

Bt1.5m project to restore coral reefs launched



Workers putting into the sea a net-like gear meant to preserve coral reefs.

SAMUI'S local government and the Tourism Association of Koh Samui have launched a Bt1.5 million project to preserve coral reef around the island.

The project, expected to be completed next month, will use current technologies to plant reef in areas where the reef had been damaged by natural disaster and human activities such as fishing and tourism.

Samui mayor Warakorn Rattanarak said: The "coral reef showcases beauty of nature under the sea. We have to do something to sustain and preserve it."

He hopes that the project

started in September last year will expand the size of coral reefs around the island and increase the presence of creatures like fish, crabs and prawns.

Meanwhile, Google Earth, which offers maps and satellite images for complex or pinpointed regional searches, has revealed that the mountain cover on Samui has shrunk considerably.

Current satellite images, it said, shows more brown spaces indicating denudation, which could cause landslide during heavy rains.

Google Earth has shown that on the hill in Ban Khoa Leam, the

soil is covered with nothing as trees in the area had been cut down for housing and hotel developments.

Mayor Varakorn said indiscriminate cutting down of trees was a recipe for disaster. But with the island's growing population and continued economic growth, "it is almost impossible to totally stop tree-cutting."

The best possible solution, he said, is replant trees after every development.