

KERATAN AKHBAR



AKHBAR	:	STAR METRO		
TARIKH	:	29/10/2019	MUKA SURAT	:
JABATAN	:	JPS		
KLASIFIKASI	:	PERHATIAN		

SPARK Foundation, in collaboration with the Global Environment Centre (GEC), celebrated World Rivers Day through a river clean-up with local communities.

The foundation and GEC teamed up with more than 50 volunteers and communities living near the Sungai Penchala river basin. They included Friends of Sungai Penchala, Sahabat Komuniti Sungai Way, Joint Management Board Block 1 Desa Mentari, Sahabat Hijau Block 1 and Indah Water Konsortium (IWK) Shah Alam to clean part of the river.

Some 385kg of rubbish was collected from a 400m stretch in three hours of the clean-up.

Of that amount, 273kg were wet waste while the rest were recyclable items.

The event was one of the foundation's many initiatives through its flagship programme, the W.A.T.E.R Project launched in 2007. Since its inception, the project has adopted five rivers, including Sungai Way, and successfully upgraded the water quality from Class IV-V to Class III in 2009, making it habitable to aquatic life.

In 2018, the project evolved from river rehabilitation to focus more on watershed health protection through two approaches — water conservation and improving water quality.

Some of the project's flagship initiatives are its water conservation workshop along with the distribution of water thimbles.

To-date, 920 water thimbles have been distributed to almost 1,000 Malaysians, and it has proven to reduce water consumption of 20litres per person daily.

The three-month pilot project involving 50 households in Petaling Jaya has reduced the consumption

Sparking the means for change in Sungai Way

Foundation works with local communities to celebrate World Rivers Day

of more than 100,000litres of water monthly.

Foundation trustee Renuka Indrarajah said, "One of Spark Foundation's visions is to grow with the local community through water and river conservation programmes.

"Through its W.A.T.E.R. Project, RM10.5m has been allocated until 2020 under the water stewardship agenda.

"In May, Spark led a reforestation effort in Raja Musa Forest Reserve as part of its watershed health protection efforts.

"There, we replanted one hectare of trees to preserve the peat swamp.

"Through public-private partnerships and high-impact programmes, we strive to practise sustainable water management and an efficient use of our water resources, supporting the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals."

The river clean-up was carried out in partnership with Drainage and Irrigation Department Selangor, Selangor Water Management Authority, Petaling Jaya City Council and IWK.

GEC River Programme manager Dr K. Kalithasan said, "It is impor-



Friends of Sungai Penchala, Sahabat Komuniti Sungai Way, Joint Management Board Block 1 Desa Mentari and Sahabat Hijau Block 1 got together and cleaned up part of Sungai Way.

tant for us to educate individuals in understanding the significance of river protection and keeping our drains clean.

"About 90% of raw water supply comes from these rivers, yet only 46% of our rivers remain clean.

"As a shared public resource, everyone should think twice about what goes down our drains as

these substances can potentially end up polluting our rivers.

"Through this clean-up effort, we hope to make volunteers aware of the influence they can have on the environment," added Kalithasan.

Volunteer Goh Jian Bin said, "I have learned a lot from this session, especially about how vital river health is to our communities

and to appreciate my surroundings more.

"For instance, I will remember not to discard cooking oil down my kitchen sink because such substance flows to the river and can suffocate aquatic life that inhabit it."

For details, go to <https://sparkfoundation.com.my>