

# Pupils plant 1,500 saplings to restore forest reserve land

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PREVIOUSLY illegally cleared for a farm, a 0.8ha piece of land in the Sungai Ichat Forest Reserve in Cameron Highlands has been replanted with about 1,500 tree saplings.

The tree-planting programme was organised by Regional Environmental Awareness Cameron Highlands (Reach) with the collaboration of the District Forestry Office.

Reach president A. Dilip Martin said the effort involved about 160 volunteers, including 40 students from SMK Kampung Raja in Tanah Rata, Pahang.

"The land was illegally cleared for farming a few years ago.

"We have replanted tree saplings there as part of our ongoing environmental conservation efforts in Cameron Highlands, to ensure long-term positive impact on the local ecosystem."

He said the species planted included *Symingtonia populnea* (*gerok*), *Xanthophyllum* (*minyak beruk*), *Cinnamomum porrectum* (*medang*) and *Lithocarpus* (*mempening*).

Dilip said tree-planting efforts in Cameron Highlands were very important because the highland served as a major water catchment area for the state of Pahang and surrounding regions.

"Forest restoration efforts like this help rehabilitate areas

affected by uncontrolled development, soil erosion and land-use changes," he said.

"It will help to reduce the risk of landslides, mitigate climate change and restore habitats for unique and sensitive biodiversities.

"Trees are a natural cooling system that maintains the highland climate," he emphasised.

Dilip said that such programmes needed to continue on a regular basis.

"They also serve as a model of collaboration between communities, the private sector and government agencies in protecting the nation's natural heritage.

"Planting trees today is an investment for future generations," he added.



Volunteers planting a sapling during the tree-planting programme at Sungai Ichat Forest Reserve in Cameron Highlands.