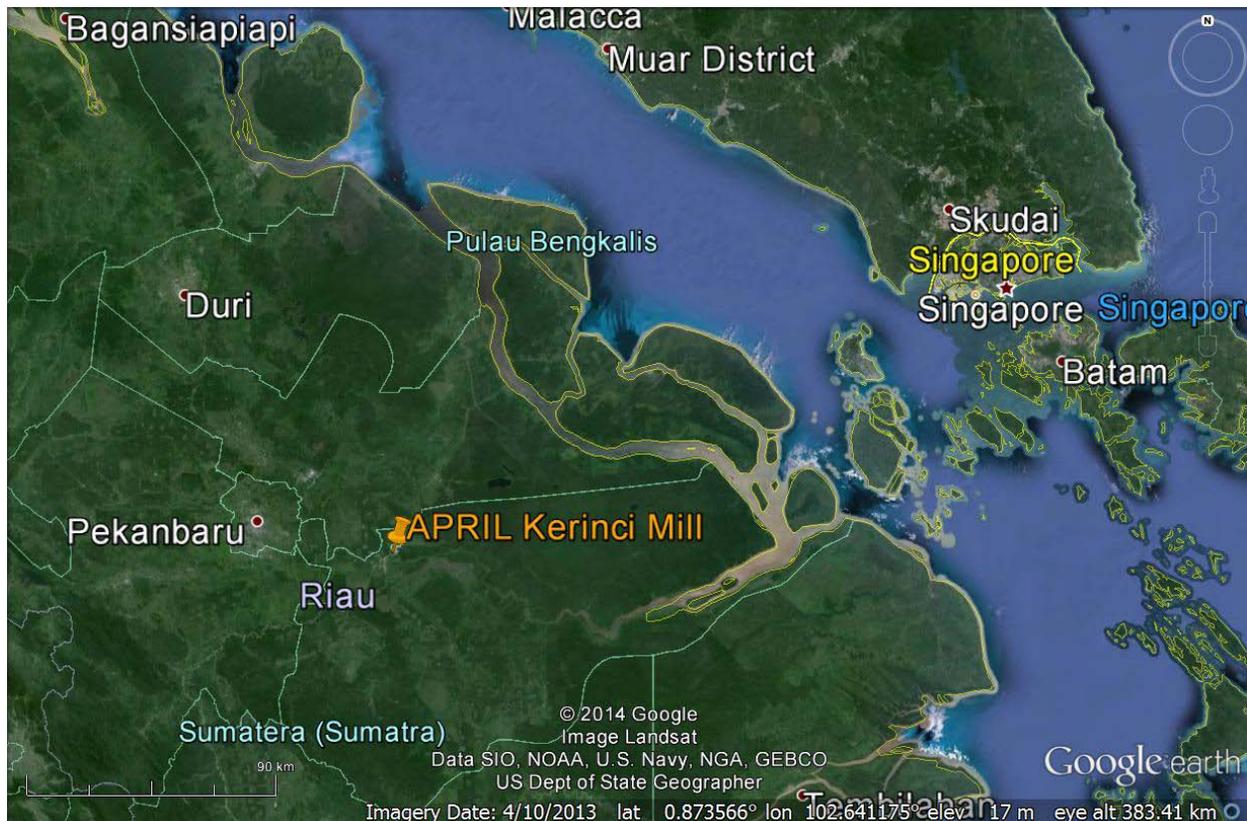


APRIL Tour Report



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Date: 27 October 2014

Location: Riau, Indonesia

Report published on 06 Feb 2015

Disclaimer: This is a qualitative report and is not a substitute for a comprehensive and thorough audit.

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Executive Summary

Pulp and paper giant APRIL has been accused of contributing to massive deforestation in Indonesia and was one of the companies blamed for fires during the June 2013 haze¹. On the other hand, APRIL claims that they have a strict no-burn policy and is a leader in sustainable forestry. In order to better understand APRIL's side of the story, and identify areas where APRIL can improve, PM.Haze accepted APRIL's invitation to tour their operations in Kerinci, Riau.

