5. Resource Control, Conflict, and Collaboration

After discussing the ways in which villagers bring the state into the village in the last chapter, this chapter will explore the ways in which villagers in Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong have resisted or accommodated government attempts to exert greater control over people and resources. As Peluso, Vandergeest and Potter (1995) have noted, one of the social trends in the political economy and political ecology of forestry in colonial and post-colonial Southeast Asia has been the consolidation of state power over forest resources, labour and territory. Furthermore, government attempts at forest control have created conflict between state agencies and villagers over forest land.

Smallholders who farm the land inside state forest boundaries in the region have been seen by Indonesian forestry authorities as perambah hutan (forest squatters/encroachers/destroyers). Villagers knew that farming the land inside state forest boundaries was illegal, yet they continued to transform forests into agricultural fields. For the latecoming landless migrants and the children of early migrants who aspired to become smallholder farmers, squatting on forest land was a way to gain access to farmland through non-market relations. Local people’s resistance to the efforts of forestry authorities to transform smallholder fields into plantation forests and, more recently, community involvement in ‘forest management’, are generally viewed as efforts to restrict resource extraction from this sort of peripheral area by central elites.

History of Conflict over Lampung’s Forest Zones

Between 1922 and 1942, the Dutch administration gazetted forested land in lowland and highland Lampung as forest reserves. On paper, the Dutch administration classified nearly 1 million hectares of Lampung land as state forest zones (boschwezen). Local people were prohibited from farming and gathering forest products from the gazetted forest zones. Until the Japanese invasion in 1942, the Dutch were able to conduct field delineation and boundary pole demarcation of more than half of the gazetted forest zones. These delineated forest zones are still referred to by local people as BW land (tanah BW), after the ‘BW’ (boschwezen) signs marked on the boundary poles.

In the post-colonial period, the national forest authority redesignated these boschwezen as kawasan hutan negara (the Indonesian name for state forest zones). Although the designation of the new forest zones was simply a reclassification
of the former BW land, the process took decades to complete. The process began in the 1970s and was completed in 1990 when the Minister of Forestry signed a decree on Lampung’s Forest Land Use Plan (Tata Guna Hutan Kesepakatan). According to the Basic Forestry Law of 1967, the Minister of Forestry had the authority to designate the state forest zones based on provincial government planning. The provincial governor’s first proposal for Lampung’s forest zones was in 1977, and the second was in 1980. Assessing this process, it appears that the governor was the one who proposed the new forest land use, but in reality it was the provincial office of the Ministry of Forestry which made these proposals. Afterwards, field delineation was carried out, new boundary poles were installed, and the old boundaries were reconstructed.

Meanwhile, massive logging operations were being conducted throughout Lampung. Beginning in the 1960s, logging became the main forestry work in the province until the end of the 1980s, when there were no more forests suitable for commercial logging. Logging concession areas included portions of land that were later designated as Way Kambas and Bukit Barisan Selatan national parks in the mid-1980s. In addition to former BW lands, the forest authorities also granted forests on adat lands to logging companies. These were either designated as state forest zones or given to estate plantation companies after they had been logged.

When the Lampung forest land use plan was proposed in the 1980s, a considerable portion of the proposed state forest zones was no longer forested because of (legal and illegal) logging, conversion to village settlements, and the expansion of smallholding fields following the flow of migrants to the province. These facts were ignored. The justification for including these non-forested lands in state forest zones was the Basic Forestry Law of 1967, which stipulated that 30 per cent of the country’s land mass must be zoned in this way. In the case of Lampung, this meant that 1.2 million hectares of the province’s territory was officially allocated to state forest zones. These zones were then divided between: conservation forest (kawasan konservasi), designed to preserve the flora and fauna in its natural habitat; protection forest (hutan lindung), with watershed conservation as its primary function; and production forest (hutan produksi) for timber production. In the conservation forest zones (Bukit Barisan Selatan and Way Kambas national parks), more patrols have limited further encroachments but have not prevented illegal hunting or poaching and the expansion of smallholder fields.

