**URGENCY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY IN MANAGING NON-STATE OWNED FOREST AREA TO REDUCE DEFORESTATION**

**(Study in Sintang District, West Kalimantan)**

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***Abstract***

*This paper aims to analyze the authority of local governments in maintaining forest cover non-state owned forest area or APL as a life support from deforestation caused by forest conversion into business areas. This research is a normative research, with data collection techniques carried out by library research. The results of the study show that the Sintang Regency Government is given the authority to manage APL in its administrative area based on the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number SK.733/Menhut-II/2014 concerning Forest Areas and Marine Conservation of West Kalimantan Province. Management of APL is intended for development activities other than forestry, so that the conversion of forest areas to non-forest areas aims to be converted for economic interests for plantations, mining and agriculture. The conversion of APL which has forest cover for permits is trying to cause deforestation to continue to increase. Through PP No. 23 of 2021, the government encourages regional governments according to their authority to carry out forest cover protection in APL that do not yet have a business license to fulfill the carrying capacity and capacity of the environment to reduce deforestation rates outside forest areas.*

*Keywords: Authority, Deforestation, Forest Cover, Local Government.*

1. **Introduction**

Indonesia is a country that has a wealth of natural resources. This overflow of wealth needs to be managed and preserved with the principle of sustainability. One of Indonesia's natural resources is forests, both tropical rain forests and peat forests which are spread across various parts of Indonesia.

Based on data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry for 2020, the area of forest areas throughout Indonesia is 95.6 million hectares or 50.9% of the total land area, of which 92.5% of the total forest area or 88.4 million hectares are in forest areas. (Nunu Anugrah, 2021). Meanwhile, 7.5% of the forested land area or 7.2 million hectares is outside forest areas or non-state owned forest area.

According to the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number 7 of 2021 concerning Forestry Planning, Changes in Allotment of Forest Areas and Changes in the Functions of Forest Areas, and Use of Forest Areas, what is meant by non-state owned forest area, hereinafter abbreviated as APL, are areas that are not Forest Areas. Furthermore, in the Regulation of the Minister of Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia Number P. 58/Menhut-II/2009 concerning Replacement of Stand Value from Timber Utilization Permits and/or Land Preparation in the Development of Plantation Forests, it states that Areas for Other Uses (APL) are forest areas determined based on Ministerial Decrees. Forestry concerning Designation of Provincial Forest and Water Areas, or based on the Consensus Forest Use Arrangement (TGHK) to become non-forest areas.

The eastern part of West Kalimantan Province has tropical forest landscapes, thus making it included in the Heart of Borneo forest area which holds the richest biodiversity in the world (Redin, 2020). To protect these forest areas, the Minister of Forestry has issued Decree Number SK.733/Menhut-II/2014 concerning Forest Areas and Marine Conservation of West Kalimantan Province by designating an area of 8,389,600 hectares to be Forest Area and Marine Conservation of West Kalimantan Province. This Decree aims to provide protection for forest areas and water conservation areas that store biodiversity in the Province of West Kalimantan according to their functions.

With the issuance of the Ministerial Decree, areas that are outside forest areas whose functions have been assigned become non-state owned forest area or APL that can be used for development purposes. With the change in forest area to APL, it accelerates the rate of deforestation caused by land conversion. Based on BPS data on Indonesia's Deforestation Rate (Net) Inside and Outside Forest Areas for 2013-2020, the area of APL that experienced deforestation in West Kalimantan in 2018-2019 was 8,985.9 hectares and there was an increase in 2019-2020 to 9,787.9 hectares (BPS, 2020).

Deforestation is a condition where forest area has decreased (Herpita Wahyuni, Suranto. 2021) caused by the conversion of natural forest into business areas (such as oil palm plantations, rubber plantations, industrial plantation forests, mining). This damage has had a negative impact on the ecological, socio-economic and cultural roles of forests (Yayan Hardian, et.al., 2017). The conversion of the APL function which has forest cover to become a business area poses at least a danger to the function of the forest as a hydrological, ecological balance and provider of biodiversity will be destroyed. Basically these various functions are so vital and unique that their existence is irreplaceable (Najicha, 2021).

The existence of land conversion in APL which still has primary forest cover for development, plantations and agriculture in the regions continues to increase, which is evidence of an imbalance in the commitment to protect forests. Sintang District as one of the regencies in West Kalimantan seeks to provide protection for forested APL from deforestation which continues to increase as a result of land conversion on permits issued by the Regional Government itself and by community activities.

