



SAVE KINABATANGAN

Prepared by

**A Civil Society
Partnership**

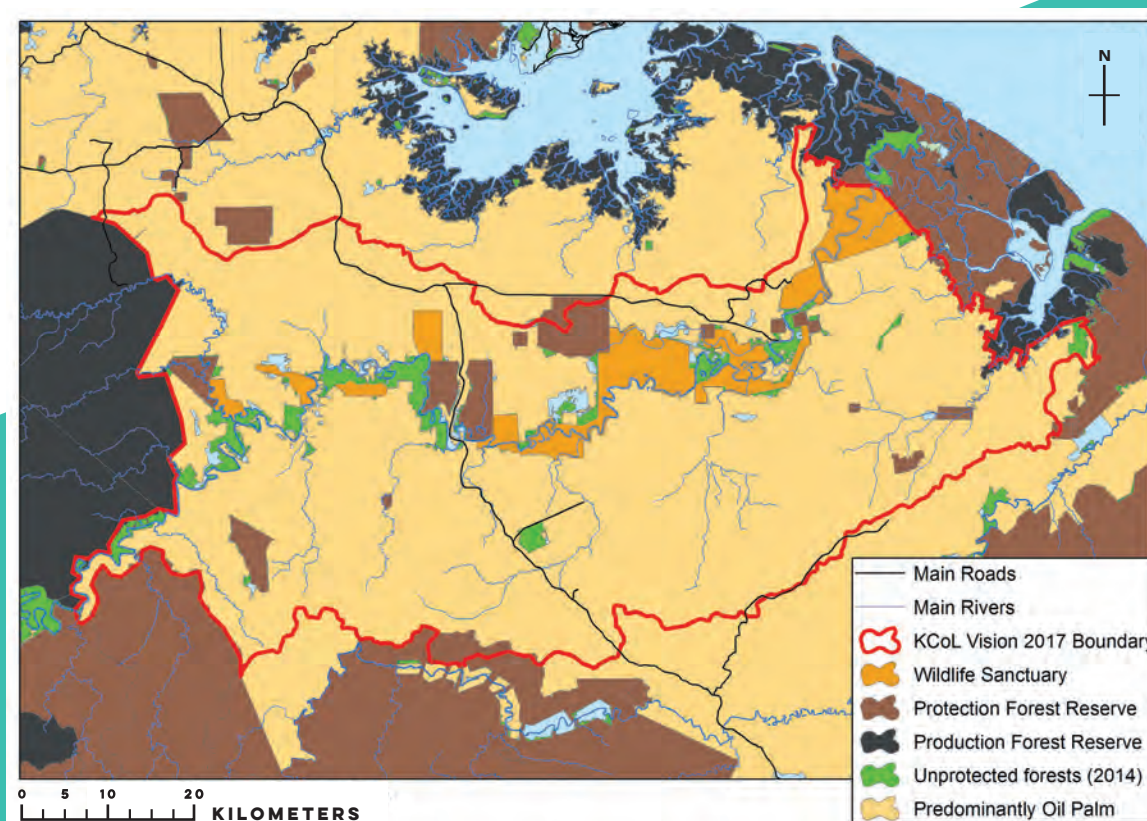
Date

7th April 2017

THE LONG-TERM VISION

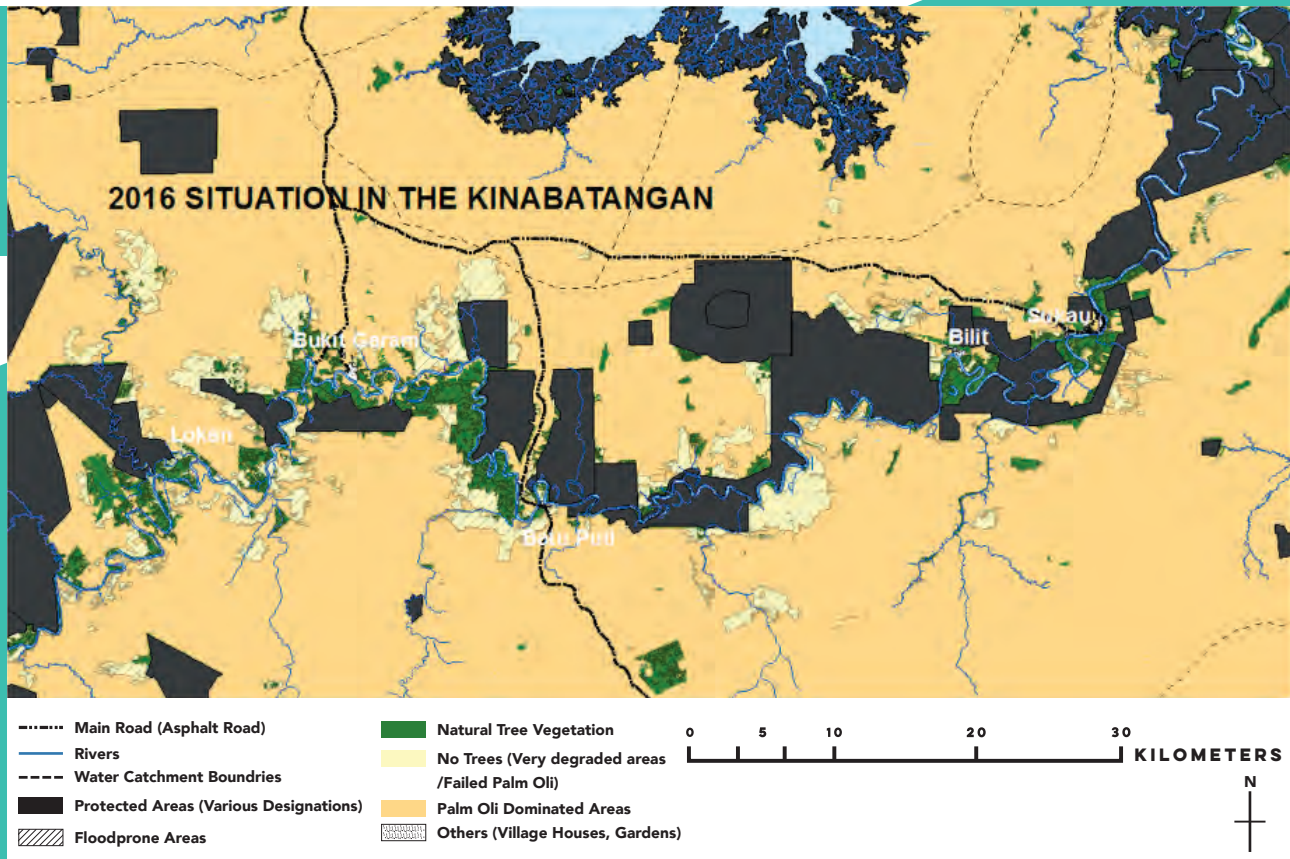
“A floodplain with large tracts of forests, riparian vegetation, wildlife corridors, clean rivers, and viable wildlife populations, where local communities benefit through ecotourism and compatible land-uses”.

THE VISION AREA KINABATANGAN CORRIDOR OF LIFE (K-COL)¹



¹ The vision area extends across the Kinabatangan river basin lying between the protection forest reserves of Malua and Ulu Segama and the production reserves of Deramakot and Segaljud-Lokan in the upstream and the protection forest reserves and the Lower Kinabatangan – Segama Wetlands Ramsar site in the downstream. This is an updated version of the erstwhile K-CoL boundary, prepared based on conservation experience gained over the years, follows a river basin management view, tends to be more ecological and less arbitrary, and agreeable to a large number of conservation NGOs involved in the current “Save Kinabatangan” campaign. The vision area (hereafter, called “K-CoL”), map above, is dominated by large-scale oil palm plantations, excepting the wildlife sanctuary, protection forest reserves, and some un-alienated state-land and native title land that remain under natural vegetation cover along stretches of the river.

