

# The Borneo Wire

A Publication of The Borneo Project

Fall 2004

## Nomadic Penan Reach Consensus on Maps and Strategies

By Jessica Lawrence



Dang Ngo

Nomadic Penan elder Along Sega, right, facilitated agreements among five bands of nomads in April, 2004. The bands are working with Borneo Project partners to map their lands for an impending court case to spare their ancestral rainforests from further logging and ecological collapse.

“There are many foods in the forest that we eat. And when the bulldozers come through, all of this forest will be gone, from the big trees to the smallest. The logging companies not only kill the forest, but they kill us slowly, bit by bit.” This was the sentiment, articulated by Penan elder Along Sega, that characterized a recent gathering of five nomadic Penan groups in the Upper Baram watershed of Sarawak, as they met to review their newly-drafted community-made maps, and consider what to do about overlapping land claims and legal strategies.

I was honored to attend and witness the remarkable consensus building that took place, given that the overlapping claims in the maps had created serious tensions and mistrust among neighboring bands. Some 50 nomads walked for days to gather on a forested mountain scarred by logging roads and landslides. As each group arrived, they quickly built raised platforms of poles, covered by palm fronds and the occasional plastic tarp. For three days, these pole platforms were where we talked, cooked, ate and slept. The hunting dogs, pet monkeys, and children played together below.

The context of the meeting

(Continued on page 7)

## Sabah Activist Wins Island Conservation Award

Adrian Lasimbang of Sabah, Malaysia has won the prestigious Seacology Prize of 2004 for outstanding achievement in island conservation. He has been recognized for his leadership role in micro-hydro initiatives, helping remote communities install renewable electricity that protects forested watersheds through joint ventures supported by the Borneo Project. For his work, Adrian was also selected as a finalist for the Malaysian Youth Humanitarian Award of 2004.

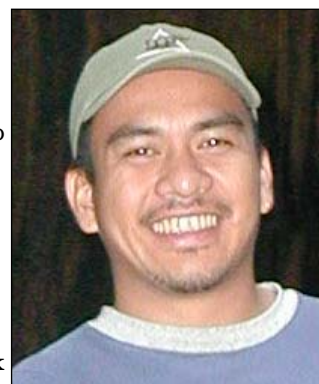
At age 26, Adrian has just begun to realize his potential as a teacher and activist. Growing up, Adrian followed his father's lead, and would take apart anything he could get his hands on--clocks, broken radios, farm machines, televisions, cars. He graduated from the University of Malaysia and became a welder in Sabah's capital city, Kota Kinabalu. In spite of his technical skills and talent for the trade, he lost his job when the Malaysian economy crashed in 1997.

He took this opportunity to shift his focus and volunteer with several rural villages near his birthplace. Volunteering came easily to Adrian, who is one of 13 siblings. “Growing up we had to share. My mother always reminded us that giving is an essential part of livelihood.”

Working with Partners of Community Organizations (PACOS), a group started by his mother and sisters, Adrian began teaching villagers how to design and install gravity-fed water systems for household use and crop irrigation. He incorporated traditional forest management practices to help communities establish protected watersheds, ensuring water supply in dry months. He took it upon himself to learn the principles of solar energy and began to install solar panels in clinics, schools and village centers. Soon there was more work than he could handle alone, so he began training other community trainers.

In 1999, Adrian heard about the Borneo Project's efforts to build the first community-owned and operated micro-hydro facility in Sarawak, Malaysia. “He contacted us and asked if he could volunteer on the project,”

(Continued on page 2)



Seacology Prize winner Adrian Lasimbang is being recognized as one of Borneo's most dynamic community organizers.

## Letter from the Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In January of this year, I was thrilled to join The Borneo Project, with its legacy of a decade of extraordinary volunteer work.

I'm amazed by the insight, energy, and dedication of our members and volunteers. The Sarawak and Sabah communities I visited in April and May expressed great appreciation for the long-term personal connections the Project has built.

Since 1993, I have been working in ecology research, community land rights advocacy, forest management, timber certification, and agroforestry education, primarily in Indonesia. In 2002, I documented indigenous struggles for forest protection in Indonesian Borneo. I was working for Rainforest Action Network at the time, campaigning to end US market demand for rainforest plywood by retailers including Home Depot and Lowe's.

