

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

**Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2009  
at 10: 00 am in Conference Room, 33/F, Revenue Tower, Wanchai**

**Present:**

Professor CHAU Kwai-cheong (Chairman)  
Professor LAM Kin-che, S.B.S., J.P. (ACE Chairman)  
Ms. Betty HO  
Dr. MAN Chi-sum, J.P.  
Mr. TSANG Kam-lam  
Dr. YAU Wing-kwong

**Absent with apologies:**

Professor LAM Kwan-sing, Paul, J.P.  
Mr. Hans Michael JEBSEN, B.B.S.  
Mr. LAU Che-feng, Edwin  
Mr. WONG Ka-wo Simon, J.P.

**In Attendance :**

Mr. Albert LAM	Deputy Director (2), Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Mr. Vincent TANG	Assistant Director (Nature Conservation & Infrastructure Planning), EPD
Mr. C C LAY	Assistant Director (Conservation), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Mr. Simon Chan	Senior Conservation Officer (Biodiversity)(Atg), AFCD
Miss Vivien Li	Senior Administrative Officer (Nature Conservation), EPD (Secretary)

**In Attendance for Agenda Item 3**

*Taiipo Environmental Association*

Ms Colleen Chiu  
Mr Chung Tam

*Conservancy Association / Hong Kong Bird Watching Society*

Dr. Cheung Ho Fai  
Mr. Lo Wai Yan  
Miss Vicky Yeung  
Dr. Hung Wing Tat  
Mr. Rico Wong  
Mr. Ken So  
Miss Katie Chick

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The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting of the Nature Conservation Subcommittee (Subcommittee).

**Agenda Item 1: Confirmation on Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 2 June 2009**

2. The draft minutes were confirmed without any amendments.

**Agenda Item 2: Matters arising**

3. The Chairman reminded members to declare potential conflict of interest, and pointed out that agenda item 3 of the meeting concerned the funding application of the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) Committee for two Nature Conservation Management Agreement (MA) proposals.

4. The Chairman then informed Members that he was one of the advisors of Conservancy Association's (CA) current MA project at Long Valley, and from time to time, were invited to give technical advice on their project. He emphasised however that he was not part of the project team, nor did he belong to the same organisation. Another member also declared that he was once the advisor of CA, but had not been involved in its administrative works, nor was he involved in its works of CA's MA project. The Chairman then invited views from Members on whether he should continue to chair the meeting, and whether the other member should continue to stay at the meeting.

5. A member said that since the Chairman was not involved in the actual administration of CA's MA project, and that the other member was not involved in the administrative works of the CA, and that both of them were only advisors of

the CA's MA project, and did not belong to CA as members, he was of the view that the Chairman should continue to chair the meeting, and the other member should continue to stay at the meeting. Other members concurred with the member's view.

6. A member declared potential conflict of interest as he was the Chairman of the Tai Po Environmental Association (TPEA), which managed the Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve, and was one of the applicants of the MA projects of agenda item 3. The Chairman also noted that another member had refrained from joining the meeting at this juncture as she noted her potential conflict of interest as one of the Directors of CA, which was also an applicant of the MA projects of agenda item 3. After consulting Members, the Chairman said that the member who was the Chairman of TPEA would be invited to leave the venue when the meeting discussed TPEA's MA proposal, and the other member would only be invited to join the meeting when the meeting finished discussing CA's MA proposal.

**Agenda Item 3: Nature Conservation Management Agreement Proposals**  
(NCSC Paper 05/09)

7. The Chairman invited Mr. Simon CHAN to brief members on the paper.

***Presentation by CA and Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS)***

8. The Chairman invited CA and HKBWS representatives to present their joint application.

9. Mr. Ken So highlighted that for the current proposal, CA and HKBWS managed to enter into MA with a land owner at Long Valley, while in the past, only land users (mostly farmers) participated in the MA project. Mr. Lo Wai Yan also highlighted that one major feature of the proposal was that paddy rice was re-introduced in Long Valley to attract birds.

