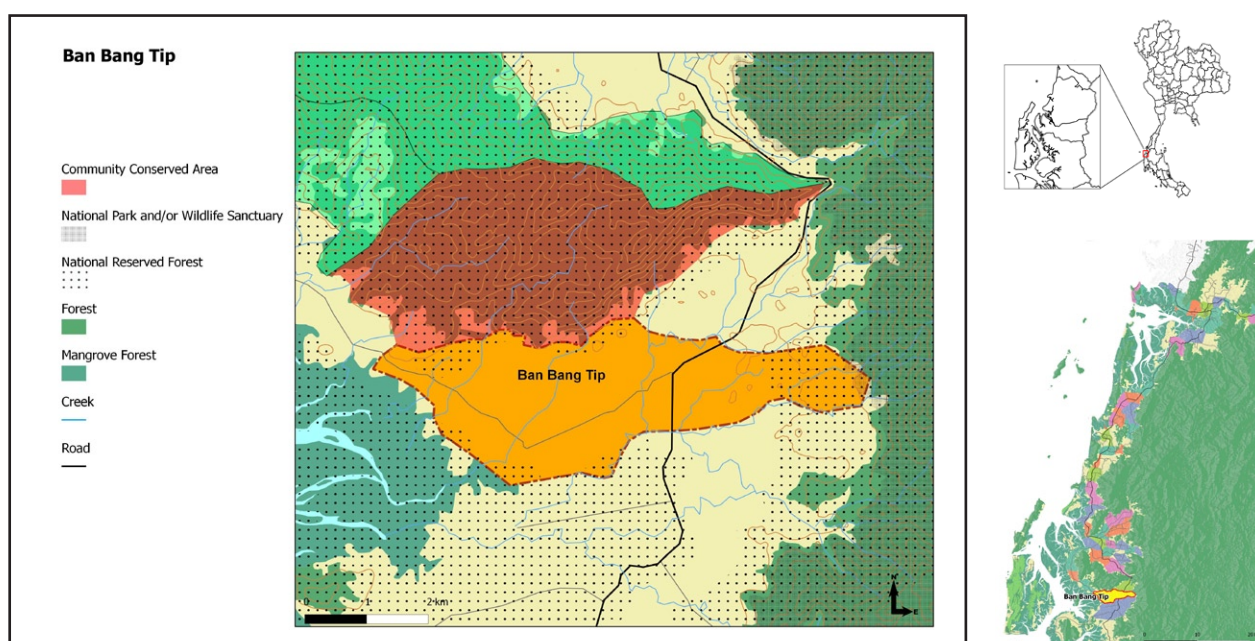


Ban Bang Tip

Conserving community forests in the Kuraburi watershed

March 2010



The Ban Bang Tip community began to manage their mangroves and terrestrial forest in 1996. The terrestrial forest is part of Khao Mae Nang Khao mountain forest complex, and it is reserved forest under the National Forest Reserve Act 1964 (see Map 1).

There are 250 households in the Ban Bang Tip village. Other nearby villages also use the forest: Ban Bang Ku Rot, Ban Bang Leang, Bang Wan, Ban Bang SaiTong, Ban Tham-nang, Ban Kong Sorn Ram, Ban Thung La-Ong, and Ban Kluck.

The people of Ban Bang Tip realised how important their forest is for Thailand's national heritage. They also saw that because many people were using its resources, to preserve the forest resources into the future they would need to manage it sustainably. Villagers use many non-timber forest products for household use: fruits and vegetables; herbs; beehives;

Map 1. shows the community conserved area, as well as protected areas under the National Park Act 1961, Wildlife Preservation and Protection Act 1992, and National Reserved Forest Act 1964.

firewood (from decayed trees); river fish and shrimp; Khao Dum wood for making birdcages; and oil trees. The rivers that run through their landscape provide water for household use in several villages - mainly to Ban Bang Tip and Ban Ku Rot - and the forest also prevents soil erosion.

Initially their conservation efforts focused only on mangroves, but they soon realised that a more holistic, whole-of-watershed approach was needed. They now manage at least 3000 rai of terrestrial forest.

There is a Mangrove/Forest Committee that works with the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) Mangrove Unit. This Committee is made up of 10 villagers from Ban Bang Tip and the nearby village of Ban Ku Rot. It has dual responsibility for mangroves and terrestrial forest. They also check the health of the forest about twice a month, by looking at the amount of light in the forest – if it too bright, that means some trees are falling or being cut down. Ban Bang Tip has recently commissioned a study into the effects of harvesting oil from the oil tree.

There is also a Ban Bang Tip Village Committee, whose 10 members are drawn from specific Ban Bang Tip community management groups, such as the Environment Group. This Committee meets at least twice per month. When important decisions are made, for example about changing the community rules, Committee members would first go door-to-door to all Ban Bang Tip houses with a questionnaire, and then there would be a vote in a Committee meeting.

The next step for Ban Bang Tip is to make signs to put up around the Khao Mae Nang Khao forest area to let all outsiders know that special community rules apply.

Community Rules

Ban Bang Tip have developed community rules that apply to the forest area. They are:

- 1. Only the big fish in the river can be caught (i.e. bigger than 250g).**
- 2. Fish cannot be caught by drugging techniques ('Oun Run Ou Lark').**
- 3. No trees can be cut down, not even for household use.**
- 4. Plants and herbs may be used, but only by picking the leaves, not destroying the whole plant.**
- 5. During the dry season, oil trees may be tapped.**
- 6. Beehives may be used.**

It is easy to monitor if any outsiders are using the area because all access roads run through the Ban Bang Tip village. If outsiders try to enter the forest via the road, the Ban Bang Tip villagers will ask them what their purpose in going into the forest is.

If someone from the Ban Bang Tip community breaks the rules, they will face community 'sanctions', such as withholding of welfare, or being prevented from borrowing money from the village bank.



Bang tip forest. © IUCN

The villagers regularly work with the government in compliance and enforcement. There has only been one person to break the rules in 2009. He was a man from Phuket who cut trees. In this case, a Ban Bang Tip villager found him cutting the trees, took pictures, and informed the Committee. The Committee reported him directly to the Royal Forest Department and he was arrested. His case is being processed now.