My research showed that the forest-dependent communities who have considered logging-- and then rejected it-- are the only ones with a real stake in protecting the rainforest and its incredible biological diversity.

With rampant illegal logging, top-down conservation decrees are, tragically, meaningless. The international boycott movement against tropical timber has so far created just enough pressure to persuade logging industries and politicians to strategically "agree" to creating more protected areas on paper, if this allows them to keep contracts with buyers. But that does not help the forests. Corporations know there is no enforcement mechanism to prevent illegal logging, so all marketable timber will end up at their mills anyway, at even less cost to them.

Eco-certification does nothing to correct this problem, nor does it enable communities to win land rights. Instead, certification greenwashes government and corporate land theft, and pays only lip service to communities.

So please, keep boycotting rainforest hardwoods, especially lauan (meranti), ramin, merbau, bangkirai and keruing of Malaysia and Indonesia.

That is why I have long admired the Borneo Project. For 13 years, the Project has worked steadily with communities who decide on a daily basis to say no to short term logging profits, choosing instead to protect and restore forests for the long term. With international support for their land mapping, indigenous rights defense, and community development initiatives, the "small is beautiful" approach gets the job done.

As Director, I want to maintain our support for the communities we have worked with for many years, as well as expand our support to more villages in need throughout Sarawak, Sabah, and Kalimantan.

It is really your support that makes this possible. Over the past ten years the Project has raised roughly \$780,000, with \$450,000 from individual donors and \$330,000 from foundations. One third is regranted directly to our partners, one third goes to trainings in Borneo, and the final third goes to research, outreach, program coordinating and administration.

In recent years, foundation support has decreased due to geographic restrictions that often exclude Malaysia. This makes the support of loyal and new members more important than ever. Please, tell a friend about the Borneo Project, and attend our raffle party on November 7 and craft sales on December 4 and 18.

Borneo's indigenous peoples are at the forefront of the crisis of cultural survival and forest protection, but even small acts of solidarity on our part make a difference.

Thank you again for your support.



Jessica Lawrence  
Director



## Micro-Hydro Project Coordinator Awarded *(Continued from first page)*

remembers former Director Wick Pancoast. "Little did he know that we were searching for a local project coordinator who could manage the technical and community development elements of the project." Adrian quickly assumed a leadership role and was largely responsible for carrying the project to successful completion.

Today, the Kenyah village of Long Lawen derives 10 kW of renewable electricity from a turbine powered by a small nearby stream. The system lights the village at night, allowing residents to work and study in the evening. During the day the system powers refrigerators and hand tools used for cottage industries.

Adrian is now coordinating construction of a second micro-hydro system in the village of Terian, an eight hour hike from Kota Kinabalu through the rainforest mountains of Crocker Range National Park. Project completion

is expected by the end of 2004.

Adrian's plans are ambitious. He intends to help seven communities build micro-hydro systems over the next three years. "These awards," he explained, "are a great motivation for me and PACOS to continue our struggle to achieve indigenous rights and environmental justice in Borneo. This award is also an achievement of the The Borneo Project and Green Empowerment."

In August, Adrian missed meeting the Malaysian Prime Minister during the Youth Humanitarian Award Ceremony, as he was in Redding, California, on scholarship with the Society for Conservation GIS. When he visited the Borneo Project after the training, he commented that though the meeting was a lost opportunity, it was more important to learn the skills to help communities over the long term. Congratulations, Adrian!

## Community Mapping

## High-tech Maps Define and Defend Ancestral Forests

By Daniel Scollon

*Daniel Scollon teaches Geography and Natural Resource Management at Shasta College in Redding, California.*

My trip to Borneo this August marked 10 years of volunteer work with the Borneo Project and its community mapping program. Over the decade, I've witnessed the mapping program evolve from sketch maps to compass and tape cartography, to the use of global positioning systems (GPS), and now to sophisticated digital maps using geographic information systems (GIS). This shift toward the high-tech may seem odd in the context of Borneo's isolated indigenous communities, but it is consistent with the ubiquitous technological changes that are penetrating the deep rainforests of Malaysian Borneo.

