

FOREST CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN LAMPUNG PROTECTED AREAS

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ABSTRACT

The government has implemented the Conservation Partnership scheme as an effort to resolve land conflicts in conservation areas. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Conservation Partnership in Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Wan Abdul Rachman Forest Park. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The results show that the implementation of the Conservation Partnership in Cilimus Village has changed the relationship between the local community and the forest park management from land tenure conflict to a cooperative relationship through the recognition of land management access. The partnership involves the direct participation of the community in land management, supported by the institutional role of Forest Farmer Groups and the application of an agroforestry system, with 21 Forest Farmer Groups holding access permits, consisting of 2 KTH Main Class and 19 KTH Intermediate Class, involving 512 households and a total management area of approximately 790.94 ha. Community development is carried out through the use of non-timber forest products as sources of livelihood, including post-harvest processing activities largely undertaken by women's groups, as well as the involvement of group members in forest patrols and conservation activities. On the other hand, the implementation of the partnership still faces several challenges, including dependence on middlemen for product marketing, low involvement of younger generations in farming activities, land area adjustments within permit arrangements, and the administrative burden of economic reporting experienced by some elderly group members.

Keywords: *Agroforestry; Conservation Forest; Institutional Structure; Non-Timber Forest Products; Tenurial Conflict.*

INTRODUCTION

The management of conservation areas in Indonesia is often faced with challenges, especially related to the high interaction of people living in and around forest areas (Safitri *et al.*, 2023). The management approach, which used to be less involving the community, has proven to be ineffective and often causes tension in the relationship between the community and the manager. This condition encourages the need for a new approach that places communities not as threats, but as partners in the management of conservation areas, both to maintain the ecological function of forests and to support the sustainability of their livelihoods (Situmorang *et al.*, 2022).

The pattern of determining conservation areas in Indonesia is generally carried out unilaterally without public consultation and participation, so it often causes conflicts and ignores the rights of local communities (Wibowo, 2024). These tensions generally arise as tenure conflicts that

are rooted in the division of land access and the use of natural resources. Unclear boundaries of forest areas in the past, coupled with the pressure of economic needs, often encourage communities to encroach or use land without following applicable procedures (Zulfidda *et al.*, 2024). This condition has an impact on both parties. On the one hand, forest areas have experienced a decline in quality due to uncontrolled management, while on the other hand, communities live in legal uncertainty and continue to be in the shadow of sanctions (Nuraeny *et al.*, 2023).

The government strengthens the legal basis for conservation management through Law No. 32 of 2024 as an amendment to Law No. 5 of 1990 (Octastefani *et al.*, 2024). The settlement of community activities in nature conservation areas is facilitated through the Conservation Partnership scheme (Kemitraan Konservasi). The scheme arrangement was updated through the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number 14 of 2023. This provision regulates the community's legal access to the sustainable and sustainable use of the traditional zone of conservation areas (Tresiana *et al.*, 2023).

The implementation of Conservation Partnerships is very important at Wan Abdul Rachman Forest Park (Taman Hutan Raya Wan Abdul Rachman/Tahura WAR), Lampung Province. This area has a long history of tenure conflicts due to the high dependence of buffer communities on cultivated land in the area (Mufidah *et al.*, 2024). Forest Farmer Group Association community forest system Lestari (Gabungan Kelompok Tani Hutan Sistem Hutan Kerakyatan Lestari/Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari) It is one of the important subjects to see the effectiveness of this scheme, especially in changing the behavior of the community from encroachers to managing partners. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Conservation Partnerships in Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Tahura WAR.

METHODS

This research was carried out in August-December 2025 in the management area of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Tahura WAR. Member of Forest Farmers Group (Kelompok Tani Hutan/KTH) who are members of Gapoktanhut live in Cilimus Village, Teluk Pandan District, Pesawaran Regency, Lampung Province. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Informants were selected by purposive sampling based on direct involvement in the implementation of the Conservation Partnership, namely: Chairman of Gapoktanhut (1 person); Village Head (1 person); Chairman of KTH (5 people); community members (5 people); Regional Technical Implementation Unit of the Wan Abdul Rachman Forest Park Conservation Forest Management Unit (3 people); and WALHI (3 people). All the data obtained were then analyzed to examine the implementation of the Conservation Partnership in Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Tahura WAR.

