) and some parts (mainly to the west – south-western part of Trusan Sugut FR) have been identified for conservation. A recently gazetted Class I FR, Sugut Wildlife Corridor FR (30 ha) connects Trusan Sugut FR to the mangroves in the north. Altogether, Trusan Sugut FR, Sugut Wildlife Corridor FR and Sugut FR form a 32,037 ha of forested area in the North-Eastern region of Sabah. However, the surrounding landscape is slowly developing into oil palm plantations (Figure 19) and there are plans to have oil palm plantings within the FMU 2. It is therefore important that Trusan Sugut FR maintains connectivity to other large forest tracts to ensure movement of plant and animal species for the long term survival of species.

At the landscape level, Trusan Sugut FR connects the mangroves south of the reserve to the north (Figure 19). Although TSFR is totally protected and has minimum risk of being converted to other land uses, it is potentially at risk of being isolated (apart from part of the northern and southern side) as the surrounding areas become oil palm plantations.

The Sabah Forestry Department is currently in the process of gazetting any unalienated stateland (riparian forests) along the Sugut River to be included as part of TSFR.

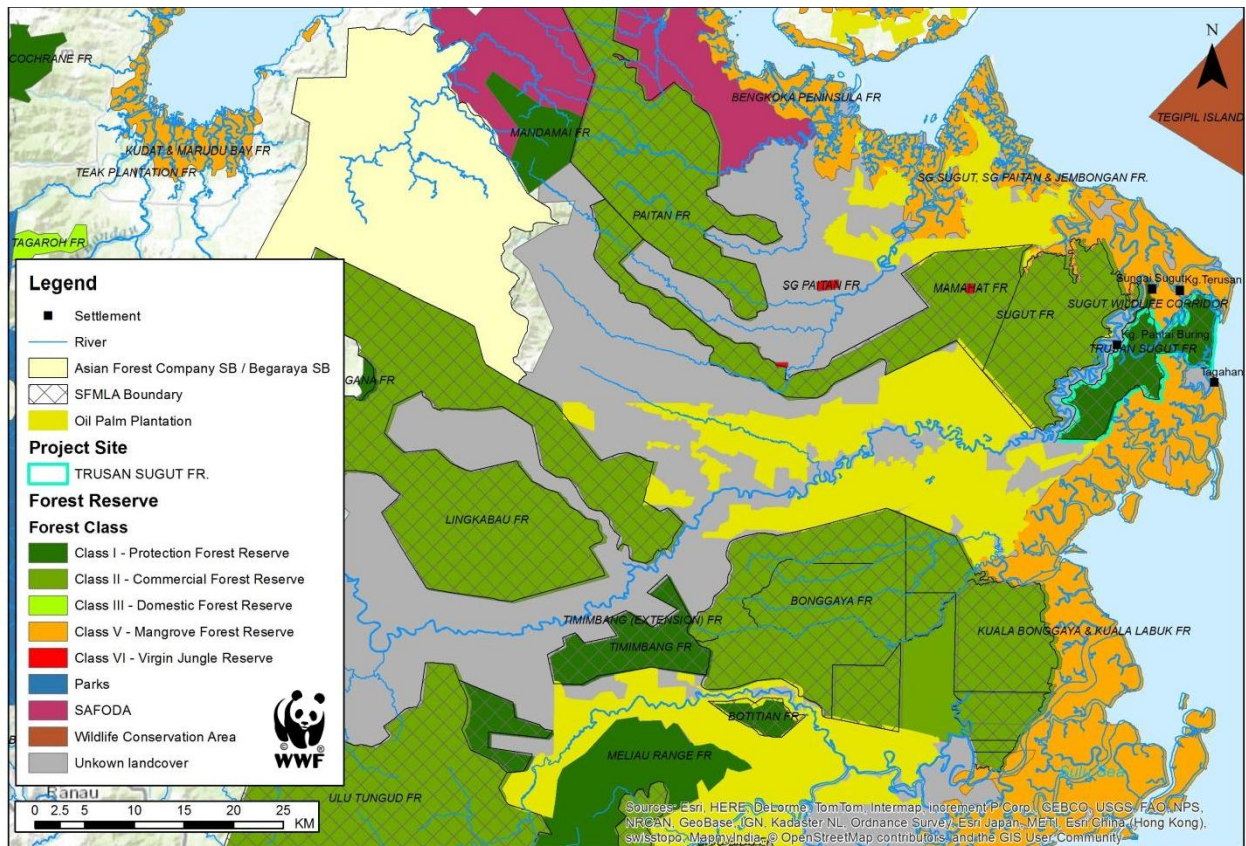


Figure 19 Trusan Sugut Forest Reserve and its surrounding land cover

Management recommendations

Although already a protection forest, as the landscape surrounding Trusan Sugut FR become increasingly fragmented by agriculture land, it is vital to ensure that it is still connected to forested areas due to the important values listed in HCV 1, 3 & 4.1. As such, rehabilitation of degraded areas should be carried out so that degraded habitats can be regenerated to support viable populations of plant and animal species found in Trusan Sugut FR, especially since Lower Sugut is deemed to be the one of the last frontiers for naturally occurring species found in the east coast of Sabah. As areas adjoining Trusan Sugut FR is still under the purview of Sabah Forestry Department, it will be important that connectivity from Trusan Sugut FR to surrounding forested area be maintained to facilitate the dispersal of species.

Monitoring recommendations

Forest cover can be monitored easily by satellite images. Periodic monitoring (e.g. once in every 3 months) should be carried out to ensure that Trusan Sugut FR remains connected to forested areas.