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**ACE-NC Paper 3/2019**  
***For discussion on 14 May 2019***

**Mid-term Progress Review of  
Sha Lo Tung Management Agreement Project**

**PURPOSE**

This paper seeks to update Members on the latest progress of implementation of the Management Agreement (MA) project at Sha Lo Tung Priority Site.

**BACKGROUND**

2. In January 2018, the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) Committee approved funding under the Nature Conservation Management Agreement Scheme for the Green Power Limited (GP) to implement its MA project “Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation Scheme in Sha Lo Tung 2018-2020” (Sha Lo Tung MA Project).

**THE CURRENT MA PROJECT**

3. The Sha Lo Tung Priority Site ranks second amongst the 12 Priority Sites for enhanced conservation promulgated under the New Nature Conservation Policy (NNCP). It is recognised as one of the most ecologically important sites for its stream and wetland habitats, supporting some 80 species of dragonfly species in Hong Kong, in addition to a diversity of amphibians, reptiles, freshwater fish, butterflies, fireflies and other fauna.

4. In June 2017, the Chief Executive in Council gave in-principle agreement to pursuing a non-in-situ land exchange with the land owner for the long term conservation of Sha Lo Tung. While we are undergoing the necessary process to materialise this proposal, proactive management in Sha Lo Tung is necessary to prevent habitat degradation and maintain the biodiversity of the site. The MA project is aimed to conserve existing habitats and enhance the biodiversity of the site. The project includes baseline surveys on the habitats and wildlife, restoration and enhancement of wet farmland, marshes and pond, as well as vandalism control and public education programmes. The project has commenced since April 2018 and aims to be completed in March 2020.

5. The Nature Conservation Subcommittee under the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE-NCSC) supported this project after discussion at its meeting on 15 December 2017, and advised the following:

- (a) GP should make it clear that the work to be carried out at the intensive management areas is on a trial basis, with an aim of gaining knowledge and experience to inform future long-term habitat restoration and management at Sha Lo Tung;
- (b) in view of the ecological importance of Sha Lo Tung in particular for odonates, GP should engage professional ecologists to carry out the ecological surveys and monitoring, and enhance patrolling efforts to prevent further eco-vandalism;
- (c) GP should make reference to previous studies on Sha Lo Tung in establishing the baseline ecological profile to assist the habitat restoration and management work under this MA project;
- (d) the advisory committee to be established to steer the project should involve relevant stakeholders and experts/academics on ecology and hydrology; and
- (e) barrier(s) should be installed across the access road/trail to Sha Lo Tung at appropriate place to prevent off-road vehicles from entering and damaging the valley.

6. Upon considering the views of the ACE-NCSC, the ECF Committee granted \$8,497,804 to GP in January 2018 for implementing the MA project. A summary of the project is at **Annex A**.

## **PROGRESS OF THE MA PROJECT**

7. For better monitoring of the projects under the ECF sponsorship, it is an established practice for recipient organisations to report the progress of the ongoing MA projects regularly to the ACE-NCSC. In this regard, GP has prepared responses which set out in detail the efforts taken to fulfil ACE-NCSC's recommendations for funding requirements (**Annex B**), and reports summarising the progress of implementation of the project from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, including the latest findings of the biodiversity surveys, extensive habitat management, agricultural rehabilitation, education and publicity works, problems encountered as well as remedial measures taken to overcome problems and their effectiveness (**Annex C**).