THE CURRENT SITUATION OF K-COL (2016)



- Protected areas (45,700 ha of Forest Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuary) are currently not large enough and too fragmented to ensure long-term survival of wildlife populations.
- In year 2016, about 13,000 ha of natural forest² used by wildlife, including small patches within existing plantations, remains outside protected areas and is likely to be converted to plantation crops.
- Human-wildlife conflicts are increasing, affecting the wildlife, the local communities, and the palm oil industry.
- The frequency of wildlife killing, poaching, and illegal trade in wildlife is increasing.
- The Sumatran rhinoceros and banteng are now extinct in K-CoL; other protected species populations are decreasing (e.g. orang-utan) and may go locally extinct if current pressures continue.
- The natural environment is deteriorating, negatively impacting wildlife and local communities.
- Water pollution has intensified loss of fish stocks, and is hazardous to public health.
- Over 85% of the area of K-CoL is large scale oil palm.
- There are currently not enough opportunities for local communities to benefit directly from conservation related activities.
- There is a declining image of the Kinabatangan for international eco-tourism.
- Oil palm has been planted in flood prone areas resulting in 16,000 ha of abandoned plantation and significant economic loss; this is increasing with continued conversion of swamp forest.
- There is ineffective management of the area often attributed to gaps in resources, capacity and coordination.

² We define natural forest as, "Native tree cover that includes planted native tree species, yet, excludes plantations and exotic species".

TARGETS FOR ACHIEVING THE LONG-TERM VISION

1. Securing habitat for wildlife

- 1.1. There will be no more loss and fragmentation of natural forest.
- 1.2. Find opportunities to increase size and connectivity of protected areas³.
- 1.3. Assist private land owners to effectively manage their land to include wildlife needs (e.g. allow safe passage and reduce conflicts).
- 1.4. All state land within 100 m of the Kinabatangan River on either side to be gazetted as protected areas.
- 1.5. Implement measures to prevent further conversion of swamp forest to oil palm, which will otherwise result in economic loss for the land owners as well as environmental damage.
- 1.6. Restore 10% of land not under forest cover in 2017 to be under forest cover by 2037.
- 1.7. Promote the retention and establishment of small forest patches within oil palm plantations as natural 'stepping stone' habitats.
- 1.8. Promote establishment of fig species that can grow to large size.

2. Connecting forests

- 2.1. Natural forest connectivity is secured throughout K-CoL between the upstream forest reserves (Segaliud-Lokan and Malua Forest Reserves) and the downstream protected forests (Lower Kinabatangan – Segama Wetlands Ramsar site).
- 2.2. Wildlife corridors of at least 300 m width, preferably including riparian vegetation, are made available for wildlife movement between forest patches, achieved by:
 - 2.2.1. Setting aside land within plantations where human activity is minimized and vegetation cover is retained;
 - 2.2.2. Rehabilitating areas with native plant species on private land or in degraded protected riparian areas;
 - 2.2.3. Creation of inland corridors to by-pass riverside village boundary areas at Abai, Sukau, Bilit, Batu Putih, Bukit Garam, Sg Lokan and Sanggau; and

³Protected areas are defined as "specific land areas legislated as either protected Forest Reserves or Wildlife Sanctuary under prevailing forest and wildlife legislations".

TARGETS FOR ACHIEVING THE LONG-TERM VISION

- 2.2.4. Addressing “bottlenecks” to animal movements by purchase of land, arranging for conservation land swaps, or conservation agreements (e.g. “easements”) with private land owners.

3. Restore wildlife habitat

- 3.1. Where necessary, natural forest will be restored in the protected areas, except in natural grasslands and marshes used by elephants for food.
- 3.2. Waterlogged areas planted with oil palm that has failed will be rehabilitated back to natural forest with suitable native species.
- 3.3. Enrichment of habitat will be undertaken to promote wildlife populations and botanical diversity through planting of native *Ficus* species and other relevant tree species.

