

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

Update on the Hong Kong Wetland Park (HKWP) Project

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the progress of the HKWP Project.

Update

Facilities and Attractions

2. The HKWP has a 10,000 square metre visitor centre, the Wetland Interactive World, and an over 60 hectare Wetland Reserve. The HKWP is the first of its kind in Asia.

3. The Wetland Interactive World has three major exhibition galleries, a theatre, a resource centre and other supporting facilities. Three exhibition galleries with different themes are designed to showcase biodiversity, human culture and the importance of wetlands.

4. The Wetland Reserve includes constructed wetlands and re-created habitats for waterfowls. Diverse wetland habitats of freshwater marsh, ponds, reedbed, mudflat, mangroves, grassland and woodland can be found in the Park. The Salt Water Crocodile "Pui Pui" will also move to the HKWP shortly.

Staffing and Operation

5. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) now manages the park through internal deployment of resources, employment of contract staff and engaging service contractors. More than 100 staff members are required. These include 80 recruited by AFCD and more than 30 hired by contractors. Training for staff covering the operation of the HKWP, hospitality and contingency arrangements has been conducted in stages.

6. AFCD has implemented a "Wetland Park Volunteer Scheme" since 2002 to promote the awareness of wetland protection through participation. At present, over 1,300 members of the public, as well as students from 70 schools have registered as volunteers and attended

training programme. Amongst the volunteers, 60 have completed their docent training and are ready to provide docent services to visitors.

Admission Fees

7. The admission fee for HKWP is \$30 for adult and \$15 for each children, full-time students or senior citizens. There are discounts for group and family visitors. The public can obtain more details from the HKWP's website at <http://www.wetlandpark.com>. Groups can also book their tickets on-line.

Complementary Facilities

8. The Tourism Commission and other relevant department have developed complementary facilities for HKWP to ensure its smooth opening and operation. These include setting up more directional signs and road signages, greening of nearby areas, beautification of pedestrian passage and installation of feature lamp posts, etc. The Transport Department has also worked closely with public transport services operators to enhance public transport services.

Marketing and Trade Familiarisation

9. We are working with Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), Yuen Long District Council and other organisations to promote HKWP. We are also considering other marketing initiatives such as promoting HKWP as an ideal venue for organizing meetings, conferences, exhibitions, and wedding functions. Workshops, briefings and familiarisation visits have been organized for the travel industry to facilitate their planning of tours in the HKWP.

Publicity

10. The HKWP is an important, new tourism infrastructure in Hong Kong. HKTB has been promoting the Park through its worldwide "Discover Hong Kong Year 2006" campaign.

11. We have displayed publicity materials in border control points, local tourist spots, Yuen Long and relevant West Rail and Light Rail stations. HKTB is now compiling two handbooks entitled "Railway Sightseeing Guide" and "Green Guide", which introduce attractions in Yuen Long and HKWP. We also promoted HKWP to the public through TV and radio APIs.

Opening

12. Before opening to the public, we conducted a series of soft opening activities for the HKWP since 11 May 2006. The participants included Members of the Legislative Council, the Advisory Council on the Environment, the Yuen Long District Council. Local organisations and disadvantaged groups in Yuen Long, the travel trade, green groups and volunteers have also been invited. The visitors offered useful suggestions to help AFCD fine-tune the operation of HKWP.

13. We have also worked with the Police and the Transport Departments for crowd control and transport management plans. We have also prepared an avian flu contingency plan and recruited staff equipped with professional knowledge in handling suspected cases of avian flu.

14. The HKWP was opened to the public on 20 May 2006. The Tourism Commission and AFCD will continue to closely monitor the operation of HKWP.

Advice Sought

15. Members are invited to note the progress of the Project.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
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