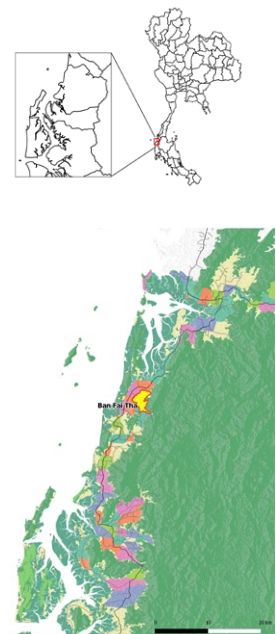
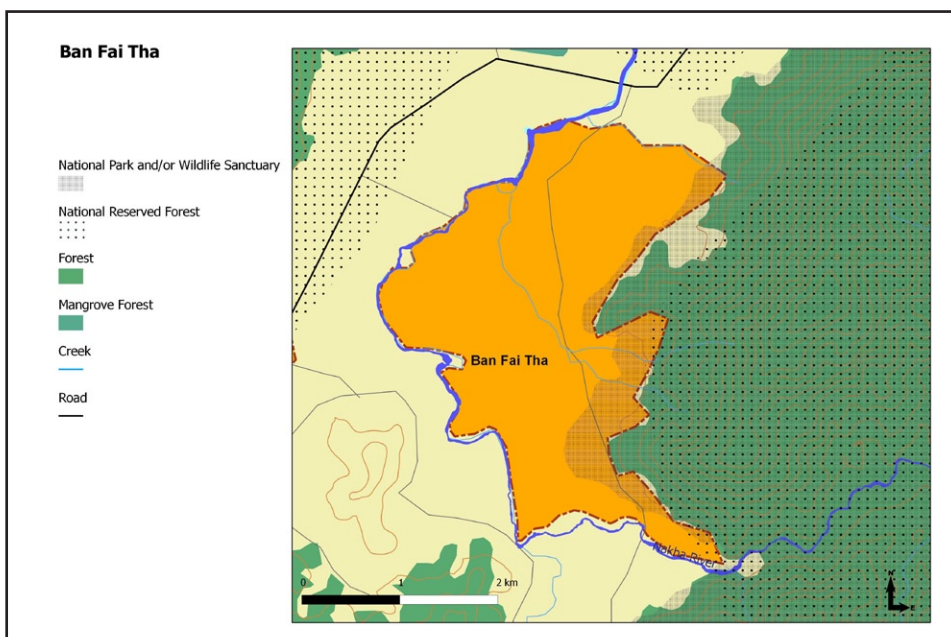


# Ban Fai Tha

## Conserving community Protecting the Water Lily in the Na Ca river

March 2010



The Na Ca River is used by about 7000 people from across 8 villages in the Na Ca Tambon. The river is an important source of water (for household and agricultural use), and fish. Other harvested resources in the river are stones and soil, which are used by the government to build roads. The river is also home to the endemic water lily, *Thainium Cranium*. This precious species is under threat due to dredging activity in the river. There is a large export market in Europe and Singapore for the water lily, and this creates another threat to the species as some villagers have been collecting the bulbs to sell into this market. However, the water lily also brings a more important source of income to the area: tourism. Last year approximately 1700 tourists visited the Na Ca River for river rafting trips to see this beautiful flower in bloom.

In the last ten years two groups have formed to help protect the river and the water lily: Pleon Prai Sri Na Ca Group and the Na Ca Conservation Group.

**Map 1. shows the village of Ban Fai Tha, the Na Ca River, as well as protected areas under the National Park Act 1961, Wildlife Preservation and Protection Act 1992, and National Reserved Forest Act 1964.**

Pleon Prai Sri Na Ca Group formed in 1999, bringing together 110 households from 6 of the 8 villages in the Tambon (excluding Ban Laem Noun and Ban Thung Thua are not currently members). This group meets twice a month to organize activities such as rafting and water lily conservation on the river.

In 2005 the Na Ca Conservation Group began, with villagers from Ban Fai Tha. They started the group because Ban Fai Tha villagers started to notice that the dramatic increase

## COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS IN RANONG AND PHANG NGA PROVINCES, SOUTHERN THAILAND



Na Ca River erosion. © IUCN/ Katie MILLER

in river erosion and exotic species, such as the channeled apple snail (*Pomacea Canaliculata*). At the same time, they saw declining native riparian vegetation, and that the water lily was declining in some areas, but surviving in others. They wanted to research the reason behind this.

Na Ca Conservation Group now actively manages approximately 5 rai of area, comprised of different areas along several sections of the river, including small canals. With the help of IUCN, they regularly monitor the health of the river ecosystem, taking water quality measurements three times per year (in all three seasons), at the top, middle, and end of the river.

The water quality measurement is part of the management plan of Na Ca Conservation Group. This plan has been in place since 2005, and they hope to document it in 2010. It involves:

**Jan/ Feb** - nursery planting, collecting seeds

**March** - collecting loose water lilies, plantation period

**April** - monitoring erosion

**May** - youth training

**June** - monitoring water quality

**July/ August** - collecting loose water lilies

**September** - Preparing for ecotourism activities

**October-December** - ecotourism activities, and collecting of lily seeds in the river

The members of all six villages in Pleon Prai Sri Na Ca Group actively participate in these management activities. Over the course of the year, about 100 people across all six involved villages participate, including many youth members. Sometimes youth volunteers from Kapoe River Network (Ban Na) also come to help with these activities.

One member of the Ban Fai Tha Village Committee, Chamni Unkhao (Tim), is also a leader of the Pleon Prai Sri Na Ca Group and Na Conservation Group. He has received the 'Award of Recognition for Efforts in Conservation' from the Royal Forest Department (Community Development Department, Provincial Agriculture Department District Office).

### Commonly-observed practices in the community

There are no defined community rules that apply to Na Ca River, however there are 'commonly- observed practices' which members of the Na Ca Conservation Group and Pleon Prai Sri Na Ca Group abide by. These are:

**1. Not fishing in the two non-fishing zones in the deep pools where fish congregate**

**2. Not collecting or damaging the water lily.**

In practice, each of the eight villages in the Na Ca Tambon applies its own rules to its section of the river. So far, no villages have developed specific rules to protect the water lily.

The Na Ca Conservation Group doesn't want to develop community rules that apply to all Pleon Prai Sri Na Ca Group members. They prefer that the government to step in to list the water lily as a protected species.



Water lily Na Ca river.

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Chamni Unkhao. © IUCN/ Katie MILLER

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