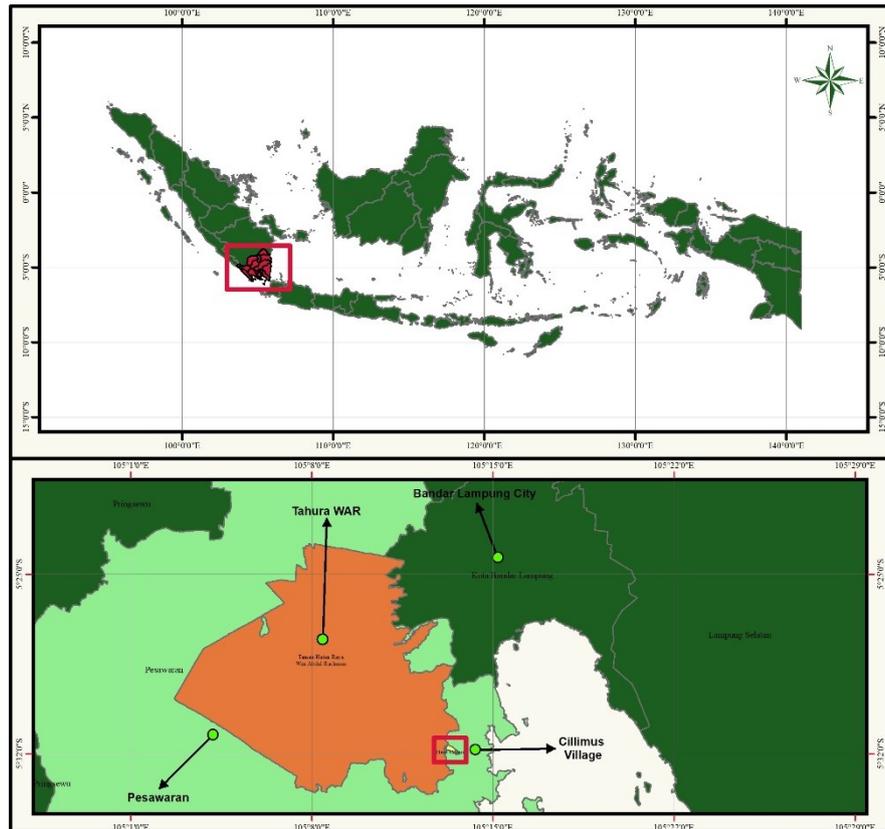


Figure 1. Map of Research Location

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 History of Land Management in Forest Parks by Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari

The Gunung Betung area was designated as a protected forest during the colonial period through Lampung Resident *Besluit* Number 307 of 1941. After Indonesia's independence, the status of the area was reaffirmed through the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number 67/Kpts-II/1991 dated January 31, 1991 concerning the Forest Management Plan of Lampung Province. Furthermore, the status was upgraded to a Great Forest Park in 1993 through the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number 408/Kpts-II/1993, and strengthened through the determination of the boundaries of the Tahura WAR area administratively in 1999 (Lampung Provincial Forestry Office, 2019). These conditions were conveyed by the informant as follows:

"From the past, many people have lived in locations that were then unaware of the public as state forest areas. One of them is the people of Cilimus Village who depend on their lives not only to make a living, but also to make the protected forest area of Mount Betung a place to live that has been inhabited for decades."

During the New Order period, forest management was carried out with a security approach that placed the state as the dominant actor and viewed the community as a threat to forest areas. This approach is oriented towards the clearing of the area and securing state assets, and tends to ignore public security. The control of the Tahura WAR area is carried out through Forest patrols (Jagawana), which is the activity of securing conservation areas by forestry officials who are oriented towards clearing the area from residents' activities. This practice has an impact on the loss of housing and livelihood of the community. The impact was also conveyed by the informant:

"When the community is down, they are confused because they not only lose their homes above, but also lose their activities and livelihoods."

This is in line with studies conducted by Amadeo and Wardoyo (2022), Setiawan *et al.* (2024) which show that this approach focuses more on controlling physical areas than protecting communities. Policy implementation is carried out through control operations and clearing of areas, including eviction of people.

In 1997, Indonesia's political conditions underwent reforms that had an impact on weakening state control over forest areas and increasing pressure on the economic needs of the communities around Tahura WAR. The encouragement for legal recognition and legal access to the community in this period was the background for the formation of the People's Forest System Support Consortium (Konsorsium Pendukung Sistem Hutan Kerakyatan/KP-SHK) in 1997 consisting of non-governmental organizations, researchers, indigenous peoples' organizations, and individuals, with one of the programs carried out at Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari as a form of motivational support to the community to be involved in the preservation of the area. In the same period, through the collaboration of P3AE-UI, THE NGO WATALA, and the University of Lampung, the establishment and institutional strengthening of community groups in the Tahura buffer villages were carried out as well as facilitating access to management through the Community Forest Utilization License (Izin Usaha Pemanfaatan Hutan Kemasyarakatan/IUPHKm). Based on the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number 677/Kpts-II/1998 concerning Community Forests, IUPHKm in Tahura was given to KPPH Sumber Agung as an initial form of providing access to community management in the area. According to Sari (2024), the Reform period is the initial milestone of agrarian reform that opens up space for the rearrangement of community access to forest areas, including through forest use permits as part of *asset reform*.

In 2000, with the issuance of Lampung Provincial Regulation Number 7 of 2000 concerning the Levy of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) Collection Permits in forest areas which was applied to all NTFPs in all areas, including Tahura WAR, every use of NTFPs by farmers was subject to a levy. The imposition of a levy on the use of NTFPs by farmers indirectly shows the recognition of their existence and activities in the forest area. Furthermore, in 2004, the Minister of Forestry Regulation No. 1 on Local Community Empowerment in the framework of Social Forestry was issued which referred to Government Regulation Number 34 of 2002 but did not provide clarity on the status of the area and legal access to the community, then it was amended through Government Regulation Number 7 of 2007 which opened the possibility of granting IUPHKm to certain conservation areas. However, through the Minister of Finance Regulation Number P.37/Menhut-II/2007, it is emphasized that the working area of HKm can only be determined in protected forest areas and production forests so that IUPHKm in Tahura WAR cannot be continued. The Lampung Provincial Government subsequently continued to refer to Regional Regulation Number 7 of 2000 as the basis for recognition of its use by the community, but in 2009 the central government canceled various Regional Regulations related to levies in line with the issuance of Law Number 28 of 2009 concerning Regional Taxes and Regional Levies so that the Regional Regulation could no longer be used as a basis for legal access for the community in Tahura WAR. As explained by Ariza *et al.* (2023), the Community Forest (HKm) scheme is a form of state forest utilization aimed at community empowerment and is generally applied to protected forest areas,