	Key Commendations	Key Recommendations
Transparency	Willingness to engage NGOs in dialogue and partnerships	
	Public update of fire incidents	Put in public domain the concession maps for APRIL and their suppliers, with community and conservation areas demarcated
	Independent audit of APRIL's SFMP	
Community	Efforts to provide sustainable livelihoods for communities in and around concessions	Help suppliers improve their community engagement efforts
Forest conservation	Commitment to preserve the Kampar core	Build capacity regarding conservation and peatland management issues through exchange with conservation organisations and collaboration with researchers
	Fulfilled commitment to end plantation establishment	Use 100% plantation fibre immediately
Fire management	Impressive fire-management policies, infrastructure and equipment	Share expertise with communities, government and within industry.
Peatland management	Use of water management to minimise over-drainage of peatland	

APRIL is gradually embracing the need to build public trust and uphold its image of being a leader in sustainable forestry. They have taken commendable steps to protect the environment and support the communities living in and around their concessions. It is encouraging that APRIL recognises that beyond maintaining a positive public image, a healthy environment and supportive local communities ultimately help maintain APRIL's own financial sustainability. With that in mind, APRIL should continue to open up and tap on inputs from stakeholders such as NGOs while playing a leading role in greening the entire industry.

Background

Asia Pacific Resources International Limited (APRIL) is a pulp and paper company that is privately held and part of the Royal Golden Eagle (RGE) group of companies, previously known as Royal Garuda Mas. RGE was founded by Mr Sukanto Tanoto in 1973 and now is involved in pulp and paper, palm oil, specialty cellulose as well as oil and gas industriesⁱⁱ. RGE's headquarters is in Singapore.

APRIL holds one direct license covering 345,000 hectares, under the name PT Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper (PT RAPP), in Riau, Indonesia. They also have a number of supply partners, which are not publicly stated, but available with Ministry of Forestry and updated every month. The 33 licenses held by supply partners cover 576,000 hectares in total. There are 26 community forests covering 27,000 hectares in total. The total gross land area of concessions that supply wood to APRIL (including all supply partners in Riau and some in North Sumatra) is thus approximately 948,000 hectaresⁱⁱⁱ.

APRIL's main paper mill is in Kerinci, Riau. It produces 2.7 million tons of pulp a year, representing 7.1% of global pulp production^{iv}.

Emissions due to land use change have made Indonesia among the world's top three greenhouse gas emitters, with 37 percent of emissions due to deforestation and 27 percent due to peat fires^v. A study by Abood et al put the total deforestation as 14.7 MHa between 2000 and 2010, with 12.8% of the deforestation occurring within pulp and paper concessions^{vi}.

In a report by Eyes On The Forest (EoF), a coalition of 3 NGOs in Riau, APRIL and its supply partners have been accused of causing 27% of total forest lost in Riau between 2008/9 and 2011^{vii}. APRIL went back on its commitment in 2009 to sustainable and natural fibre free production after 2009^{viii}. Some of its concession licenses were said to be obtained through corrupt practices^{ix}. EoF has also reported on social conflict between local communities and APRIL's suppliers^x. EoF also highlighted the drainage of peatland as well as clearing of potential habitat of critically endangered Sumatran Tigers and Elephants. In 2014, a National Joint Team from the Indonesian government conducted an audit and found PT Sumatera Riang Lestari, a supplier for APRIL, as being extremely non-compliant in prevention of forest and land fires^{xi}.

In January 2014, APRIL made a 1-for-1 commitment to conserve forest areas equalling the size of its concession area^{xii}. They also launched a Sustainable Forest Management Policy (SFMP) which commits it to certain targets in the areas of long-term sustainability, forest protection and conservation, peatland management, legal compliance and certification, community engagement and social responsibility, as well as good corporate governance and transparency^{xiii}.

In order to better understand APRIL's side of the story, and identify areas where APRIL can realise its aspirations of being a responsible corporate citizen, PM.Haze decided to accept APRIL's invitation to tour their operations in Kerinci, Riau.



Figure 1. Aerial view of Kerinci Mill showing large piles of wood.

Itinerary of tour

On 27th October 2014, three representatives from PM.Haze conducted a day-trip to view APRIL's operations around their Kerinci Mill in Riau, Indonesia.

The itinerary was as follows:

- Presentations on APRIL's fire and peatland management approach
- Aerial tour (Heli ride)
- Visit to RGE technology centre and R&D gallery
- Demonstration of fire suppression
- Visit to Kerinci Central Nursery
- Visit to Community Development Centre



APRIL's motivations

According to RGE's staff, RGE has always been implementing sustainability measures. In fact, the company's founder expounded the need to satisfy the triple bottom line of "Country, Community and Company", whereby country includes the environment.