Known as an "Asian Tiger," Malaysia is on the development fast track—evidenced by sparkling new airports, stadiums, resorts, and malls. Cell phones, computers and a dizzying array of electronics are the norm today in urban areas, especially among youth. That technology dominates many aspects of Malaysian culture today should be no surprise given the growth of high-tech manufacturing throughout the country. However, it is still perplexing to reconcile the tech craze with the rural Dayak longhouses where time seems to stand still. It was to this land of dichotomy that I embarked to lead a series of GIS training sessions with indigenous partners.

As I settled into the rustic, open-air training center outside of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, I found myself pondering the ethics of promoting mapping technologies in the context of indigenous knowledge systems that are seemingly antithetical to the digital world. Would these technologies further undermine traditional cultures? Does training community members in GIS create a technocratic "class" that exacerbates divisions within the community?

My students in Sabah represented a range of tribal groups: Kadazan, Dusun, Murut and Sungai. Some had dabbled in GIS before. Others had limited exposure to mapping of any sort. A number of groups focused on mapping community lands in an attempt to derail plans for another massive oil palm plantation. Another group, the community-managed Kinabatangan Orangutan Conservation Program, wished to map village conservation zones and their research findings.

Despite the range of backgrounds, each participant plunged into the training, enthusiastically prodding, exploring and asking questions. I was somewhat surprised with the almost universal comfort with technology. I often encounter students in my California college classes who are tentative and easily frustrated working with computers. Not so with these folks. Did they share my reservations regarding the application of these technologies to their community efforts? Not a bit. Instead they viewed mapping as a critical tool that could elevate their efforts to defend customary lands and life ways.

Following the Sabah training, I traveled southwest to Sarawak where community mapping efforts are being under-



*Borneo mapping technicians Merin Rayong, Nicholas Mujah, Jetli Jelian and Mark Bujang (left to right) share skills and explore the power of computerized mapping at a recent Borneo Project training workshop.*

taken in the context of dramatic deforestation and forest conversion. I heard story after story of indigenous longhouse communities struggling against private and state-sponsored projects to convert their lands into plantations of oil palm and fast-growing exotics for pulp, such as acacia. Many other communities were actively protesting road and dam development on their lands.

A recent trend in Sarawak native land struggles has been to pursue legal action, making the case for customary land rights. Producing maps in this context is critical to show the extent of historic land use. As such, community mapping is being pursued with a marked sense of urgency. Since maps are legal instruments, the accuracy and methods of production are being scrutinized. One mapping technician told of being grilled on the stand for two days by plantation lawyers and government surveyors.

These demands have led to an imperative for mapping accuracy, adherence to standards and careful documentation of mapping initiatives. Despite government actions to outlaw community mapping efforts, which came on the heels of a major legal victory based on community-produced maps, native rights advocates and communities are optimistic that maps can help stem the flood of land encroachments.

After years of Borneo Project training and support, community mappers in Sarawak now produce high-quality GIS maps on their own. But the number of villages requesting mapping support far exceeds the human and financial resources of current community-mapping efforts. At the workshop we focused on creating a process that will standardize and increase the efficiency of current mapping activities. The meeting also offered a chance for participants from various organizations to collaborate and troubleshoot current obstacles.

Considering the innovation, drive and aptitude of mappers in Borneo, my questions *(continued on page 7)*

# Accomplishments of 2004

## Human Rights Update:

### Corporate Wrongdoing in Penan Cases

In two historic developments this year, Penan activists were vindicated in their struggle for human rights. First, activists from Long Sayan were offered US\$10,000 to drop their lawsuit against logging giant Rimbunan Hijau for wrongful imprisonment and mistreatment. Second, activists from Long Lunyim were relieved of false charges against them, as they continue to peacefully resist logging by Rimbunan Hijau and its subsidiaries. They are now considering pressing charges against the company and police for 8 days of wrongful imprisonment. Native rights lawyers from two Borneo Project partner organizations assisted with the cases.

### Second Micro-Hydro Project Nears Completion

Thanks to a \$15,000 completion grant from Seacology Foundation, the second community-owned and operated micro-hydro electrification project will be completed by the end of 2004. It will produce 6kW of clean, quiet, renewable electricity for 50 families. In return, the community has agreed to protect and restore the rainforests of the stream's headwaters, which were formerly used for shifting agriculture. This project is a joint venture including the village of Terian, Partners of Community Organizations (PACOS), the Borneo Project, and Green Empowerment.

