

Protecting The Alas Purwo National Park

Fash Fahish Shofhal Jamila Karim¹, Sri Ana Handayani,^{*1} Ratna Endang
Widuatie¹, Nurhadi Sasmita,¹ Retno Winarni¹

¹(Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember, Indonesia)

Abstract:

The establishment of the national park gives no automatic guarantee for its protection. The present study examines the efforts to protect the Alas Purwo National Park Area from 2007 to 2018 after its designation as a national park. This study aims to investigate the disturbances in the Alas Purwo National Park conservation area and the authorities' efforts to contain the problems. Drawing upon historical materials and employing a political ecology approach and conservation theory, it shows the changing status from a wildlife reserve to an autonomous national park separated from the Baluran National Park in 1997 presented the Alas Purwo National Park (APNP) with new challenges. The APNP management had to handle the threats damaging the park through land conversion, forest encroachment, illegal mining, illegal logging, and poaching. The APNP management implemented a security strategy in response to the problems by establishing a Resort Base Management (RBM). This strategy has mixed results. It is ineffective in stopping APNP encroachments, but some villagers benefit.

Key Word: conservation area, encroachment, resort-based management

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I. Introduction

Forest is an essential component of the natural environment. Forest contains a rich biodiversity and serves vital functions supporting human life. Efforts to protect the natural environment in colonial Indonesia began to enter a decisive moment in 1912, with the establishment of an association at the initiative of Dr. S.H. Koorders under the name of the Dutch East Indies Nature Protection Association (*Nederlandsh Indische Vereeniging tot Natuurberscherming*). The association was designated by the Netherlands-Indies Government Decree (*Gouvernement Besluit van Nederlandsch-Indie*) No. 36 dated 3 February 1913 (Yudistira, 2014: 87). The goals of the association were to raise the awareness of the Netherlands-Indies government not to use forests only for economic purposes, but also for ecological and scientific functions. The colonial government should use its power to maintain the rest of the forests to support the tropical environment and the colonial economy.

After its inauguration, the association applied to the Netherlands Indies government to grant management rights for 12 locations where plants needed to be preserved as natural monuments. The twelve locations were Ujung Kulon, Panaitan, Rawa Danau, Krakatau Island, Patenggang Lake, Bodas Lake, Papandayan Crater, Bromo Sand Sea, Nusa Barong, Ijen Crater, and Purwo Peninsula. Unfortunately, the application was rejected because the government regarded the request too much. Thanks to Koorders' persistence, the Netherlands Indies government finally issued the Nature Reserves Act (*Natuurmonumenten Ordonantie*) on March 18, 1916, published in the State Gazette of the Netherlands Indies government Indies (*Staatsblad van Nederlands-Indie*) No. 278, 1916. This regulation became the basis for the Governor General to designate nature reserves in the Netherlands Indies. At the end of the colonial rule, in Besuki residency, there were ten nature reserves (Nawiyanto, 2018:146)

Among the designated nature reserves were the Jati-Ikan and Alas Purwo, situated in the Blambangan Peninsula region of Java. In 1939 the Alas Purwo and Jati Ikan nature reserves underwent a change in status to become the South Banyuwangi Wildlife Sanctuary covering an area of 62,000 hectares. This was the largest conservation area in the Besuki residency. Nevertheless, during the independence period, its coverage was in decline because of its conversion into a commercial forest, producing teak and mahogany. This development seriously debilitated the reserve's role in preserving large mammals because the excised area was, in fact, open terrain, an essential part of their living habitat (Nawiyanto, 2018:152). Based on the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number: 283/Kpts-II/1992 the South Banyuwangi Wildlife Sanctuary was changed into the Alas Purwo National Park (APNP) (Nur Haqiqi, 2020:5). In 1997, the management of APNP was separated from the Baluran National Park (BNP) with the issuance of the Decree of the Minister of Forestry No.185/Kpts-II/1997 dated 31 March 1997 (Mangunjaya, 2005:39).

Administratively, the APNP is located in three districts, namely Tegaldlimo, Muncar, and Purwoharjo. The APNP is divided into: Core Zone with an area of 17,200 hectares, Jungle Zone with an area of 24,767 hectares, Utilization Zone with an area of 250 hectares, and a Buffer Zone with an area of 1,203 hectares (BTNAP, 2015:1). The creation of APNP aimed at improving the management of the protected area in order to prevent it from encroachments that cause damages. In reality, the APNP continued to suffer from extensive damage. This article seeks to explain the causes of the APNP damage and the efforts made by the authorities to protect the APNP.