Sintang Regency has an area of 21,638 km2 (2,163,800 ha), of this area based on the Map issued by KalFor in 2018 covering 61,938 hectares is APL land or non-forest area, which can be used for the construction of various living facilities such as for cultivation agriculture, settlements, offices and other supporting facilities (Hartono, et.al., 2018). Utilization of APL within the Regency area is under the authority of the local government based on space utilization that has been determined in the Provincial Spatial Plan and Sintang Regency Spatial Plan.

APL which is located in the administrative area of Sintang Regency is spread across various villages and there are several areas that have good forest cover conditions, there are flora and fauna that are still preserved so that they need to be saved. Forest cover serves as a life support and a living space for all living things, including humans. Rescue aims to prevent permanent changes in forest cover to non-forest caused by human activities.

Efforts to save forested APL from deforestation were carried out by the Sintang Regional Government by establishing a Decree of the Sintang Regent Number 593.3/513/KEP-BAPPEDA/2017 which determined 10 (ten) APL locations to become Eco-Cultural Areas. Sintang District Head Decree No. 593.3/236/KEP-BAPPEDA/2017 stipulates that the Rima Seringin forest is a forest cover. The Decree of the Sintang Regent Number 593.3/710/KEP-BAPPEDA/2017 stipulates that the Tawang Selubang forest is a forest cover.

The designation of eco-cultural and jungle forest areas aims to protect forest cover, biological natural resources that have high conservation value and the local wisdom of the local community; utilization of biological natural resources having high conservation value must be managed in a sustainable, harmonious and balanced manner for the welfare of the community; and as a cultural and tourist location in Sintang Regency.

Such management is oriented towards preservation, which may conflict with the Regulation of the Minister of Forestry Number P.50/Menhut-II/2009 concerning Affirmation of the Status and Functions of Forest Areas which states that APL is a forest area that has changed its function and can be used for economic activities, such as plantations, agriculture and settlement development. This means that the change in forest area to APL clearly aims to increase the area of land that can be used for economic activities which is the cause of forest destruction.

Therefore, regions often prioritize conversion of APL for permits for oil palm plantations or mining rather than forest protection. The existence of these investments can increase the rate of deforestation in the region. However, the constitution has mandated that Indonesia's natural resource wealth be utilized in a sustainable and just manner. Therefore, the existence of forests must be optimally maintained, their carrying capacity maintained in a sustainable manner, and managed with noble character, fairness, prudence, openness, professionalism, and accountability (considering letter b of the Forestry Law).

Moving on from the description of the background above, it is necessary to question the urgency of the authority of the local government in managing non-state owned forest area to reduce deforestation in Sintang District. Researchers need to conduct more in-depth research to examine these legal issues.

1. **Methods**

This type of research is normative legal research, namely legal research that places law as a building system of norms. This research was conducted by examining the legal regulations relating to the authority of local governments in APL management to reduce deforestation. Research material obtained by library research. The approach used in this research is a statutory approach, which is an approach that prioritizes legal material in the form of statutory regulations as a basic reference material in conducting research. The data collection technique in this study was carried out by studying the literature on legal materials. Searching for legal materials is done by reading and searching through internet media and documents. The data analysis used is descriptive qualitative, by explaining secondary data obtained from library research to obtain a conclusion as an answer to the formulated problems.

1. **Results and Discussion**

According to Article 1 point 2 of Law Number 41 of 1999 concerning Forestry, what is meant by a forest is a unit of ecosystem in the form of a stretch of land containing biological natural resources dominated by trees in their natural environment, one cannot be separated from one another.

Article 1 point 3 of the Forestry Law states that a forest area is a certain area designated and or determined by the Government to maintain its existence as a forest or is referred to as a forest area. Furthermore, according to Government Regulation Number 23 of 2021 concerning Forestry Administration, what is meant by forest areas are certain areas determined by the Government to maintain their existence as Permanent Forests. Meanwhile, what is meant by permanent forest is a forest whose existence is maintained as a forest area consisting of conservation forest, protection forest, and permanent production forest. From this normative definition it can be interpreted that a certain area outside the conservation forest, protection forest and production forest remains an area outside the forest area.