10. In response to a member's enquiry, Dr Hung Wing-tat said that –

- (a) Managing the habitat in favour of amphibians was one of the measures to restore the food chain at Long Valley; and
- (b) He agreed that the project might not be able to achieve self-financing in monetary terms, but the project brought agricultural produces to farmers and attracted visitors, which in turn drove the local economy. He also

highlighted that the re-introduction of traditional crops had the effect of preserving cultural heritage.

11. Upon a member's enquiry, Mr. Simon Chan advised that when MA commenced at Long Valley in 2005, 202 species and 400 individuals of birds were recorded there in a month. In 2008, the numbers increased to 230 species and 600 individuals. This demonstrated the achievements of the MA.

12. Dr. Hung Wing-tat agreed to a member's observations that while the project needed to achieve sustainability, it might not need to be financially self-sustainable. Instead, sustainability should also include the promotion of public awareness on conservation, such as organising more educational programmes. He also agreed with the member's observation that the MA project had led to a decrease in the area of abandoned farmland, which also had the effect of achieving sustainability. A member remarked that the project also engaged land owners / users to monitor illegal fly-tipping at Long Valley.

13. Upon Mr. Vincent Tang's enquiry, Ms Katie Chick said that to establish a brand for Long Valley-grown produces, there needed to be a quality control system. CA and HKBWS would continue to explore the feasibility of introducing a system to recognise, for consumers' reference, the Long Valley-grown produces as quality produces, and for boosting the sales of them.

14. The Chairman opined that more efforts could be paid to habitat management in favour of amphibians and reptiles, so as to improve the structure and function of the ecosystem at Long Valley. Noting Mr. Ken So's advice that 70% of the Long Valley visitors were first-time visitors, the Chairman said that it would be useful to ask visitors to fill out questionnaires, to monitor their attitude change, and whether there was an increase of conservation awareness.

15. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Ms Katie Chick advised that while fragmentation of management areas did affect how well these areas were conserved, increasing the size of management areas depended on the willingness of land users / owners to cooperate. She added that managed areas had increased significantly since MA commenced in 2005.

*(The CA and HKBWS representatives were invited to leave the meeting at this juncture.)*

2. After some deliberations, the Chairman concluded that –

- (a) Members supported recommending the application to ECF;
- (b) While Members noted the ECF's Guide to Application (Nature Conservation Management Agreement Projects) on the requirement on achieving sustainability, it should be interpreted in a broader sense, especially for nature conservation projects which could hardly operate on a self-financing basis. For example, in assessing whether a nature conservation project was sustainable, considerations should also be given to whether the project could enhance the biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, promote local economy, and whether public awareness on nature conservation could be raised;
- (c) Members appreciated that the applicant made efforts to enhance the sustainability of the project, and recommended the applicant to highlight them in their proposal to ECF. In particular –
  - (i) the applicant re-introduced traditional crops including paddy rice, water chestnut, Chinese arrowhead and lotus to the Long Valley farmland. This not only contributed to enhancing the habitat diversity and ecological functions, but also conserving the cultural heritage, since farmers in Long Valley had already given up growing these crops for a period of time, and re-introducing them could sustain the Long Valley traditional farming culture;
  - (ii) driving the local rural economy, as ancillary economic activities in Long Valley (e.g. the nearby bean curd shop serving visitors to Long Valley, the agricultural produce could bring income to farmers / landowners and give them an economic incentive not to leave the land idle) were encouraged; and
  - (iii) much efforts have been paid to promote public awareness on nature conservation.
- (d) Members appreciated the applicant's conservation works, in particular, their habitat management efforts provided a favourable environment to wetland-dependent species (including birds, amphibians and reptiles) at Long Valley. This has enhanced the

biodiversity and ecosystem functions of the area by restoring the food chain.

- (e) Members noted that most of the visitors to Long Valley managed sites were first-time visitors, and suggested the applicant to conduct surveys to collect information on whether these visitors' nature conservation awareness would be raised after the visits.