II. Material And Methods

This study used a historical method consisting of four major stages, namely sources collection (heuristics), external and internal criticisms, interpretation and historiography (Sasmita and Nawiyanto, 2012). The collected data included both primary and secondary sources. Among the primary sources are survey reports conducted by the Alas Purwo National Park Office. It also draws upon secondary sources in the form of relevant publications collected from the libraries of Jember University. The data were analyzed to obtain historical facts which then synthesized for composing the historical argument in this paper.

III. Results

Alas Purwo Conservation Area

Alas Purwo is one of the national parks in Indonesia. Located at the easternmost tip of Java, the APNP is part of the Banyuwangi regency. Grajagan Bay forms its western border, the production forest area of Perum Perhutani, South Banyuwangi Forest Management Unit, Grajagan, Purwoagung, and Sumberasri villages. The Bali Strait and the Indonesian Ocean border the eastern part of the APNP. Its northern part comprises Pangpang Bay, Bali Strait, and several villages such as Sumberberas, Kedungrejo, Wringinputih, Muncar, Kedungsari, and Tegaldlimo districts. In contrast, its southern part is directly adjacent to the Indonesian Ocean (BTNAP, 2015). Regarding topography, the Alas Purwo area has a land elevation between 0-322 meters above sea level. Sembulungan Peak (201M) and Mount Linggamani (322 M) are the highest peaks. On the eastern side are natural limestone caves such as Isana Cave, Basori Cave, and Padepokan Cave. The western part of the national park has a slightly undulating topography with swamps in particular parts. There are also steep limestone hills jutting into the sea. The Alas Purwo area is surrounded by a mostly sloping beach consisting of whitish-brown iron sand and yellowish-white sand (BTNAP, 2015).

The ecosystems in APNP have complete diversity, from seagrass, coral, mangrove, coastal forest, natural forest, plantation forest, bamboo forest, and sapodilla forest. Even karst and cave ecosystems are found here. There is also a savanna, a gathering place for suminsia mammals and their predators. Initially, this area had the status of South Banyuwangi Wildlife Reserve based on the Decree of the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies Number 6 Stbl 456 dated September 1, 1939, with an area of 62,000 ha, before being designated as a National Park. This area has been reduced to 43,420 ha during the independent era. Based on the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number: 283/Kpts-II/1992 dated February 26 1992 South Banyuwangi Wildlife Reserve changed its status to Alas Purwo National Park (Baluran National Park, 1981:6).

Based on the zoning division as stated in the Decree of the Director General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation Number: 51/Kpts/Dj-Iv/1987 dated 12 December 1987, the APNP area is divided into: Core Zone with an area of 17,200 ha, Jungle Zone with an area of 24,767 ha, Zone Utilization with an area of 250 ha, and Buffer Zone, 1303 ha. In 2015 the APNP zoning underwent a revision in line with the proposed Use Zone and the change in the former Buffer Zone to a Traditional Zone and a Rehabilitation Zone. Based on the Decree of the Director General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation Number: 26/Kpts/IV-KK/2007 concerning the Revision of the APNP Zoning, APNP is divided into: Core Zone with an area of 17,150 ha, Jungle Zone with an area of 24,207 ha, Rehabilitation Zone with an area of 620 ha, Utilization Zone with an area of 660 ha, and Traditional Zone with an area of 783 ha (BTNAP, 2015).

The South Banyuwangi Wildlife Sanctuary was managed based on its uses, which were divided into protected forest and plantation needs. The PPA Agency managed the protected forest. This part is rich in natural vegetation in the eastern part, while Perum Perhutani managed the western part covering the plantation area. This kind of division was one of the significant reasons for ineffective management. The PPA agency is a state institution dealing with the issues of nature protection in cooperation with the Malang Natural Resources Conservation Agency with the task of managing several Wildlife Sanctuaries in the East Java Province (Regional Office, 1985:3). The South Banyuwangi Wildlife Sanctuary was designated to become a national park. Its new status was promulgated by the Decree of the Minister of Forestry No.283/Kpts-II/1992 and was inaugurated by Minister Ir. Hasjru Harahap on 26 February 1992. The South Banyuwangi Wildlife Sanctuary was renamed the Alas Purwo National Park (APNP).

