

COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD

Country Parks Public Education Programme “Take Your Litter Home”

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper informs members on the progress of the Country Parks Public Education Programme “Take Your Litter Home”.

2. Background

2.1 To encourage the public to nurture a good habit of taking litter away from country parks after hiking and develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), in collaboration with 17 local green groups and hiking groups, launched the Country Parks Public Education Programme “Take Your Litter Home” in September 2015. The Programme, targeting at the general public, covered all country parks in Hong Kong and laid down action plans for various aspects including facility management as well as publicity and education.

3. Facility Management

3.1 Over the past years, the AFCD has been promoting the message of keeping the countryside clean. Since 2010, the AFCD has gradually reduced the number of litter bins and litter stockades along certain trail sections, taking into account the actual need of individual hiking trails, the impact of litter on wildlife and the natural environment, as well as the acceptance of the public. Notices have also been put up to remind hikers to take away their litter.

3.2 To tie in with the “Take Your Litter Home” Public Education Programme, the AFCD identified five trial sites for a pilot scheme of removing all litter bins at these sites in September 2015. The pilot scheme is to accustom the public progressively to the idea of taking litter away after hiking, and to collect information and data for reviewing the effectiveness of the measures so as to map out the way forward upon the completion of the pilot period.

3.3 The trial sites include the Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve, the Ma On Shan Country Trail, the Tai Lam Chung Country Trail, the Dragon's Back on the Hong Kong Island and the Lantau Trail Section 3 on the Lantau Island. These trial sites are located in the northern, eastern and western parts of the New Territories, as well as on the Hong Kong Island and the Lantau Island. Moreover, the concerned trails are rated with different levels of difficulty. Hence, the data collected from the pilot scheme would serve as a representative and valuable reference for future review.

3.4 Having removed the litter bins, the country park staff will continue to collect litter in order to keep the country parks clean and to step up cleansing effort at the trail sites as needed.

4. Publicity and Education

4.1 The AFCD has put up banners around the trial sites as well as other suitable locations of the country parks to appeal to the public to take their litter away. Besides, country park wardens will step up patrol and issue fixed penalty tickets to persons who litter in country parks as and when necessary.

4.2 To enhance public awareness of the importance of waste reduction and environmental protection, the AFCD has organized a series of publicity and education activities for students and the general public as part of the programme. The activities include:

- (a) Organizing "Take Your Litter Home" launching ceremony and the Country Parks Waste Reduction Day at the Lions Nature Education Centre on 20 September 2015 that the media were invited to cover the event;
- (b) Broadcasting Announcements of Public Interest on the radio and the internet from September 2015 onwards, in order to promote waste reduction and "Take Your Litter Home";
- (c) Holding public lectures on waste reduction at the Lions Nature Education Centre and on "Leave No Trace" at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre in Kowloon Park in September and November 2015 respectively;
- (d) Organizing "Take Your Litter Home" photo exhibitions at the Lions Nature Education Centre, Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve, and Tai Tong, Tai Lam Country Park in September, October and December 2015 respectively.

- (e) Arranging the Volunteer Patrol Team and co-organizers' patrol teams to conduct patrol along hiking trails, collect litter and promulgate the message on waste reduction; and
- (f) Deploying Nature Ambassadors to disseminate the message at major entrance of hiking trails in country parks to educate hikers on the impact of litter on wildlife and the amenity value of country parks, as well as distributing souvenirs with the slogan "Take Your Litter Home".

4.3 According to our preliminary observation, the general cleanliness and hygiene at the trial sites have been well maintained since the launch of the "Take Your Litter Home" Public Education Programme. The AFCD will continue to closely monitor the hygiene conditions at the trial sites and collect information for the review on the effectiveness of the programme. The AFCD will also continue with the multi-pronged approach to promote the message of "Take Your Litter Home" and at the same time keep the country parks clean.

5. Advice sought

5.1 Members are invited to note the progress of the "Take Your Litter Home" programme.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

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