

COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD

MacLehose Trail 40th Anniversary Celebration Programme

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper aims to brief members on the programme to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the opening of MacLehose Trail.

2. Background

2.1 MacLehose Trail, opened on 26 October 1979, was the first long-distance hiking trail in Hong Kong. This 100-kilometre trail is divided into ten sections, traversing the New Territories from East to West through eight country parks namely Sai Kung East, Sai Kung West, Ma On Shan, Lion Rock, Kam Shan, Shing Mun, Tai Mo Shan and Tai Lam. Winding along coastline, rugged mountains, valleys and reservoirs, the trail offers to hikers varied hiking experience and breathtaking scenery of the countryside as well as overlooking view of the cityscape of the Kowloon Peninsula. This famous trail has been named as one of the world's 20 dream trails by National Geographic.

2.2 This year is the 40th anniversary of this iconic hiking trail. To commemorate this special occasion, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) is going to launch a celebration programme from September to December 2019 to promote the fun of hiking and showcase the stunning natural beauty, interesting heritage and relics and amazing wildlife along different sections of MacLehose Trail. AFCD will collaborate with green groups, hiking associations and partners in organising the activities and promulgating to participants environmentally friendly outdoor practices (e.g. take you litter home, leave no trace) and hiking safety.

3. The Celebration Programme

3.1 Complete Walk on MacLehose Trail 2019

The “Complete Walk on MacLehose Trail” was the first public hiking event on MacLehose Trail after its opening in 1979. To promote the fun of hiking and encourage hikers to experience the uniqueness of all ten sections of MacLehose Trail, a hiking challenge named “Complete Walk on MacLehose Trail 2019” will be held from September to November 2019. To join the challenge, hikers may complete different trail sections at their own pace and schedule within the 3-month period according to their physical strength, experience and preference. By taking a simple step using a mobile phone at the checkpoints of each trail section, information on when and which trail section the hiker has completed will be recorded. Hikers will be awarded a commemorative prize if they complete all ten sections within the period and/or a souvenir for those who complete five sections or more.

3.2 MacLehose Trail 40th Anniversary Celebration Day

The MacLehose Trail 40th Anniversary Celebration Day will be held on 26 October 2019 along MacLehose Trail Sections 6 and 7 which are popular among various hiking groups due to their proximity to the urban areas and rich natural, heritage and landscape resources. This carnival type event will include hiking challenge to Needle Hill, recreational tree climbing, war relics appreciation, sight-seeing at Grassy Hill, game booths, workshops and music performance for participants to enjoy a festive moment.

3.3 MacLehose Trail Campers

Many outdoor facilities and overnight facilities such as picnic sites and campsites are provided along MacLehose Trail to encourage hikers to make wise use of the resources to explore the wilderness of country parks. To offer a unique outdoor experience, a two-day hiking cum camping event will be organised in collaboration with the Scout Association of Hong Kong. The participants will have wild camping at Gilwell Campsite and take delight in exploring the day and night of MacLehose Trail Sections 4 and 5. Side events and workshops will be organised to enrich the outdoor fun and promulgate environmentally responsible hiking and camping practices along the leave no trace principles.

3.4 Excursion with Experts at MacLehose Trail

AFCD will organise a series of guided tours named as “Excursion with Experts at MacLehose Trail” from September to December 2019. Led by experts of AFCD and partner organisations, the tours will explore the biodiversity, geology, history, relics and amusing stories at selected sections of MacLehose Trail and bring about fascinating outdoor experience to participants.

3.5 Trail Maintenance Workshop at MacLehose Trail

MacLehose Trail connects hikers to nature across the territory. Through hands-on maintenance work, participants will better understand the pressure of human activities on trail conditions, the needs for trail management and the methods for trail maintenance. The use of trails in a sustainable way is essential for trail conservation. Trail maintenance at selected sections of MacLehose Trail will be conducted in the dry season of 2019 for experienced volunteers and the general public respectively.

4. Publicity plan

4.1 To promote MacLehose Trail and encourage public participation in the celebration programme, AFCD will produce a series of short videos to feature the captivating scenery, nature treasures and spectacular features on each trail section, and another series on the history and unforgettable memories of different trail users to highlight the affection of the trail. Other promotional activities will be launched through press interviews, website, social media, booklet, banners and posters and other publicity channels. Partner organisations will also assist in spreading the message through their networks and connections.

5. Advice sought

5.1 Members are invited to comment on the MacLehose Trail 40th Anniversary celebration programme.

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