

# Juan Meets The Least Famous Forest



Peatswamp forest.

What?



A peatswamp forest...  
Is not just Juan's  
typical idea of a forest.



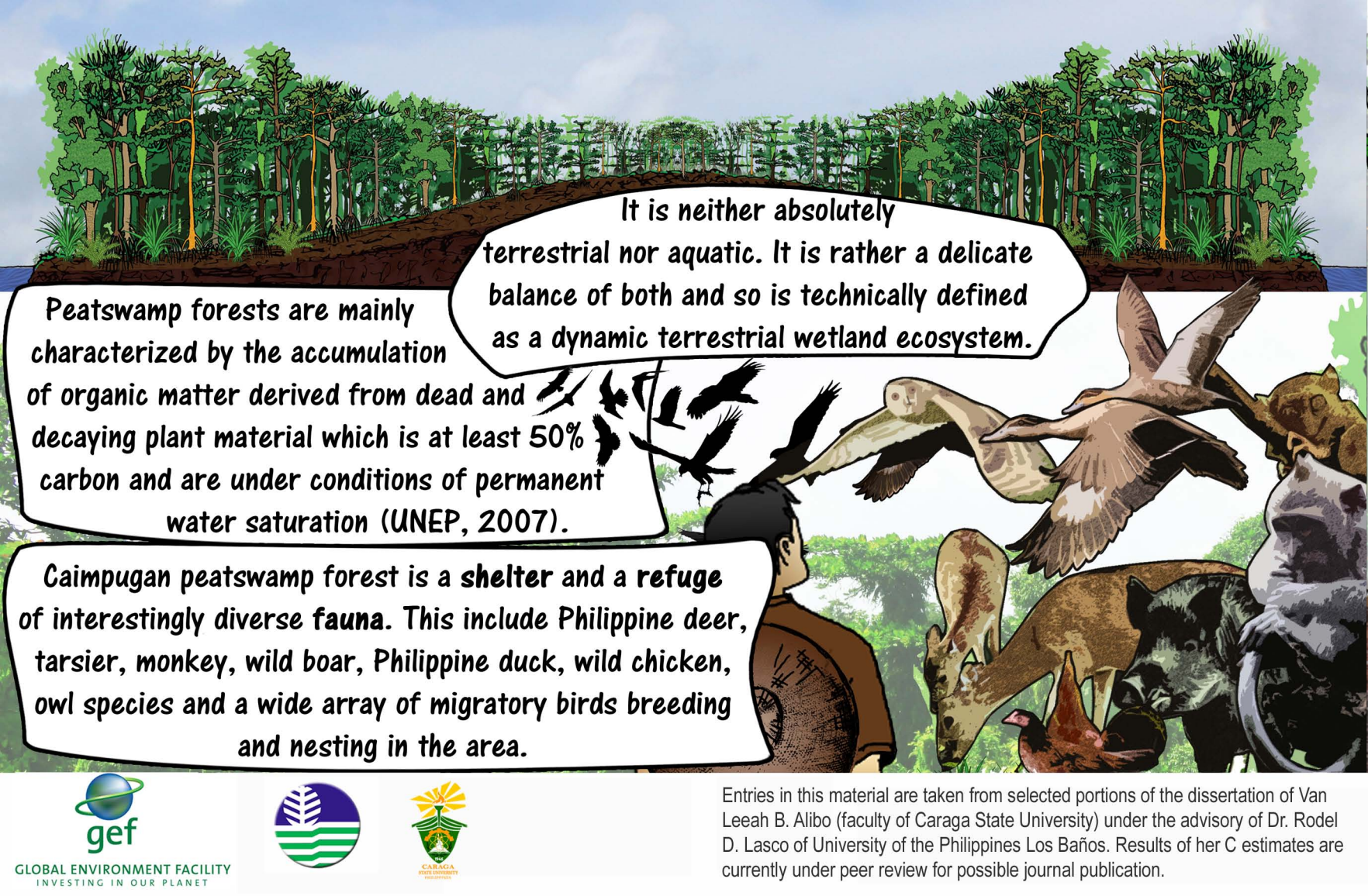
## Apfp-SEApeat

ASEAN Peatland Forests Project - Sustainable Management of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia



## IFAD

Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty



Peat swamp forests are mainly characterized by the accumulation of organic matter derived from dead and decaying plant material which is at least 50% carbon and are under conditions of permanent water saturation (UNEP, 2007).

