

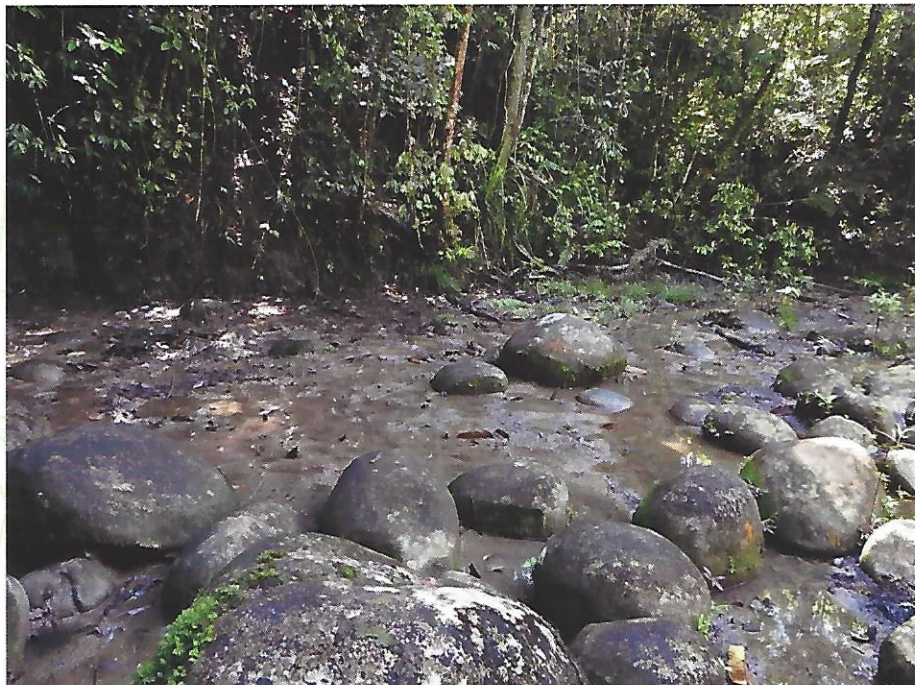
THE IMPORTANCE OF SALT LICKS IN SARAWAK



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Salt lick are areas with high concentration of minerals that occurs naturally in the forest where many herbivorous animals uses these resources as supplement to their diet. Salt lick are protected in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah by their wildlife protection legislation but not under the Sarawak Wild Life Ordinance 1998. Salt licks in Sarawak has been given reasonable attention in highlighting their importance, as the first recommendations documented to heed the status of salt licks was the Sarawak Master Plan in 1996. Although legislatively there are no specific sections in the State Ordinances to protect nor restrict hunting activities at or near salt licks, there are some directives, guidelines, criteria and indicators to encapsulate the salt licks to protection from disturbances under sustainable forestry practises by the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) in the Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management Certification 2002. Therefore, salt licks that lies within the production forests and protected areas are safeguarded within this area. However, hunting for subsistence is allowed for the local communities, thus the outcome of continuous effort to protect the salt licks remained equivocal. Overlapping laws on subsistence hunting and hunting ban in production forests had left forest managers perplexed. The question now arises on the sufficiency of the current protection, or shall there be an effort to fortify the salt licks from the said risk lest it could result in depletion of wildlife in Sarawak. It is therefore important to understand the wildlife dynamics and synergy between local community and land use management from conservation policy both at the State and Federal level to facilitate long term protection of this vital resource.



Salt lick site in a production forest in Sarawak