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《雪州时报》
雪州时报

By Gan Pei Ling

KUALA SELANGOR: Selangor is moving to save its dwindling population of fireflies by setting up a breeding nursery along Sungai Selangor next month.

"We will set up artificial breeding grounds for the fireflies," said Dr Ang Lai Hoe at the Kampung Kuantan Firefly Park last Friday.

Ang, a senior research officer from the biotechnology division in Forest Research Institute Malaysia (Frim), said the fireflies' natural spawning grounds have been disturbed due to plantations and other developments along the river.

"The breeding ground has become too hot and dry, and lacks organic material," he said.

Indigenous tree species like sago will be planted, and artificial shade will be set up in a one-hectare plot in Tanjung Beluntas to help rehabilitate the area by the riverside.

He said sago trees are the natural habitat for firefly larvae as the plants provide sufficient moisture and shade.

"If the project is successful, we will replicate it in other areas," said Ang.

Selangor has acquired and gazetted 95 hectares of land as a firefly sanctuary along Sungai Selangor in 2009 to preserve the species.

Ang said that previously, around 60% of the 95 hectares were converted into plantations and other land use, according to satellite im-

ages. Only the remaining 40% are forests.

Frim experts will be working together with the state to carry out the three-year breeding project sponsored by Aeon, a Japanese retailer.

The company donated

RM390,450 to the project and signed a memorandum with the state last Friday.

Selangor Water Management Authority (Luas) acting director Norzamri Sondor said they also plan to invite villagers to help plant trees

along the riverbank.

"We must get the community involved to help protect the fireflies," Norzamri told *Selangor Times*.

He said fireflies can be found along a 20km stretch of Sungai Selangor and its buffer zone of around

2,000 hectares.

Around 60% to 70% of the 2,000 hectares are private lands, with some converted into plantations and other residential areas.

He said the Luas enforcement

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OPS PAYUNG: In an effort to combat crime, police have set up mobile beat bases under umbrellas in crime hotspots, such as this one located at Klang Parade.

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Keeping the home fireflies burning

Ensuring no big-scale development threatens colony

• FROM PAGE ONE

team would monitor the river and its buffer zone from time to time with Frim and the land office to ensure there is no big-scale development that would threaten the firefly colony.

"Villagers will inform us whenever there are encroachments," said Norzamri, adding that the highest penalty for encroachment is a fine of RM50,000 and imprisonment for two years.

Frim entomologist Nada Badrud-

din said fireflies can be found worldwide, but the special behaviour of fireflies that congregate, as seen in Kuala Selangor, is only limited to Southeast Asia.

"Kuala Selangor is special because the location is strategic; other areas are not as accessible to humans," she told *Selangor Times*.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim said the popular eco-tourism site attracts around 3,500 visitors a month.

Visitors usually take a boat tour via Kampung Kuantan Firefly Park

or Kampung Belimbing to view the fireflies at night.

Also present at last Friday's memorandum signing ceremony were Aeon president Datuk Abdullah Yusof, state secretary Datuk Khusrin Munawi, executive councillor Dr Xavier Jayakumar, and assistant executive councillor Edward Lee.

They took a boat tour to witness the beauty of the fireflies after the signing the memorandum.

Kuala Selangor district council officials and councillors were also present.