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# To 'friends' of FRIM

Research body vows to continue improving services, facilities after letter on littering at its Kepong 'campus' and calls on interested parties to help

FIRST and foremost, I would like to thank Nurul Syafikah for highlighting the perennial problem we have in maintaining the cleanliness of the Forest Research Institute Of Malaysia's (FRIM) campus in the *The Malay Mail* on Nov 9.

Being honoured Tapak Warisan Alam Semulajadi by the Jabatan Warisan Kebangsaan (National Heritage Department) and designated as one of the "must see" eco-tourism destinations for Selangor, FRIM bears the heavy responsibility of providing exemplary services and facilities to its visitors.

We believe people generally do care about the environment but there are others who need persuasion. As Nurul observed, FRIM does have signboards at the entrance and other strategic places listing the dos and don'ts, and littering is not allowed. Still there are visitors who do not comply with the rules. We thank Nurul for her suggestions and will look into placing more signs.

The challenges are during weekends especially as there are fewer staff at work. One person makes daily rounds throughout the FRIM campus to identify and take immediate action to enforce cleanliness as well as clear fallen trees or branches.

Due to the vast area to be covered, he can only make his rounds once. On top of that, the garbage trucks

make less rounds while the number of visitors is at its highest during that period.

While it is true there may be some irresponsible visitors, sometimes, it is also the work of wild animals, particularly monkeys and wild boars, in search of food. It is not uncommon to spot these animals in action in FRIM.

The management is looking at various means to address this and has tried to introduce garbage disposal bins that cannot be easily accessed by animals and ensuring quick collection by our contractors, even on Sunday.

As for rubbish brought in by visitors, there is a proposal to ban them from using styrofoam in the FRIM campus ground. This ruling will apply to staff and our cafeteria operator by January.

There is also a proposal for visitors to be given a partial refund on their entrance fees when they take out their own rubbish with them when they leave.

FRIM receives many requests from schools, institutions of higher learning, non-governmental organisations and corporate bodies to do clean-ups at the campus as part of their corporate social responsibility and we have always been supportive of the activity. We welcome Nurul to do the same.

As for the entrance fees charged by FRIM, I would like to clarify its main function is to serve as a tropical forestry research institute, conducting research and development activities, not unlike a university.

Although it has become a popular eco-tourism site, it is not a public park like Taman Metropolitan Kepong or Taman Tasik Kuala Lumpur which were gazetted for the purpose with no charge imposed.

Nevertheless, FRIM decided to open its doors to the public, offering its calm and peaceful surroundings for recreation and relaxation away from the stressful city life.

The charges are minimal and the funds collected cover only a fraction of the total cost for maintenance of the various facilities within the 486-hectare area.

Having said that, on behalf of the FRIM management, I would like to assure you we will take concrete steps to address the issue and we will work continuously towards improving our public facilities and services.

We also welcome suggestions and advice from responsible citizens like Ms Nurul Syafikah, whom we consider friends of FRIM.

**Norhayati Nordin**  
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