 In the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number SK.733/Menhut-II/2014 Concerning Forest Areas and Waters Conservation of the Province of West Kalimantan, the First Amar has determined that the Area of Forests and Waters Conservation of the Province of West Kalimantan covers an area of ± 8,389,600 hectares, which is broken down by function by area as following:

1. Nature Reserve Areas (KSA) and Nature Conservation Areas (KPA), covering an area of ± 1,621,046 hectares, consisting of:
2. Land, covering an area of ± 1,430,101 hectares;
3. Waters, covering an area of ± 190,945 hectares;
4. Protected Forest Area (HL), covering an area of ± 2,310,874 hectares;
5. Limited Production Forest Areas (HPT), covering an area of ± 2,132,398 hectares;
6. Production Forest Area (HP), covering an area of ± 2,127,365 hectares;
7. Convertible Production Forest Area (HPK), covering an area of ± 197,918 hectares.

Taking into account the stipulations issued by the government, in this case the Minister of Forestry can find out what is meant by forest areas are Nature Reserve Areas and Nature Conservation Areas; Protected Forest Areas; Limited Production Forest Areas; Production Forest Areas and Convertible Production Forest Areas. So outside the area that has been determined through the Ministerial Decree is the area that is not a forest area as stated in Article 1 number 50 Minister of Environment and Forestry regulation Number 7 of 2021 and Minister of Forestry Number P. 58/Menhut-II/2009.

Forest area and non-forest area is the notion of control by the state and by other parties. If it is called a “forest area” then the management rights are in the hands of the state or the government, whereas if it is “not a forest area” the management is in the hands of the regional government for purposes outside of forestry interests, such as plantations, agriculture and mining (Susetyo, 2021). Therefore APL is not a forest area and can be encumbered with land rights.

Even though APL is not a forest area, it does not mean that APL does not have forest cover. Currently APL area reaches 67.4 million hectares in Indonesia. According to data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, an area of 7.9 million hectares or 12% of APL still has forest cover (Susetyo, 2021). In the elucidation of Article 18 paragraph (1) of the Forestry Law, what is meant by forest cover is land cover with vegetation with a certain composition and density, so that the functions of the forest are created, including microclimate, water system, and habitat for animals as one ecosystem.

The existence of remaining forest or land cover in APL needs to be maintained and saved to prevent deforestation. Because based on data from the Directorate General of PKTL, it shows that Indonesia's deforestation trend is relatively lower, and tends to be stable. Net deforestation in 2018-2019, both inside and outside Indonesia's forest areas, was 462.4 thousand ha. The highest area of deforestation occurred in the secondary forest class, which was 162.8 thousand ha, of which 90.6 thousand ha or 55.7% was inside the forest area and the remaining 72.2 thousand ha or 44.3% was outside the forest area. (PPID Ministry of Environment and Forestry, 2020).

Based on the identification carried out by Yayan Hadiyan, Yuliah, Haryo Pambudi, on the factors causing forest deforestation in Kalimantan, it was found that the conversion of natural forests into business areas (such as oil palm plantations, rubber plantations, industrial plantation forests, mining) is the main cause of forest deforestation (Hadiyan , et.al., 2017). This means that the conversion of natural forest, both primary and secondary forest in APL for business areas, causes the loss of forest cover which has the function of maintaining the microclimate, water system, and habitat for animals as a forest ecosystem.

Based on its function, the main function of the forest is to protect the flora and fauna that inhabit the area, absorb rainwater, and have a positive impact on humans. The 1945 Constitution Article 28H paragraph (1) that "everyone has the right...to have a good living environment..." is considered a green constitution that can strengthen environmental protection in all regions of Indonesia. Some experts highlight that the application of the concept of green constitution in the 1945 Constitution is quite promising in solving the problem of environmental damage that has occurred in Indonesia (Fauzan, 2021), one of which is caused by the clearing of forests for business areas in APL by the local government because it prioritizes economic aspects rather than environmental aspects.

However, the Constitution has mandated that the protection and management of the environment is the responsibility of the government, regional governments and the people of Indonesia. This includes forest management outside forest areas as an effort to protect forests which are a source of biodiversity. In addition, forests have an important role for the lives of rural communities, namely they can provide economic, social and environmental benefits (Anatika, et.al., 2019).

The responsibility of local governments in protecting forest cover in APL is emphasized in Government Regulation Number 23 of 2021 concerning Forestry Administration as a derivative regulation of the Job Creation Law, in Article 41 paragraph (8) states that Regional Governments in accordance with the Minister's decree regulate forest closure outside the Area Forests for optimizing environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits. The ministerial decree in question is the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number 733/Menhut-II/2014 concerning forest areas and water conservation in West Kalimantan Province which is under the authority of the central government.

