

More ways to befriend a river

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Participants looking for water insects in Sungai Ara. — ASRI ABDUL GHANI/The Star

SUNGAI Ara which meanders along Taman Jajar (Linear Park) is certified as the cleanest river in Penang.

So it was only natural the river was chosen for a two-month pilot project to outline the importance of a river on flora and fauna and its uses including for transport and agriculture.

Coming together for a 'Celebra-ting Sungai Ara' programme were some of those involved in the project — Taman Jajar Residents' Association, Penang Hills Watch (a member of Penang Forum), Water Watch and Ruang Kongsi.

Among other activities were a pictorial exhibition highlighting the source of the river which has a series of small waterfalls upstream and the existence of flora and fauna along the river.

“The map which is displayed here is a result of research and water quality testing carried out by Water Watch,” said Penang Island City councillor Dr Chee Heng Leng who launched the programme at Taman Jajar.

Dr Chee said the ‘Celebrating Sungai Ara’ programme was carried out using a RM20,000 allocation.

“It is the culmination of the Sungai Ara river awareness project under the council’s Cleaner, Greener, Healthier and Safer Penang campaign,” she added.

At the event, Water Watch carried out three educational sessions for schoolchildren including teaching them how to test the cleanliness of the water.

The children also took part in a creative drawing workshop contest by the Ombak-Ombak ARTStudio.

Programme organising committee member Rexy Prakash Chacko from Penang Hills Watch made three recommendations based on his study of the river.

“The river side from Taman Gedung Heights (Lebuh Sungai Ara 1) to all the way until the Than Siang Temple has potential for another linear park which can help residents appreciate the river more,” said Rexy.

“A monthly plogging activity along the river by the locals can also foster love for the river,” said Rexy.

He also recommended setting up a River Information and Education Centre in Sungai Ara with the help of the Penang Island City Council.

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Northern Region , Sungai Ara Campaign Water Watch Dr Rexy Dr Chee Heng Leng

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