Despite the lack of legal certainty for the community to work in the Tahura WAR area, the Provincial Forestry Office is still committed to providing support for the facilitation of strengthening community groups under the name Collaborative Forest Management with the Community (Pengelolaan Hutan Bersama Masyarakat/PHBM), one of them is in Gapoktan SHK Lestari. In practice, PHBM in the management area of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Tahura WAR is manifested in cultivator data collection activities, regulation of the use of NTFPs, and community involvement in rehabilitation and area security activities. In the period around 2005–2010, the management of the area was directed through PHBM as a form of fostering and regulating community activities without providing formal legality in the form of management access, cooperation agreements, or memorandums of understanding. This is in line with Harya *et al.* (2024) which explains that PHBM is a forest resource management

system that emphasizes collaboration between forest managers and the surrounding community through forest village community institutions to optimize the use of forest resources and maintain the preservation of the area together. In this scheme, community involvement is directed at participation in the management and protection of forest areas to achieve common interests between managers and communities. as explained by Wandira *et al.* (2020) The coaching-based management pattern has not necessarily been accompanied by legal recognition of the community's cultivated land, so that the position of community management remains in a situation of legal uncertainty.

In these uncertain conditions, the local government together with academics, NGOs, and the private sector studied opportunities through the Minister of Finance Regulation Number P.19/Menhut-II/2004 concerning Collaboration in the Management of Nature Reserve Areas and Nature Conservation Areas as a basis for opening legal access space for the community in the area. This process then prompted the birth of Lampung Provincial Regulation Number 3 of 2012 concerning Collaborative Management of Tahura WAR which aims to strengthen collaboration between parties in supporting legal access and strengthening community institutions, even though these regulations have not been effectively operationalized as a basis for providing administrative access. Despite the lack of legal certainty for the cultivation of the community in Tahura WAR during that period. In this situation of uncertainty of legal access, Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari continues to receive support from the government and other parties, especially local NGOs, as part of efforts to maintain the sustainability of community-based area management. According to Mangkunegara *et al.* (2024) Overlapping policies have the potential to create unclear legal access for management groups at the site level. This condition makes the success of implementation highly dependent on coordination between agencies and the support of the parties. Lack of policy synchronization and poor understanding of the division of roles among stakeholders are the main factors that hinder the implementation of the program, so the support of the government and civil society organizations plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of community-based forest management.

The turning point of certainty of regulations that regulate the sustainability of cultivation by communities in the Tahura WAR area based on the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number 83 of 2016 concerning Social Forestry has become a reference for national policies in providing legal access to forest management to the community through various schemes, including Forestry Partnerships. The Conservation Partnership is part of the Forestry Partnership scheme that is implemented specifically in conservation areas. The technical provisions for the implementation of Conservation Partnerships in that period are regulated through the Director General of KSDAE Number P.6/2018 as the basis for regulating access to community management in conservation areas. In line with that, Utami *et al.* (2020) explained that land management in Tahura WAR is carried out through the involvement and empowerment of the community around the forest, including efforts to provide legal access to land use to improve welfare and support the success of area management.

The granting of legality of access in Tahura WAR began in stages in November 2021 through the issuance of the Decree of the Minister of Environment and Forestry to the first batch of 17 Forest Farmer Groups (KTH). The legality was issued in several stages, namely on November 1 (1 KTH), November 3 (1 KTH), November 5 (2 KTH), November 9 (4 KTH), November 22 (1 KTH), and November 26, 2021 (8 KTH). Regionally, the first wave includes 10 KTH in Kedondong and Way Lima Districts which are members of Gapoktanhut Manunggal Sejahtera and 7 KTH in Padang Cermin District, with a total area of around ±733.36 hectares and involving 689 heads of families with an institutional classification of 15 KTH in the Intermediate class and 2 KTH in the First class. The legalization process continues in 2022 through the issuance of the Decree of the Director General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation (KSDAE) dated October 25, 2022 to 17 KTH of the second wave, which includes 9 KTH in Padang Cermin District, including those who are members of Gapoktanhut SHK PBL, and 8 KTH in the Bogorejo Village area, with an area of around ±662.17 hectares for 513 heads of families and a variation of institutional class 1 KTH Beginner class, 14 KTH in

Intermediate class, and 2 KTH in Primary class. The next stage is marked by the issuance of the Decree of the Director General of KSDAE dated December 31, 2024 to a total of 43 new KTH, which is the basis for the implementation of the Conservation Partnership by Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Cilimus Village. At the beginning of 2025, as many as 21 KTH in Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari will obtain formal legality through the signing of a Cooperation Agreement (Naskah Perjanjian Kerja Sama/PKS) Conservation Partnership with an area of around ±790.94 hectares involving 512 families, with an institutional composition of 19 Intermediate class KTH and 2 First class KTH (Lampung Provincial Forestry Office, 2025).

3.2 Implementation of Conservation Partnership at Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Wan Abdul Rachman Forest Park

