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Connecting with nature



Students learning about stream ecology during the nature camp.

IMAGINE a clear river in a pristine setting or a lake teeming with marine life. These are some of the visions our younger generation have for Malaysia's precious water resources.

The recently-concluded "Water Vision" contest, organised by the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) and Coca-Cola Malaysia (Coca-Cola), saw youths giving serious thought to water pollution issues today.

Now in its third year, the contest, which aims to raise awareness of our limited water resources, was open to Forms Three to Five students in over 300 national schools through the *Kelab Pencinta Alam* (Nature Lovers' Club) network.

Many of the students used videos, photos and music to illustrate water conservation issues. The judges were impressed by the entries but it was SMK Jugra and SMK Batu Laut from Selangor, and SMK Tengku Ampuan Intan from Terengganu, that won their approval.

The three schools emerged first-, second- and third-placed winners respectively. The teams, comprising four students and a teacher each, were invited to a special camp held at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), Kuala Lumpur, where they learnt about stream ecologies. They also visited a water treatment plant.

"This year's entries were good as students could identify, critically discuss a specific water issue and propose possible measures to overcome the problem," said MNS Environmental Education Department head, I. S. Shanmugaraj.

"We hope the contest will encourage more students to participate in environmental conservation efforts."

The winning schools also received cash prizes and MP3 players. The prizes were presented by Coca-Cola's director of Public Affairs and Communications, Mohamed Kadri Mohamed Taib.