### Community Mappers of Borneo Tour North America

In March, 2004, Adrian Lasimbang of Partners of Community Organizations (Sabah) and Mark Bujang of Borneo Resources Institute (Sarawak) gave presentations at the International Forum on Indigenous Mapping in Vancouver, Canada, to an audience of several hundred indigenous leaders and mapping technicians from around the world. After the Forum, Adrian and Mark spent a week in the San Francisco Bay Area, meeting with mapping experts from the City of Berkeley, the California Academy of Sciences, Indigenous Communities Mapping Initiative, and UC Berkeley. They also toured the restoration project of Strawberry Creek, and enjoyed speaking to Borneo Project supporters at a welcoming reception.

### Partnering for Community-Based Orangutan Conservation

Wild orangutans, found only in Borneo and Sumatra, face extinction within the decade due to extreme rates of habitat loss. Much of this is due to commercial logging and clearing for plantations, and impoverished local agriculturists exacerbate the problem. This tragedy is being actively resisted by concerned villagers of Sukau, Sabah. With the help of local and international groups, they have established the Kinabatangan Orangutan Conservation Project and Red Ape Encounters. This summer, Borneo Project volunteer Daniel Scollon trained villagers and staff how to map community protected forests, orangutan nesting sites, and key habitat characteristics. Borneo Project is now promoting ecotours to support their efforts-- see the back of newsletter for details.

### Legal Aid Grants

\*A \$30,000 grant from the Goldman Environmental Foundation facilitated by the Borneo Project is currently providing legal subsidies for more than a dozen indigenous communities fighting cases against the government, logging companies and plantation developers.

\*A \$4,000 grant from Global Greengrants enabled the procurement of the com-



Photo Credits from top: Ian Mackenzie (2), Borneo Project (2), BRIMAS.

# Borneo Project In Action

plete archives of the Current Malaysian Law Journal for a native rights legal resource library run by a Borneo Project partner.

*\*The Threshold Foundation has granted \$32,000 over the next two years to support community mapping and legal aid in Sarawak.*

## Equipment, Donations Boost Mapping Efforts

Contributions to the mapping program from friends of the Borneo Project in 2004 have surpassed \$10,000. Donations include seven GPS units with antennae, 15 compasses, two palm pilots for data collection, three cameras, and a laptop computer. Supporters at a Borneo Project reception for Adrian Lasimbang and Mark Bujang raised the \$3000 needed to purchase a complete set of topographic base maps of Borneo, and to cover the costs of a mapping skills exchange between PACOS and BRIMAS. Dr. Ken Wilson donated 60,000 frequent flyer miles, enabling mapping instructor Dan Scollon to travel to Borneo and lead two weeks of training workshops at very low cost. Thanks to all!

**Medical Supplies Reach Sabah Communities** Thanks to Zena Kruzick and friends, the Village Relief Foundation of Richmond, CA, coordinated donations of over \$1000 worth of medical samples and supplies to Borneo in March. Dr. Helen Lasimbang, accepted the donation on behalf of Penampang Paps and Mercy Malaysia. Dr. Helen and her team provide free emergency medical care, testing, and health education workshops to the most remote indigenous communities of the state. If you know of medical practitioners who may be interested in helping to make a difference, contact Zena via [www.villagerelief.org](http://www.villagerelief.org).

## Borneo Beadwork Celebrated

The April/May 2004 issue of Beadwork magazine featured the elaborate traditional beadwork of Sarawak, and highlighted Uma Bawang and the Borneo Project. Author Mary Ellen Harte of Berkeley recounts the fascinating cultural history of beads and beadwork in Borneo. To order the issue, go to [http://www.interweave.com/bead/beadwork\\_magazine/back\\_issues/04\\_04.asp](http://www.interweave.com/bead/beadwork_magazine/back_issues/04_04.asp)

## Upcoming Crafts Sales: Dec. 4 and 18, 2004

Beautiful handmade crafts from Borneo longhouses and nomadic communities will be celebrated at two holiday season sales: December 4 at Bay Home Furnishings, 1717 4th St. in Berkeley, and December 18 at Cafe de la Paz, Shattuck Ave, Berkeley. Mark your calendars to buy great gifts that support indigenous livelihood and rainforests!

## Partners' Wish List

Our partners in Borneo seek the following items, new or gently used, to improve their mapping services to communities.