There is also recognition that protecting the environment and gaining support of community also directly benefits the company. Given the size of the companies' concessions, it is difficult to manage the entire area without the support of the local communities living within and around the concession area. One of the directors shared that they are victims of the haze as fires outside their concession can jump into their plantations which cause a loss of raw material for their production. The haze also caused a lot of health problems for their people working in the mill as well as the plantation.

In recent times, there is also recognition of the need to engage NGOs and improve APRIL's public image. This change is possibly due to APRIL's new leadership philosophy under Anderson Tanoto, Sukanto Tanoto's youngest son.

Intense public accusations in the wake of the 2013 haze also spurred APRIL to aggressively push their side of the story. APRIL's staff seem to be proud of their company's contribution to the environment, economy and society. Therefore they feel that there is nothing to hide on one hand, and on the other hand, they feel that they have been wrongly victimised when they hear accusations of APRIL's wrongdoings.

The threat of Singapore's Transboundary Haze Pollution Act (the "Act") is also being taken seriously by the management. Because of the way the Act is written, the presence of fire within the company's concession area is enough to bring the company to court, whereby the company has the burden of proof to show that they were not responsible for the fire. Regardless of the final outcome, there would be negative impact on the company's reputation. Prevention of fire has therefore taken increased importance.

Contrary to expectations however, consumer pressure does not seem to be a significant motivating factor. One of the directors even called consumers the "biggest hypocrites" for not matching their words with the willingness to pay more for sustainable products.

The need to satisfy best practices as requested by western NGOs in order to gain access to consumer markets was quoted by one of the directors as their prime motivation to conserve forests. The pressure from western NGOs is resented by many members of RGE/ APRIL who seem to feel that western NGOs and governments are unfairly targeting agri-commodity companies in Asia in order to gain a competitive advantage. For example, they feel that the FSC standard that prevents clearing of more than 10,000 hectares of forest in the past 5 years, favours plantations in developed countries which have already cleared their natural forests long before the current tightening of forestry conservation reigns.

Assessment of APRIL's sustainability measures

I. Transparency



Figure 2. Visit to RGE Technology Centre accompanied by APRIL staff.

In recent years, APRIL has shown increasing willingness to engage non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government officials and the public, as well as open its policies to 3rd party checks.

That PM.Haze was invited to visit APRIL's operations in Kerinci is part of this recent phenomenon. Many key personnel such as two corporate communications managers from Singapore office, sustainability director and two fire-management managers were tasked to accompany us for the entire day. Besides PM.Haze, APRIL has also invited academics, think-tanks, government officials and even students for such a tour. APRIL is also conducting an education programme at schools regarding sustainable forestry agriculture. APRIL's implementation of their Sustainable Forest Management Policy is being independently verified by KPMG, and overseen by a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). APRIL is also working with Flora and Fauna International in their Kampar Peninsula ecosystem restoration project^{xiv}.

On its APRIL Dialog website, APRIL also provides updates on forest fires in its concessions including map coordinates, the causes of fires and the status of fire-fighting efforts.

Commendations

APRIL's willingness to engage NGOs in dialogue and partnerships is a welcome departure from their past attitude of being defensive and antagonistic towards criticisms by NGOs.

3rd party audit of the SFMP is essential to assure the public that commitments to sustainability are put into actual practice, especially after failing to meet the 2009 zero-deforestation commitment.

Public update of fire incidents is probably a first in the industry, and should be replicated by other companies such that it becomes an industry norm.

Recommendations

Site visits and education outreach are useful for displaying a snapshot of APRIL's efforts, but they are insufficient in proving that these efforts are being properly replicated across all of APRIL's and their suppliers' concessions. There will always be the suspicion that APRIL is moulding the narrative to "greenwash" itself. APRIL's transparency efforts would therefore gain more mileage by focusing more on comprehensive and independent 3rd party audits and monitoring.

APRIL can demonstrate their commitment to greater transparency by putting their concession maps in the public domain, as well as showing areas demarcated for community and conservation. These maps should provide information on APRIL's own concessions as well as all their supply partners. APRIL can work with World Resources Institute (WRI) to put these maps on Global Forest Watch so that the public can overlay hotspot and deforestation data on these maps^{xv}. In this way, the public can independently verify where the fires are occurring and whether HCV areas are really being protected from deforestation. This system can be integrated with APRIL's public updates on fire incidents so that the public is assured that all fire incidents are being dealt with promptly.