In the 1980s, following the designation of state forestry zones, and with little forest left to log, the eviction of forest squatters and a program of reforestation became the main forms of protection. From the early 1980s to the mid-1990s, thousands of families were evicted from protection forest zones in various upper watershed regions in the province. These regions included: Gunung Balak in the
east; Gunung Betung, Pulau Panggung and Wonosobo in the south; and Sumber Jaya and neighbouring sub-districts in the north. Evictions were accomplished through a series of military operations. Between 1979 and 1996, 65,000 families (over a quarter of million people) were resettled to several sites in the northern lowland of the province (for example, Pakuan Ratu, Tulang Bawang, and Mesuji) through local transmigration programs (translok, transmigrasi lokal).

It is public knowledge that those who joined the transmigration programs were only a fraction of those who actually settled and farmed in the state forest zones. Those who farmed in the state forest zones but did not live there were excluded from the local transmigration program. From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, official reports indicated that 180,272 hectares of protection forest had been reforested. But evidence in the field indicates otherwise, as most reforestation projects failed to transform ‘degraded’ forests into plantation forests.

Plantation forestry was conducted both in protection forest zones and production forest zones. Various government forestry units were made responsible for reforestation in protection forest zones, while in the production forest zones the state-owned company (PT Inhutani) and some private companies were involved in the industrial forest plantation scheme known as Hutan Tanaman Industri (HTI). From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, it was reported that PT Inhutani and other companies, which controlled 239,000 hectares of production forest between them, planted 54,907 hectares of fast-growing trees and rubber, but their success was limited.

Not only did the government fail to clear the state forest zones of settlers and reforest the ‘degraded’ land, but the eviction of the forest settlers and attempts at reforestation resulted in prolonged conflicts between smallholders, the forest authority, and the HTI companies. Meanwhile, the conversion of forests to smallholder fields continued, as did illegal logging of the remaining forests. In the mid-1990s, at least 41.4 per cent of some 316,570 hectares of conservation forest was no longer forested and had 5,676 households living within its various boundaries. Additionally, 83.5 per cent of some 318,513 hectares of protection forest contained 36,349 households, and 81.5 per cent of 401,910 hectares of production forest contained 54,000 households.
Map 5-1: Forest Land Use Plan or Tata Guna Hutan Kesepakatan (TGHK) of Lampung Province, 1990.

Land and Forests in Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong

In the Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong region, the state forest zones included all of the former BW lands, which already comprised a large portion of the region, but did not include the relatively flat land along the banks of the Way Besai River encircling Bukit Rigis Mountain. Located on the banks of the Way Besai, most villages in the region have state forest zone boundaries as their village
borders. The former BW land to the east and north of the region was classified as protection forest. The hilly and mountain land to the west and north of the region was gazetted as part of Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park.

The opening of the BW forests began a few years after independence, and continued before, during, and after the creation of the province’s forest land use plan. As early as 1946, on the border of what were then the sub-districts of Way Tenong and Bukit Kemuning, the forests were cleared for upland rice swidden, housing, and later coffee gardens, by a small group of Ogan and Semendo people from the neighbouring regions. Their hamlet, named Bedeng Kerbau, supplied rice for Indonesian soldiers who used Bukit Kemuning as their post during the revolutionary war in 1946–47. In 1965–66, the forestry service gave permission for 489 farmers to use 1,294 hectares of the BW land for housing compounds and farming, with each person receiving between 0.3 and 17 hectares. Finally, in 1969, the provincial governor officially recognised this territory as the administrative village of Dwikora.

From the early 1950s, more BW forests were transformed into settlements and farms for the transmigration of veterans from Java. As previously noted, the transmigration program was organised by a central government unit called Biro Rekonstruksi Nasional (BRN). The first BRN transmigration village of Sukapura possessed 224 hectares of BW land while another village, Tribudi Sukur, had 127 hectares. Elders in Simpang Sari remember that in the late 1960s there were already warnings from village officials to the incoming transmigrants to stop further encroachment onto BW land.

