Land Empowerment Animals People

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1 January 2010

Happy New Year from Sabah!

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Happy New Year from Sabah! LEAP had a very exciting year in 2009, and as we head into the new year, we would like to thank you for your continued support and interest in LEAP's work, and to share some of our recent successes.

LEAP underwent significant growth in 2009, engaging in Sumatran rhinoceros conservation, advocating for green power and sustainable energy and no net loss mitigation strategies, exploring options for employing Payment for Ecological Services and REDD in Sabah, and building new partnerships and projects in Indonesian Borneo. We are also engaged in a process to internationalize our Board and widen our connections within Southeast Asia. Amidst this growth, we have also continued to support our core partners and projects and work in Sabah, with many successes to report!

Sun bear waiting to be released

Ground breaking ceremony

Almost completed sun bear houses

Some highlights of our work in 2009 include:

- Expanding our work to include 20 projects with some 50 partners locally, nationally and internationally;
- Raising almost USD2 million for LEAP partners and projects, including land acquisition of several critical habitat linkages for orangutans and other endangered wildlife in Sabah;
- Coordinating the successful construction of the first phase of the **Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre**, consisting of a new 20-bear house with large outdoor forested enclosures, with plans to move orphaned and confiscated sun bears into their new living environment in early 2010;

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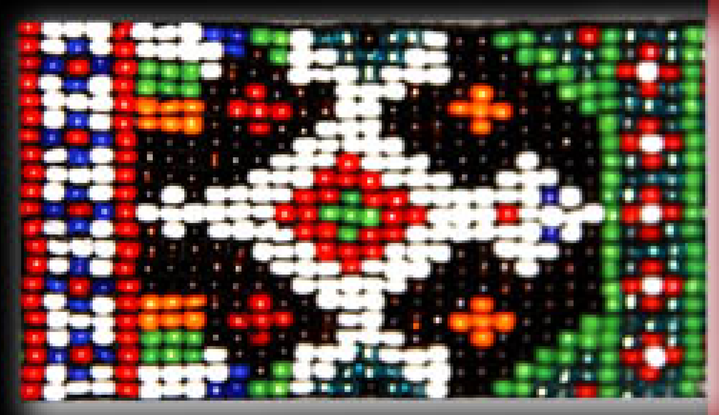

Cecilia Ramirez (of AIR), Caroline Gabel (of Shared Earth Foundation) & Datuk Masidi Manjun (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Sabah) during the Rhino Rescue lunch in March 2009

- Facilitating the transition of SOS Rhino (USA) to a new Malaysian NGO, the **Borneo Rhino Alliance (BORA)**, now mandated to manage the Borneo Rhino Sanctuary on behalf of the state government of Sabah;

- Joining forces with 4 Malaysian NGOs – WWF Malaysia, Malaysian Nature Society, Sabah Environmental Protection Association and PACOS Trust – to form **Green SURF**, a coalition focused on raising awareness on climate change and alternative sustainable energy in Sabah, with a specific near-term focus on mobilizing the public voice in resisting a coal fired power plant proposed for the east coast of Sabah that will have a significant impact on several sensitive protected areas, including Danum Valley, Tabin Wildlife Reserve and fragile coastal marine ecosystems, as well as indigenous communities in the area;

The Green SURF coalition - L-R: Malaysian Nature Society, LEAP, WWF & Pacos Trust & Sabah Environmental Protection Association

- Supporting **Project Women Empowerment Trees** through its third year, in which ten groups of women and their families in the Pitas district planted indigenous trees to protect their watershed, established community gardens, and began selling vegetables and crops at their local markets, thereby establishing sustainable sources of income for their families and community and regaining power over their land and livelihoods;

PWET women with Cynthia Ong (CEO of LEAP) and Brie Walsh (of Alexander Abraham Foundation)

- Helping develop micro enterprises with **Project Women Empowerment Trees** with the traditional craft-making practices that they have revived through the project – weaving, embroidery, beading, basketry, etc.;

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ASRI Clinic, Sukadana - Kalimantan

MESCOT's Eco Camp

Datuk Masidi offificating the launch of MESCOT's Eco Camp and Lake Tungog, free of salvinia weed