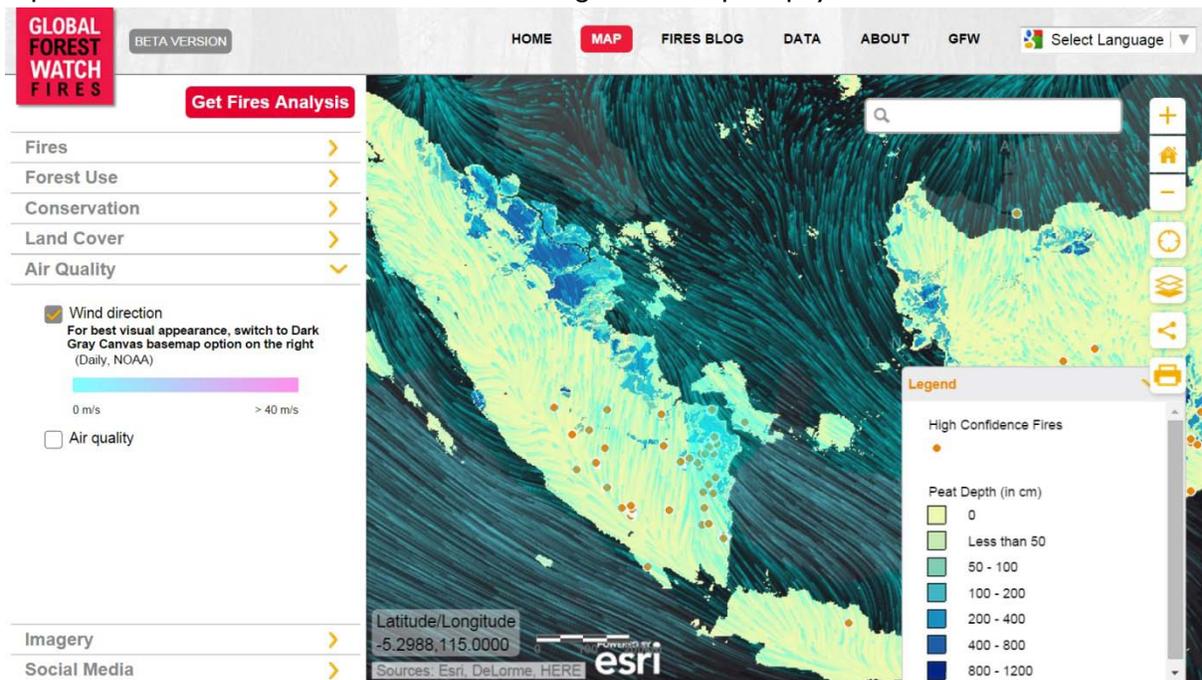
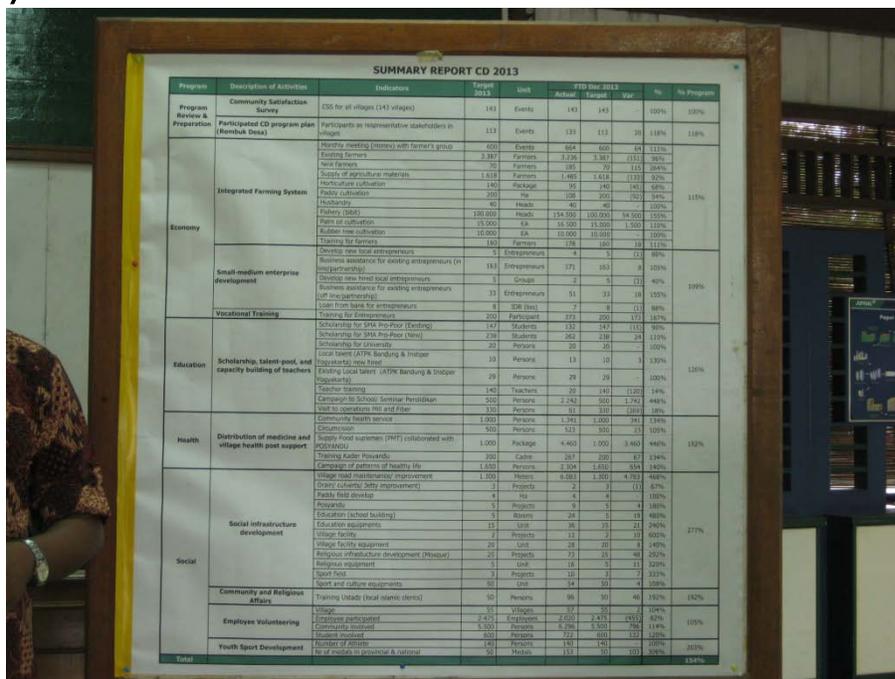


Figure 3. Global Forest Watch Fires website provides public with daily updates of hotspot locations.

