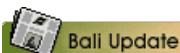




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News

A Solution to Bali's Deepening Water Crisis Water Protection Program Launched to Urgently Halt Salt-Water Intrusion and Replenishing Aquifers

(5/3/2015) Bali's natural fresh water aquifers are at record lows of less than 20% and researchers warn the island will be in a state of ecological crisis before 2020 if the situation is not reversed by mitigation.

Technical experts from *Bali Water Protection Program (BWP)* team at *Universitas Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB)* and *Indonesian Development of Education and Permaculture Foundation (IDEP)* recently announced a collaborative community solution to help restore island aquifers and assist reversal of the water crisis, following a worldwide assessment of rapid aquifer recharge systems as effective mitigation for emergency conditions on Bali.



Click Image to Enlarge

"Water is life... the need and utilization of ground water is increasing, while the need to recharge water into the soil is being underestimated," said *Dr. Lilik Sudajeng*, PNB Professor of Civil Engineering and head of research.

High demands for fresh water from Bali's densely populated urban and tourism areas, has seen water supplies diverted from vital agricultural areas to tourist precincts in the south that now threatens the island's future food security, *UNESCO* designated world-heritage rice fields, traditional Balinese culture and overall quality of life.

Research for an inexpensive, cost-effective solution began intensely in 2012. The pilot water protection program, at a cost of less than US\$1 million, will commence operation on funding and address the depletion of aquifers with 136 rainwater gravity-fed well systems strategically located in 13 pre-identified intervention areas.

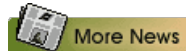
Based on successful systems in several drought-stricken areas in India, the aquifer recharge model was the technique chosen by international and Bali academic teams for rapid results in successfully restoring and raising water levels within 3 to 5 years in areas suffering fresh water crisis and threats of salt water intrusion.

"Coastal areas where aquifers continue to be over-exploited will suffer further leakage of salt water into groundwater, which is forever non-reversible, meaning total dependence on expensive desalination plants to treat seawater for Bali residential, agriculture and tourism water supplies," says PNB researcher of Civil Engineering and program co-initiator, Ida Bagus Putu Bintana.

Bali tourism industry action and public awareness is urgently needed to educate residents and stakeholders on the water crisis and share knowledge to key tourism leaders on the severity and reality of current water sustainability issues, explains *IDEP Foundation* special project advisor and program co-initiator, Florence Cattin.

"With over 77,000 registered hotel rooms, plus online booking platforms promoting thousands of Bali villas for rent - and recent announcement of increasing tourist targets to 30 million by 2029, the sustainability of Bali's water has now passed tipping point," said Cattin.

Program organizers' - *IDEP Foundation* and *Universitas Politeknik Negeri Bali* - are seeking support from civic and tourism industry leaders to ensure the



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success of the *Bali Water Protection Program* and the expansion of the program to other at-risk dry areas to protect regional water and food security.

"This rescue program cannot be carried out by one organization alone, all must cooperate - including government, industry and general public for water rescue in this land," said *PNB* Professor Lilik Sudiajeng.

"At the end of the day, we are facing a choice - No water, no Bali - the island has very few years of fresh water left and either we want to depend on expensive technologies such as reverse osmosis for our water or allow Bali's future generations to enjoy the natural water bountifulness of their parents - it's as simple as that," said Ms Cattin.

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