

Urban ecological restoration: increasing forest cover in the Klang Valley region through urban planning and biodiversity conservation

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Forest fragmentation due to a rapid expansion of urbanisation has been on the rise in the greater Klang Valley region, Malaysia. In this paper, we present baseline results of flora and fauna studies carried out by Tropical Rainforest Conservation and Research Centre (TRCRC) at the Elmina township that neighbours a forest reserve, and the preliminary plans to connect and restore ecological connectivity, showcasing the need to integrate these fragments by urban planning and the adoption of biodiversity focused development. As a result of these preliminary findings, TRCRC along with Sime Darby Property (SDP) developed strategies and are embarking on extending the fragmented habitat into an integrated 300-acre Elmina Central Park. The restoration strategies will inform and integrate habitat connectivity and ecological restoration plans for future development. The use of native species and focusing on rare and endangered species aims to achieve multiple national biodiversity targets including achieving Sime Darby Property's sustainability pledges. This collaborative effort between a non-governmental environmental organisation and a real estate player to restore the ecological functions of townships also demonstrates the growing importance of strong partnerships in bringing back (rewilding) urban biodiversity into spaces where communities thrive.