

Central Forest Spine

Yayasan Hasanah's mission for Central Forest Spine (CFS) is to stop further degradation and defragmentation of critical sites in the CFS landscape through advocacy, community led action and civil society initiatives.

What is the Central Forest Spine (CFS)?

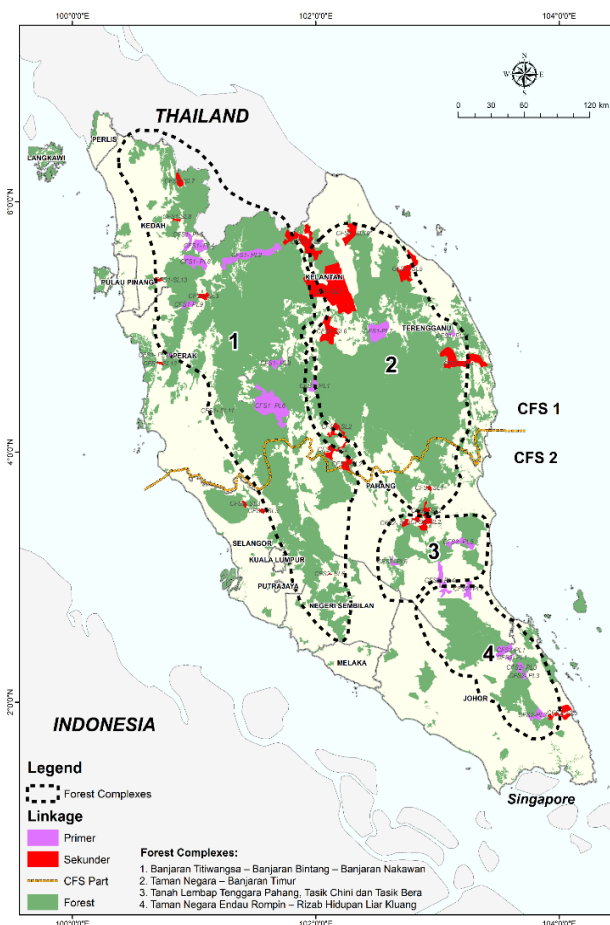
CFS was a term coined by the National Physical Plan (NPP) for a set of four environmentally sensitive forest complexes in Peninsular Malaysia which are crucial to life in this landscape.

CFS straddles across eight states (Kedah, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Johor, Negeri Sembilan and Selangor), and comprises of four major forest complexes, i.e.

- Banjaran Titiwangsa-Banjaran Bintang-Nakawan,
- Taman Negara- Banjaran Timur,
- South East Pahang, Chini and Bera Wetlands, and
- Endau Rompin Park- Kluang Wildlife Reserves.

What is the issue?

Malaysia's Central Forest Spine (CFS) is degrading at an alarming rate as a result of the rapid urbanization growth. Over the years, human intervention for commercial gains has resulted in clearing of vegetation and forest land for agriculture, settlement and infrastructure development. This has resulted in overall reduction of our forest areas, decline in quality of our forests and tearing the natural habitat into unconnected parts, also known as forest fragmentation.



