

Metro 'esteros' yield 4,772 cubic meters of trash

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Different sorts of trash enough to fill 685 trucks were recovered from at least nine esteros or waterways during a relentless 45-day cleanup operation ahead of the rainy season, said the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

Engineer Noel Santos of the MMDA Flood Control Center, said the garbage thrown into the waterways includes plastics, Styrofoam, broken appliances, sofa set and even vehicle tires.

“Since we started the cleanup on March 1, we have retrieved 4,772 cubic meters of garbage and silt. Styrofoam from fast foods topped the list of collected trash,” said Santos, during the agency’s radio program over DZBB radio.

The massive cleanup operation under the Estero Blitz program de-silted and de-clogged Tripa de Gallina, Libertad Retarding Pond, San Miguel, San Sebastian, Quiapo, Magdalena, Tanigue, Roxas Canal, and Maypajo.

Santos said workers of the agency target to clean Estero de la Reina in Tondo, Manila on Tuesday.

Aside from the difficulty of hauling trash, Santos said uncooperative barangays that let waterways stink are also a problem.

“There are residents in some barangays in Manila who do not cooperate with us. With their barangay captains, we have reminded them to refrain from dumping their trash at the waterways but they continue to do so,” said Santos.

Before dredging a waterway, Santo said they usually inform the barangay leaders of their cleanup drive aimed to reduce the risk of flooding in their areas during the rainy season, often during the third quarter of the year.

“We give barangay leaders notices that they are responsible in maintaining the cleanliness of the cleaned waterway. If we find the waterway full of dirt again, we will complain to them before the Ombudsman,” said Santos.

Santos said they want to complete the cleanup of heavily-clogged waterways in flood-prone areas during summer.

Garbage and silt limit the capacity of waterways to handle the amount of rainwater thus causing flooding.