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# Ministry wants more trees to curb erosion

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**PUTRAJAYA** — The Natural Resource and Environment Ministry wants the Pahang government to give the green light to plant new areas in Camerons Highlands with trees to prevent soil erosion.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, said the Forestry Department had planted 21,000 trees on 27ha as of October but wanted to do more.

“Yes, we have done our job but we want to do more to green Cameron Highlands,” he said.

Wan Junaidi visited Cameron Highlands last week to review the progress of the tree-planting exercise and found open areas still covered with plastic.

“We require permission from the state government to allow us to reforest these areas. We cannot barge in without permission,” he told reporters at his ministry.

On the relocation of illegal vegetable planters, he said Forestry Department

director-general Datuk Seri Dr Abdul Rahman Abdul Rahim had been given until February to prepare a report.

“The relocation of illegal vegetable planters to a designated area will be monitored by the government. They are not allowed to cultivate land belonging to the state government or cut down trees,” he said.

On the Bertam Valley flood mitigation project involving an allocation of RM40 million and aimed at overcoming the perennial flooding problem in the area, Wan Junaidi said it was 61 per cent completed and expected to be completed by May.

The outstanding work included the widening and deepening of a 200m stretch along Sungai Bertam.

“When the project is completed, it can prevent flooding as the Sultan Abu Bakar dam has been enlarged to accommodate a total of 22 million cubic metres of water compared with 5.5 million cubic metres before,” he said.