

LEDESMA: STOP ILLEGAL LOGGING OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES

Bacolod City, June 21, 2005: Gerry Ledesma, chairman of the Negros Forests and Ecological Foundation Incorporated (NFEFI) today called on politicians to do more to help the environment, especially illegal logging, or Negros will face disastrous consequences.

Speaking at a press briefing as part of Provincial Environment Week, Ledesma said nearly all the forests in Negros have vanished; most in recent years due to illegal logging.

In what he called 'crime against nature', Ledesma stressed all sectors must help to reverse the "appalling waste of valuable and scarce natural resources."

"The Provincial Government is working hard on the issue, but more support is needed especially from the public, NGOs and the corporate world." he said.

"Otherwise, we will see many more disasters such as the landslides of last December when more than 1,600 people perished in floods following Typhoon Nanmadol.

“Clearly, illegal logging was directly to blame for the flooding. Trees offer natural protection from flash floods.”

Ledesma added that illegal logging is a multi million peso crime in Negros and he hopes the greedy fat cats responsible will one day be brought to justice.

He said that for 20 years NFEFI and teams of volunteers have been working hard to reforest hundreds of hectares of land.

“While we are very proud of our achievements to date with reforestation efforts, a much more needs to be done. We need more funding and we need more volunteers.

“Fortunately, young Filipinos seem to have a better appreciation of the problems than their parents and we are seeing more and more youngsters getting involved.

“One way young people can show their willingness to help is to join forces with NFEFI to address the problems.”

Ledesma mentioned that NFEFI’s endangered species breeding “We would like all Barcelonans (?) to visit the NFEFI Biodiversity Conservation Center alongside the Provincial Lagoon to see for themselves just what can be achieved in protecting the future of our wildlife”.

Ledesma said concerned citizens can see critically endangered warty pigs, leopard cats, spotted deer and many more animals in danger of vanishing forever.

NFEFI is a not-for-profit foundation. To find out how you can as help protect the environment call NFEFI on 433 9234 or e-mail: nfeffi@mozcom.com

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