2. Community



SUMMARY REPORT CD 2013									
Program	Description of Activities	Indicators	Target 2013	Unit	Actual	Target	Var.	%	% Progress
Program Review & Preparation	Community Satisfaction Survey	ISI for all villages (143 villages)	143	Events	143	143	0	100%	100%
	Participated CD program plan (Review Desk)	Participate in representative stakeholders in village	113	Events	133	113	20	118%	118%
Economy	Integrated Farming System	Monthly meeting (online) with farmer's group	500	Events	664	600	64	133%	
		Training farmers	3,387	Farmers	3,336	3,387	(51)	98%	
		Visit farmers	75	Farmers	65	75	(10)	87%	
		Supply of agricultural materials	1,618	Farmers	1,465	1,618	(153)	90%	
		Produce cultivation	140	Package	95	140	(45)	68%	
	Small-medium enterprise development	Produce cultivation	200	far	58	200	(142)	29%	
		Husbandry	40	head	40	40	0	100%	
		Fishery catch	100,000	head	154,150	100,000	54,150	154%	
		Plant or cultivation	15,000	EA	15,000	15,000	0	100%	
		Rubber tree cultivation	10,000	EA	10,000	10,000	0	100%	
Vocational Training	Training for farmers	140	Farmers	138	140	(2)	99%		
	Develop new local entrepreneurs	5	Entrepreneurs	4	5	(1)	80%		
Education	Business assistance for existing entrepreneurs (off-in partnership)	143	Entrepreneurs	173	163	10	121%		
	Develop new local entrepreneurs	1	Entrepreneurs	2	5	(3)	40%		
Health	Business assistance for existing entrepreneurs (off-in partnership)	13	Entrepreneurs	31	31	18	100%		
	Local level (off-in partnership)	4	Off-in partnership	7	8	(1)	88%		
Social	Scholarship for 30% Pro Poor (Education)	200	Participant	372	200	172	186%		
	Scholarship for 30% Pro Poor (New)	174	Students	152	174	(22)	87%		
Community and Religious Affairs	Scholarship for 30% Pro Poor (New)	238	Students	262	238	24	110%		
	Local level (off-in partnership)	20	Persons	35	20	15	175%		
Youth Sport Development	Scholarship for university	10	Persons	13	10	3	130%		
	Ending child labor (30% Bandung & Diklat logistik)	29	Persons	29	29	0	100%		
Youth Sport Development	Teacher training	140	Teachers	70	140	(70)	50%		
	Campfire to School, Sekolah Persekolahan	500	Persons	2,292	500	1,792	458%		
Youth Sport Development	Visit to operations (off-in partnership)	230	Persons	31	230	(209)	14%		
	Community health service	1,000	Persons	1,241	1,000	241	124%		
Youth Sport Development	Community health service	500	Persons	513	500	13	103%		
	Regular health services (PHF) collaborated with POSKINDO	1,000	Package	4,460	1,000	3,460	446%		
Youth Sport Development	Training kader Poskinds	200	cadre	267	200	67	134%		
	Campaign of pattern of healthy life	1,400	Persons	2,204	1,400	804	143%		
Youth Sport Development	Village level maintenance improvement	1,500	Visits	8,882	1,500	4,782	486%		
	Crack closure (off-in partnership)	3	Projects	2	3	(1)	67%		
Youth Sport Development	Track field (off-in partnership)	4	off	4	4	0	100%		
	Poskinds	5	Projects	9	5	4	180%		
Youth Sport Development	Education (school building)	5	Buildings	34	5	29	680%		
	Education equipments	15	Unit	36	15	21	240%		
Youth Sport Development	Village facility	2	Projects	11	2	9	600%		
	Village facility equipment	22	Unit	28	22	6	127%		
Youth Sport Development	Resilient infrastructure development (Resilient)	25	Projects	73	25	48	292%		
	Resilient equipment	1	Unit	1	1	0	100%		
Youth Sport Development	Sport field	3	Projects	10	3	7	333%		
	Sport and culture equipments	50	Unit	14	50	(4)	28%		
Youth Sport Development	Community and Religious Affairs	Training (village level clinic)	30	Persons	96	30	66	220%	
	Village	113	Village	97	113	(16)	86%		
Youth Sport Development	Employee volunteering	Employee participant	2,471	Employees	2,600	2,471	129	109%	
	Community volunteer	5,500	Persons	5,294	5,500	(206)	96%		
Youth Sport Development	Student involved	600	Persons	723	600	123	121%		
	Resilient equipment	100	Persons	141	100	41	141%		
Youth Sport Development	Youth Sport Development	far of media in provincial & national	50	Media	151	50	101	302%	
	Total		1		1			100%	100%

