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Strengthen Bkt Gasing

PETALING JAYA: LANDSLIPS, erosion and other warning signs such as uprooted trees greeted a group of journalists who were taken on a hike at the Bukit Gasing forest reserve in Petaling Jaya on Tuesday.

The hike, led by Backpackers Association Malaysia's president Datuk Dr Wong Sai Hou was to highlight the severity of soil erosion at the forest.

The eroded areas were blocked from access with tapes and there were "No Entry" signs pasted on some trees.

Due to the severity of the problem, Wong urges Petaling Jaya City Council to strengthen the hill to avoid further mishaps. He added that the council failed to highlight the seriousness of the problem.

"The entrance to the trails, which was hit by a landslide was marked with tapes and the only advice was to use alternative routes," he said.

Wong suggested that the council put up a temporary chain link fence to stop the public from entering the danger zones. He wants the council to seek funds from the state in case it lacks the resource.

He also said the council could put on hold some of the other projects planned for the city and channel the funds for the hill strengthening works.

Vandals have not spared the jungle either. Wong blamed the council's poor surveillance for it.

"A tall tree has uprooted with soil displacement at one of the trails called Denai 1. A 40-year-old creeper plant well known among frequent forest visitors was chopped off. We suspect it was stolen," said Wong.

He said a portion of the hill was razed in a fire in May 2009. To safeguard the natural forest, the council and several non-governmental organisations embarked on a project and planted 300 trees at the affected site.

Wong said some the trees are missing.

"There had not been any organised effort to assess the survival rate of the 300 trees that were planted here.

"In due course, the area once razed by fire is now without trees and the ridge is the natural divider of Petaling Jaya and Kuala Lumpur. It will be prone to soil erosion and landslide," he said.

Wong said the council should build another lookout tower on the highest point of the hill at 130m above ground level which will allow better hill supervision and monitoring.

"Three years have lapsed and the second tower which I proposed during a meeting with the council has not been built," he said.

The council's Health and Environment Department director Dr V. Chitra Devi said the council inspects the forest once a week.

She said the council is aware of the landslides and will take measures to address the problem soon.

"My department has compiled a report on the situation and submitted the report to the engineering department. The engineering department is working on the rectification process.

"The council will give priority to the areas affected by the erosion," said Dr Chitra.



Datuk Dr Wong Sai Hou pointing to an area hit by landslide inside the Bukit Gasing educational forest.
Pic by Aizuddin Saad

Read more: [Strengthen Bkt Gasing - Central - New Straits Times](http://www.nst.com.my/streets/central/strengthen-bkt-gasing-1.185602#ixzz2F0mG2SZI)
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