Changes in Forest Cover in Peninsular Malaysia

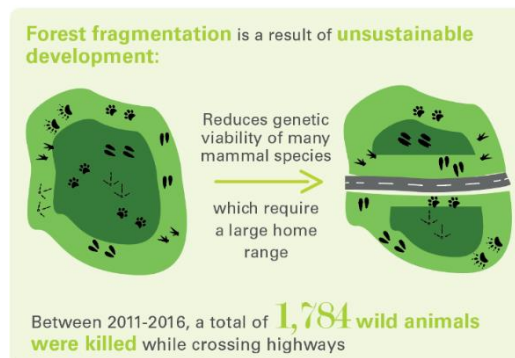
77%
in
1946



43.7%
in
2017

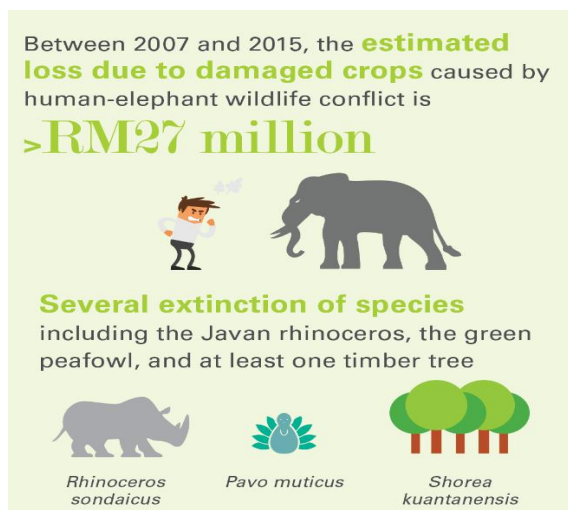
Forest fragmentation inhibits the free movement of fauna and flora which usually leads to habitat destruction thus ultimately reducing the diversity of plants and animals. Forest fragmentation has the following consequences:

- Reduction of Forest Cover
- Environmental Integrity and Degradation of Highland Areas
- Damage to the Water Catchment and River System
- Damage to Potential Recreation and Tourism Areas
- Loss of Tourism Development Resource and National Natural Heritage
- Elimination of Potential Medical Resource,
- Education and Research



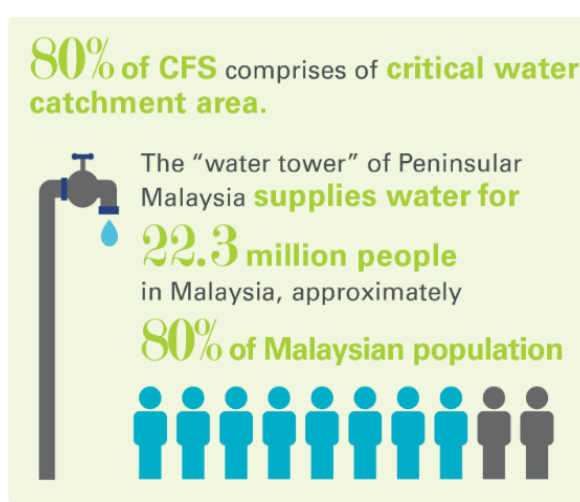
Source: Salman Saaban (Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia - DWNP) 2016 - paper was presented at the "Biodiversity Forum 2016"

Why conserve CFS?



Source: Salman Saaban (Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia - DWNP) 2016 - paper was presented at the "Biodiversity Forum 2016"

Source: UNDP Project document : Improving Connectivity in the Central Forest Spine (CFS) Landscape - IC-CFS



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According to the National Policy on Biological Diversity (2016-2025), Malaysia's transition into high-income nation has exerted huge pressure on biodiversity, such that nearly half the country's plant species is facing threat of extinction while species like the *Javan* rhinoceros and green pea fowl have been declared extinct. UNDP estimates that between 1970 and 2015, Malaysia has lost 30% of its forest cover. 80% of the population of the country is dependent on CFS as it is the main provider for water, forest and non-forest produce, acts as a carbon sink, flora and fauna.

In fact, the National Policy on Biological Diversity (2016-2025) describes how the conservation of biodiversity is crucial to several aspects including food security; provision of ecosystem services like maintenance of water quality, soil regeneration. In addition, many rural communities are dependent on environment for sources of traditional medicine.

Conservation of biodiversity is also critical for the economy as non-forest produce is essential as raw material for many industries; tourism; advances in biotechnology are reliant on genetic diversity of parent stocks; and, finally, biodiversity is the habitat of indigenous people and traditional knowledge.



What has been done so far?

In 2005, the Government of Malaysia adopted the CFS Master Plan as part of the National Physical Plan with the objective of re-establishing, maintaining and enhancing connectivity between the most significant remaining areas of forests in Peninsular Malaysia through what was called the Central Forest Spine (CFS).