4. Wildlife management

- 4.1. Actions prescribed in the Species Action Plans of Sabah government will be implemented to safeguard the Schedule I species populations for the long-term (i.e. orang-utan, proboscis monkey, elephant, sun bear, and clouded leopard).
- 4.2. The remaining fragmented orang-utan population will be connected, and management measures will be implemented to reduce the risks of inbreeding, and promote population recovery.
- 4.3. A coordinated, landscape level electric fence system will be designed to reduce current disruption of elephant movements, to alleviate damage to crops, human property and other human-wildlife conflicts.
- 4.4. Land owners will be encouraged to facilitate wildlife movements across their lands by retaining small patches of forest as stepping stones, as well as by increasing human tolerance to transient animals.
- 4.5. Re-establish and manage river fisheries for the benefit of local communities and the ecosystem.

TARGETS FOR ACHIEVING THE LONG-TERM VISION

5. Restoring the health of the natural environment

- 5.1. Reduce and manage open burning, natural and man-made, e.g. through intensified enforcement of regulations.
- 5.2. Reduce water pollution from agriculture and other industries to restore a healthy aquatic environment.
- 5.3. Address the causes of unnatural sedimentation and river bank erosion.

6. Local communities

- 6.1. Enable socio-economic development to be compatible with long-term wildlife conservation.
- 6.2. Support sustainable community-led eco-tourism initiatives that capitalize on nature.
- 6.3. Local communities will be directly involved in and benefit from the protection and management of natural resources in the area.
- 6.4. Build the capacity of local communities to reduce and manage human-wildlife conflicts, especially with elephants.
- 6.5. Facilitate societal adaptation to climate change, flood and drought events, and infectious disease outbreaks.
- 6.6. Assist local communities to access environmental rehabilitation and management contracts.

7. Tourism

- 7.1. Equitable and sustainable opportunities will be sought, making the Kinabatangan a top ecotourism destination in South East Asia.
- 7.2. The tourism industry implements further measures to reduce its environmental footprint and broaden its benefits to local communities and to the state economy.

8. Responsible oil palm plantations and mills

- 8.1. Oil palm plantations and mills will be certified to RSPO standards by 2025.
- 8.2. Oil palm plantations and mills collaborate with specialists to achieve reduced environmental and social impacts from their operations.
- 8.3. Appropriate legal actions will be taken where infringements of environmental laws and regulations have been conducted by oil palm plantations and mills.