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

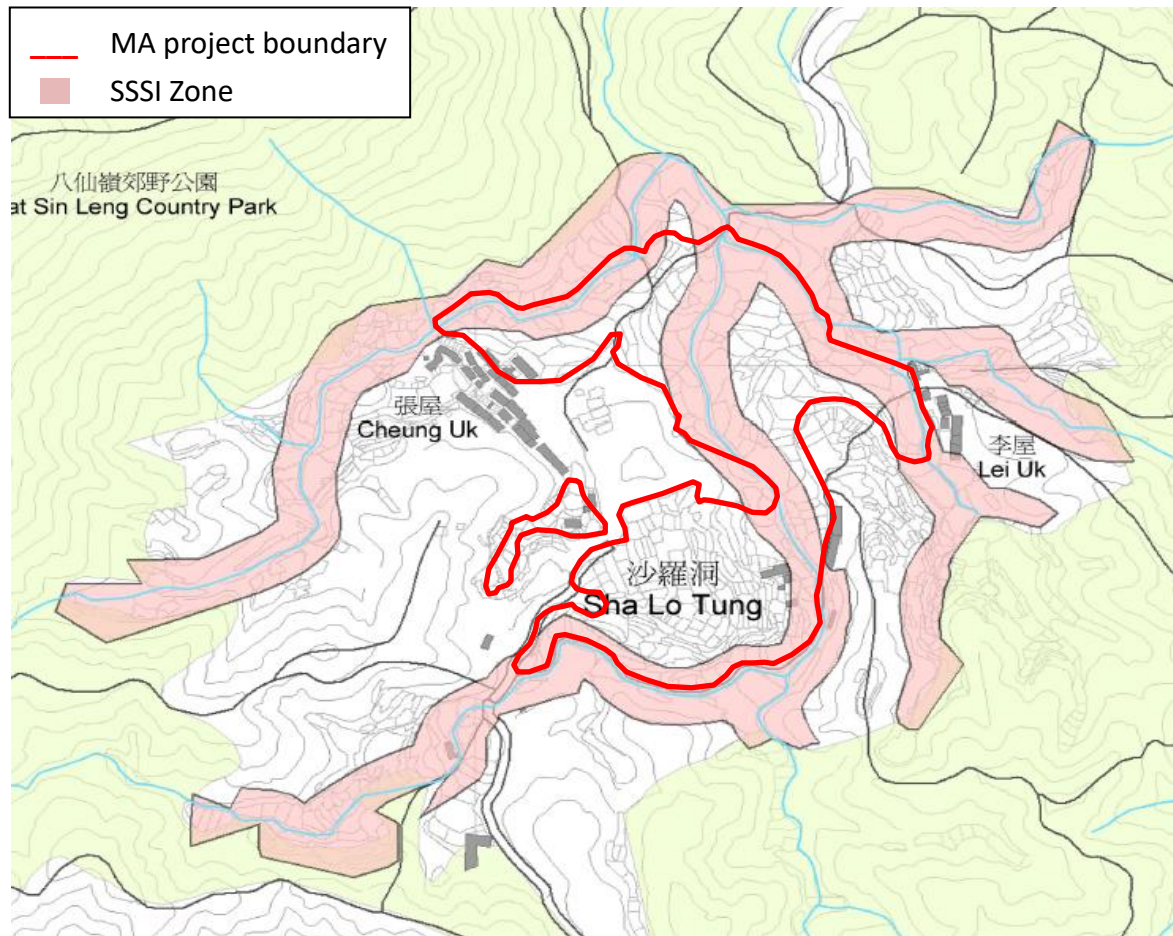
8. Members are invited to give views on the implementation and progress of the MA project.

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department**  
**Environmental Protection Department**  
**May 2019**

**Summary of the Sha Lo Tung MA Project (2018-2020)**

<b>Project Title</b>	Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation Scheme in Sha Lo Tung 2018-2020
<b>Proponent</b>	Green Power Limited
<b>Area Managed</b>	Around 11.45 ha
<b>Duration</b>	24 months (from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2020)
<b>Project Description</b>	This new MA project aims to restore and enhance the ecological value of Sha Lo Tung, through collaboration between Green Power Limited and the local rural community.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To protect existing habitats and preserve the natural landscape of Sha Lo Tung;</li> <li>- To improve existing knowledge on the ecology of Sha Lo Tung;</li> <li>- To engage different stakeholders including the land owner and local villagers; and</li> <li>- To enhance public awareness towards conservation of ecology, heritage and culture.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline surveys and monitoring on habitats and wildlife taxa;</li> <li>- Restoration and enhancement of habitats including wet farmland, artificial marshes and pond, woodland fringe, etc.;</li> <li>- Vandalism control such as prevention of hill fire and off-road vehicles;</li> <li>- Education and publicity programmes including school talks, volunteer training, guided tours and night tours, large-scale community event, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Approved</b>	\$8,497,804

**Figure 1: Project boundary of Sha Lo Tung MA**



## **Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation Scheme in Sha Lo Tung 2018-2020**

### **Green Power's Responses to the Recommendations of the ACE-NCSC**

- (a) *Green Power should make it clear that the work to be carried out at the intensive management areas is on a trial basis, with an aim of gaining knowledge and experience to inform future long-term habitat restoration and management at Sha Lo Tung;*

**Wetland restoration work and agricultural activities are being / will be implemented in the intensive management areas. Wetland restoration work includes the following:**

- **Removal of existing exotic vegetation, trash and debris.**
- **The establishment of artificial marshes and an eco-pond. This will be achieved by re-profiling of topsoil to create depressions for water storage. If the water retaining features of the previous paddy fields are damaged or buried, repairing and reconstruction of earth bunds and excavation of top soil will be conducted.**
- **Planting of wetland plants.**
- **Restoration of abandoned irrigation systems to irrigate the artificial marshes and eco-pond.**