Once established, this Central Forest Spine would form a physically and functionally unbroken link of forests from Johor to the Thai border, henceforth, connecting with certain protected areas in Thailand. The Master Plan provides a framework for linkage strategies in creating connectivity via ecological corridors that provide forest cover, food, water, protection from dangers and minimal disturbance for the species. The CFS Plan describes two types of ecological corridors, viz. Primary and Secondary Linkages- where it is crucial to establish forest connectivity to facilitate the movement, existence and nurturing of biodiversity.

In order to start realising the objectives in the CFS Master Plan, Government of Malaysia with the support of UNDP Malaysia secured financial support from Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 2012. The project was to support the CFS Master Plan implementation by demonstrating approaches to re-connect forest fragments, conserve biodiversity, maintain and restore ecosystem services and secure livelihoods for those dependent on the forests. However, the project was only partly implemented as a result of complexity of working on the ground given state and federal jurisdiction issues and is being restructured in 2019 to capture more comprehensive and integrated outcomes.

Further, NGOs have been working on the CFS landscape for over two decades from early 2000's, on a range of issues including curbing poaching, provide safer habitat for elephants, tigers and tapirs, and protecting plant species and water resources. Similarly, Corporates and other private agencies have also carried out conservation programmes which are largely driven by their mandate and branding, and are short term in nature i.e. on a year-on-year basis.

The urgent need is for all stakeholders to come together NOW to achieve a sustained long-term vision for the CFS landscape and take responsibility to prevent degradation and deforestation of the forest ecosystem.

What needs to be done?

Yayasan Hasanah is committed to creating a balance between the need for development and conservation of our natural forests for our current use and future generations. Our work, currently covers four broad areas:

Research and Documentation – Building the understanding on the status of our forest (deforestation and degradation) over the last 30 years, its ecosystem services and developing a conservation economics model for the protection of CFS;

Community Engagement – Working with Civil Society Partners and local communities to be stewards in managing and protecting riverine and forest ecosystems in states of Perak, Pahang, Terengganu and Kedah.

Awareness and Capacity Building – Building the understanding on the biodiversity, ecosystem services and functions of the Central Forest Spine among targeted stakeholders including government agencies, private sector, civil society, local communities within the CFS.

Advocacy and Policy Support – Working with federal and state government agencies in enhancing policies and legislation in the conservation and protection of the CFS landscape. Towards this, we are supporting the co-creation of stakeholder platforms and advocating for direct involvement of private sector, civil society and local communities in the conservation and protection of CFS landscape.

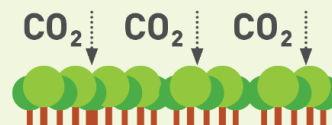
Collaborating for Impact

Our main objective is to develop a holistic, integrated and participatory approach to the conservation and protection of the CFS landscape. In this regard, we are keen to collaborate with stakeholders and Malaysian public to achieve this conservation agenda.

Call to Action- what can you do?

- ✓ Get in touch with us on how Hasanah could partner with you.
- ✓ Spread the word- share the brief on your social media and tag us.
- ✓ Tell us your action pledge.
- ✓ Get in touch with your State Assembly Representatives and Members of Parliament to create awareness about the vulnerable state of our forests.

CFS provides **climate regulation**: **Carbon stock** of natural forests in Peninsular Malaysia is approximately **1.139 billion tonnes**, of which **85%** falls within the CFS



Source: UNDP Project document : Improving Connectivity in the Central Forest Spine (CFS) Landscape - IC-CFS

CFS also offers **natural forest products**, including timber and non-timber forest products Rattan, bamboo, petai, and gaharu (agarwood)



Source: UNDP Project document : Improving Connectivity in the Central Forest Spine (CFS) Landscape - IC-CFS

Tourism is a significant component of Malaysia's economy (contributing an estimated **12% of GDP** and **CFS has a huge potential** to boost the tourism economy)



Source: UNDP Project document : Improving Connectivity in the Central Forest Spine (CFS) Landscape - IC-CFS

Where can you get more information?

<https://yayasanhasanah.org/>
https://www.townplan.gov.my/download/CFS%20I_1.pdf
<https://www.mybis.gov.my/pb/590>