In the following decades, more and more people migrated to the region and as a result, more BW land was cleared and transformed into hamlets and smallholder fields. As more people led to more ‘development’ in the region, the creation of more administrative villages, the construction of roads, schools, and health clinics, and improved coffee prices and trade, even more people were attracted to the area. Yet enforcement of the forest zone boundaries was not an issue until the 1980s. Elders in Gunung Terang and Muara Jaya still remember that during the Dutch period, forestry officers regularly patrolled the BW boundary and advised village heads to deter their fellow villagers from clearing and farming land within the BW boundary. However, after independence the village head had no authority to prohibit outsiders from clearing BW land because the BW land was not part of the village territory and the incoming migrants were not ‘citizens’ of any village. Instead of asking the migrants to stop clearing the land, many village heads profited from these situations by charging the migrants fees, whether as a land tax or by granting farming permits (izin garap). The new migrants then became the ‘citizens’ of that village.
Illegal logging was another important factor that led to the deforestation of the region. In most villages the elites were — and a few still are — involved in this lucrative business. In the village, their responsibility was to organise felling, cutting, and local transport, and they were provided with protection by local policemen, military personnel, and/or forest rangers. This allowed them to avoid forest ranger patrols and raids, as well as police and forestry checkpoints along the highway when transporting the timber out of the region. It is a widely held view that timber is the main source of additional cash for local state agencies and their apparatus in those regions of Indonesia where alternative sources of additional cash, such as large industries or plantations, are absent. Without the backing of police, military or forest rangers, any local villager taking lumber, even from a naturally felled tree in the forest, will become the target of a local forest ranger’s raid. The timber will be seized and the possessor will be sent to jail and released only after a sum of ‘peace money’ (uang damai) is paid.

Since the late 1970s, the region has been constantly targeted as a site for the sporadic implementation of forestry policies. Until recently, the main policy has been to evict smallholder farmers from state forest zones and to reforest their farmland, and one effective way of doing this was to accuse smallholder farmers of ‘damaging the environment’.

The hilly region of Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong is the source of water for big river systems that feed large dams and irrigation schemes in the lowlands. This region forms the catchment for the Way Besai River, and is part of the larger Tulang Bawang watershed. The neighbouring regions of Tanjung Raja and Pulau Pangggung are the upper parts of the Way Rarem, Way Seputih, and Way Sekampung watersheds. While the Way Besai hydropower scheme is an important source of electricity for the province, the Way Rarem dam supplies water for irrigation networks in the district of North Lampung. The Way Seputih irrigates rice bowls in the central Lampung lowlands, while the Way Sekampung feeds the Batu Tegi hydropower scheme in Pulau Pangggung and irrigation networks in the southern lowlands of the province. For the forestry officers, the removal of natural cover and the planting of smallholder coffee on sloping land causes erosion, damaging the quality (siltation) and quantity (reduction) of water flowing downstream. Thus, smallholders have been accused of environmental destruction (merusak lingkungan) and were said to deserve harsh measures.

Reforestation projects in this region began in the late 1970s. They began with the planting of a few hundred hectares of pine and sungkai trees (Peronema canescens). A few stands of these trees can still be seen between Dwikora and Sukapura. During the 1980s and early 1990s, rosewood (Dalbergia sp.), calliandra (Calliandra calothyrsus), and mahogany (Swietenia sp.) were used in reforestation projects. Prior to the 1980s, projects were undertaken exclusively
by the forestry service. After that time, the project would involve other parties, including private companies, PT Inhutani, and the military, which had its own reforestation project known as ABRI Manunggal Reboisasi (AMR). Previously concentrated only between the villages of Sukapura and Dwikora, reforestation projects spread throughout the region from the 1980s to the early 1990s, and most villages in the region received one.

In 1995–97, reforestation projects concentrated on the area around Dwikora and a few villages in the eastern part of Sumber Jaya, such as Sukapura, Simpang Sari and Tribudi Sukur, close to the site of the Way Besai dam. Gmelina arborea was the main type of tree being planted, along with a few other tree species. Private companies and the army were no longer involved in these projects, leaving their implementation to PT Inhutani and the forestry service. The reforestation projects often involved local men and women as paid workers, as well as labourers recruited from outside of the region.

