



KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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Seeing the forest for the trees

A conservation society wants a 161.87ha area in Bukit Cherakah, Shah Alam to be preserved for its ecological, recreational and educational value

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THE Shah Alam Community Forest Society (SACF) is pushing for a part of the Bukit Cherakah Forest Reserve (BCFR) to be gazetted as a community forest to preserve its ecological value and biodiversity.

The forest, which has been used by the public for recreation and educational purposes, is one of the few forests left in the Klang Valley.

The society has named the portion of the woods consisting of primary natural lowland dipterocarp forest as SACF.

SACF is known for its community trails, hiking activities and scenic views.

The society hopes to stimulate the Kota Damansara Community Forest (KDCF) concept as it firmly believes that having a forest co-managed by the community and authorities can benefit nearby residents.

Occupying approximately 161.87ha, the forest is part of the wider BCFR (9,642ha) that was originally constituted on May 21, 1989 under the Selangor Forest Enactment.

Located in Section U10 in Shah Alam, the forest is surrounded by Setia Alam, Alam Budiman, Bandar Nusantara and Bukit Bandaraya housing developments.

Today, about 70% of SACF belongs to Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor (PKNS) for future commercial development while the remaining land belonging to Selangor government is for burial grounds.

Community forest plan

The society's pursuit in pushing for SACF to be turned into a community forest heightened after a proposed road cutting through the forest — to connect Section U13 and Section U10 — was revealed in the Shah Alam Local Draft Plan 2035.

Many protested against the move during an objection hearing at Wisma MBSA in April.

SACF Society founder and secretary Alicia Teoh said the society submitted a proposal to Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) during the hearing to turn the area into a community-ruled forest.

"When we mentioned an alternative plan to make SACF a community forest, the hearing committee panel seemed interested and said the proposal would be considered.

"We are merely giving city planners another perspective on how to use the forest and we have identified endless potential, both economically and ecologically.

"There is certainly a better way of managing it than bulldozing the green area for development.

"The power is in the state government to protect whatever green that is left in Shah Alam," she said.

Teoh also highlighted the ecological, recreational and educational benefits of preserving SACF.

"Preserving the forest will prevent further fragmentation of Bukit Cherakah's remaining forest.

"It acts as climate change mitigation to prevent floods and soil erosion as well as protect wildlife that live in the forest," she added.

Endangered species like the tapir, white-banded gibbon and Sumatran slow loris have been sighted based on a biodiversity survey done by the society.

"The forest also serves as a recreational outlet for nearby residents and a platform for researches and educational trips to be conducted in the area because of its biodiversity.

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