



**For immediate release**

## **Plan to restore Indonesian forest gets go-ahead**

*Restorasi Ekosistem Riau begins work in 20,265-hectare Sumatran reserve*

**JAKARTA, OCT 7, 2013** – Indonesian forest conservationists said today they've been given final approval to begin restoration of a damaged Sumatran peat forest. The approval came via provincial government approval of a 12-month work plan for non-profit Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER).

"We're grateful for the approval," said RER project leader Susilo Sudarman. "Now we're eager to begin the work of rescuing this forest from years of encroachment and illegal activity."

Pulp and paper company APRIL Indonesia created RER last May under a government concession to restore 20,265 hectares in Riau Province. The Kampar Peninsula forest has been scarred by illegal logging and burning. APRIL plans to spend US\$7 million there over three years on projects ranging from biodiversity conservation to community development.

Restoration efforts begin immediately, RER officials said, now that the annual work plan has been approved. Among the tasks to be undertaken in the next year:

- Topographical and hydrological surveys;
- Construction of a seedling nursery;
- Forest replanting; and
- Infrastructure development including a residential compound for workers.

RER said preliminary work is already underway. Guard posts have been installed to protect the restoration zone. Security patrols have been initiated to prevent encroachment.

Over time, RER said it intends to replant native tree species in the restoration zone. It will also close illegal drainage canals that deplete water tables and threaten the forest's underlying peat bog.

Renowned conservation non-profit Fauna & Flora International is managing biodiversity and community projects for RER. Indonesia community development expert Bidara is also a member of the RER partnership.

For more information about RER, visit [www.rekoforest.org/index.php/en/](http://www.rekoforest.org/index.php/en/)

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About RER:

*Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to delivering comprehensive ecosystem restoration of ecologically important peat forest areas on Indonesia's Kampar Peninsula, to fulfill environmental, economic and social imperatives in a sustainable manner.*

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