The implementation of Conservation Partnerships in Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari takes place through a long and layered administrative process, guided by the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number 83 of 2016 concerning Social Forestry as a regulation of forest management schemes by the community, as well as the Regulation of the Director General of KSDAE Number P.6/KSDAE/SET/KUM.1/12/2018 concerning Technical Guidelines for Conservation Partnerships as operational guidelines in nature conservation areas. Provisions related to the arrangement of community activities in conservation areas also refer to the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number 14 of 2023 concerning the Completion of Businesses and/or Built Activities in Nature Reserves, Nature Conservation Areas, and Hunting Parks which regulates the completion of activities that have taken place in conservation areas without changing the main functions of the area. This legality flow also follows the provisions of Law Number 32 of 2024 concerning Amendments to Law Number 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems as the legal basis for the management of conservation areas. The stages that are taken systematically start from the formation of the Forest Farmers Group (KTH), followed by the registration process by the Head of the Forestry Office (Kadishut), submission of a Conservation Partnership proposal, and Technical Verification which must be passed more than once until it leads to the signing of the Conservation Partnership PKS Script. According to Jamaluddi (2025), one of the crucial stages in the process is technical verification, namely the field assessment stage used by the government to ensure the suitability between the application data and the condition of the proposed area. In the study, technical verification was carried out to check the boundaries of the area, the use of space, and the suitability of documents with biophysical conditions in the field, and the results became the basis for the authorities in determining the approval or rejection of the application. The condition of the length of this bureaucratic process was conveyed by the informant as follows:

"From Social Forestry to Conservation Partnerships, the process is long. From P.83 in 2016 to the Director General of KSDAE in 2018, it took almost two years. After that, there are still technical verifications, including two verifications by Satlak Wasdal. Until now, the community is still waiting for the submission of the Conservation Partnership approval that has been administratively issued, but it has not been submitted for ceremonial reasons."

In the technical verification process, the determination of detailed area boundaries is carried out through field inspections by taking coordinate points using a Global Positioning System (GPS) device. The coordinate point is then the basis for determining the suitability of the location and area of the proposed management area, and is used in determining the boundaries of the Conservation Partnership area outlined in the administrative documents and the Conservation Partnership PKS Script. According to Pradipta *et al.* (2025) GPS is a satellite-based navigation technology that works by processing signals to accurately determine position.

The implementation of the Conservation Partnership in the management area of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Tahura WAR shows a change in the pattern of cooperative relations between the state and the community in the management of forest areas. The sustainability of this

program is supported by the recovery of public trust after a period of conflict. The recovery is reflected in the community's willingness to follow the applicable provisions and take care of administration so that cultivators' activities obtain legal recognition. Based on the documentation data of UPTD KPHK Tahura WAR (Table 1), the seriousness of the community is reflected in the achievement of legality and the area of management area agreed as follows.

Table 1. Implementation Achievements: Institutional, Legality, and Managed Area by Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari

No	Achievement Indicators	Results Achieved	Description
1	Level of Legality	100% (21 KTH Units)	The Conservation Partnership Cooperation Agreement (PKS) with Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari is set for January 30, 2025.
2	Institutional Quality	2 KTH Main Class (Kelas Utama); 19 KTH Intermediate Class (Kelas Madya)	Showing a good level of maturity of the group organization according to the assessment of the extension worker.
3	Total Area of Management Area	± 790.94 hectares	It is an accumulation of the total area of the Conservation Partnership approval area at 21 KTH.
4	Beneficiaries	512 households	The number of heads of families in Cilimus Village who are members of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari and are actively involved as members of the Conservation Partnership.

Source: Progress of UPTD KPHK Tahura WAR Report August 2025

The Conservation Partnership in Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari involves 21 KTH, 512 Heads of Families, and a management area of ± 790 ha which is regulated through the Conservation Partnership PKS Script. The data shows that the implementation of the Conservation Partnership in the management area of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Tahura WAR runs through the formation of group institutions and the regulation of land management access. This achievement reflects success in the aspects of legality and administration. Prasetya *et al.* (2023) states that the existence of partnership and group institutional documents does not directly guarantee the implementation of conservation obligations in the field. The results of this study show that the legality of PKS provides certainty of access for the community in managing land. The technical implementation of management and economic benefits is still taking place in stages.

The implementation of the Conservation Partnership at Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari is a continuation of the long process of land management by the community that took place without legal recognition of management access. Management activities in that period were within the framework of informal coaching and arrangements, without providing legality of access. Land management practices are not free, but are limited by provisions governing activities within forest areas, including restrictions on the existence of permanent settlements. This provision gradually forms awareness among the community about their position as managers who coexist with the forest ecosystem, not as owners of space. This pattern of awareness is in line with the findings Wicaksono *et al.* (2022) which shows that sustainable natural resource management practices within local communities are often underpinned by self-regulatory mechanisms and internal values that place nature as an entity to be respected. In practice at Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari, this value is reflected in the implementation of the planting substitution rule, where every plant utilization is required to be accompanied by replanting with a larger amount as a form of collective responsibility for the preservation of the area.

In the institutional aspect, the community is gathered in the Forest Farmers Group (KTH) which is then a member of the Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari. The formation of these groups is not only to meet administrative requirements, but also serves as a mechanism of social supervision at the group level. The planning process is carried out in a participatory manner, namely by conducting gatherings (*meetings*) at predetermined locations, where the community is directly involved in area mapping, block determination, and preparation of management plans. Anwar dan Farhaby (2022) explained that community participation in forest management must be placed from the planning stage, where the community is actively involved in the preparation of plans, implementation, utilization, and monitoring, so that the community functions as a subject of forest resource management.

At the implementation stage, the Conservation Partnership is carried out through a change in cultivation pattern from a monoculture system to agroforestry. The community is directed to carry out *enrichment planting* with a target density of 400 stems per hectare. The implementation of this provision has not been the same in all KTH. In the field, some coffee farmers consider that planting high-crowned plants with this density can interfere with the growth and yield of coffee plants which are the main source of livelihood. Differences in land conditions and farming patterns between groups also affect the implementation of these provisions, so their implementation is not always easy. This condition is in line with the findings Syahputra *et al.* (2022) In a similar forest rehabilitation program, which shows that enrichment activities with an average of about 400 trunks per hectare tend to have a low growth success rate if not supported by adequate maintenance.