Figure 4. Summary report of APRIL's community development efforts.

APRIL has a Community Development programme targeting local communities living in and around the concession areas. One of their initiatives involves introducing the integrated farming system to members of the community to encourage what they termed as 'sustainable agriculture'. The village farmers will rear cows and use the manure as fertiliser for growing vegetables so that burning to add nutrients to the soil is not required.

Nonetheless, social conflicts with local communities still remain a challenge in some areas. One of APRIL's staff revealed that social conflict on PT Sumatera Riang Lestari's concession has prevented the company from properly implementing fire management infrastructure in the disputed area.

The one day visit made did not allow us much opportunity to interact much with locals or visit different villages in order to present a proper evaluation of the local communities living there.

Commendations

APRIL's efforts in helping communities attain sustainable sources of income will benefit APRIL, local communities and the environment. The positive impact of APRIL contribution to the local economy is evident in the built infrastructures such as roads, buildings and availability of employment and facilities.

Recommendations

APRIL should work more closely with its suppliers to help them improve their community engagement efforts.

3. Forest conservation



Figure 5 Acacia plantation (left) next to natural peat swamp forest (right)

APRIL believes that the best way of conserving forests is for responsible corporations to form a ring of plantations around the conservation area to serve as a buffer against encroachment. They point to conservation areas such as Tesso Nilo and Giam Siak Kecil which despite their conservation status have seen dramatic deforestation due to illegally clearing by encroachers.

They therefore feel that HCV assessments should take into account the location of the HCV area with respect to the concession boundaries (see figure).

On a larger scale, APRIL is trying to apply the ring concept to the Kampar Peninsula where they attempt to conserve the core of Kampar Peninsula by surrounding it with their concessions. They have also established a 20,265 hectare ecosystem restoration concession in Kampar Peninsula^{xvi}.

However, the ring concept was ironically used by Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) in the establishment of the Giam Siak Kecil – Bukit Batu biosphere reserve, whereby a core area of peat swamp forest would be protected by a ring of plantations managed by APP^{xvii}. Unfortunately, that has failed to prevent illegal logging and fire in the core zone^{xviii}. In Kampar Peninsula, the presence of other companies' concessions as well as a large number of local communities also makes this conservation project a challenging one.

APRIL has pledged to complete plantation development by end 2014 and use only plantation fibre by end 2019. This means that APRIL will not be directly causing deforestation by end 2014, but will continue to buy natural forest wood from other sources and therefore indirectly cause deforestation till end 2019.

Based on our helicopter survey, the conservation areas within APRIL's concession near to the Kerinci mill seems to be intact. In contrast, certain areas outside their concessions are composed of degraded or burnt forests.



Figure 6. Signs of burnt and degraded forest outside of concession.

APRIL is also conducting research on improving their yield, which would allow more wood to be produced from the same land area, thereby reducing the need to clear natural habitat.

Commendations

The Kampar Peninsula is one of the largest peat swamp forests in Southeast Asia and it is imperative to protect it. APRIL's commitment to preserve the Kampar core is therefore commendable.

APRIL fulfilled its commitment to end plantation establishment by end 2014^{xix}.

APRIL conducts research & development to improve yield.

Recommendations

Protecting large-scale conservation areas from encroachment and wildfires is more challenging in practice than on paper. APRIL can contribute to the field of conservation management by exchanging their experience and best practices with the government, research institutions and NGOs. Birdlife International, for example, established the first ecosystem restoration concession in Indonesia, and would have gained much experience^{xx}. APRIL can also collaborate with researchers to better understand how to protect the HCV areas and manage peatland.

APRIL's image of being a champion of sustainable forestry would only be convincing if they ended all usage of natural forest wood. APRIL should use 100% plantation fibre immediately.

