

Presented by
SCHOOL OF HUMAN EVOLUTION & SOCIAL CHANGE
& GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SUSTAINABILITY WRIGLEY LECTURE SERIES

Greasy Palms: Assessing the Resilience & Vulnerability of Bornean Landscapes to Agribusiness Expansion for Edible Oils & Biofuels



LISA M. CURRAN

A major challenge of sustainability science involves assessing the resilience of human-environmental systems that are experiencing multiple natural and anthropogenic perturbations that vary in rate, extent, and intensity. Curran presents a case study from tropical forests in Indonesian Borneo that documents a major perturbation to human-environmental systems—large scale and intensive land clearing for agribusiness. Economic and political drivers of oil-palm expansion are associated with global demand for timber, edible oils, and biofuel. The effects of these land-use changes on carbon emissions, biodiversity, and forest-dependent livelihoods are assessed. Issues of land tenure, environmental justice, accountability, and transparency of governance are critical factors for evaluating private-sector behavior and long-term regional sustainability.

Ecologist and evolutionary biologist Lisa Curran has spent over 25 years in the South and Southeast Asian tropics conducting research, training, and policy studies. She held a diversity of positions for UNESCO-MAB, foundations, and NGOs, and has consulted with multidisciplinary teams for US-AID, The World Bank, and Asian Development Bank. Currently, she is a professor of Tropical Resource Science and Director of the Tropical Resources Institute at Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Curran is also an external faculty member at the Santa Fe Institute, a MacArthur Fellow, and serves on NASA's Earth Science Advisory Board, as well as the boards of the Tropical Forest Foundation, the Forest Dialogue, and the Forest Integrity Network

Curran's current research focuses upon the effects of land-use change, climate, drought, and fire on carbon dynamics and biodiversity; and the impact of multisectoral governmental policies and industrial practices on ecosystem management and rural livelihoods in tropical frontiers.

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Arizona State University, Tempe campus

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