

# WNPS And DWC Partners With Abans To Combat Deforestation



*(L-R): Amila Perera, Project Coordinator, WNPS; Dr Suhada Jayawardana, Department of Wildlife Conservation – Veterinary Surgeon; W A A U G Indrajith, Assistant Director, DWC (Western Province); Prof Lakdas Fernando, Project Chair Past President & Committee Member, WNPS; Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne, CEO, Abans Group & President WNPS; Buddhika Dharmawardena, Deputy Director, Abans; Terry Kim, Product Director, LG Electronics; R M W E Rathnayaka, Range Officer DWC – Attidiya; and Charith Fernando, Brand Manager, Abans.*

One of Sri Lanka's most significant wildlife habitats in Attidiya-Bellanwila region, which is home to unique plant and animal species is facing the threat of degradation as well as extinction as a result of increased urbanization, poaching and deforestation.

In response, the Wildlife Nature and Protection Society (WNPS) has partnered with LG and Abans to launch the Green Isle Project to combat habitat loss, which has been identified as a major threat towards the continued survival of Sri Lanka's unique position as a biodiversity hotspot. The Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) is also a project partner.

Over 200 environmental activists, educators and students took part in planting more than 1,000 trees in the Attidiya-Bellanwila Sanctuary. They were aided by Abans' own 50-member environment volunteer taskforce. Dr Iroja Caldera from the University of Colombo conducted a seminar for students on the significant role that the Green Isle Project will play in alleviating several of Sri Lanka's key environmental issues. Proposed actions for this project include habitat enrichment via a tree replanting scheme of over 30,000 trees, enabling the gradual replacement of invasive plant species, the revitalization of small canals, as well as the clearing out of weeds and other debris. A 3.5 Km Nature Trail will also be developed to enable wildlife enthusiasts, researchers, educators, and

school children to observe and study Attidiya's native species from a safe distance. The day-long launch was held under the auspices of Terry Kim, Product Director, Sol Lee, and Brian Kwak, LG Electronics. Abans' Senior Management Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne, Group Chief Executive Officer, Buddhika Dharmawardena, Deputy Director and Ruwan Gunasekara, Head of Home Appliance Products also attended the occasion. Professor Lakdas Fernando from the WNPS and Siri Hettiarachchi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism Development, Wildlife, and Christian Religious Affairs were also in attendance.