Beyond 2014, with the completion of plantation establishment, APRIL can still meet growing demand by moving into the paper recycling sector. Such a move would demonstrate APRIL's effort to close the loop.

4. Fire management



Figure 7. Drones allow central command to monitor the fire from the air.

APRIL has a no-burn policy on its plantation land. This can be verified by the presence of Ramin trees that were from the original peat swamp forest but remain standing in the plantation because they are protected under Indonesian law. If fire had been used to clear the forest, these Ramin trees would probably not have survived. Once the plantation has been established, it would be risky to use fire as it may spread to other parts of the plantation and damage their existing stock.

In order to prevent accidental or escaped fires from damaging their plantation, APRIL has invested millions of dollars in their fire-fighting program. Constant surveillance is done via helicopters, patrol boats as well as ground patrols. Weather conditions are monitored to assess fire risk. Hotspots are monitored via Global Forests Watch website. The water pumps were specially imported from Canada and the small ones can be easily carried by one person, in contrast with typical water pumps used by community fire fighting teams.

APRIL asserts that active management of the land will be better at preventing fires than allowing land to be unmanaged. This viewpoint makes sense provided that the land is already open and dry and therefore is in a condition where fire risk is high. A research study revealed that half of the fires in Riau in 2013 occurred on “forest cemeteries”: unmanaged land covered by scrub and dead trees^{xxi}.

Recognising that fires could also start in community land surrounding the concession, APRIL has also trained village volunteers to fight fire. This year, they also collaborated with local police and government to provide incentives for villages which had zero cases of burning. At the end of each dry season (about July-October), villages with zero fire occurrences within their land will be awarded with Rupiah 2 million to purchase anything as decided by their village head.

Commendations

APRIL’s no-burn policy seems to be true.

APRIL's fire-management policies, infrastructure and equipment are impressive. Their decision to go beyond the concessions boundaries to engage neighbouring communities is also wise.

Recommendations

APRIL can extend its influence by sharing their fire management expertise with the Indonesian government, local communities and within the industry.

5. Peatland management



Figure 8. Peat canal that has been dammed.

69% of APRIL's concessions are on peat soil, including some on peat deeper than 4m^{xxii}. APRIL digs canals parallel to peat dome contour for transport purposes. These are dammed to maintain the water level within the canal for movement of boats. There are also drainage channels that are dug to drain water within the peatland area. The water level in the drainage channels are maintained at a level of 40 – 90 cm below the ground surface by a series of weirs, with a target depth of 60cm. Compliance to this standard (40 – 90cm) is met about 70% of the time. However, due to natural variations in rainfall, the water table may sometimes be higher as a result of floods, or sometimes lower when droughts occur.

The peat soil subsidence is present on APRIL's plantations and represents oxidation of the peat and release of carbon emissions. Over the long-term, subsidence also leads to increased risk of flooding. APRIL is conducting studies on how to reduce the subsidence of peat.

Commendations

APRIL has put in place a water management system that minimises over-drainage of peat soil. Nevertheless, it should be noted that subsidence still occurs and the water table may still drop below the recommended level during the dry season.



Limitations and Future research

This tour provided valuable insights into APRIL/ RGE's motivations and their fire-management and conservation efforts. However, given that we had limited time and our tour was limited to only one of the concessions under APRIL, it is not a substitute for a comprehensive and thorough audit.

We value holding an independent ground visit to the concessions in the area to have a fairer objective view of the whole picture without possible external influence by any of the stakeholders.

Conclusion

APRIL is gradually embracing the need to build public trust and uphold its image of being a leader in sustainable forestry. They have taken many commendable steps to protect the environment and support the communities living in and around their concessions. It is encouraging that APRIL also recognises that beyond maintaining a positive public image, a healthy environment and supportive communities ultimately helps maintain APRIL's own financial sustainability. With that in mind, APRIL should continue to tap on input from stakeholders such as NGOs and play a leading role in greening the entire industry.

Acronyms

APP: Asia Pulp and Paper (A pulp and paper company)

APRIL: Asia Pacific Resources International Limited (A pulp and paper company)

EoF: Eyes on the Forest (a coalition of NGOs)

HCV: High Conservation Value

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

RGE: Royal Golden Eagle

SAC: Stakeholder Advisory Committee

SFMP: (APRIL's) Sustainable Forest Management Policy

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