Areas of ‘bush’ (belukar) and coffee gardens were the main targets for reforestation. It is reported that, between 1978 and 1985, reforestation projects planted trees in 20,000 hectares of forest zones in the region, and between 1995 and 1998, over 8,000 hectares were planted. After planting the trees on a particular site for a year or two, the project would move on to other sites and the newly planted trees were left without care. In areas of belukar, the trees soon died. In the coffee gardens, most trees were uprooted, but a few were kept alive alongside the coffee stands.

The eviction of farmers living inside of the state forest zones started in the early 1980s. Of the families whose coffee farms were demolished and planted with pine trees in Dwikora, a few hundred were involuntarily resettled in a new transmigration site in Mesuji, near Menggala in Northern Lampung. Hundreds of other families from the BRN transmigration villages of Purajaya, Purawiwitan, and Pura Mekar were among the more than 8,000 people targeted by a military operation to evict small farmers from state forest in Sumber Jaya and Pulau Panggung in 1990–91. They were also forced to resettle in Mesuji. In July 1994, in a joint operation of the forestry service and the police force, houses and coffee gardens in 86 hamlets in Purajaya, Purawiwitan, and Muara Jaya were destroyed. Some of the 1,200 affected families were resettled in Mesuji, while the rest moved elsewhere.

In other areas, to avoid the demolition of their houses and gardens by these military operations, the farmers dismantled their own hamlets themselves. Those who moved outside of the region simply abandoned their gardens, while those who lived nearby continued to maintain and harvest their coffee gardens. Living in a nearby village territory outside of the state forest boundaries, while continuing to care for and harvest the coffee gardens inside the state
forest zones, became a common response to such military operations. Such a practice was called *kucing-kucingan* (hide-and-seek), and because it involved the pruning, pollarding, or felling of the reforestation trees, it had to be done carefully to avoid the risk of being caught in the act by patrolling officers who were becoming increasingly ruthless. During the harvest season, the patrolling forestry, military, and/or police personnel began to confiscate part of the harvest. Later, this became a regular practice, and every harvest season the farmers were asked to set aside a portion of their harvest for collection by the patrolling personnel who threatened to destroy their gardens if they were not compensated.

On the southern slopes of Bukit Rigis there were six hamlets, all located within the state forest zone. The population of three of these hamlets was registered in the transmigration village of Fajar Bulan, while the other three hamlets officially belonged to another transmigration village called Puralaksana. In the 1970s, they were populated by migrants, mainly from Java, and by the end of the 1980s, there were over 500 families within the six hamlets. Soon they were preparing to create a separate village administration. *Sinar Harapan*, literally meaning ‘the light of hope’, was chosen as the name of the village. Members of this community envisioned having a small market, an elementary school, and some mosques, just as in neighbouring administrative villages, but the plan never materialised. In the early 1990s, forestry and military personnel informed the villagers of an upcoming military operation to evict those living and farming in the state forest. Not wanting their houses and gardens destroyed, they vacated the village. Most of them moved to neighbouring villages. Their coffee gardens were soon planted with rosewood and mahogany. Only on regularly maintained coffee gardens have some of these reforestation trees survived; on the abandoned gardens and bushland they died.

The most recent government attempt to evict small farmers and turn coffee gardens and bushland within state forest zones into plantation forests took place in 1995–97. It began with what villagers in the region remember as ‘the elephant operation’ (*operasi gajah*) at the beginning of 1995. Unlike earlier military operations, this one involved a troop of elephants. The villages of Dwikora, in Bukit Kemuning sub-district, and Sukapura, Simpang Sari and Tribudi Sukur, in Sumber Jaya sub-district, were selected for the evictions. The start of the operation was aired nationally on the government television station (TVRI) and covered by local and national newspapers.

In a couple of months, the elephant operation managed to demolish hundreds of huts and houses, and thousands of hectares of coffee gardens. Unlike in previous operations, this time the villagers were more open in expressing their disagreement. Hundreds of Dwikora villagers organised a demonstration in the capital of the province. Delegates from this village also managed to engage
in a series of dialogues with high-level provincial government officers and politicians. Petitions were signed and sent to key institutions in Jakarta, such as the Ministry of Forestry, the Human Rights Commission, and the House of Representatives. As a result, it was decided that houses located within 300 metres of a stretch of the main road more than a kilometre long would not be destroyed in the operation, but the villagers were still expected to dismantle their houses on their own, and demands for the cancellation or delay of the demolition of coffee gardens were rejected. In 1996, through a decree by the provincial governor, the administrative village of Dwikora was declared to no longer exist. By the end of 1996, a smaller troop of military, police, and forestry personnel was again set up to destroy the gardens, but this time hundreds of men wielding machetes rushed out and were ready to attack them. To avoid bloodshed, the government forces cancelled the demolition of houses and coffee gardens. The villagers only allowed them to demolish government facilities such as the village hall, water tank, and elementary school.