**GPS Units:** Garmin 12XL with antennae: 4

**Digital Cameras:** 3

**USB Keys:** 3

**Palm Pilots:** 6

**Laptop computers:** 4

**Digitizing Tablet (42"):** 3

**Camping equipment for forest boundary mapping:** hammock tents, mosquito net tents, LED headlamps, cookstoves and raingear.

## What Your Donation Can Do

**\$1000** allows a community to create participatory sketch maps of their customary land boundaries, then receive technical training to turn their drawings into computer maps with satellite-determined coordinates. These maps are crucial to win court cases that help communities protect their forests, farms and rivers.

**\$500** enables our partner organizations to travel to remote indigenous villages to conduct workshops on human rights and land rights guaranteed by international law and the Malaysian constitution. These workshops also form the basis for grassroots organizing networks, where communities coordinate strategies amongst themselves and with legal advisors.

**\$250** allows us to donate a Geographic Positioning System (GPS) unit to enable partner communities to document coordinates of boundaries and sacred sites.

**\$50** allows a Penan women's group to buy seeds and tools for their newly established community gardens. Though they prefer forest produce, logging has degraded the resource base, requiring a difficult shift to sedentary agriculture. The gardens increase children's nutrition and prevent overharvesting of remaining forest resources.

**Frequent flyer miles:** 60,000 miles allows a Borneo activist to attend trainings and speaking tours in the US, or it allows a US volunteer to join efforts or offer skills trainings in Borneo.

## Citizen Diplomacy

# Sister City Delegates Revisit Keluan, with New Eyes

By Joe Lamb, Borneo Project Founder

For an arborist, loving trees is a job requirement, and I was first drawn to Borneo because I love trees. That was over 12 years ago. At that time, the international media was overflowing with woe about the destruction of the rainforests and the displacement of indigenous peoples. It was the worst kind of news, the kind that carries both a sense of urgency and a sense that nothing can be done. But, like many of my friends, I refused to believe that solutions didn't exist. So I considered myself blessed when the opportunity opened to travel as a kind of eco-ambassador from the city-state of Berkeley to the longhouse people of Keluan, who were blockading logging roads in the interior of Borneo.

Trees drew me to the rainforest, but it was the rainforest people that have kept me coming back. I would have never thought, the first time I struggled up the muddy bank of the Baram River, half fearing arrest, not knowing if I was at the right longhouse, that I would be coming back over a decade later with my wife Anna and our two-year-old daughter, Carson, in tow. We were also accompanied by Borneo Project Director Jessica Lawrence and long-time Project volunteer John Paisley.

Much has changed in the dozen years between those trips. The Borneo Project has grown from a couple of dreamers into an international network of supporters who take great pride in the remarkable successes of our indigenous partners in Borneo. Imagine my great pleasure when our sister citizens from Keluan took my family to a young forest and pointed out the many different species of trees. Here's a tree that produces the nuts that wild boars eat. Here's a type of ironwood that withstands decomposition even in Borneo's constant rain. Here's the legendary durian tree, which bears the overwhelmingly pungent emperor of fruits.

This entire forest was planted by our sister citizens on a hillside that I had seen denuded by commercial logging ten years before. Trees grow fast in the rainforest, with the right conditions. With careful topsoil management, and constant clearing of vines and weeds, it is possible to restore the forests. It is possible to create positive change. And our partners in Borneo, with our help, have created a great deal of positive change.

Thousands of people have learned how to map their lands in order to protect them. We've won court cases against seemingly impossible odds. And our sister community of Keluan has received global recognition for their efforts at building a sustainable future, including the Slow Food Award, the Conde Naste Environmental Award, and the UN Equator Initiative Prize. With a map created in a Borneo Project workshop, Keluan had won government recognition to protect their community rainforest-- partly intact, partly logged-- from further encroachment by logging and plantation development. In little over a decade, the seeds of change that were planted and carefully tended have grown into strong trees.

I hope Carson's generation cares about trees and about people who live close to trees. As a two year old,

she is off to a good start. She is a consummate ambassador. In Borneo's towns, complete strangers would ask to have their picture taken with her. She charmed people in the longhouse by eating everything, including python, and by learning the first moves of the hornbill dance. A two year old's best ambassadorial quality is her complete oblivion to cultural barriers. (This characteristic is not without discomfort to her parents.)