It is neither absolutely terrestrial nor aquatic. It is rather a delicate balance of both and so is technically defined as a dynamic terrestrial wetland ecosystem.

Caimpugan peat swamp forest is a shelter and a refuge of interestingly diverse fauna. This include Philippine deer, tarsier, monkey, wild boar, Philippine duck, wild chicken, owl species and a wide array of migratory birds breeding and nesting in the area.

Entries in this material are taken from selected portions of the dissertation of Van Leeah B. Alibo (faculty of Caraga State University) under the advisory of Dr. Rodel D. Lasco of University of the Philippines Los Baños. Results of her C estimates are currently under peer review for possible journal publication.



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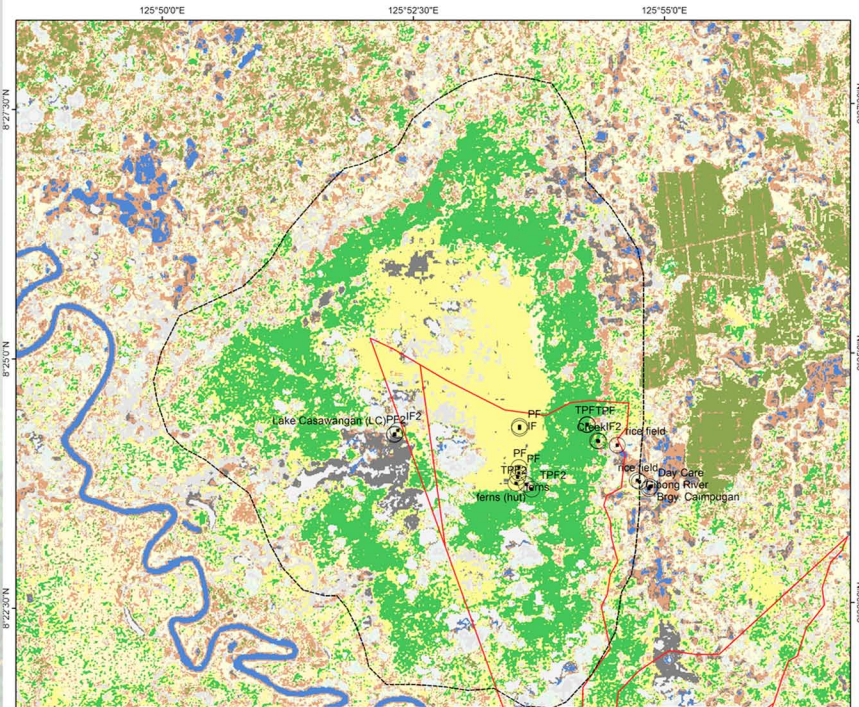
**Peat swamp forests are globally important ecosystems being the most carbon-dense in the terrestrial biosphere.**



forest litter

organic soil (peat)

*Illustration and graphic design by Joey Arles Vergara  
faculty of Caraga State University and freelance artist.*



**FYI. Peatlands as significant C sinks cover only 3% or some 4 million sq.km of the Earth's land area (Global Peatlands Initiative, 2002) but is equivalent to 30% of global soil C, 75% of all atmospheric C, 90% of all global C stored in plant biomass and twice the carbon stock in the forest biomass of the world (UNEP-GEF Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change, 2007).**



A unique attraction of the Caimpugan peatland is the presence of a peatdome. Its aerial view is an expression of natural artistry and involuntary design. At the center of this dome is a 1,000-hectare stunted or “pygmy forest” surrounded by a ring of slightly taller forest or the “intermediate forest”, followed outwardly by a much taller forest or the “tall pole forest”.

Located in the northeast portion of Agusan Marsh, Caimpugan peatland is estimated to store **22.8 million tons of C** within its 5,487 hectare peatland with an estimated > 3,000-6,000 tons of C on a per hectare basis.

This peatswamp forest covers the municipalities of San Francisco and Talacogon, in Agusan del Sur.

Its C storage is remarkably the **highest** among all other studied forest types in the Philippines.

Caimpugan peatswamp forest is currently **under threat**. Most often, these **man-made pressures** endanger its ecological integrity.

