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Balili River designated as water quality mgmt area

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Sec. Ramon Paje has approved last January the designation of the Balili River system as Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) to protect and improve water quality of the river system.

DENR Administrative Order 2013-05 covers the La Trinidad and Sablan in Benguet and Baguio City, pursuant to the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

With the designation, a governing board was recently organized to oversee and direct rehabilitation efforts on the water quality of the river.

The Balili River

system was categorized as Class A in 1975 but its waters deteriorated through the years due to pollution, urbanization, and human activities.

The governing board is chaired by the Environment and Management Bureau-DENR regional technical director with members composed of representatives from the Office of the Governor of Benguet, Cordillera Regional Development Council, mayors, and *Liga ng mga punong barangay* presidents of Baguio City, La Trinidad, and Sablan, regional directors, representatives from business sector, water utility, registered non-government organizations involved

in environmental concerns, the academe, the Balili River System Revitalization Coalition (BRSRC), and Benguet State University.

Among the functions of the board are to formulate strategies, monitor and facilitate regulations, coordinate information dissemination activities, undertake projects and complementary interventions, and formulate rules based on applicable and pertinent laws, policies, rules, and regulations.

During the organizational meeting last March 13, it was agreed the BRSRC will constitute the technical working group of the board. - Susan C. Aro