



Tourists marvel at the beauty of the Underground River in Puerto Princesa City. (Photo by Jonjon Vicencio)

MANILA — The Underground River needs your vote.

This is the government's pitch to text-crazy and Web-surfing Filipinos to generate more votes for the Underground River in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan to become one of the world's New Seven Wonders of Nature.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Ramon Paje said Filipinos, who spend so much

time sending text messages from their cell phones and browsing the Internet, could do more to ensure that one of Palawan's jewels would make it to the list.

Paje made the appeal as he spearheaded the other day a media launch for the Underground River as the country's sole nominee to the global competition that will culminate on Nov. 11.

Based on the latest results, the Underground River holds the precarious ranking of seventh place among the 28 finalists in the global competition, attributed to a slowdown in voting for it.

Although the Underground River currently has "a very good chance of winning," Paje encouraged Filipinos to aim for a higher ranking by submitting more votes online or through text messages.

Online voting, which is allowed only once for each e-mail address, can be done until Nov. 11 at www.new7wonders.com

Cell phone users of all local networks, meanwhile, have until Sept. 25 to vote by texting PPUR, PPUR7 or PPUR15 to 2861.

"Our mass media, through the global information highway, can reach out to millions of Filipinos overseas," Paje said.

"We should bring the (Underground River) to our countrymen who have not been to Palawan to see the awesome beauty of the river, which took centuries to be crafted by nature," he added.