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Baguio Water District, social clubs move to save forest

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BAGUIO CITY--The Baguio Water District (BWD) and the various Lions Clubs in the city are joining forces to protect the watersheds where the majority of the city's water supply is sourced.

The 13 Lions Clubs in Baguio are Baguio City Host Lions Club, Baguio Everlasting Lions Club, Baguio Magnolia Lions Club, Baguio Sunflower Lions Club, Baguio Chrysanthemum Lions Club, Cordillera Adivay Lions Club, Baguio Kindasan Lions Club, Benguet Optometrist Lions Club, Baguio Pines City Lions Club, Metro Baguio Lions Club, Baguio Burnham Lions Club, Baguio SLU Medicine Campus Lions Club, and Baguio Family and Friends Lions Club have signed a memorandum of agreement adopting the different watersheds, to protect, continue reforestation and nurture.

There are about 400 lions club members in Baguio, 200 of which are actively involved in club projects.

“We opted to join forces as a regional group for a bigger impact,” Jefferson Ng, Cordillera region chairman told the Philippine News Agency (PNA) on Tuesday.

The BWD protects and maintains several watersheds, as a primary source of water for the residents and the commercial establishments.

Among them are the Camp 8, Buyog, Busol, partly that of Santo Tomas and the Forbes Park which they have endeavored to also protect. These watersheds support the production of water for the underground aquifers which are also sourced by the water distribution utility. Several pumping stations have been established aside from impounding facilities within the watersheds as a source for the city's needs.

The agreement with the Lions clubs is a renewal of the commitment of the private organizations through its regional chairman making them all “muyong” holders of the watershed, committing to help protect and preserve the reservations.

“Muyong” is an indigenous practice in Ifugao province where the holder protects the area designated as his forest.

The MOA will be for a period of three years that will primarily focus on Busol watershed, Buyog, Camp 8 and Sto. Tomas.

Among the activities that will be done are tree planting held during the planting months while nurturing activities will be on other months of the year. There will also be cleaning and clearing activities to allow the trees planted to grow freely.

Ng said they hope to be perpetual partners of BWD’s Adopt-A-Watershed program.

“We are thankful that we are able to continue this partnership with BWD. The Lions clubs will persistently help in whatever way it can to support BWD and to help protect the city’s watersheds,” Ng said.

The Adopt-a-Watershed program aims to preserve the watersheds in Baguio City through partnerships with government and non-government organizations, civic organizations, and schools through tree planting, nurturing, and other related activities.

Under the Adopt-A-Watershed program, the clubs have signified their continuous support to the environmental endeavor of Baguio’s sole water producer and distributor.

Aside from the adoption of the watersheds, Ng said at the club level, they have adopted parks, which they maintain, beautify and protect as part of the contribution to the greening and beautification effort for the city.

“As advocates of environmental preservation, we thank the Lions clubs for their continued support to our cause. This partnership will help us sustain our goals to preserve or better yet improve the condition of Baguio City’s remaining forest covers,” BWD general manager Salvador Royeca in a said.

Royeca said the protection of the city’s watersheds requires a collective effort from all of its stakeholders.

He said the renewal of the MOAs will ensure that the BWD will be able to sustain its task in protecting the watersheds under its jurisdiction and continue providing potable water to the public.

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