The day we left the longhouse, most of us had slept maybe an hour the previous night. Our friends at Keluan had treated Anna and I to a 'Two Pig Wedding', in which we played the roles of traditional Kayan bride and groom (you can imagine how the giggles became raucous laughter as the 24-hour celebration progressed). Anna and I were able to escape the all-night competition in drinking, singing, and dancing only because of Carson needing sleep.

In the morning, our party looked more pale than usual as we bumped and fishtailed our way down the logging road. We were standing in the back of the land cruiser, on our way to a logging camp, where we were to pick up a motorized dugout canoe that would take us back down-river. The logging camp consisted of a shack, an eroded hillside, and acres of log piles-- the remains of trees that were once part of the world's oldest and most diverse rainforest. But no boat or boat driver. I became concerned upon learning that the boat driver was one of the loudest singers and most spectacular dancers at the party the night before. He had supposedly taken his boat downriver to buy gas shortly before dawn, but as could be expected, we had hours to wait, and many missed connections.

The sun was unbearably bright, and the only shade was under the piles of huge logs or on the veranda of the loggers' shack. After twenty minutes in the scorching heat of the logyard, we

*(continued on page 7)*



Berkeley's youngest Sister-City Ambassador, two-year old Carson Lamb greets Keluan resident Do Jau, as Obong Jau looks on.

## Nomads Unite in Complex Struggle for Rights *(Continued from first page)*

was this: in Sarawak, customary land rights are, in theory, guaranteed for indigenous inhabitants by the Malaysian constitution. However, this has been interpreted to refer only to cultivated lands, not to forests used by tribes that left little to no discernable impact over hundreds of generations.

As logging giants Samling and Limbang Trading continue to push the extractive frontier towards the Indonesian border, the few remaining bands of nomadic Penan are struggling to stave off logging of the forests that sustain them. In the past few decades, deforestation has forced over 90 percent of Penan to settle, abandoning their nomadic lifestyle. Worsening poverty has been the result in most cases.

After years of international outcry at rainforest destruction and human rights violations, the Sarawak government was finally shamed into declaring a "draft Penan Biosphere Reserve", an offensively small area that has not been effectively closed to logging. The proposed reserve would provide only enough territory for *one* band of nomads, and it would force dozens of others into cultural extinction, as their forests are logged this decade.

In response to this dire situation, ten nomadic bands enlisted the help of Borneo Resources Institute (BRIMAS) to map land claims and file a joint lawsuit against the government and logging companies.

After one year of mapping, in which teams of GPS technicians trek through the jungle with bands to demarcate boundaries and sacred sites, BRIMAS attended the meeting to explain the mapping process and legal options.

At the meeting, women, men and youth openly debated the issue of overlapping claims. They worried that alloca-

tion of jointly-used mountainsides to just one band or another would leave everyone more vulnerable to companies trying to buy off leaders one by one to break the strength of the court case. But designating the overlaps as jointly claimed was also problematic: the courts reject maps with overlaps as being "confusing". Thus the nomads' fluid relationships with the land and with each other are being forced into the static framework of private property. But they understand they must engage with the system.

The outcome of the meeting was remarkable. After days and nights of non-stop negotiations, facilitated primarily by elder Along Sega, the bands agreed that certain hillsides could be said to "belong" to one band or another on official maps, as long as it was agreed that each could continue to use the areas of the others unimpeded. All agreed that there would be absolutely no negotiations with loggers. Instead, they want maps to be finalized, and the court case, which demands an immediate cease of logging in their claimed areas, to proceed as quickly as possible.

It remains worrisome whether making official maps of boundaries between bands will cause future problems. Use rights were traditionally negotiated through barter and face-to-face discussions. If today's maps are misinterpreted as static, the ability of future generations of nomads to determine land use in traditional ways could be threatened by an imposing legal system. Yet logging is causing such acute threats to Penan cultural survival that they are consciously setting aside concerns over potential future conflicts in order to save the forests for themselves, and their children's children.

## Sister-city Delegation Sees Forests of Hope *(Continued from page 6)*

moved up to the veranda. John and our guides were soon stretched out, sleeping off the rice wine hangovers. Carson's mosquito bites had become red blotches the size of quarters. She was sweating and itchy. It wasn't long before little walks to look at butterflies, even the fantastic black-with-electric-green Brooke butterflies, were no distraction from discomfort.