Resettlement and the further demolition of smallholder coffee gardens, as well as the planting of reforestation trees, still followed on from this exercise. In 1996, nearly 300 families from Dwikora and other villages in Sumber Jaya moved to Mesuji under a local transmigration program. PT Inhutani and various forestry units organised the reforestation project, and Dwikora was chosen as their base camp. By the beginning of 1998, it was reported that the project had planted at least 6,000 hectares around Dwikora.

Although the re-opening of previously destroyed and reforested coffee gardens had been occurring for some time, a massive re-opening began in mid-1998. In the early years of the monetary crisis, the price of export crops such as coffee and pepper increased sharply following the decline of the rupiah vis-à-vis the US dollar. Coffee prices rose fivefold from Rp 3,000 to nearly Rp 15,000 per kilogram. Dried bushland and dying reforestation trees were burned, making felling and clearing of bush and trees less arduous. The overthrow of Suharto and his New Order regime in May 1998 — marking the beginning of reformasi — was interpreted as the abrogation of the New Order’s repressive forest policies, which allowed the reformasi to justify land reclamation and reappropriation. There was no more fear of forestry and military personnel. Apart from people reclaiming fields, a series of protests and demonstrations were staged throughout the province, resulting in some changes to forest policy. The news spread among villagers that there would be no more evictions and crop destruction, and that farming in state forest zones was no longer prohibited. The PDIP campaign for the 1999 general election centred around this theme, and the party’s election win added further justification to the reclamation and reopening of state forest zones.
When talking about their interactions with the forest authority, villagers in the region often speak of a series of periods: *buka kawasan* (opening of [state forest] zones); *tutup kawasan* (closing of [state forest] zones); and *bebas kawasan* (free [to occupy state forest] zones). The first refers to the period prior to the enforcement of repressive forest policies; the second to the closing down of state forest zones from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s; and the last to the post-*reformasi* period. Some villagers said that if the coffee price not declined in 1999, the few patches of natural forest that still remain would be gone, completely transformed into coffee gardens. Certainly, throughout the region, most reforested lands were cleared and returned to coffee gardens.

**Traditional Social or Community Forestry**

The early model for reforestation projects in the 1980s can be seen as a form of social forestry. ‘Forest farmers’ were treated as free (unpaid) labourers in the establishment of plantation forests, and often the farmers worked as labourers on reforestation projects to plant rosewood in their own gardens. The farmers were allowed to keep maintaining and harvesting their coffee, but were strongly advised to look after, and not to fell, the reforestation trees, nor to abandon their gardens when the rosewood trees outgrew the coffee trees. Although some farmers followed this advice, most did not. They uprooted or felled the rosewood or kept only a few of them. Coffee gardens with a few rosewood trees can still be encountered in the region. However, most coffee gardens that were overgrown by rosewood and abandoned were soon taken over and transformed back into coffee gardens by other farmers.

During the late 1980s and 1990s, reforestation projects used harsher measures. Coffee trees were chopped down and the land was replanted with calliandra, gmelina, and other trees. Until 1997–98, thousands of hectares of calliandra bush covered state forest zones throughout the region, and gmelina trees were common in the eastern part of Sumber Jaya. By 2000, except for a few calliandra groves planted on bushland that was not suitable for coffee cultivation, most of this reforestation cover had been cleared.