Forest buffer communities are a group of people, both indigenous peoples and migrant communities who have lived in and around the forest for generations. The forest buffer communities depend primarily on the natural resources in the forest area for their living hood. They collected firewood, food, trees that can be used as

building materials, and many more from the forest area. The resources taken can be in the form of wood, non-timber, and even forest areas can also be used for farming, gardening, or ponds. Eleven villages serve as forest buffer communities. They are Wringinputih Village and Kedungringin Village in Muncar District, Summersari Village and Grajagan Village in Purwoharjo District, Kalipait Village, Kedungsari Village, Kedunggebang Village, Kedungwungu Village, Purwoasri Village, Purwoagung Village, and Kendalrejo Village which are in Tegaldlimo District. The districts are located between the border of the APNP conservation area and the forest area managed by Perum Perhutani (BTNAP, 2011)

Forest Disturbances

The rampant disturbances in the national park area have been influenced by the community's high dependence on the resources of the APNP. The disturbances are due to some factors, such as the existence of settlements adjacent to the protected area, the low economic level of the buffer community, less stable jobs, and claims of ownership of the natural resources of the national park (Beckman, 2004:17). The disturbances experienced by APNP were present in the forms of hunting for wild animals, harvesting plants and marine products, felling trees, and stealing bamboo.

Poaching of wild animals was also a severe disturbance to forest security. This is a top priority for the APNP to address. Wildlife hunting was carried out in various ways, traditionally by using hunting dogs and snares or firearms. Hunting is carried out using traditional and modern methods (BTNAP, 2011: 12). Poaching of wild animal species in the APNP was also done by poisoning and trapping. The traps used for large mammals such as bulls and deer are in the form of feed boxes placed on the animals' paths where traps were set. Apart from bulls, illegal hunting also targeted birds, wild boar, deer, gray monkeys, langurs, and turtles.

An estimate indicated that in 2002 the population of wild oxen was 80 individuals. This was a remarkable decrease compared with its population in 1993 which reached around 300-400 individuals. In the period from 2003 to 2010, 11 cases of banteng death were found in the Sumbergedang block, the Kepuhgantuk Block, and Kalipahit Village, right in the location owned by Perum Perhutani which borders the APNP (BTNAP, 2011: 23). The decline in the bull population was the result of Poaching and disruption of the ecosystem due to human activities.

Another form of disturbance in the APNP area was bamboo stealing. In the APNP area, there are dozens of types of bamboo that grow naturally. Most of the APNP area is dominated by bamboo stands. In 1999 the conservation area covered 43,420 ha, of which 17,000 ha or 17.26% was the bamboo forest. In the core zone, where the jungle forest is found, bamboo forests covered an area of 3,836.96 ha or 15.5% of the area.

Moreover, rattan has also been stolen from the APNP area, like bamboo. Rattan was taken from the core zone and jungle zone. Rattan is usually used for handicrafts and also furniture that has been produced by small and industry. It has been around the APNP for a long time. Kalipahit Village was one of the villages which, in 2002, had 234 small craft industries. Also stolen from the APNP were Manon wood roots, widely used to produce rustic ornaments, decorations, bags, and other handicrafts (BTNAP, 2017).

Collecting firewood also constituted a severe disturbance to the APNP. In Kalipahit Village, 986 households, or 67%, have used wood as fuel. Because Kalipahit Village is directly adjacent to the APNP area, more than half of the population depended largely on collecting firewood from the national park area. Firewood is used more in the APNP area, which is close to residential areas, for example, in the forest between the Rowobendo Post to the Segoro Anak estuary or in the Jungle Zone, which borders the Buffer Zone. The firewood was collected not only for household needs but also for sale. The people around the APNP area collected firewood not only in the form of branches (*rencek*) but also in extensive woods that had high economic value, such as Sonokeling (Tim Penulis BTNAP, 2017)

Another form of disturbance is forest lands used for agriculture. One of the buffer villages that has the closest access to the forest is Kalipait Village. The majority of the people of Kalipait Village work in agriculture. Agricultural activities were carried out in the production area of Perum Perhutani. Farmers in Kalipait village have an average cultivated area of 0.25 ha (Purwanti R, 2007:257). The small amount of arable land makes the production yields insufficient to meet the needs of farmers. Cost and labor factors are also obstacles for farmers to manage their land optimally. Most farmers can only manage 0.25 ha of land or a maximum of 0.5 ha (Gaesetiasih, 2015:7). With the low income, illegal activities were often done by targeting resources available in the forests of the APNP area.

Formation of Resort-Based Management

To prevent the rising disturbances in the APNP, protecting vegetation and wild animals was regarded as urgent. Area protection was the first step in conservation to study natural resources and their use sustainably. The strategy needed to be more effective for protecting and securing conservation areas was establishing a Resort-Based Management (RBM) and dividing it according to the required areas. The resort-based management of APNP started in 2007. The arrangement is based on the effectiveness of area protection and the mobility of

personnel in the area. In addition, the resort-based national park management developed by the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation emphasizes the importance of security at the national park resort level (Wiratno, 2009:16).

