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CHALLENGES FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN TROPICAL PEAT SWAMPS: A REVIEW OF EXISTING MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

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Pristine tropical peat swamp forests represent a unique ecosystem characterized by high water tables, specialist flora and fauna adapted to anaerobic, acidic and waterlogged conditions, and globally significant stores of soil carbon. With over 50% of tropical peatlands occurring in Southeast Asia, they provide significant local regional and global ecosystem services. However, these ecosystems are under considerable anthropogenic pressure due to the rapid development occurring throughout this region. This is having considerable impacts on the ecosystem functionality and carbon emissions as well as being closely linked to the increasing trans-boundary haze pollution of the region. With this in mind, we will review the extent and efficacy of current peatland policies with a focus on Indonesia and Malaysia as well as key policies initiated by non-state actors. In doing so, we will review current policies, guidelines and emerging processes related to land management decisions and consider their implications in relation to the preservation of PSFs and sustainable management of those under altered land-use.

Keywords:-