

## Urgent Need for Rare Pride: Orangutans on the Brink



### Orangutans will go extinct in the wild during our lifetimes if we don't help local communities in Indonesia protect their forest habitats

Indonesia has the highest rate of forest loss in the world, and it's not showing any signs of slowing down. These dwindling forests are some of the last refuges for orangutans, a species in rapid decline due to habitat loss and fragmentation<sup>1</sup> caused by human activities. Orangutans could become extinct in the wild within the next 15 years if deforestation in Indonesia doesn't dramatically decrease.

While there are many factors contributing to the loss of the orangutan's forest habitat, Rare Pride is designed to engage those people close enough to make a difference. Local communities in Indonesia are playing a key role in forest degradation, through clearing trees for farming, collecting woodfuel, and illegal logging. Pride has a proven track record changing harmful behaviors at the local level, and Rare is preparing to launch three campaigns targeting Orangutan sites in 2008 (see reverse for more).



Above: An orangutan mascot from a Pride campaign in Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve in Aceh (one of the last refuges for the Sumatran orangutan) helped build the local constituency needed to block construction of a major road across the Reserve. Photos at top: Lush mountains of Aceh; a young orangutan.

#### **Rare Pride campaigns use social marketing to change attitudes and behaviors threatening the environment.**

Adapting private sector marketing techniques, Pride segments its target audiences, develops tailored messages that speak to the needs and interests of each group, and offers meaningful reasons and tools for change.

Pride campaigns use everything from radio ads, pop songs, billboards and festivals to classroom activities, sermons, press releases, and bumper stickers to build a strong grassroots constituency for conservation in threatened areas – like the orangutan's forest habitat.

Pride has been used in more than 40 countries to increase adoption of more sustainable practices, reduce forest fires and illegal logging, clean up watersheds, establish new protected areas and legislation, and create a lasting environmental ethic at the local level.

# Proposed Sites for Rare Pride Campaigns



## Gunung Leuser National Park

It is estimated that this Park supports three quarters of the remaining Sumatran orangutans. Partnering with the Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS), the Pride campaign will focus on four villages with approx. 32,000 people in the Langkat District bordering the Park. The Park is an 800,000-hectare protected area that was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2004, and is globally known for its immense diversity in animal (elephants, rhinos, and tigers, in addition to the orangutan) and plant species.

## Lamandau River Wildlife Reserve

Rare will partner with Yayasan Orangutan Indonesia (YAYORIN) to build environmental Pride among 17 villages, with a population of 15,000, around the Reserve. This 76,000-hectare forest was designated as a wildlife reserve in 1998 (when two logging concessions ended) to house a rehabilitation program that releases orangutans back into their natural habitat. To date, over one hundred healthy orangutans have been successfully released into the reserve.

## Batang Toru Barat

Rare and PEKAT Indonesia will run a Pride campaign in the sub-districts surrounding the Batang Toru Barat water catchment. About 15,000 community members residing in 18 settlements share land and water with a 14,735-hectare forest that includes a Nature Reserve, Wildlife Reserve, and areas used for logging. In addition to hosting a variety of important and protected floral species, the water catchment area is an important habitat to roughly 400 Sumatran orangutans.

## What will Rare Pride accomplish?

Rare and its partners will use Pride to specifically target farmers whose practices of shifting cultivation for subsistence and selling of land for “quick cash” to oil palm companies pose the greatest threats to orangutan habitat.

The Pride campaign manager will work on increasing farmer awareness of the global significance of their land, and how their activities affect it. As soon as the farming community expresses the desire to do things differently, the campaign manager will work closely with the group to create and implement more sustainable practices. This includes adoption of permanent agricultural systems, establishing monitoring groups to prevent and report illegal logging, and introducing alternative livelihoods to help preserve the habitats that orangutans desperately depend on.



To ensure complete support by the entire village communities, the Pride campaign will also reach out to other community members—elders, leaders, women, and children—to increase their awareness and understanding of conservation, and facilitate collaboration between villages. The greatest results occur when entire communities are mobilized around conservation, and this requires targeting different segments with individualized messages and solutions.

After almost two years of working with these communities, Rare and the three partners expect to see a reduction in the amount of traditional forest area sold to private companies and converted into oil palm plantations; an increase in farmers adopting permanent agricultural systems; along with dedication to conserve natural resources and important species by the entire community – all of which will lead to a healthy, preserved, and growing orangutan habitat.

Photo at right: Orangutans in Gunung Leuser National Park in North Sumatra, Indonesia

**Your support can help build local constituencies to protect Orangutans long term.**