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Man-made wetland to rise soon in Alaminos to cleanse waste water

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in Environment

ALAMINOS CITY, Mar. 19 — A man-made wetland, the first of its kind in the country, will soon rise here primarily to ensure safe drinking water and protect rivers, sea and the Hundred Islands National park from pollution.

Construction of the wetland started Sunday during the ground-breaking rites attended by city and barangay (village) officials and representatives of League of Cities of the Philippines, the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) and the Democratic Local Government of South East Asia (DELGOSEA).

Located in a 4,000 square meter lot in the Poblacion here, the project is touted as the very first in the country that will use the natural way of cleansing waste water before it can be harnessed for irrigation purposes and for growing fresh water fish.

The project is a product of sharing best local government practices among Southeast Asian countries.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, attended by city and barangay officials and from the League of Cities and Director Antonio Avila, project coordinator of DELGOSEA, Mayor Braganza said the project may yet be the cheapest and most effective way of treating waste water that comes from the market, households, commercial establishments and sewage that flows to lower areas.

Based on the project plan, four series of ponds will be built, one pond of which will be planted with different species of aquatic plant whose roots have the capacity to cleanse waste water and remove its obnoxious odor.

“We have to protect our people who depend on clean potable water that they draw from under the ground and the people who depend on fishing and tourism as livelihood,” said Braganza.

The project will cost only P5 million when fully completed before the end of the year. The first phase of the project, costing P2.5 million, is now going on.

Being built by the Alaminos City government under President Aquino administration's Public-Private Partnership (PPP) program, the project got the much needed push when the family of Atty. Alfred Felix De Castro agreed to lend their land behind the big Suki Public Market as site of the constructed wetland.

When completed, it will help cleanse the waste water coming from the central business district and most parts of barangay Poblacion, before this can be released to water the farms.

Backing up this project are the League of Cities of the Philippines represented by its secretary general Alaminos City Mayor Hernani Braganza, and ULAP, with the help of DELGOSEA.

City Administrator Wilmer Panabang said that the project was a replication of the "Constructed Wetland for Municipal Wastewater Treatment" which is a Best Practice Model, in Udonthani City, Thailand.

When Braganza and other Alaminos City officials visited Udonthani City, Thailand two years ago, he was impressed by that city's constructed wetland which was using the natural method to treat waste water coming from homes and factories.

He vowed to adopt the same project in Alaminos City to protect the farms, fishpond and the whole Hundred Islands from pollution.

Braganza finally decided to embark on the project after Alaminos City received a grant from DELGOSEA.

The grant which provides funds for research, travel and coordination expenses was awarded to the city government of Alaminos for bagging the Seal of Good Housekeeping (SGH) award from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) last year.

The SGH awards were given to local government units that excel in the practice of transparency and good governance with no derogatory record whatsoever from the Commission on Audit (COA).

Panabang said that since the project was doable and needed no big budget to pursue, the project would be replicated soon in other areas of Alaminos City that also need to treat their waste water.

He said Braganza was also set to share the technology to other towns of Pangasinan, especially in the central part, so that they could also cleanse their waste water going to their farms and fishponds and bring about healthier and livable environment

Meanwhile, Bayan Muna Partylist Rep. Teddy A. Casiño, an acclaimed human rights and environmental protection advocate, hailed Alaminos City's undertaking to build the constructed wetland

Casiño, who graced the city fiesta on Sunday, said the Alaminos City Constructed Wetland project is “commendable and logical because it is a truly natural way of treating waste water.”

“This sustainable and affordable means of treating waste water will be a big contribution of the administration of Mayor Hernani Braganza and to the protection of the environment,” said Casiño.

Braganza thanked the family of Atty.De Castro for leasing part of their land to the city to be used as treatment area for waste water.

The project consists not only of a series of water ponds plant with different species of aquatic plants but will also become a park where people of Alaminos can relax, do their fishing and morning and afternoon exercises and will be called “Judge Felix De Castro Jr. Park.” (PNA)

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