**The above conservation work is a pilot test in Sha Lo Tung. Green Power regards such wetland restoration work as a trial to provide useful references for the long-term habitat restoration and management at Sha Lo Tung.**

- (b) *In view of the ecological importance of Sha Lo Tung in particular for odonates, Green Power should engage professional ecologists to carry out the ecological surveys and monitoring, and enhance patrolling to prevent further eco-vandalism;*

**A professional odonate ecologist Mr. So Ying Kin Ken is conducting baseline odonate survey for this Management Agreement project. In view of the irreplaceable odonate ecology of Sha Lo Tung, odonate expert Mr. Keith Wilson was also invited as the advisor for this project.**

**Dr. Sung Yik Hei and his research team are conducting baseline herpetofauna survey for this project, while Mr. Tsang Hin Fat is carrying out ecological baseline survey on freshwater fish. Local plant experts Dr. Lawrence Chau and Ms. Gloria Siu also helped in this Management Agreement project by providing information on previous discoveries and observations in Sha Lo Tung.**

**In addition, since the herpetofauna and freshwater fish surveys mainly take place at the streams and riparian zones where illegal poaching may occur, our surveyors will also inspect the stream course and remove any animal traps during the surveys.**

- (c) *Green Power should make reference to previous studies on Sha Lo Tung in establishing the baseline ecological profile to assist the habitat restoration and management work under this MA project;*

**Ecological baseline surveys on habitats and biodiversity have been conducted. Previous studies on Sha Lo Tung, such as EIA reports, reference books, research papers, historical aerial photos and historical photos have been reviewed to establish a baseline to steer our habitat restoration and management work. In addition, local ecological experts have also been consulted so that we could gather their previous observations and findings in Sha Lo Tung.**

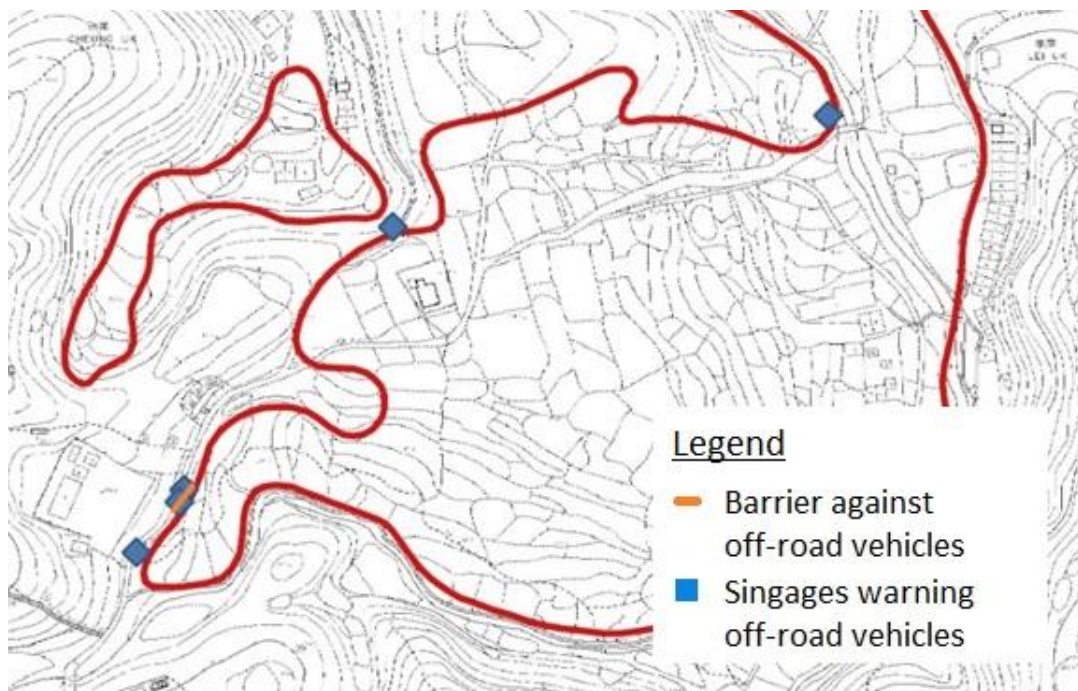
- (d) *The Advisory Committee to be established to steer the project should involve relevant stakeholders and experts/academics on ecology and hydrology;*

**Members of the Advisory Committee for this Management Agreement project come from different sectors, including tertiary institutes, NGOs and the government. Members include experts, academics and officials in areas such as ecological conservation, environmental engineering, hydraulics and nature education. Below is the list of members and the organisations they represent.**