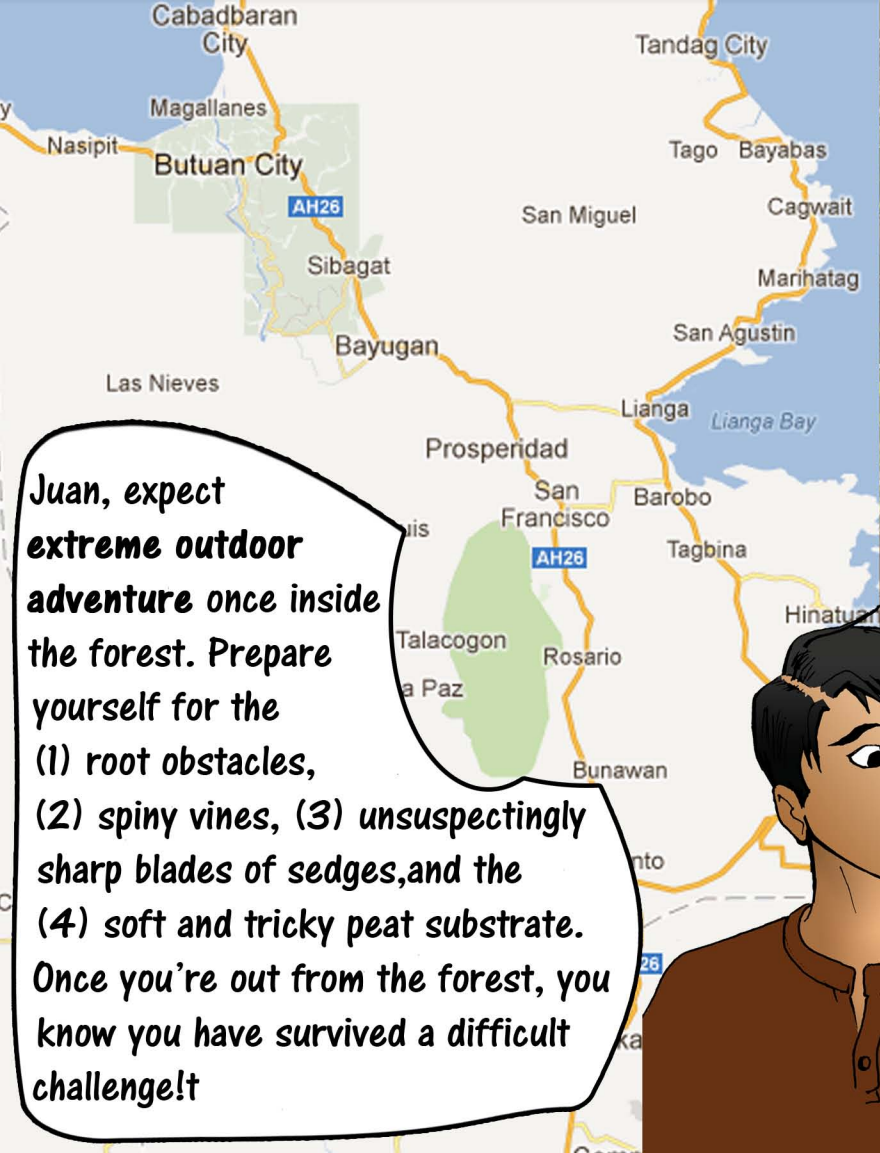
Sad to note, both local people and the dayos have been engaging in **forest clearances** in the peat **periphery** for agriculture as well as the **indiscriminate burning** of forest patches within the peatland. These are the two most alarming threats that contribute to **C emissions**.

Juan, in case you decide to have a close encounter with this unique and fragile ecosystem, please take note of the following directions:

1. Butuan City to San Francisco: 86km ride
2. Poblacion San Franz to Brgy. Caimpugan: 20km habal-habal ride
3. 5-minute bamboo rafting across Gibong River
4. 2-3 hours trek towards Tower 1 of the peatland (pygmy forest)







Juan, expect **extreme outdoor adventure** once inside the forest. Prepare yourself for the (1) root obstacles, (2) spiny vines, (3) unsuspectingly sharp blades of sedges, and the (4) soft and tricky peat substrate. Once you're out from the forest, you know you have survived a difficult challenge!



Did you like my discussion about the Caimpugan peatswamp forest, Juan?

Say what? I super like it! I might as well create a fan page for it. There I shall upload pictures of my upcoming visits to raise conservation awareness on peatswamp forests. This forest type is every Filipino's natural heritage. Umm, hey, author, click 'like' in that page I'm making, okay?

(like us on facebook at [Save the Caimpugan Peatland of Agusan Marsh, Philippines](#))