Outside of the state forest zones, the forestry offices implemented ‘people’s forestry’ (*hutan rakyat*) programs, which provided training, materials, and financial incentives for farmers’ groups. The program included ‘re-greening’ (*penghijauan*), in which fruit and fast-growing timber tree seedlings were distributed for free. Financial incentives for introducing farming techniques for soil conservation (terraces, ridges, pits), and the construction of small dams on creeks to reduce eroded soils flowing into river systems, were also included in the program.
In the mid 1990s, a different kind of ‘social forestry’ approach was put in place. This approach, which was very limited in scope, was concentrated in a few villages in the eastern part of Sumber Jaya, with the village of Simpang Sari being the main site. Farming blocks in state forest zones were grouped together, and villagers were employed as paid labourers to plant reforestation trees in their coffee gardens. Apart from exotic timber trees, a small number of non-timber trees were also planted. These non-timber trees, including petai (Parkia speciosa), aren (Arenga pinnata), jengkol (Archidendron pauciflorum), damar (Shorea javanica), and durian (Durio zibethinus) are officially known as multi-purpose tree species. The project itself was officially named hutan kemasyarakatan (community forestry). Forestry officials hoped that in the long run, the farmers would care for the reforestation trees, would be able to benefit from ‘minor’ forest products, and would give up cultivating coffee. In 2002, the farmers still cared for the young ‘multi-purpose’ trees, but the timber trees were uprooted, felled, or pruned regularly to prevent them from shading the coffee trees.

A few villages in the region were able to protect patches of natural cover adjacent to the village settlements. In the transmigration villages of Simpang Sari, Tribudi Sukur, and Cipta Waras in Sumber Jaya, as well as the Semendo village of Sukaraja in Way Tenong, a few hundred hectares of forest groves were prevented from being cleared and converted into farms. The forest grove in Sukaraja is an exception because it is located outside of the state forest zone boundary, unlike many other groves that are located within the boundary. This village forest is known as Kalpataru forest, after the national environmental award given to the Sukaraja community in 1987. Securing the water supply for rice fields and domestic use is said to be the villagers’ top commitment. In all villages, the elders continue to remind the other villagers to protect the groves. Farmers — either from within or outside of the village — need land for farms. Aside from illegal logging by village elites backed by the military, police, and/or forestry officers, this need for farmland presents the greatest challenge for the villagers in protecting their forest. It is illegal logging operations and expansion of smallholder farms that have caused the failure of village forest protection in some transmigrant and Semendo villages in the region.

After the Reformasi

As far as relations between smallholders and forestry authorities are concerned, ‘agro-forestation’ and the protection of the remaining forest by local communities become a major policy theme in the region after the reformasi. Community forestry or hutan kemasyarakatan (HKm) was adopted as a program or policy that aimed to resolve the prolonged conflict over forest and land resources. The
new policy marked the beginning of collaboration between forestry officers and village communities. However, the development of such collaboration has been problematic because the villagers understood the new policy to mean that there would be no more evictions and or destruction of their farms, while forestry officers saw it as a different strategy to gain greater control, not only over the resources but also over the people. Conflict over such divergent views is shown in the politics of resource control in the implementation of the community forestry program.

Plate 5-1: Members of a community forestry (HKm) group in Rigis Atas.

Source: Courtesy of the author.
At the provincial level, besides community forestry, reformasi in the forestry sector was also marked by a minor change in the forest land use plan, and the introduction of a regulation to impose a levy on all non-timber products (iuran hasil hutan bukan kayu) from all state forest zones in the province. The new land use plan (from 2000) excluded 145,000 hectares of production forest — mostly in the plains and lowlands of the province — that had long been converted to established village settlements, smallholder upland fields, wet rice fields, or brackish shrimp ponds on the coast. The new levy was designed to extract revenues from timber plantation companies which planted crops other than timber, as well as smallholders farming in state forest zones. For the smallholders, the exaction of the levy was linked to the granting of community forestry permits (izin HKm).

Under the community forestry scheme, smallholder farmers were required to form a farmers’ group, or preferably a cooperative. The farmers’ community group (kelompok) or cooperative was responsible for submitting a ‘management plan’ for a particular block of state forest managed by its members. The planting of trees — with a caution that coffee is not considered a tree — and protection of the remaining natural cover (if there was any) were the main components of the plan. The official contract of usufruct right was given to the group by the head of the district (bupati) and approval of the plan granted rights to the area for five years. After five years an evaluation was to be conducted. It was said that the results of the evaluation were used as the basis for granting more permanent permits which were valid for 25 years.