- **Prof. CHAU Kwai-cheong (CUHK)**
- **Prof. WAI Wing-hong, Onyx (PolyU)**
- **Dr. Sam LAU Shun-shun (HKBU)**
- **Mr. Ken CHING See-ho (Eco-Education & Resources Centre)**
- **Dr. MOK Siu-yan, Flora (AFCD)**
- **Dr. MAN Chi-sum, JP (Green Power)**
- **Dr. CHENG Luk-ki (Green Power)**

- (e) *Barrier should be installed across the access road/trail to Sha Lo Tung at appropriate place to prevent off-road vehicles from entering and damaging the valley.*

**In March 2019, a barrier against off-road vehicles was installed in Cheung Uk, Sha Lo Tung by Green Power. It is a metal chain fixed between two signs which warn off-road vehicles to stay on track. The barrier is located adjacent to a major footpath which leads to the core area of Sha Lo Tung Valley. It separates the footpath and a piece of abandoned farmland where off-road vehicles frequently intruded into.**



Location map of the barrier against off-road vehicles

*(Remark: Responses from Green Power are bolded and without any textual amendment by the Secretariat)*



**Summary of Progress of Sha Lo Tung Management Agreement Project**  
**From 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019**

**Objectives**

- To protect existing habitats and preserve the natural landscape of Sha Lo Tung;
- To improve existing knowledge on the ecology of Sha Lo Tung;
- To engage different stakeholders including the land owner and local villagers; and
- To enhance public awareness towards conservation of ecology, heritage and culture.

**Conservation management for habitats**

*Extensive management: restoration of habitats*

a) Removal of undesirable vegetation

Invasive vegetation has become extremely widespread on the abandoned farmlands in Sha Lo Tung. In addition, the area is occupied extensively by terrestrial plants which are not compatible to the wetland habitats. The undesirable vegetation has extended to a degree causing degradation of ecology and biodiversity.

Removal of undesirable vegetation in extensive management area commenced in October 2018 after the ecological baseline surveys in the wet season. From October 2018 to March 2019, two rounds of vegetation clearance were conducted. Most invasive plants and plant species which are incompatible with wetland habitats were removed by hand-held grass trimmer or bulldozer. Vegetation very close to stream courses was left untouched to avoid disturbance to the top soil. Green Power has stockpiled the removed plant materials at appropriate locations so that they can decay naturally.

Most of the undesirable vegetation was terrestrial plants. They tend to extract substantial water from the top soil or even ground water. Removal of these plant species helps the soil to retain water, which is essential to the restoration of wetland habitats in Sha Lo Tung. In March 2019, temporary wetlands were observed in certain parts of the extensive management area, where native wetland plants were observed to have emerged naturally. This was regarded a good sign of habitat enhancement in Sha Lo Tung.

b) Management of woodland fringes

A considerable extent of woodlands and fung shui woodlands in the project area are degrading due to the emergence of invasive plant species. Proper management was implemented at the woodland fringes to rectify the problem.

In the extensive management area, woodland fringe which measures 300m along a stream course has been designated. In January 2019, the first round of management was completed. Exotic plants such as *Mikania micrantha* and *Ipomoea cairica* along the woodland fringe were removed using hand-held grass trimmer and other hand tools. Green Power is stockpiling the removed plant materials at appropriate locations so that they can decay naturally.

