

UMS, SMK Tebobon beach clean-up

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KOTA KINABALU: Likas Bay beach on Saturday saw voluntary beach clean up activities by students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and SMK Tebobon on Saturday.

The event which was organised under the joint initiative of John Mark Storey, lecturer at Pusat Penataran Ilmu dan Bahasa (PPIB) Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and SMK Tebobon secondary school senior principal Loh Kok Cheang saw volunteers gather up 42 garbage bags worth of trash and refuse from the beach area.

The majority of the volunteers were fourth year students who gathered at the Likas Bay beach starting at 8am.

Storey said he was inspired to initiate the project due to the amount of trash washed up at the beach area.

"When going for what should have been a pleasurable walk along Likas Bay turned out to be very unpleasant, due to the sheer amount of rubbish on the beach. There was hardly any sand visible because of the amount of plastic bags half buried in the sand. It looked like an officially sanctioned refuse tip."

He said being a prime tourist destination Likas Bay has the potential to be one of the most beautiful spots in Sabah.

"However, the rubbish severely mars



Students beach clean up.

the scenery and sends the wrong message to tourists and locals alike, as well as deterring swimmers from entering the water."

Storey commented that while the relevant authorities are making some effort to clean the beach, they are not taking the problem of deeply embedded plastic bags in the lower tide zone seriously enough.

He pointed to the need for an excavator or some such machine to tackle the problem, as removing the refuse by hand proved very difficult.

"The issue here is two-fold: more diligence is needed in cleaning up the beach and park areas as well as more education being required at public and school levels".

Loh who was deeply concerned about the quality of the coastline, had always wanted to engage students in a beach clean up project.

"The beach is a fantastic asset for Kota Kinabalu with its magnificent views, but when you look closer at the beach, it is a different story.

"We support the efforts of the authorities and want to collaborate with them, but hope the efforts made to clean the beach can be doubled in the future."

An eye opener for him was discovering not only visitors to the coastline created the rubbish problem, but that it came in with the tide from islands and rivers.

Loh praised a recent education initiative by Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun who spoke about one of the root causes of the rubbish problem - litter being carried down-river to beach areas. As such Loh hoped that the message will reach more schools, especially in the Likas area.

"We do not inherit the Earth from our parents; we are merely borrowing it from our children" quoted Principal Loh, reading from a student study hand-out.

He said that the older generation often tend to forget that they will hand over this world to the next generation.