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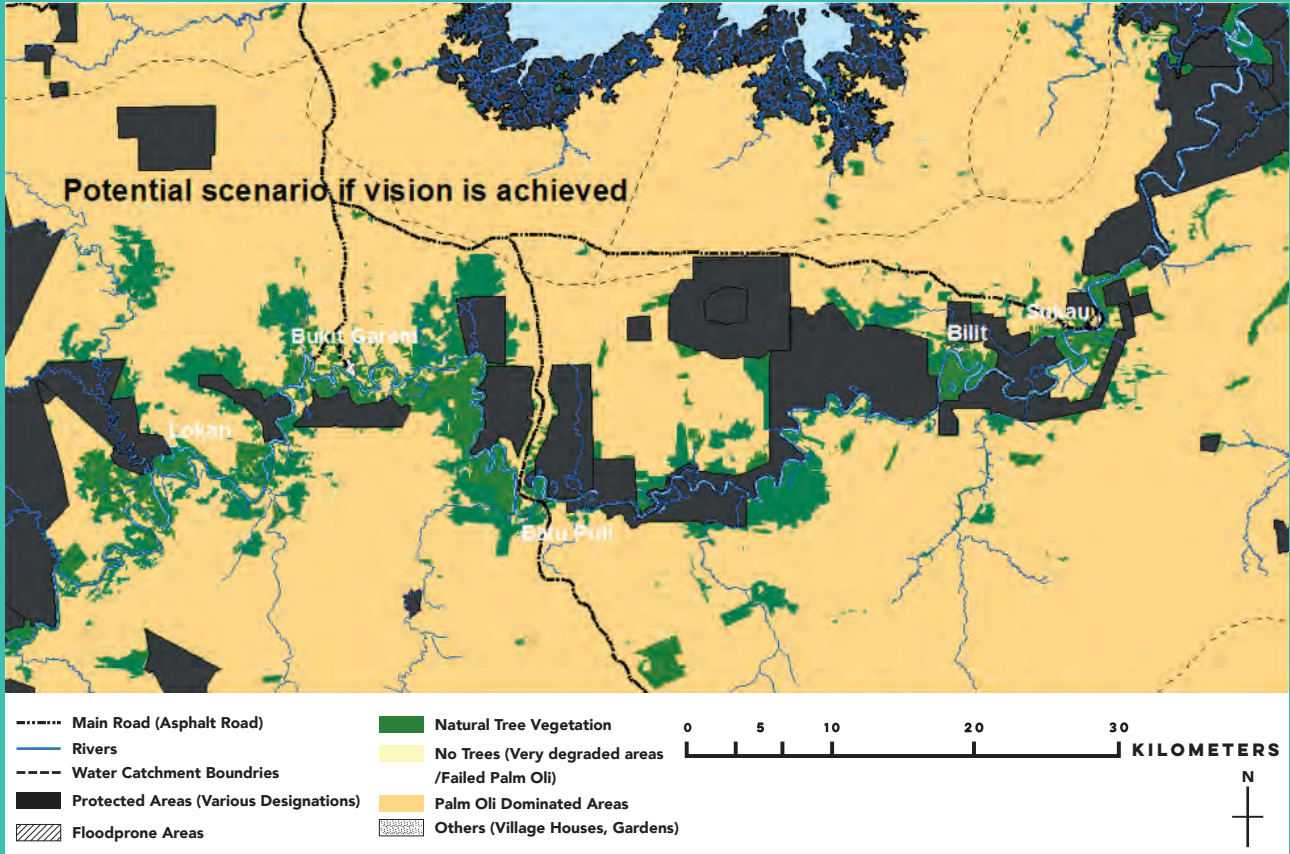
9. Infrastructure development

- 9.1. No new road bridges across the Kinabatangan River.
- 9.2. Major new infrastructures within K-CoL systematically include design approaches that efficiently mitigate negative impacts to wildlife and the environment (e.g. new townships and lodges).
- 9.3. The development of major new infrastructure to be avoided on flood-prone lands, and within one kilometre of the Kinabatangan River (e.g. for oil palm mills and estate settlements).

10. Management of K-CoL

- 10.1. All protected areas including, 'Forest Reserves', 'Wildlife Sanctuary', and 'Wildlife Conservation Area' and other state-land within 100-m of the river (see 1.4), in K-CoL will be re-gazetted under one legislation to be effectively managed by one authority.
- 10.2. A single Management Authority for K-CoL to be instituted and made operational with adequate budget, staffing and a robust management plan.
- 10.3. Capacity, resources and awareness will be enhanced among all stakeholders part of the K-CoL Management Authority.
- 10.4. Assured long-term government funding will be committed to support effective management of K-CoL.
- 10.5. No further conversion of 'Native Titles' to 'Country Lease' titles and no sublease of 'Native Titles' to plantation companies allowed in K-CoL.

APPROXIMATE EXPANSION OF FOREST COVER WHEN WE SUCCEED IN THIS VISION



ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC)

Danau Girang Field Centre (DGFC)

HUTAN

Kinabatangan – Corridor of Life Tourism Operators Association (KITA)

Land Empowerment Animals People (LEAP)

Living Landscape Alliance

Sabah Environmental Protection Association (SEPA)

Sabah Environmental Trust (SET)

WWF-Malaysia (Sabah office)

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