By the end of 2002, five community groups had been granted temporary permits. The farmers’ group in Tribudi Sukur — which consisted of 15 smaller groups with 248 members managing 360 hectares of land — received substantial assistance from forestry office staff in 2001. For three other groups, assistance was also provided by field staff of WATALA and ICRAF. They assisted the groups in mapping and inventory, formulation of a management plan, and the granting of the temporary permits. Two of the farmers’ groups were from two hamlets in Simpang Sari. One from Abung Marga Laksana consisted of four smaller groups with 73 members managing over 260 hectares of land, half of which was over-logged forest. The other one was from Gunung Sari, with 145 members managing 259 hectares land, including 90 hectares of over-logged forest. The third group was from Rigis Atas, a hamlet in Gunung Terang village, with three smaller groups managing 203 hectares of land, more than half of which had natural forest cover. The area of land per member for these three groups, and perhaps for other groups as well, was similar to the pattern of land control on marga (non-state forest) land which was between 0.25 and 4 hectares,
with 1 hectare being the average. The last farmers’ group to receive a temporary permit in 2002 was from the village of Tambak Jaya. Unlike the other groups, this farmers’ group did not receive much help from external agencies.

The groups with temporary permits were responsible for the protection of the remaining forest from illegal logging. In addition, each village with a HKm group received a small monthly allowance from the district government for the appointment of persons — nominated by the group members and village leaders — as civilian forest rangers (petugas keamanan [or pam] swakarsa). This gave the authority in these villages to both the HKm group and the appointed pam swakarsa (civilian forest rangers) to stop illegal logging and the clearing of the remaining forest in the villages. After some initial raids, tree felling in forests near villages with an HKm group ceased. As some of the villagers involved in the illegal business said, ‘we can no longer cut trees from the forest in some villages. It is now forbidden, not by officials (petugas) but by the community (masyarakat).’ But forest protection by the village community created yet another problem. Timber now had to be imported from other areas, which led to an increase in the cost of home construction.

There were similarities among the various groups that were granted temporary permits. All of the groups were located on sites that were frequently targeted for evictions and crop destruction. With official permission, the villagers now had a more secure right to farm in state forest zones. As they often put it, ‘we are safe (aman) now. We will no longer be the target of eviction and crop demolition.’ Official permission was a strong motivator to join the HKm scheme. Among villagers themselves, there was sometimes conflict over ‘ownership’ of gardens on BW land where there were competing claims over a particular piece of land. Being registered officially with izin HKm ownership secured the land against any claim by fellow farmers.

Another similarity the groups shared was the large number of members of each group who lived in the same hamlet. As neighbours and friends and sometimes relatives, it was easier for them to form a group and to reach agreement on various issues. Strong leadership was another key issue as all of the groups that were granted permits had energetic, smart, and articulate leaders. The groups were therefore not only successful in reaching group consensus, but also in getting much-needed assistance from external organisations.

Being granted only temporary permits meant that the groups still had to obtain more permanent permits. This was a complicated issue since it was not clear how permanent permits were granted, and villagers had heard that there was reluctance in the forest authority to continue the implementation of the HKm scheme. There were reports that in many parts of the province, farmers were clearing more forests in anticipation of HKm permits because they had
misinterpreted the policy as legal permission to convert more forest into farms. Villagers’ resistance to official efforts to collect the levy on non-timber forest products imposed on smallholders farming state forest lands was another reason for a moratorium on the HKm policy.

Another problem which was more technical, but equally complicated, was the issue of planting trees. Villagers often had questions regarding how many trees needed to be planted, what species, and who should supply the seedlings. Smallholders who wanted to transform their coffee gardens into tree-based gardens were happy to plant as many trees as possible, but many were keen to keep coffee or other export crops, so they were more inclined to minimise the number of tall trees. Others wanted to plant more annual crops, such as vegetables, in their gardens, while trees that produced ‘minor’ forest products, such as fruits, sugar palm and resin, were strongly recommended for planting on HKm plots. Good quality seedlings were imported from outside of the region and were expensive, which was a major constraint. Some farmers also reported that their previous experience with planting commercial fruit trees (such as durian and longan) had shown that the harvest was too small and too irregular. Some crops like guava, jackfruit, and avocado fetched a low price. According to those in the village, it was the fast-growing timber trees that grew well and for which there was high market demand, but the planting of such trees was discouraged because, under the HKm scheme, forest farmers were obliged to plant trees but were prohibited from cutting them down, let alone selling the timber.

