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Friday, 1 April 2016

50 volunteers clean up Sungai Buntong in conjunction with World Water Day

BY MANJIT KAUR



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Buntong residents cleaning up the river.

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SOME 50 volunteers did not mind getting their hands dirty when they got down to business cleaning Sungai Buntong on a Sunday morning for three hours.

The event was held as part of the "Love My Drains" campaign in conjunction with World Water Day and



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organised by River Ranger Sungai Buntong (RRSB) – a local community group involved in the Sungai Kinta River Education programme.

The river clean-up was supported by Global Environment Centre (GEC), Buntong 3 and 4 Rukun Tetangga, the state Drainage and Irrigation Department and the Ipoh City Council.

GEC coordinator M. Jagedeswary said some 100m of the river would be cleaned up.

She said the aim of the campaign was to educate people on the importance of keeping drains and rivers clean.

“She said it was important to raise awareness among the public on the importance of having clean drains because it will help reduce pollution at Sungai Buntong (a tributary of Sungai Kinta).



River rangers and residents cleaning up the river. — Photos by SAIFUL BAHRI

“This is the fourth time we are jointly cleaning this river. The attitude of the community must change because we still see the drainage system choked with rubbish,” she said.

Despite attempts to raise awareness, she said the people here are just not cooperating as they continue to discard domestic rubbish in plastic bags into the river and drains.

S. Jayagopi, who is the RT chairman as well as the coordinator of the local community group, said the response from the community was still lacking.

“I think we just have to continue organising awareness programmes until they change their mentality, as people are not aware that drains are meant for the flow of rainwater into the river,” he added.

RRSB’s leader S. Pravin, 16, from SMK St Michael said he had been involved in the group for the past two years because of his interest in the environment.

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He said the group's main area of concentration were rivers in Buntong, Lim Garden and Sungai Kinta.

Ipoh City Council worker (right) cutting the grass along the river bank as a Buntong resident pickup rubbish from the river.

"I have been involved in six river clean-ups to date, and I am encouraging more of my friends to get into the ranger group to save our rivers.

"Usually, during a clean-up session, we will carry out a water quality test," he said, adding that used diapers, construction material and wood pieces were regularly dumped into the rivers.

E. Navinish Rao, 14, from SMK Anderson Ipoh said he had joined the group for a year now.

"This is my third time cleaning a river. Usually, plastic bags with domestic rubbish are the main items found.

"But once, I fished out a pair of old shoes from the river," he added.

Navinish's schoolmate G. Sanjay, 14, said this was his first river clean-up and he was looking forward to getting his hands and feet dirty.



Workers helping to clean up the clogged drain.

"It is for a good cause and I hope people will change their attitude by discarding their rubbish appropriately instead of finding the easy way out and throwing rubbish into the rivers or drains," he added.

One of the residents living next to the river said he would clean part of the river on his own.

Policeman D. Thevasigamoney, 60, said before going to work, he will pick up plastic bags and other rubbish.

"At 7pm, I will once again clean up the part of the river close to my house. I also go the extra mile of cutting the grass at the river bank," he added.

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