Ignoring her father's unease about loggers-- would they be hostile to a group from Keluan? Carson plunged right in to the relative cool of the loggers' shack, and instantly befriended the loggers' children. Soon all were playing with newborn kittens, and the ice was broken. Jessica, who speaks Bahasa, unraveled the loggers' sto-

ries. They were immigrants from Indonesian Borneo, here to escape severe poverty and unemployment, with little luck. But they are part of the rainforest community as well, driven by market dynamics to destroy the forests of neighboring tribes. In Indonesia, it is the same story in reverse, with Malaysians illegally logging there. Without legal rights to manage land or trees, local communities struggle, too often in vain, to protect the land that is their livelihood as well as our collective global heritage.

I feel great gratitude to the people of Borneo for having so enriched my life. I trust that when Carson returns to Borneo as a young woman, the durian trees of Keluan will be bearing fruit.

## Mapping Training Supports Land Protection *(Continued from page 3)*

of technical mapping in the context of indigenous cultures seem moot. Mapping is now embraced by communities across Malaysian Borneo. In a place ravaged by extractive industries, maps provide hope. The simple act of depicting one's homeland as familiar terrain with names and stories passed down from great grandparents instills confidence. The map becomes a statement in itself that a place and its people are worthy of respect and careful consideration. And while even the simplest sketch maps of village lands are valid unto themselves, GIS maps help translate local depictions into the dominant language of power.

On the last day of my trip, one of the few local lawyers courageous enough to represent native communities wearily explained the difficulty of juggling multiple cases in the context of red-tape and stall tactics used by corporate lawyers. Driving toward the airport, past regal mansions built with the spoils of Sarawak's timber trade, I was left to wonder if the rule of law would trump the corrupting influence of extractive wealth. Reflecting on the good-natured and tenacious motivation of my Dayak friends, I hold out cautious optimism that the inherent values of land and culture will someday be honored by those in power.

## Join the efforts in Borneo! Service & Ecotour Options 2005

- \* **Search the forests** for wild fruits and seeds to restock Penan **reforestation** nurseries.
- \* **Build a new traditional longhouse** at Berkeley's Sister City of Keluan.
- \* **Install micro-hydro** electrification systems in the remote rainforest mountains of Terian, Sabah.
- \* **Establish a shortwave radio** network for the nomadic Penan bands of Sarawak.
- \* Help our partners **document community and campaign news** with press releases and articles.
- \* View wild **orangutans**, pygmy **elephants**, and **proboscis monkeys**, while supporting the best community-based ecotourism in Borneo.

**Red Ape Encounters**, run by the village of Sukau in the Kinabatangan Wildlife Reserve of Sabah, offers unbeatable wildlife viewing tours, and is the only outfit that provides significant benefits to local people working to save Borneo's most endangered mammals.

\* **Swim with endangered whale sharks.** These gentle giants migrate into the bay of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah every winter. Ecologically sensitive boat tours by local fishermen allow visitors to dive or snorkel with them.

\* **Dive the world's most spectacular coral reefs**, climb through cloud forests to summit sacred **Mount Kinabalu**, and help conserve these remarkable ecosystems. Borneo Project partner PACOS of Sabah will help you plan an unforgettable visit to their homeland, making sure your impacts will be ecologically and socially positive.



**Contact The Borneo Project  
for more information.**

*The Borneo Project supports local initiatives for human rights, rainforest protection and community development through small grants, equipment donations, educational outreach, technical training, & citizen diplomacy.*

For more information contact us at:

**The Borneo Project • 1771 Alcatraz Avenue • Berkeley, CA 94703 USA**  
**510.547.4258 • 510.547.4259 (fax) • borneo@earthisland.org • www.borneoproject.org**



<b>Nomadic Penan Decide Land Mapping Strategy.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Borneo Project Partner Wins Conservation Award.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Letter from the Director.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mapping Training Success.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Borneo News Flash!</b> Accomplishments and news highlights of 2004.....	<b>4-5</b>
<b>Berkeley Sister City Delegation</b> Project Founder reflects on recent visit to Keluan.....	<b>6</b>

*Coming down the Wire...*

**The Borneo Project**  
of Earth Island Institute  
1771 Alcatraz Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94703

