

'Stop logging in catchment area'

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Peka concerned over river systems in Fraser's Hill forest

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RAUB: An environmental group has called for a stop to all logging activity in Bukit Telaga in the forests of Fraser's Hill, a major water catchment area and the source of two major river systems – Sg Pahang and Sg Selangor.

This came as an area about the size of two football fields was found denuded of its trees, with some 20 logs heaped in a pile on excavator tracks.

The Pahang Forestry Department later confirmed that a permit had been given for the logging.

Association for the Protection of Natural Heritage of Malaysia (Peka) said Fraser's Hill was sensitive as its soil eroded easily, and any deforestation would affect its role as a water catchment area.

"Our water supply comes from highland areas. If we don't protect them, it will be affected," said its president Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil here yesterday.

"This will increase the cost of cleaning our water supply, and also lead to natural disasters like landslides and floods," she said.

It is believed that logging on the 100ha of land in the area will take place over a span of six months.

Shariffa Sabrina said there was also an orang asli village in Kampung Bukit Telaga which might be affected by the logging activities.

"We are asking both the state and



Ravaged Earth: A section of forest about the size of two football fields cleared of trees with its logs piled on one side at Bukit Telaga in Fraser's Hill.

the federal governments to permanently end all logging and deforestation around Fraser's Hill and to gazette the area as a heritage site," she said.

While a permit had been given for the current site, Shariffa Sabrina said Peka feared that this might be followed by more deforestation.

"We have written to the Forestry Department, and it has replied to

say that all activity will be halted until further notice but we want this to be stopped permanently," she said, adding that logging began about a month ago.

"We will now be the eyes and ears of Bukit Telaga and watch it like a hawk to protect Fraser's Hill."

When contacted, Pahang Forestry Department director Datuk Mohd Paiz Kamaruzaman said it would

look into Peka's request for all logging to be stopped before making a decision.

"Yes, there is a permit (for the current logging)," he said.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said he had received Peka's letter and forwarded this to his director-general for a report.