Commodities such as Nutmeg (*Myristica fragrans Houtt*), Durian (*Durio zibethinus*), Petai (*Parkia speciosa Hassk*), Pecan (*Aleurites moluccana*), Cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*), Coffee (*Coffea robusta*), Cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*), Rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*), jengkol (*Archidendron pauciflorum*), avocado (*Persea americana*) and others were chosen because they are in accordance with the ecological conditions of the region and still provide medium and long-term income potential for the community. According to Rosanti *et al.* (2020) This technical implementation does not stand alone, but is supported by the institutional strengthening of farmer groups as regulators and supervisors at the internal level. In line with Larasati *et al* (2021) Farmer group institutions play an important role as a means of internal regulation and supervision in community-based forest management.

Agroforestry is understood by the community as a form of utilizing forest areas that still provide economic space without being exploitative. Communities are allowed to benefit from NTFPs' resources, such as fruits, sap, and plant seeds, while logging is not allowed. This utilization pattern is seen as able to provide sources of income in different periods of time and reduce dependence on one type of commodity. This perspective places agroforestry as a management strategy that combines the interests of conservation and the sustainability of people's livelihoods. These field findings are in line with Syafarman *et al.* (2024) which explains that agroforestry not only functions as an instrument of conservation, but also as a support for the community's economy. In addition, in the study Adelia *et al.* (2024) shows that the use of NTFPs allows people to obtain more stable income because the source of income does not rest on one commodity alone.

Although permanent settlements within forest areas are abolished, communities are still given access to manage the land that has been agreed. The access is not used as a residence, but is limited to land management activities such as planting, maintenance, and harvesting. To support these activities, the community is allowed to set up temporary work huts. According to Bisjoe *et al.* (2023) The existence of a work hut functions as a place to rest and store equipment, as well as a marker of the boundary between living space and management space. With this arrangement, community activities in forest areas can take place in a controlled manner and are easier to supervise by the state. According to the informant:

"By eliminating the settlement, the community is still given access to set up work huts. Settlements no longer exist, but they can be replaced by work huts that are smaller in size and easier to control by the state."

In addition to the provisions for access to management, the implementation of the Conservation Partnership also places the community as the main actor in the restoration of forest areas. In areas that are considered to have been damaged, the community is required to plant high-title plants through agroforestry patterns. This obligation is not only administrative, but is carried out directly by the community as part of the management of the area. Area restoration is understood as an effort to restore forest function through the replanting of high-crown plants, accompanied by community involvement in patrol and area security activities. This pattern of involvement shows that the responsibility for restoration and protection of the area is attached to the active role of the community as a manager, in line with the findings Hadianti *et al.* (2025) which emphasizes the importance of direct community involvement in partnership-based forest area rehabilitation.

The implementation of the Conservation Partnership also provides environmental services that are directly felt by the community, especially related to water availability and the use of microhydro energy. For the community, the existence of microhydro is not only understood as a small-scale source of electricity, but also as a marker of the environmental condition of the region. Stable water flow and the functioning of microhydro are perceived as an indication that forest cover around water sources is still maintained, while a decrease in water discharge is understood as a signal of disturbance to the function of forest areas. This understanding is formed through the direct experience of the community in managing and utilizing the area. The field findings are in line with Shofiyah *et al.* (2023) which explains that microhydro is a small-scale power plant that relies heavily on the stability of discharge and the height of water drop. In addition, Helida *et al.* (2023) It shows that changes in water discharge are often used as a simple indicator to assess the condition of forest cover, where the stability of water flow reflects the ecological function of the area that is still preserved.

The successful implementation of the Conservation Partnership in the management area of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari is greatly influenced by the institutional capacity of KTH in managing the area that has been legally agreed. Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari acts as a coordination forum that organizes the management of the area into KTH units, so that the division of management and supervision responsibilities can run more structured. Each KTH has clear boundaries of management and membership as the basis for implementing land management and area protection. This organization ensures that partnerships do not stop at the administrative aspect, but are carried out in management practices at the site level. Details regarding the group name, institutional classification, Cooperation Agreement number, area of management, and number of members are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Area and Number of Conservation Partnership Members in Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Tahura WAR

No	KTH Name	KTH Class Classification	Conservation Partnership Cooperation Agreement Number (PKS) in 2025	Area Managed (Ha)	Number of heads of families
1	Karya Makmur I	Madya	500.4/035/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 30.90	27
2	Karya Makmur II	Madya	500.4/036/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 35.74	28
3	Karya Makmur III	Madya	500.4/037/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 31.16	24
4	Karya Makmur IV	Madya	500.4/038/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 33.54	23
5	Karya Mukti I	Madya	500.4/039/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 40.69	26

6	Karya Mukti II	Utama	500.4/040/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 48.17	30
7	Karya Mukti III	Utama	500.4/041/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 36.47	24
8	Karya Mukti IV	Madya	500.4/042/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 35.24	19
9	Karya Mukti V	Madya	500.4/043/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 40.42	26
10	Karya Sejati	Madya	500.4/044/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 58.79	32
11	Karya Tani I	Madya	500.4/045/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 54.66	36
12	Karya Tani II	Madya	500.4/046/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 49.48	33
13	Karya Tani III	Madya	500.4/047/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 25.92	17
14	Puja Kusuma I	Madya	500.4/048/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 39.30	22
15	Puja Kusuma II	Madya	500.4/049/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 40.61	21
16	Puja Kusuma III	Madya	500.4/050/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 31.85	20
17	Sri Lestari I	Madya	500.4/051/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 24.97	17
18	Sri Lestari II	Madya	500.4/052/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 29.27	23
19	Tersenyum I	Madya	500.4/053/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 30.50	21
20	Tersenyum II	Madya	500.4/054/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 36.18	22
21	Tersenyum III	Madya	500.4/055/V.24/T.2/PKK/2025	± 37.08	21
Total				± 790.94 ha	512