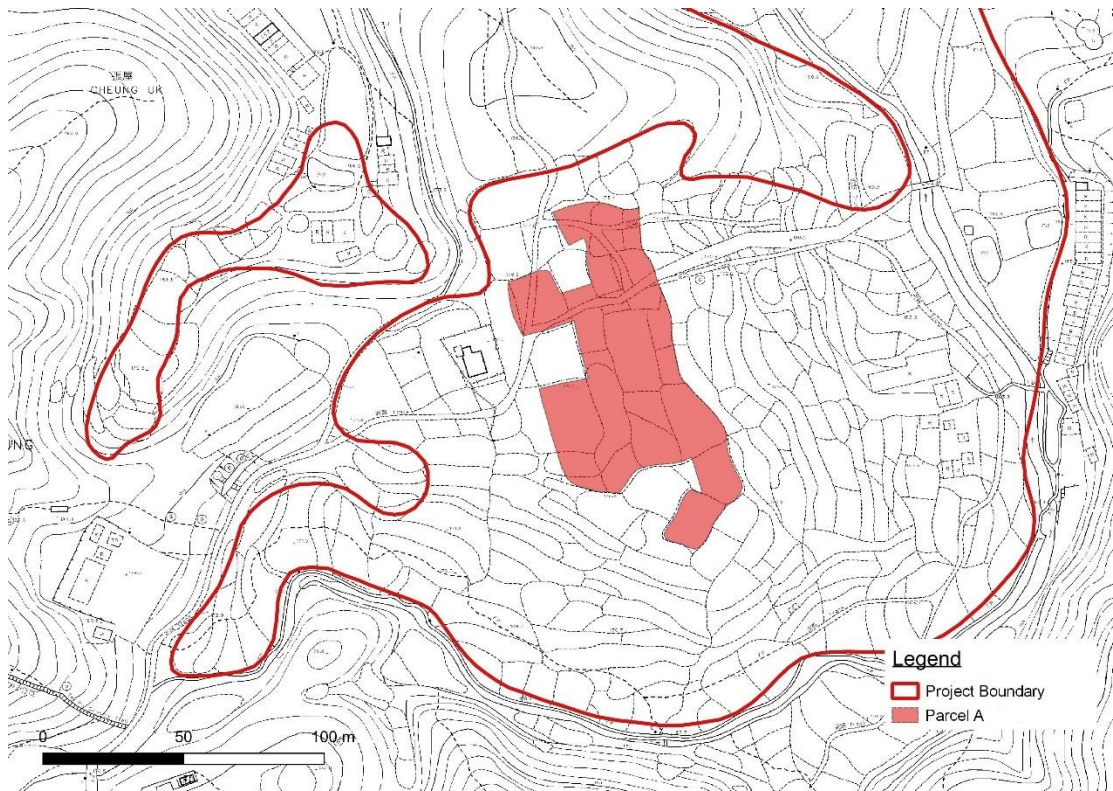
*Intensive management: enhancement of habitats*

a) Reintroduction of agricultural activities

Agricultural activities are one of the key intensive management measures in this Management Agreement project. Villagers and farmers were invited to practice organic farming, which helps to restore the ecological value of the abandoned farmlands.

An agreement between Green Power and a social enterprise “Sha Lo Tung Greenfields”, which is mainly formed by Sha Lo Tung villagers, was made in April 2018. Since then, preliminary agricultural activities have been initiated by Sha Lo Tung Greenfields. Due to unforeseen reasons, ground preparation works for the rest of abandoned farmlands was delayed. In March 2019, 5,000m<sup>2</sup> of abandoned farmlands in Parcel A of the intensive management area was restored for agricultural use. Recently, “Sha Lo Tung Greenfields” is cultivating on the 5,000m<sup>2</sup> of restored farmlands.

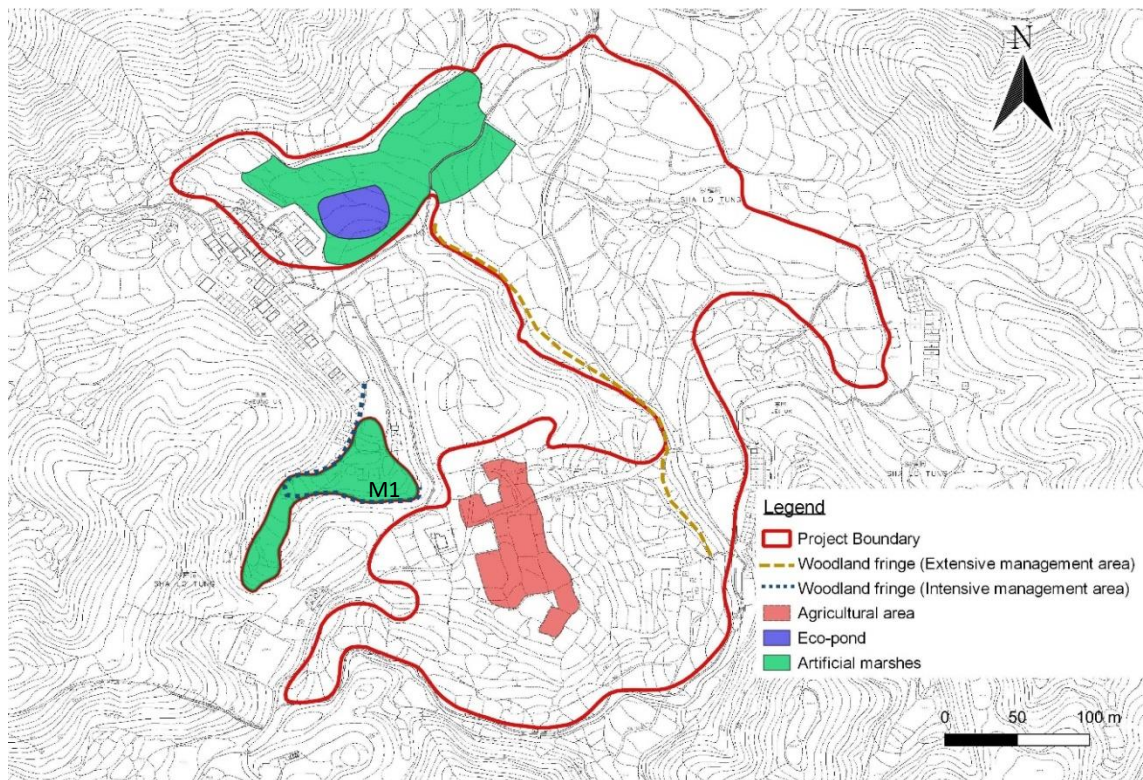
Farmlands in Parcel A of the intensive management area are more suitable for dry agriculture as the high mpd (~177m) leads to low water retention capacity and thus low possibility of undergoing wet agriculture. However, wet agriculture will also be conducted on a trial basis afterwards.