- Launching a working group of key government agencies, and private and non-profit entities to consider the adoption of a **No Net Loss** regulatory framework in Sabah that will require mitigation to offset losses incurred through forest conversion;

- Supporting the **Malua Bio Bank** with Cynthia as Chair of the advisory committee and **LEAP** as secretariat, as it rolls out its 5-year conservation management plan in Malua Forest Reserve;

- Engaging in Indonesian Borneo by facilitating discussions between a local NGO, **ASRI (Alam Sehat Lestari)**, the local government, park management and communities around Gunung Palung National Park (orang utan population of 2,500), to help promote the establishment of a Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) project in the area in an effort to provide more sustainable livelihoods for local people as well as protect the 90,000 hectare forest;

- Joining the Steering Committee of **Trees for Life** Borneo, a state government initiative to plant 1 million trees throughout Sabah in the next five years, to assist in the role of building international partnerships for the project;

- Supporting the official launch in November of the **MESCOT Tungog Rainforest Eco-Camp**, a project that **LEAP** has supported for the last five years. The Eco-Camp is a community-run initiative that will help the local community achieve economic sustainability while working to restore the surrounding lowland rainforest ecosystem;

- Supporting **MESCOT's forest restoration** projects with both private foundations and the Sabah Forestry Department, with the goal to regenerate Pin Supu Forest Reserve as critical wildlife habitat; and

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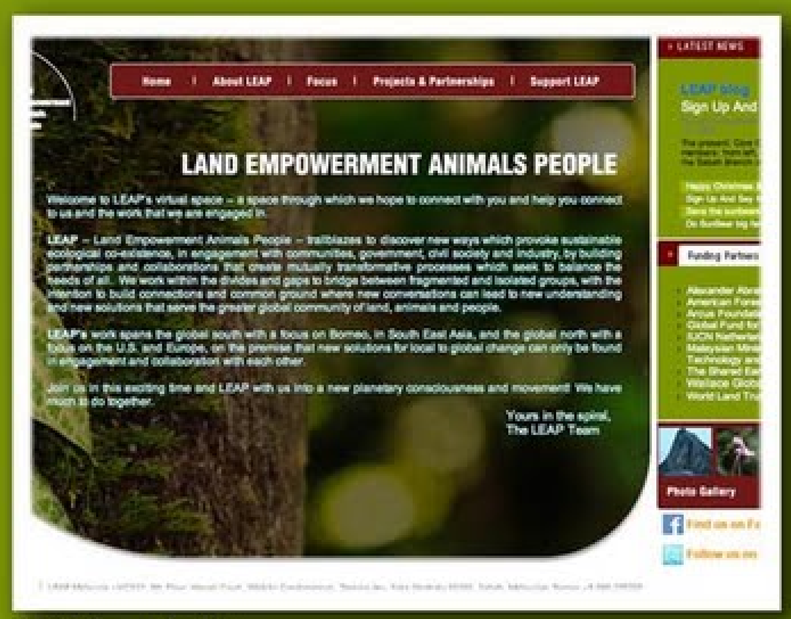

LEAP's website

Adding new communications and administrative staff in Sabah to support the work on the ground, revising and updating our **website**, and starting a blog at **leapspiral.blogspot.com**.

As you can see, LEAP continues to grow as the need and the work continues to expand. LEAP is now receiving constant requests for assistance with conservation and community projects, both in Sabah and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Our plans for 2010 include continuing to support our ongoing projects as well as expanding our work in Sabah and Southeast Asia, with a specific focus on enhancing wildlife and habitat protection and ensuring engagement and inclusion of indigenous communities. We also intend to engage in an intensive long-term strategic planning process in 2010 to further guide our work and growth over the next 5 years.

All of us at LEAP thank you for joining us and supporting us in our vision and our work, demonstrating the amazing things we can accomplish working together. We could not do it without you!

There is so much more important work yet to be done. If you would like to continue your support or join us as the spiral continues to unfold, you may make a donation on-line at *http://tiny.cc/DonateLEAP*

Wishing you all the best in 2010!

The LEAP Team

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