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## Jogja Go Green

## Yogyakarta on News

# Gunung Kidul Guy Shines

by [Linda Hoffman](#)

*Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF) had its start when Balinese veterinarian Bayu Wirayudha went to Central Kalimantan's Tanjung Puting National Park in 1997 to join animal rescue operations during a devastating forest fire. Concerned that so many foreigners and so few Indonesians were involved, he later returned to the park with a handful of colleagues to see how they could help the local people – many of whom were involved in illegal logging in order to feed their families – find new jobs that would both restore the forest and provide them with sustainable livelihoods.*



Basuki (2nd from the right) & FNPF reforestation team at Tanjung Puting National Park, C. Kalimantan

*Since then, FNPF has been involved in many community service, orangutan care and rehabilitation, and reforestation projects in the Tanjung Puting area. FNPF has now expanded its operations to Nusa Penida – an island off the southeast coast of Bali – where Bayu's highly successful breeding and release program for the endangered Bali*

*Starling also benefits local residents.*

*FNPF is an amazing example of how one guy's dream and determination can make a huge difference. Following is a compilation-excerpt from FNPF's September 2008 newsletter where one of its outstanding staff members, Mas Basuki, was profiled.*

### **Staff profile**

Basuki was born and raised in Gunung Kidul, Central Java. His love of plants and planting began early in life, working with his father on their family farm. Basuki graduated from Mulawarman University in Samarinda, East Kalimantan with a Bachelor of Forestry Degree in 1999. Before coming to FNPF, he worked with non-profit organizations, including World Wildlife Fund and CARE International, as well as for private companies in reforestation, farming, and community mapping, organizing and development. He worked closely with the Agabag Dayak of NE Kalimantan, helping them organize to protect their community land from encroaching pulp wood plantations and develop sustainable methods of income-generation from farming.

Basuki first came to FNPF in 2004 as a volunteer and worked for 3 months with FNPF's reforestation project in Pesalat. His skills as a forester and community organizer were recognized and he has been with FNPF since then. With his skills he has developed reforestation projects for FNPF in Tanjung Puting National Park that have had unprecedented levels of success. Through his guidance, leadership and training he has built a highly qualified and capable reforestation team comprised of local villagers, many of which were formerly loggers. He and his team are continually adapting and revising reforestation techniques and adding new species to the list of trees being propagated for reforestation projects in the park. Currently survival rate for seedlings exceeds 80% with more than 40 different tree species being planted.

In addition to reforestation, Basuki also works closely with young people, involving students from local schools in reforestation efforts in the park. Because of his efforts, a young generation of conservationists are being grown who have a zeal for preserving and restoring the rainforest habitat of Kalimantan. Knowing that environmental issues cannot be solved without also focusing on social and cultural issues, Basuki has developed agriculture and agro-forestry projects with the local communities situated in and adjacent to the park, projects that will improve their economic condition while preserving the unique biodiversity found there.

Currently Basuki has aimed much of his focus on the development of a sustainable, organic agriculture/agro-forestry project in Jerumbun, which lies across the Sekyoner River from the national park near Camp Leaky. It is a small holdout of good forest cover that provides habitat for a small number of orangutans, gibbons, red monkeys and birds. He and his team have strategically blocked access into this forest from a nearby palm oil

plantation, 12,000 hectares of which occupies much of the horizon line in Jerumbun.

With plantation workers and gold and zircon miners, Basuki speaks passionately of the potential for developing a more secure and better future through organic farming. The house he built as a training center is used to spread the message of the project's purpose and goals. Every day and night miners and plantation workers can be found sitting around Basuki's kitchen table discussing the potential of organic farming and agro-forestry. It is this holistic approach to conservation that provides a glimmer of hope for the preservation of the area's remaining rainforest.

Basuki also works with other FNPF staff members on a Conservation Education program, continuously giving support to all students in the communities FNPF works with, and especially to the Youth Conservation Forum (FMK). Two members of the FMK were chosen to represent their school for an International Geographic Olympic in Yogyakarta held by Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (UPN). Basuki and staff worked with the students to review and sharpen their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and helped them gain experience in answering questions in English. Out of the 56 school teams participating, FNPF's students won the competition!

Basuki plays an essential role in FNPF project development, giving him the ability to use all of his skills and talents. This plus his devotion to the community and love of his staff and work have kept him with FNPF for the past four years. FNPF's success continues to grow because of the quality of Basuki's work and the enthusiasm he spreads to all of those he works with.

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