Location and boundary of Parcel A

b) Management of woodland fringes

In the intensive management area, woodland fringe which measures 150m along the marshes in Cheung Uk (Parcel M1 of intensive management area) has been designated. In January 2019, the first round of management was completed. Exotic plants such as *Mikania micrantha* and *Ipomoea cairica* along the woodland fringe were removed manually using hand-held grass trimmer and other hand tools such as long secateur and long saw. Green Power is stockpiling the removed plant materials at appropriate locations so that they can decay naturally.



Scope of woodland fringe management

c) Establishment of eco-pond and artificial marshes

Excavation and land filling will take place during the construction of the eco-pond and artificial marshes. The undertaking of such ground works requires planning permission by the Town Planning Board since the subject site falls within Conservation Area and SSSI Zone according to the Outline Zoning Plan of Sha Lo Tung. In September 2018, Green Power submitted to the Town Planning Board a planning application under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance. The application was withdrawn by Green Power in November 2018, as some interested parties left specific comments and required supplementary information on the construction of eco-pond and artificial marshes.

In January 2019, Green Power submitted a new Section 16 application to the Town Planning Board. An Environmental Assessment Report was attached to supplement key information on our wetland restoration works to be conducted in the dry season. It is expected this application will be discussed by Town Planning Board in June 2019. Before Town Planning Board approves the planning application, Green Power cannot carry out excavation and land filling. However, Green Power will implement other wetland restoration measures in the intensive management areas which do not require Town Planning Board's approval, such as removal of undesirable vegetation and fixing of old irrigation ditches.