Related to the responsibility for regulation, Article 249 paragraph (7) PP No. 23 of 2021 confirms that the Regional Government according to their authority shall carry out Forest Protection in areas outside Forest Areas that are not burdened with Business Permits in order to fulfill the carrying capacity and capacity of the environment. In addition to being given the authority to regulate forest protection outside forest areas, Article 251 letter e states that regional governments can also involve the participation of the community in forest management activities. Local government, in this case, is the provincial government and district/city government as administrators of government affairs under their authority.

Referring to the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number 733/Menhut-II/2014 RTRW of West Kalimantan Province and RTRW of Sintang Regency, the APL in Sintang Regency is under the authority of the Sintang Regional Government for its management. Based on the Forest Cover Map outside the Forest Area in Sintang District issued by KalFor in 2018, 35,608 hectares of APL were not burdened with business permits, while 26,330 hectares already had business permits.

Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number SK.733/Menhut-II/2014 which stipulates a forest area and water conservation area for the province of West Kalimantan covering an area of ± 8,389,600 hectares provides legal certainty over forest areas and outside forest areas which are spread in every district and city in Indonesia. West Kalimantan. Designation of forest area and provincial water area is based on Consensus Forest Use (TGHK) by taking into account the National RTRW and Provincial and Regency/City RTRW.

If we pay attention to the Decree of the Minister of Forestry and Plantations Number 259/Kpts-11/2000 dated 23 August 2000 concerning Designation of Forest Areas in the Province of West Kalimantan, there has been a decrease in the area of forest area from ± 9,178,760 hectares to ± 8,389,600 or there has been a decrease covering an area of 789,160 hectares in the range from 2000 to 2014. The decrease in the area of forest area was due to changes in the designation and function of forest areas to become non-forest areas.

APL in West Kalimantan covers an area of 6,341,100 hectares or 43% of the total area of West Kalimantan Province which is spread across every regency and city. Sintang Regency as one of the Regencies in West Kalimantan in 2018 has an APL area of 61,938 hectares. Of this area, APL, which has forest cover and no business license, is 35,608 hectares.

Efforts to preserve forested APL in Sintang Regency are carried out to realize the vision of Sintang Lestari which has been proclaimed by the local government since 2020, as support for environmental preservation. One of the efforts made is to issue a Regent's Decree on APL that has forest cover value and has biological wealth in it so that its sustainability is maintained.

In APL that does not yet have a business permit, there are APL that have forest cover and some that do not have forest. It is this APL that is forested or has forest cover that needs to be preserved because most of it still has primary forest. Based on document tracing, the Regent of Sintang since 2017 has issued a Determination Decree, as follows:

1. Decree of the Regent of Sintang Number 593.3/513/KEP-BAPPEDA/2017 concerning Determining the Location of Eco-Cultural Areas in Sintang Regency. In this decision there are 10 (ten) locations that have been determined, namely:
2. Senkuang Lebuk area of 9 hectares
3. Penam Ketunggau area of 28 hectares

Both of these locations are located in Empaka Kebiau Raya Village, Binjai Hulu District

1. Perauh with an area of 32 hectares is located in Gemba Raya Village, Kelam Permai District
2. Tawang Mesribung area of 55 hectares
3. Tawang Sebasai area of 9 hectares
4. Tawang Semilas area of 48 hectares

These three locations are located in Ensaid Panjang Village, Kelam Permai District

1. Pendam Selabang area of 1 hectares
2. Pendam Senibung area of 2 hectares

Both of these locations are in Karya Jaya Bakti Village, Kelam Permai District.

1. Decree of the Regent of Sintang No. 593.3/236/KEP-BAPPEDA/2017 concerning Determination of the Location of the Rima Seringin Forest Area as Forest Cover in Sepulut Village, Sepauk District, Sintang Regency with an area of 14.20 hectares.
2. Decree of the Regent of Sintang No. 593.3/710/KEP-BAPPEDA/2018 concerning Determination of the Location of the Tawang Seuntung Forest Area as a Forest Cover in Merpak Village, Kelam Permai District, Sintang Regency, covering an area of 14,268 hectares.

Based on the purpose of determining the area contained in the second dictum is to protect biological natural resources that have high conservation value in the Sintang Regency area which is in an area for other uses. Based on the data collected, the APL that has been determined to be protected covers a total area of 212.468 hectares or 0.60% of the APL area for which there is no business permit. This means that the Sintang district government's efforts to protect forest cover in APL need to be increased by issuing a District Head's Decree and involving the community in its conservation. Real efforts to protect forest cover in APL by the local government are urgently needed amidst the reminders of deforestation.

