

Headline	Mining land to preserve endangered flora, fauna - expert		
MediaTitle	New Sarawak Tribune		
Date	01 Sep 2015	Color	Black/white
Section	News	Circulation	46,471
Page No	4	Readership	164,773
Language	English	ArticleSize	135 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 524
Frequency	Daily (EM)	PR Value	RM 1,572



Mining land to preserve endangered flora, fauna – expert

KUALA LUMPUR: In a move to preserve endangered flora and fauna, it is imperative that former mining areas in the country be transformed into green areas, says an environment and ecology expert.

Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) ecophysiology branch head, Dr Ang Lai Hoe said there were about 70,000 hectares of ex-mining land in Peninsular Malaysia, which could be transformed.

Land transformation was the reclamation, rehabilitation and restoration of former barren land into a productive land through scientific and technical improvements, he told Bernama in an interview here recently.

“Today, large areas of our forest are inevitably lost due to massive development and conversion into housing, industrial and agricultural purposes. Consequently, some of our floral and faunal biodiversity of the forest may be extinct,” he said.

Citing an example in 2011, Ang said FRIM had successfully established a model of

man-made forest on a former landfill and flood mitigation site under a consultative project with the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) at Ara Damansara Eco-Park (APEP).

“This was the first project in Malaysia where we grew rain-forest on a landfill site and flood mitigation area,” he noted.

He said APEP currently housed more than 90 species of tropical rainforest tree species respectively, including endangered and endemic species.

However, Ang said ex-mining land should not be transformed into food production site as they contained heavy metals such as mercury, lead, arsenic and lead, and also radioactive substances.

“This degraded land should be converted into forests and also later can be used for parks and housing estate development after ensuring that the radiation level is not harmful to health. The time needed to transform barren land into a green area depends on the objective of growing the trees,” he added. – Bernama