Source: Progress of UPTD KPHK Tahura WAR Report August 2025

The condition of KTH after the legalization of the Conservation Partnership shows that most groups are in the stage of institutional strengthening, with 19 KTH in the KTH Intermediate Class (Kelas Madya) and 2 KTH pada Main Class (Kelas Utama). This classification refers to the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number P.89/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/8/2018 concerning Guidelines for Forest Farmer Groups, which assesses KTH based on aspects of institutional management, area management, and business management. KTH kelas Madya reflects the group that has carried out basic institutional functions, including organizational structure, group administration, and implementation of management activities, while KTH kelas Utama demonstrate further capacity in institutional, regional, and business management. This condition is in line with the findings Hardiyanto (2024) which shows that the institutional dynamics of KTH are positively related to the level of member participation, where the better the institutional capacity of the group, the higher the community involvement in management activities. Each KTH already has a Conservation Partnership Cooperation Agreement Number (PKS) as the legal basis for the management of the partnership area, with variations in the area of management and the number of members between groups, which reflects the difference in the scale of the management space and the level of community participation in the implementation of the Conservation Partnership.

With the signing of the Conservation Partnership PKS on January 30, 2025, land management by Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari has entered a new phase marked by the state's formal recognition of the role of the community in the management of conservation areas. The signing of the PKS was carried out after the proposed partnership was declared to meet the administrative and technical requirements through field verification, so that land management no longer takes place *de facto*, but is within a collaborative framework that has a clear legal basis. PKS was signed on January 30, 2025 by the Head of UPTD KPHK Tahura WAR together with 21 Chairman of the Forest Farmers Group (KTH) which is a member of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari, and contains regulations regarding the management subject, the location of the partnership area, and the area of the management area with a total of around \pm 790.94 ha in the Tahura WAR area. The existence of this PKS is in line with the concept of Conservation Partnership as a form of regional management collaboration that emphasizes the division of roles, responsibilities, and authority between area managers and the community, as stated by Massiri *et al.* (2025) Where formal agreements are understood not just as administrative documents, but as instruments to build understanding, trust, and legitimacy in the management of community-based conservation areas.

The relationship in this partnership involves several parties with complementary roles. Tahura WAR plays the role of an area manager who holds authority, while the community is the implementer of management at the site level. In addition, NGOs such as WALHI play a role as a companion that supports the facilitation and communication process between the community and area managers. The role of mentoring contributes to strengthening the institutional capacity of the community and helps the smooth partnership process, without replacing the authority of the management of the area in Tahura WAR. This is in line with Rahman (2020) That is, community involvement in forest conservation cannot be separated from the support of the parties because the effectiveness of area management is highly determined by the synergy between the community, the government, and accompanying institutions. In his study, the formation of management groups at the site level is always accompanied by government facilitation and accompanying organizations so that community capacity can develop without shifting the authority of area management that remains with state authorities. According to the informant:

"The biggest contribution is that they become a 'bridge'. In the past, the community had no communication with us, they were even afraid. Since there is assistance like WALHI, now there is communication."

In line with the improvement of communication patterns between the community and area managers, the practice of illegal logging tends to be increasingly abandoned. This shift in behavior is related to increasing public awareness to maintain productive crop assets as a source of livelihood. In addition, there is a development of mutually agreed local rules, such as the obligation to plant replacement trees in the event of death or felling of crops. These rules are carried out collectively as part of efforts to maintain the condition of forest areas. According to The Lancet Planetary Health (2023) Behavioral changes in forest management are not only influenced by economic factors, but also by changes in people's perceptions of the relationship between forest sustainability, water source availability, and future livelihood sustainability.

In addition to changes in planting patterns, community participation is also seen in area protection activities carried out independently. The limited number of Forest Police is overcome by involving KTH members in routine patrols. In practice, the community is actively involved in protecting the area from encroachment by outside parties, because they have an interest in protecting cultivated areas that already have legality. This is in line with Hai *et al.* (2021) The success of the protection of conservation areas is highly dependent on the support and involvement of local communities, as the successful management of protected areas relies on the support and cooperation of the local community.

Community participation also varied between women's and youth groups. Although the partnership rules provide access for all citizens, based on interviews with key informants, conditions on the ground show a division of roles influenced by gender and age. Women's involvement in the Conservation Partnership of the Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari management area is generally focused on downstream or post-harvest activities. The support from WALHI and Tahura was realized through the formation of Farmer Women Group (Kelompok Wanita Tani/KWT) which focuses on the processing of NTFPs, such as melinjo chips, hazelnut oil, and nutmeg syrup. In the decision-making process, for example the determination of land boundaries or agreements with outside parties, the role of men is still more dominant. As a result, women are more often placed as economic supporters of the family and have not been fully involved in regional management decisions. This condition is in line with the findings James *et al.* (2021) which shows that women's involvement contributes to the effectiveness of conservation interventions, but their role is often not optimal in the decision-making process. The same thing was also expressed by Salampessy *et al.* (2025) which found that women are generally active in technical activities and forest product processing, but are still limited in their involvement in planning and management policy determination. According to the informant:

"We encourage one of the driving women in this group to continue to speak out. Men only take the produce, but the ones who manage it until it becomes money (derivative products) are the women's group."