In general, the state views forests from two perspectives, namely status and function. Status refers to the status of forest ownership. In terms of status, it can be seen the ownership of a forest area. Meanwhile, the function of the forest sees the forest from its benefits and role for life as a whole (both for humans and for flora and fauna). The function of this forest is more related to how the forest is managed (Ifrani, et.al., 2019). While APL seen from its status is an area outside the state forest whose function is used for development needs, so that APL can be burdened with land rights as regulated in the UUPA.

Often the use of land for development is oriented towards economic interests which prioritize how humans achieve prosperity by regulating the availability of limited resources for the purposes of human life. In carrying out these methods, ecological interests will always be the most affected. This is because ecological interests speak so that economic interests do not only make welfare the main goal but must pay attention to environmental sustainability and the availability of resources for the benefit of present and future life (Cobb, 1992).

Cobb also stated that in order to balance economic interests and ecological interests, it should be mediated by the formation of government policies contained in a policy document (Cobb, 1992). Departing from this, the role of law and policy documents is an important matter to accommodate development policy directions based on the concept of environmental justice.

Meanwhile, APL is an area outside the state forest area designated for non-forestry development activities. But on the other hand, according to the Director General of Forestry Planning and Environmental Management of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, forest management in APL is very important as part of fulfilling sufficient forest cover in one province as mandated in the Job Creation Law (Violleta, P.T., 2021).

The allocation of APL for development activities is the authority of the respective regional governments in accordance with the boundaries of their administrative areas. Therefore, the local government is given the authority to manage APL according to its designation, whether it is granted a business permit or the assignment of land rights or for forest protection. In addition, APL which still has forest cover can be designated as a protected area through a District Head's Decree. The existence of a Regent's Decree and a Regent's Regulation are the mediators so that economic interests and ecological interests are accommodated in the government's development policies which are based on the concept of environmental justice.

Taking into account the considerations for the designation of 10 areas by the Decree of the Sintang Regent in APL, it shows that APL has a very important function as a community's living environment. Therefore, forests and biodiversity in APL must be managed by prioritizing the function of environmental protection.

The aim of determining APL that has forest cover by the Regent is to provide legal certainty and justice, related to land use for the benefit of forest and biodiversity conservation. This is related to the theory of utilitarianism according to Hamidi in Ernada, et.al, (2020) which states that the purpose of law is to create an order in society besides the aim of providing justice and great benefits for society, efforts should be made to preserve forest cover in APL that protects forests from deforestation as a result of land conversion for business permits by the Sintang Regional Government can provide results that are in line with this objective. As an agency that has the authority to regulate forest protection outside the forest area in its administrative area.

Each area is determined by the Regent based on the proposed management rights from the Village Government. Against this decree the Regent gave management permits to the Village Government. In his considerations, the issuance of permits for the management of areas and the utilization of biological natural resources that have high conservation value must be sustainable, harmonious and balanced for the welfare of the community. The issuance of permits also aims to provide protection and responsible management.

The APL that has been determined by the Regent's Decree holds the potential for medicinal plants such as pasak bumi wood, and ingredients for traditional ingredients (herbal medicine), entuyut (katong semar), agarwood, resin, and jerry cane rattan (a source of natural dyes) which have added value when processed sustainably. In addition to the potential for these non-timber forest products, there is a panoramic view of primary forests that can be managed for the utilization of environmental services such as ecotourism and eco-culture. Management that is oriented towards protecting forest cover in APL is a very important thing to be done by the Sintang district government to maintain the carrying capacity and capacity of the environment to save the widest possible APL from deforestation.

1. **Conclusion**

In the management of APL which has primary and secondary forest cover, the Sintang District Government is guided by the Decree of the Minister of Forestry Number SK.733/Menhut-II/2014 regarding the determination of forest areas and water conservation in West Kalimantan Province. Besides that, pay attention to the Regency RTRW on spatial use which refers to the Provincial RTRW. It is urgent to protect forest cover in Sintang District because the conversion of APL which has forest cover for permits is trying to be the cause of the rate of deforestation. Maintaining forest cover in APL is a form of Regional Government responsibility in providing forest cover protection outside state forest areas to support sustainable development by preventing forest deforestation.

**Acknowledgments**

Researchers still thank the Chancellor of Kapuas Sintang University who funded this research. In addition, the researchers also thanked the Secretariat of the Sintang Regional Government for assisting researchers by providing data related to this research. Thanks also go to Mr. Filemon who helped collect data in this research.

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