Farmers from a few other villages also formed groups in order to obtain temporary permits, but they were less successful due to a lack of skilful and trusted leaders and limited group cohesion. There were instances where the leaders of these HKm groups indicated their intention to secure personal gain from the group, which made other members reluctant to support them. In other cases, groups faced difficulties in reaching agreement simply because each faction within the group insisted on their own needs. In the worst cases, a group meeting was difficult to organise and so it was impossible to make a collective decision.

Given the large number of smallholders farming state forest zones in the region, the number of villagers engaged in the HKm scheme was relatively small. Many villagers made statements to the effect that ‘the majority of people here in the region are forest settlers (perambah hutan) and most of the state forest zones in the region have been cleared and farmed.’ This may be an exaggeration, but a large proportion of smallholders farming state forest lands in the region were not bothering to get official permits. For forestry officers, villagers who refused to join HKm and/or pay the levy ‘lacked awareness’ (belum sadar) of environmental conservation, ‘needed education’ (perlu penyuluhan), and were ‘blind to the law’
The villagers, on the other hand, made equally valid points. The destruction of coffee gardens and the uprooting of reforestation trees became so frequent that, as they put it:

\[\text{We now are getting used to it (sudah biasa). It is a matter of who gets exhausted (capek) and gives up (menyerah) first. If we give up first, then they can plant timber trees. If they give up first, we continue cultivating the land.}\]

Many villagers saw the conflict as a conflict over access to wealth. Illegal logging, reforestation projects, and premium-class or fast-growing timber trees were lucrative sources of income for the state. As some villagers put it, 'if all state forest lands are to be managed by the community, then how can those officers feed themselves (bagaimana petugas bisa makan)?'

The village of Simpang Sari is an interesting case that can perhaps represent the population in the entire region with regard to HKm. There were villagers who had successfully secured temporary permits, villagers who had formed groups but were still struggling to acquire permits, and villagers who did not want to be bothered with official administrative processes such as HKm. Those with permits were struggling to obtain tree seedlings and protect the remaining forest, and were confused over the additional burden of paying the levy. Other groups agreed to pay the levy but proposed that, in return, they be granted permits but without the obligation to plant trees and/or protect the remaining forests. Given such confusion, as well as internal leadership and cohesion problems, other villagers dissolved their groups and abandoned the HKm scheme altogether, while some felt that there was no need to join the HKm scheme and pay the levy because they had been paying land tax to the village administration for years.

The state of collaboration in forest land and resource management between villagers and forestry authorities is problematic, both in scale and substance. The protection forest zone of Bukit Rigis, for example, has a total area of 8,289 hectares. Heavily forested until the 1970s, about 2,000 hectares (less than 20 per cent) of the upper slopes remained forested in 2002, while the rest was mostly transformed into smallholder coffee gardens. Four years after the implementation of the community forestry policy, only a few hundred hectares of Bukit Rigis protection forest had cultivation permits. The process of obtaining the permits required strong community cohesion, exceptional village leaders, and/or external assistance, which more often than not has been unavailable. Under the community forestry scheme, smallholder households were required to form groups or cooperatives and make collective land use decisions instead. But this was problematic because individual households organised their agricultural production independently. Household farming decisions were made in response to the availability of farming inputs, market signals, and natural potentials and
limitations, while the community forestry scheme demanded a management plan similar to the scientific approach used in the development of large-scale plantation forests.

Many villagers and a few forestry and other government officers believed that the remaining forests would soon vanish unless the nearby village communities protected them, while efforts to convert existing smallholder fields into plantation forests were unlikely to be successful. But they also well knew that those in power were very unlikely to hand over control of land and forest resources to the local people.