

Clean-up of Klity Creek demanded

Court asked to force dept to take action

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Villagers of the Lower Klity Creek in Kanchanaburi province have asked the Administrative Court to force the Pollution Control Department to speed up the clean-up of the lead-laden creek that has been held up for six years.

A group of 13 villagers, led by village head Yaser Nasuansuwan, filed the petition by registered mail on Monday. It should have reached the court yesterday.

A lead-processing plant, located next to the World Natural Heritage site of Thung Yai Naresuan wildlife sanctuary, was accused of discharging wastewater into Klity Creek for more than 25 years. It was ordered to permanently shut down its operations in 1998.

However, no environmental officials have since then ordered the removal of the lead-contaminated sediment from the creek.

"All they have done is placed a board of the Public Health Ministry near the creek to warn villagers not to use water from the creek," said Surapong Kongchantuk, director of Karen Studies

and Development Centre.

Mr Surapong, who has lent support to villagers suffering from lead poisoning and a deteriorating environment over the past few years, said the Pollution Control Department had done nothing to improve the water quality in the creek.

The Law Society of Thailand, which helped the villagers file yesterday's complaint, last year asked the department to deal with the case, but received no response.

"So the court of law is one way to urge the department to take action," he said.

The department had earlier said that digging out sediment from the creek bed would simply cause lead to spread further. But Mr Surapong argued that the method had been used worldwide in rehabilitating the environment in similar cases and did not face any problems. The department's claim is very "bizarre" in his view.

Officials had earlier excavated some sediment and piled it up on the banks of the creek. This had been washed away by rain over the years. They also built two check dams to trap laden sediment in the creek. But no further action was taken.