The participation of young age groups still faces challenges in the aspect of regeneration. The results of field observations show that the involvement of the younger generation in cultivation activities in forest areas is relatively limited. Agroforestry activities have not become the main choice for young people, especially when compared to formal jobs in urban areas which are perceived to be more stable and have a higher social status value in the Cilimus Village community. This condition causes the regeneration process at the group level to run slowly and raises concerns about the sustainability of regional management in the future. This phenomenon is in line with the findings Priyanto *et al.* (2025) which shows that the low involvement of the younger generation in rehabilitation and land management activities is one of the factors that can affect the sustainability of community-based natural resource management programs

The social impact of the Conservation Partnership program appears to be more prominent than its economic impact which is still developing gradually. One of the most important changes is the emergence of tenure certainty for the community. The legality of managed access through the Conservation Partnership scheme provides a sense of security, as communities are no longer in a vulnerable position to eviction from forest areas. This sense of security is an important social capital for farmers in carrying out land management activities in a calmer and more sustainable manner. The relationship between the community and the area manager, which was previously often colored by tension and conflict, has shifted towards partnership relationships. Through the formal recognition of the state's access to community management, the existence of farmers in the region is no longer perceived as an illegal activity, but as part of regional management cooperation. This change in relationship is in line with the view Sati (2019) which emphasizes that certainty and recognition of tenure rights are key in reducing forestry structural conflicts. And strengthened by the findings Wakka dan Bisjoe (2019) which shows that forestry partnerships function as an instrument for conflict resolution as well as a means of building trust and cooperation between area managers and communities around forests. According to the informant:

"The biggest benefit is one: peace. If you ask about money, economy, to be honest, not yet. All of them are the same (feats). The price of coffee, nutmeg, that's all. But this mind is calm when managing cultivated land."

From an economic perspective, this program provides a diverse source of income for the community. With the agroforestry pattern, farmers can harvest various types of crops, ranging from daily to annual. However, increasing citizens' income still faces challenges, especially in

terms of product sales. Even though the harvest is abundant, farmers generally still sell to middlemen in the village, so the price obtained is not optimal. On the other hand, the assistance of existing production equipment will be more useful if it is supported by buyer certainty, so that processed products can be sold smoothly. According to Informant:

"Here some of us still sell it to middlemen. So the price is yes, I like to play. But the bottom line is, after this partnership, we live more peacefully. It's just that, the price of coffee fluctuates (up and down). It's just like a hazelnut. Two weeks ago it cost 8,500, now it can be 37,000. That's not bad if the harvest can be 1 ton".

The diversification of NTFPs processed products is a tangible manifestation of the efforts of the Cilimus Village community in expanding economic activities outside of primary cultivation. Through business units under the auspices of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari, the community develops various products based on local potential, ranging from ecoprint batik that utilizes banana fronds, banana flour, to palm sugar. This development also includes the processing of nutmeg syrup that maximizes the use of meat to the skin of the beans, as well as the production of ground coffee whose process is centered at KTH Karya Mukti II. All production activities are carried out on the principle of using NTFPs without cutting down trees, so that they remain in line with the function of the conservation area. Details of the types of processed products produced by the community are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) by Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari

No	Product Type	Main Raw Materials	Specification/Technical Details	Description
1	Candlenut oil	Candlenut seed	Yield of 3 kg of seeds: 1 liter of oil (Bottle of 60 ml)	Processed products of the Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari
2	Batik Ecoprint	Banana leaf sheath	Natural printing technique (Suji Leaf Brand)	Craft product innovation
3	Banana Flour	Local Bananas	Low-gluten food products (200 gram packaging)	Diversification of local foods
4	Nutmeg Syrup	Nutmeg Pulp, Nutmeg Seeds, and Nutmeg Kernel Skin	250ml	Supported by infrastructure assistance
5	Ground Coffee	Robusta coffee beans	Post-harvest processing (Mechanical milling machine)	Production of KTH Karya Mukti II
6	Palm Sugar	Sugar palm sap	Printed products using special molding tools	Production of KTH Karya Mukti III

Source: Extension Officer Report, UPTD KPHK Tahura WAR, May 2025

The existence of these various NTFPs products shows that the community's economic diversification has begun to take shape, although the scale is still limited and depends on mentoring support and market access. Along with the development of these economic activities, community participation in preserving the Tahura WAR area is also seen through involvement in participatory patrols and conservation activities, this phenomenon is in line with the findings Susanti *et al.* (2021) which emphasizes that the certainty of economic benefits from forests is the main driver of the emergence of farmers' collective awareness to participate in securing the area from damage.

Success in the aspects of legality and economic management is gradually proportional to the increase in ecological awareness of the community. This is reflected in the community's involvement in the release of protected animals which was carried out on June 28, 2024 in the Resort Youth Camp area, which is understood as part of ecosystem restoration efforts in the

Tahura WAR area. The integration of these activities into land management patterns shows that Conservation Partnerships not only function as a management access mechanism, but also shape a new way of looking at people's perceptions of human-wildlife relations. This condition is in line with the findings Putri *et al.* (2025) which confirms that legal recognition of the role of communities in forest management contributes to the growth of ecological awareness, marked by increased concern, sense of responsibility, and active involvement of communities in maintaining ecosystem sustainability.

Based on the activity report by Tahura WAR, the animals released consisted of Three Eagles (*family Accipitridae*), Three Kuwuk Cats/Root Tigers (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), and Three Lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*). The presence of these animals in the Cilimus Village utilization block is expected to maintain the balance of the food chain naturally while strengthening the ecological function of the area as a buffer for life in the Mount Betung area. The active involvement of Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari members in maintaining the safety of the release site shows a paradigm shift in the community from what was previously considered a threat to the main partner in biodiversity protection.

