

Headline	State Govt targets 2.2m hectares to be totally protected forest		
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Mardinah Jikur

SANDAKAN: The Sabah Forestry Department welcomes any idea or initiative on forest and environment sustainable.

Its Director, Datuk Sam Mannan (pic) said the Sabah Government has targeted 30 per cent (2.2 million hectares) of land area to be totally protected forest, where 53 per cent of the land area is under forest cover.

"Any national environment initiative is a good suggestion for us and we welcome such ideas," he said Sabah Forestry Department also has its long term planning on sustainable forest management with Deramakot being one of its best model.

He said it is important that the next generation know nature not only from the books or any material but they seeing it live in front of their eyes.

Sam was speaking during the closing of the EERace 17th HoB Ramsar Special Edition: A Course on Environment Education For Sabah District Education Officers at Rainforest Discovery Centre, Sepilok, here.

Also present, Dr. Robert Ong of Sabah Forestry Department and Mastan Gaga of Sabah Educational Department, representing its Director.

During the four-day event, 18 sites were visited and 18 assignments given to 32 participant from Sabah Education Department, officers from district and teachers from various school in Sabah.

They are also other Sabah Environmental Education Network (SEEN) mem-

bers consisting of BSBCC, Sabah Wildlife Department, Hutan-KCOP, Sandakan Municipal Council and SMK Muhibbah.

Six panelists consist of representatives from Sabah Education Department, Environment Protection Department (Sabah Environmental Education Network, Secretariat), FRIM, E-ijau Millenium Explorer (NGO), WWF Malaysia and Universiti of South Africa, also come presided over the forum on Environmental Education Forum entitled 'Whats next in Environmental Education for Sabah Schools.'

Six group facilitators from SMK Elopura, SK Taman Rimba, SK Sg.Anib 3, SK Sg.Napas Beluran, Sandakan Education Department and Kinabatangan Education Department also be a part of the event.

Five observers consist of Sarawak Forest Timber Department, Sarawak Timber-Industry Development Corporation (PUSAKA), Hutan-Kinabatangan Orangutan Conservation Project (Hutan-KOCP), Borneon Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) and FSP: Michelle & Yong (Sabah Forestry Department) also join this EERace.

The event is supported by Sabah Education Department as a co-organiser, Sabah Wildlife Department, Hutan-KCOP, BSBCC, IOI Sandakan Region Group, Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey Sanctuary, Sandakan Municipal Council, SMK Muhibbah, Sandakan, K2 Lifewater Sdn Bhd and also members of communities; Kg.Assam, Kg Baru Sandakan, Kg Sri Ganda and Kg Tundun Bohangin of Kinabatangan and the tour operator and relatives forces.

About EERace, Sam said, it is one of the department's initiatives with relevant agencies and NGOs to discuss and come with new ideas on the said effort.

Meanwhile, two of the participant representatives said, they will share the experience at their places and said that the EERace is a good programme especially to get a better knowledge on related issues.

EERace was first organised in 2005 and about 20 EERaces have been conducted, including three stimulation. SFD leads other SEEN members to organise EERaces in East Coast. The Environment Protection Department leads the way in the West Coast.

While EERace 17 Edition was specially requested by the Director of Sabah Educational Department for District Officers and Heads of sector department.

It also aims to create awareness, install attitudes with the hope of promoting positives actions for the environment.

EERace is designated by Rainforest Discovery Centre, Sabah Forestry Department in 2005 special for teachers, school head mister and principle, now also done together with few private agencies and from year to year has improvement on the Heart of Borneo (HoB) area.

While the HoB conservation program between Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia has covers an area of approximate 200,000 km of rainforest with high biodiversity.

The lower Kinabatangan-Segama Wetlands, Malaysia largest Ramsar site with 78,802 ha, is an important recognition for the need to conserve and promote use of wetlands in Sabah is also been visited by the 32 current EERace participants.

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