*(The member who was the Directors of CA was invited to the meeting at this juncture. The member who was the Chairman of TPEA joined TPEA as one of the representatives.)*

### ***Presentation by TPEA***

16. The Chairman invited TPEA representatives to present their application.

17. On the efforts to raise public awareness, Dr. Yau Wing-kwong, highlighted that upon TPEA's request, the Tourism Board had erected directional signs leading visitors to Fung Yuen. The Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve was also one of the sites promoted to overseas visitors who came to Hong Kong to participate in the East Asian Games and Olympic Equestrian Events. The Butterfly Festival 2009 attracted thousands of visitors, among them, 90% were first-time visitors. The successful promotional efforts also reflected the high quality of TPEA's volunteers.

18. Upon a member's enquiry on whether there would be adjustments to the management strategy of Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve in view of the nearby development project, Ms Colleen Chiu advised that students from the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) had been engaged to monitor the change in the environment brought about by the development project. Dr. Yau Wing-kwong added that TPEA was in dialogue with the developer, and requested it, inter alia, not to apply insecticides, and to control the density of tall buildings within the development site.

19. Upon a member's enquiry, Dr. Yau Wing-kwong advised that he noted currently, the management sites were fragmented, and TPEA would continuously consider expanding its management areas after securing the support of land owners / users.

*(The TPEA representatives were invited to leave the meeting at this juncture.)*

20. After some deliberations, the Chairman concluded that –

- (a) Members supported recommending the application to ECF;
- (b) Members appreciated that TPEA proposed additional measures to raise the financial sustainability of the project;
- (c) As sites managed by TPEA were fragmented, TPEA was encouraged to seek to manage those remaining sites within private land to further enhance the conservation of the Fung Yuen Valley. TPEA was also encouraged to continue liaising with the landowners / land users in Fung Yuen Valley, with a view to expanding the sites to be managed and conserved.

**Agenda Item 4: Latest Progress of Implementation of the New Nature Conservation Policy** (NCSC Paper 06/09)

*(Dr. Yau Wing-kwon re- joined the meeting at the juncture)*

21. The Chairman invited Mr. Simon Chan and Mr. Vincent Tang to give presentations on the paper where it concerned conservation matters, and country and marine parks, respectively.

22. Upon two members' enquiry, Mr. CC Lay explained the procedures of designating Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as follows –

- (a) AFCD would propose new SSSIs for Planning Department's (PlanD) consideration having regard to AFCD's biodiversity survey results;
- (b) PlanD would consult relevant government departments on the proposals, as well as the local community as deemed appropriate;
- (c) The Committee on Planning and Land Development (CPLD) would decide whether to endorse the proposal; and
- (d) PlanD would keep the SSSI register administratively, and incorporate the SSSI on the register into the relevant Outline Zoning Plan or Development Permission Area (DPA) when the opportunity arose.

Mr. Simon Chan further advised that the proposal to list Lung Kwu Tan as SSSI was being processed by PlanD. Upon asking how long it would normally take for the listing of a SSSI, Mr. Simon Chan advised that the procedure to list Siu Lang Shui as SSSI has taken about one year to complete.

23. Upon the Chairman's enquiry, Mr. Albert Lam advised that it was the Government's policy intention to implement the public-private partnership (PPP) scheme under the New Nature Conservation Policy, and the Government would continue to resolve the issues with the project proponent for materializing the Sha Lo Tung PPP project. A member agreed that PPP, if successfully implemented, should be a feasible way for protecting ecological value of land under private ownership.

24. In conclusion, the Chairman noted the efforts made by EPD and AFCD on nature conservation so far, and requested the two departments to report the progress of the New Nature Conservation Policy to the NCSC in due course.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Any Other Business**

25. The Chairman said the secretary will circulate possible dates of next meetings for Members' consideration by circulation.

26. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

**Secretariat, Nature Conservation Subcommittee  
January 2010**