

**Advisory Council on the Environment  
Nature Conservation Subcommittee**

**Public Awareness and Education Programmes on Wetland  
Conservation**

**Purpose**

This paper is to provide information to members on public awareness and education programmes on wetland conservation conducted by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) in 2004/05 and programmes planned for 2005/06.

**Background**

2. The aims of the public awareness and education programmes conducted by AFCD are:
  - a. To promote the understanding of ecosystem and biodiversity of Hong Kong wetlands;
  - b. To promote the wise use of wetlands for eco-tourism and educational studies; and
  - c. To promote public awareness on the importance of wetland conservation.

**Hong Kong Wetland Park (HKWP) in 2004/05**

3. A summary of programmes organised in 2004/05 is given below for members' information.
  - a. Conserve our Wetlands  
The "Conserve our Wetlands" initiative was held from October 2004 to February 2005. It aimed at promoting direct involvement in wetland conservation and encompassed a series of programmes for public and schools, including:

- i. “Wetlands at a Touch”: guided tours (696 participants);
- ii. “Wetlands Learning Site”: a wetland classroom for families (1,580 participants);
- iii. “Wetlands at School”: exhibition, game booths and experience sharing at schools (5,366 students in 15 schools).

b. Guided Tours

In 2004/05, guided tours led by the Hong Kong Wetland Park (HKWP) interpreters and volunteer guides were organized to promote the values of wetlands to students and visitors. A total of 812 tours were organised for 20,748 participants. In addition, 271 educational eco-tours to Tsim Bei Tsui and Nam Sang Wai were organised for 9,150 students.

c. School Visits and Teacher Workshops – Resource Kits

Supplementary to the educational guided tours, special school visits and teacher workshops were organised by HKWP for promotion of the Wetland Park Resource Kits. During the period April 2004 – March 2005, a total of 6 school visits and 15 teacher workshops were organised, joined by about 1,000 participants.

d. World Wetlands Day 2005

The World Wetlands Day 2005 Hong Kong Celebration Ceremony was held on 29 January 2005 with the global theme “There’s wealth in wetland diversity – don’t lose it!”. The celebration included an opening ceremony, prize presentation for Junior Bird Watching Race 2005 and outstanding HKWP volunteers, fun fair co-organised with local green groups, and a guided visit to Phase 2 of HKWP. The day also marked the launch of the Yuen Long Eco-heritage Tours. A total of 429 participants attended the event.

e. West Rail Sightseeing Bus

The West Rail Sightseeing Bus initiative was launched by West Rail and co-organised by Yuen Long District Office and HKWP from October to November 2004. HKWP volunteers provided guided tour services at Phase 1 venue of HKWP (12,552 participants), Nam Sang Wai (19,414 participants) and Ping Shan

Heritage Trail (10,386 participants).

f. Yuen Long Eco-heritage Tours

The “Yuen Long Eco-heritage Tours” programme was jointly organised by the Yuen Long District Council, Yuen Long District Office and HKWP on nine consecutive Sundays from January to March 2005. Over 3,500 participants joined the tours of three different routes guided by HKWP volunteers.

g. Volunteer Programmes

As at March 2005, a total of 820 volunteers and 36 voluntary groups have enrolled in the HKWP Volunteer Scheme. Besides servicing at major public events, volunteers also receive a series of training ranging from ecotourism to bird watching on a regular basis to update their knowledge and maintain their interest in wetland conservation. For the eco-tour team, 51 volunteers provided 281 man-days of guided services while 161 volunteers joined the training to be eco-guides. Besides, 131 volunteers in the field work service team provided 494 man-days of services during 04/05.

h. Cooperation with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

AFCD collaborated with the Conservancy Association by subventing the Association’s public education programmes, such as “Dance with the Birds” (over 5000 participants). AFCD jointly organized the Junior Bird Race event with the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (more than 240 students from 61 school teams). In collaboration with the World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong, AFCD also facilitated the Wetland Link International (WLI) Asia network hosted by Waterfowls and Wetland Trust in connection to Ramsar Conservation Education and Public Awareness programme.

## **Programme plan for 2005/06**

4. The programme plan for 2005/06 is summarised below:

a. Opening of the HKWP

The works for phase 2 of HKWP will be completed by early 2006 and the HKWP will be opened to the public in the first quarter of 2006. Detailed progress of the HKWP project is set out in Committee paper NCSC 3/05.

b. Education programmes

AFCD is currently preparing a series of educational programmes in connection with the opening of Phase 2 of HKWP. These include education kits, website, field study activities and worksheets.

c. Volunteer programmes

HKWP will continue to recruit and train volunteers for on-going services in wetland conservation and eco-guides. Intensive training programme will be conducted to prepare for the opening of the HKWP in early 2006.

d. World Wetlands Day 2006

AFCD will continue to organise the Celebration Ceremony for the World Wetland Day 2006 in February 2006 to raise public awareness of wetland values and the Ramsar Convention in particular.

e. Cooperation with NGOs

AFCD will continue to cooperate with local NGOs to promote public awareness and organise education programmes.

### **Advice Sought**

5. Members are invited to note the progress and comment on the plan for 2005/06.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department  
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