At the cultivated land level, farmer groups, especially KWT, have begun to implement environmentally friendly agricultural practices through the use of liquid organic fertilizers and plant-based pesticides to reduce dependence on synthetic chemicals. These findings show a link between agroforestry-based economic activities and efforts to maintain the ecological function of the region, this strengthens the argument Lispiani *et al.* (2022) that the active involvement of women in forest management significantly encourages the adoption of more intensive agricultural patterns while still paying attention to land conservation principles.

The implementation of the Conservation Partnership at Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari shows the institutional strengthening of the group as part of the area management strategy. After obtaining the legality of access to management, the institutional strengthening was followed by the support of production facilities and funding that supported business aspects and regional rehabilitation. The assistance received includes the development of NTFPs processing, support for MPTS plant enrichment, and funding for rehabilitation activities and improvements to production facilities. The support comes from the Forestry Office and external agencies, and shows the connection between the legality of the partnership and access to program facilitation. This assistance pattern not only strengthens the group's business capacity, but also supports the area's conservation function through plant rehabilitation and enrichment activities. Details of the type, source, and recipient of assistance are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Types and Sources of Assistance to Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari

No	Year of Implementation	Help Resources	Recipient	Types of Assistance	Provisions & Specifications
1	2023	Forestry Office	KTH Karya Mukti III	Means of Production	Palm sugar molding tools
2	2024	Forestry Office	KTH Karya Mukti II	Means of Production	Coffee grinding machine (Ground coffee production)
3	2024	Forestry Office	Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari	Grant funding of IDR 99,900,000	Rehabilitation and restoration of 3.5 million hectares of the Tahura WAR Rehabilitation Area
4	2025	Forestry Office	Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari	Seeds & Mentoring	Enrichment of MPTS plants (Nutmeg, Durian, and Avocado)

5	2025	<i>FLIGHT (Indonesian Flying Foundation)</i>	Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari	Grant funding of Rp. 2,000,000	Coffee Oven Appliance Repair
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Source: Progress of UPTD KPHK Tahura WAR Report August 2025

The community, Tahura, and WALHI have relatively similar views on the importance of legality of access to and implementation of agroforestry systems in the implementation of the Conservation Partnership program. This similarity of views is supported by a communication pattern that is now more open than in the previous period. However, differences in understanding still arise at the implementation stage in the field. Tahura views administrative procedures as an integral part of the obligation to manage the area, while some people consider the process to be quite difficult because it must be fulfilled gradually and requires administrative capacity that is not always possessed by groups. Differences in perspectives are also seen in the assessment of the level of group independence, where the community emphasizes that their needs are not only related to the technical aspects of cultivation, but also include marketing access and price stability of the produce. In the cooperative relationship, each actor also interprets WALHI's role differently: the public sees WALHI as a companion, Tahura sees it as a partner, while WALHI itself places its role as a companion that bridges the interests of the parties. The dynamics of these different roles and needs are in line with the findings Mukhlis *et al.* (2022) which shows that the implementation of agroforestry in rural communities involves multilayered social, economic, and environmental interests, so that its success is greatly influenced by the ability of the actors involved in aligning conservation goals with the livelihood needs of the community.

The implementation of this program shows the need to adjust strategies so that partnership activities can run more stably in the future. The community considers that the agroforestry business needs support at the processing and marketing stages, not only in cultivation activities on the land. Therefore, the increase in economic business is considered necessary to be directed to downstream activities, including certainty of market access and the possibility of cooperation with buyers. On the other hand, Tahura WAR sees the need to simplify administration, especially in the reporting of Economic Transaction Value (Nilai Transaksi Ekonomi/NTE), so that the members of the group, most of whom are elderly, do not experience difficulties. The issue of regeneration is also a concern because some youth are less interested in the agricultural sector, so additional support such as training, access to capital, or simple technology is needed to encourage their interest. In addition, the role of women who have been more involved in yield processing activities also needs to be strengthened in the decision-making process at the Gapoktanhut level. According to Faizah *et al.* (2024) Strengthening group participation in partnership institutions is one of the important strategies in maintaining the sustainability of community-based programs. Thus, all members of the group can play a more balanced role.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the Conservation Partnership at Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari in Tahura WAR shows a major change in the status of land management, from a condition without legal recognition to legal management through the Conservation Partnership PKS script, thus providing a sense of security and comfort for the community in managing land. Until early 2025, as many as 21 KTH in Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari have obtained legality of management access involving 512 heads of families with an area of around ±790.94 ha, with institutional classification 2 KTH Main Class (Kelas Utama); 19 KTH Intermediate Class (Kelas Madya), where the KTH class reflects institutional capacity and is not directly related to the provision of managed access. This legality facilitates the process of coaching, facilitating, and assisting by area managers, as well as encouraging community involvement in the implementation of agroforestry systems, the use of NTFPs, post-harvest processing activities that are mostly

carried out by women's groups, and participation in area patrols and conservation activities. The implementation of the Conservation Partnership still faces challenges in the form of dependence on product marketing to middlemen traders, low involvement of the younger generation in farming, as well as the administrative burden of economic reporting felt by some members of the elderly group, so it is necessary to strengthen marketing access, regeneration strategies for young farmers, simplification of administrative mechanisms, and increase the role of mentoring and facilitation by Gapoktanhut SHK Lestari so that the Partnership Conservation can run more sustainably.

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