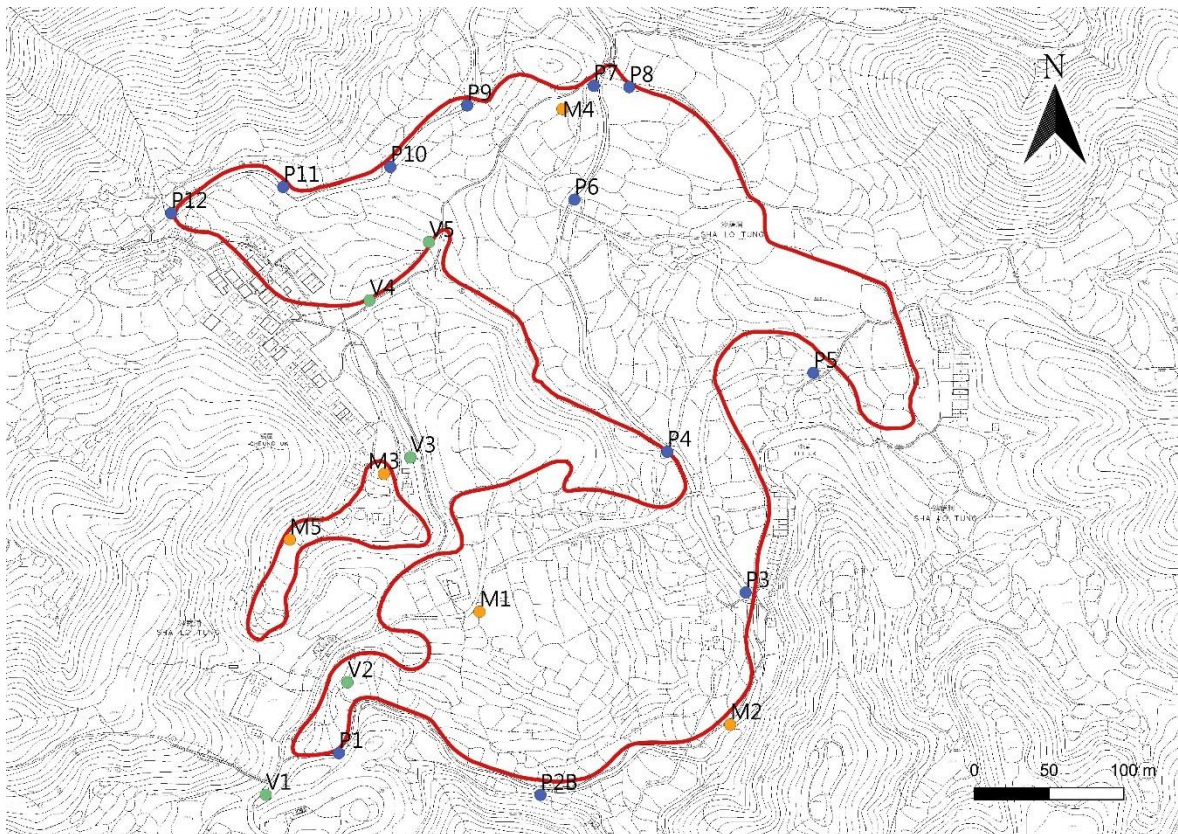


### *Removal of illegal traps, obstacles and trash*

Since April 2018, regular patrol in Sha Lo Tung has been carried out by Green Power at least once a week. Simultaneously, a villager has been hired to conduct patrol at least 5 days per week in Sha Lo Tung.

The patrol covers the entire project area, including all the stream courses adjacent to the project area. Any illegal traps, obstacles and trash will be removed manually. From April 2018 to March 2019, 11 animal traps were discovered and removed accordingly by Green Power.

In addition to patrol, 12 sets of infra-red surveillance cameras were installed along the stream courses in Sha Lo Tung in May 2018. If potential poachers were spotted in the streams, active searching of illegal traps will be conducted immediately.



Location map of the surveillance cameras set up by Green Power (blue: targets at anti-poaching / green: targets at anti-off road vehicles / yellow: mammal survey camera)

### **Baseline surveys and monitoring**

Green Power conducted baseline studies on distribution and composition of habitats, flora

and fauna within the project area to collect updated ecological data, inform management practice and monitor effectiveness of the management and wetland restoration measures implemented under this management agreement. The results of baseline studies carried out during the first project year (April 2018 - March 2019) were summarised below.

(a) Habitat

Habitat surveys were conducted in the wet and dry seasons to investigate the temporal change of habitat distribution within the project area. Results showed that the project area is currently dominated by dry open habitat (mostly being grassland-shrubland mosaic), with area of open wetland (all being marsh) dropped by over 80% within a decade when compared with habitat survey results of the environmental impact assessment released in 2011, possibly due to deliberate conversion of the areas into dry farmlands by villagers in recent years, as well as accelerated drying up of the land due to the disturbance and natural succession.

(b) Plant

A total of 127 species of plants were recorded during the first project year. A number of species of conservation interest were identified, including the locally protected Incense Tree (*Aquilaria sinensis*, “Near Threatened” on the list of *Rare and Precious Plants of Hong Kong* and “Vulnerable” in *China Plant Red Data Book*), the Hong Kong Pavetta (*Pavetta hongkongensis*, scheduled under Cap. 96A) and Bee Orchid (*Cleisostoma simondii*, scheduled under Cap. 96A and protected under Cap. 586). It was found that parcels to be intensively managed, especially those planned to be restored to open wetlands, were highly terrestrial and suffered from severe invasion by exotic plants during the surveys, thus requiring additional management efforts.

(c) Odonate

A total of 49 species of odonates (11 zygopterans and 38 anizopterans), which is about 50% of all historical species records in Sha Lo Tung, were recorded in the first project year. Species of conservation interest were recorded, including Chinese Tiger (*Gomphidia kelloggi*), the endangered gomphid (IUCN 2018), South China Cruiser (*Macromia katae*), a macromiid listed as “Vulnerable” on IUCN Red List (2018) and Ryukyu Dusk-hawker (*Gynacantha ryukyuensis*), which was a new record to Sha Lo Tung Valley. Results reflected high abundance and diversity of adult odonates along sections of ecologically important streams within the project area. Odonate abundance and diversity in parcels to be intensively managed were relatively low, revealing the needs of wetland restoration within these areas.

Larval surveys of stream odonates were also conducted during the dry season to investigate

micro-habitat preferences of these stream specialists. High abundance and species diversity of larvae were recorded among bankside submerged vegetation in pools, as well as leaf litter and substrates in pools and riffles, reflecting the importance of conservation of riparian vegetation and stream bed substrates along these ecologically important streams.