A new zoning system was introduced based on Government Regulation 28 of 2011 concerning the Management of Nature Reserve Areas and Nature Conservation Areas. The area arrangement includes a) Zoning or management block (spatial function area), and b) Working area arrangement (management area). APNP is a Type B National Park Center consisting of an Administrative Subdivision; a Section of National Park Management Region I; a Section for Regional Management of National Parks II; and Functional Groups (Departemen Kehutanan, 2007). Resort-based national park management is not a program that ends in an activity, but rather a management system. Increasing the capacity of the management unit at the resort level is basically a step towards optimizing management at the most minor national park management unit level. The implementation of resort-based management is expected to accelerate the achievement of the goals of national park management. The initial step needed to optimize forest area management is structuring the resort work area, including the area and boundaries of the work area as outlined in the map.

The division of forests into smaller management units is the first step to do. The objectives of dividing the forest are as follows: 1) to provide certainty over work areas and 2) to facilitate organizational planning and forest management. In dividing the forest, there are several factors to be considered. These factors include the location and distribution of forests, extent and characteristics of work, supervisory ability and responsibility for work, marketing areas, topography, transportation facilities, characteristics, and inventory requirements.

Resort-Based National Park management carried out by APNP is aligned with patrol activities, which in APNP is known as Active Patrol. Active Patrols are carried out in areas prone to violations while recording data, covering former violations, supply (traffic violations), excellent potential for biodiversity and tourism objects, and animal encounters. After completing their duties, the security team is required to make a Task Implementation Report (LPT) by attaching evidence while carrying out their duties (register reports, incident reports). Officers who do not carry out patrol activities can be assigned to carry out other activities such as counseling, flow maintenance, sending data to Sections, and others (Hartono, 2008).

The implementation of RBM had a mixture of results. On the one hand, the disturbances of the APNP continued to occur. From 2008-2019 there were 112 cases of hunting of wild animals including wild oxen, deer, and antelope. There were 51 cases of tree felling, 74 cases of forest fires, 57 cases of bamboo theft, and 41 other cases. Resort-based management of national parks was indeed not able to eradicate forest disturbances as a whole in a short time. Based on the Incident Report (LK) in 2008, there have been 14 cases of theft of forest products in the form of bamboo, acacia, and rosewood, as well as hunting of wild animals in the form of deer, wild oxen, and birds (Yuanjaya, 2020).

APNP conservation, on the other hand, positively impacts the community around the area. One of the supports for the positive impact was the inauguration of the Bedul Mangrove Ecotourism. The level of forest encroachment the community carries has begun to decrease (Yuanjaya, 2020: 270). The community began working together to develop ecotourism because they felt it had a direct or indirect impact. Most of the people of Sumberasri Village are agrarian and fishing communities. The fishing communities who usually work to find fish on the coast then use their boats to be used as a means of transportation to serve visitors visiting the Bedul Mangrove Ecotourism. Boats used to catch fish are then modified in such a way as to be able to accommodate tourists, commonly called *Gondang-gandung*.

IV. Conclusion

The APNP is a conservation area in the form of a national park in Banyuwangi district, East Java. One of the functions of a national park as a conservation area is to protect the ecosystem, preserve plant diversity and protect the animals. However, in practice conservation areas suffered from disturbance by human activities. The disturbances were linked to the existing settlements adjacent to the area, the low economic level of the buffer community, less stable jobs, and claims of ownership of the natural resources of the national park. The forest disturbances experienced by APNP included illegal hunting of wild animals, harvesting plants, harvesting marine products, felling trees, building huts using plastic, and stealing bamboo. Bamboo has been a beneficial material used by people around the area, especially for construction materials, hedges, crafts, and household needs.

The continuing damage raised concerns that it was necessary to take further steps to protect the forest. One of the essential programs the management took was establishing the Resort-Based Management (RBM) system. In the management of national parks, resorts are security units for national park areas with the duty and authority to carry out protection and security activities to guard the conservation area against various disturbances. In general, the activities related to the protection of conservation areas included routine patrols, area registers (forest damage and deaths of animals), area guarding, and counseling to the surrounding community. In comparison, activities related to preservation and utilization varied due to each resort's potential and conditions. With the existence of supporting activities, the conditions of each resort could be continuously monitored and

help the management to achieve the conservation goals. Despite the fact that the cases of APNP disturbances continued to take place, the inauguration of the Bedul Mangrove Ecotourism under the RBM scheme gives satisfying results for the villagers with the created employment.

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