(d) Butterfly

A total of 109 species of butterflies were recorded within the project area during the wet season, with more than 60 species being recorded around parcels to be intensively managed. Species highlights include the uncommon and locally protected Common Birdwing (*Troides helena spilota*), Forget-me-not (*Catochrysops strabo riana*), Plain Hedge Blue (*Celastrina lavendularis limbata*), Metallic Cerulean (*Jamides alecto*) and Grey Scrub Hopper (*Aeromachus jhora*) which are listed as locally very rare or rare. High numbers of larvae of the rare and locally restricted Yellow Coster (*Acraea issoria issoria*) was also found next to Li Uk San Wai.

(e) Herpetofauna

A total of 13 amphibian species and 14 reptile species were recorded within the project area in the first project year. Species highlights include the Chinese Bullfrog (*Hoplobatrachus rugulosus*), a Class II State Key Protected Species, and the Tokay Gecko (*Gekko gekko*) which is listed as “Endangered” on China Red Data Book. The near-threatened and locally protected Hong Kong Newt (*Paramesotriton hongkongensis*), the vulnerable Lesser Spiny Frog (*Quasipaa exilispinosa*), King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, “Vulnerable” on IUCN Red List and “Critically Endangered” on China Red Data Book), Banded Krait (*Bungarus fasciatus*, “Endangered” on China Red Data Book) and new records to Sha Lo Tung, including the endangered and locally protected Romer’s Tree Frog (*Liuixalus romeri*) and Chinese Striped Turtle (*Ocadia sinensis*, possibly a released individual), were found along the ecologically important streams within the project area. Ten species of frogs and two species of reptiles were found within parcels to be intensively managed. Diversity and abundance of herpetofauna within these parcels are expected to increase after the restoration of open wetlands.

Hong Kong Newt surveys were conducted during the dry season to determine the distribution of breeding populations of the species, with at least 20 breeding pools (where relatively high number of newts and breeding behavior were observed) recorded within the project area, mostly concentrating along the stream sections to the north of Cheung Uk and to the southern part of the project area.

(f) Mammal

A total of ten mammal species were recorded within the project area, including Small Asian

Mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*) which was a new record to Sha Lo Tung Valley, the locally common Eurasian Wild Pig (*Sus scrofa*) and Chinese Porcupine (*Hystrix brachyura*). Crab-eating Mongoose (*Herpestes urva*), a species listed as rare and of conservation concern in AFCD assessment (Shek et al. 2007), was also captured on camera near woodland fringe in one of the parcels to be intensively managed and locations along the ecologically important streams and indicated the ecological importance of these habitats.

#### (g) Freshwater Fish

A total of 13 freshwater fish species were recorded within the first project year, including the newly recorded White-line Chest-sculptured Sisoridfish (*Glyptothorax pallozonus*), a rare and highly globally restricted species possibly endemic to Guangdong Province, the restricted Hong Kong Paradise Fish (*Macropodus hongkongensis*), a “species of conservation concern” in AFCD assessment and “Global Concern” by Fellowes et al. (2002) and the Small Snakehead (listed as “Uncommon” in AFCD assessment and “Local Concern” by Fellowes et al. (2002)) within ecologically important streams and marshes within the project area. Three highly invasive species, the Mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*), the Swordtail (*Xiphophorus hellerii*) and the Variable Platyfish (*Xiphophorus variatus*), were found along one of the stream sections and removed when observed during surveys. Most parcels to be intensively managed and restored into open wetlands were dried up and thus no fishes could be found in these dry parcels. Restoration of wetlands would provide additional habitats especially for species adapted to low-flow or even lentic conditions.

#### **Vandalism control**

Regular patrols are being carried out by Green Power and a villager frequently to deter vandalism and accidents such as hill fire, off-road vehicles and illegal poaching.

For hill fire control, weeds and sedges near graves are removed before Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festival. This aims to establish fire breaks around graves and minimise the risk of hill fire before grave-sweeping by villagers. In addition, village representatives of Cheung Uk and Lei Uk were notified of the need of hill fire control before and during grave-sweeping and ancestral offering.

In May 2018, 5 sets of infra-red surveillance cameras were installed along a major footpath in Sha Lo Tung. If off-road vehicles were spotted in the project area, the drivers will be warned and invited to leave the project area immediately. In March 2019, 8 sets of signages targeting off-road vehicles were erected in the project area. A barrier against off-road vehicles was also installed. It is a metal chain fixed between two of the signposts. Two cases of vehicle intrusion were reported (i.e. 12 August 2018 and 11 February 2019). This



indicates our preventive measures against off-road vehicles are quite effective.

As stated in the original proposal, new footpaths will be designed and built to guide the visitors, thereby avoiding disturbance to any sensitive areas in Sha Lo Tung. The construction of footpaths requires an application to Town Planning Board. In the application process, some organizations were not very supportive of the new footpaths. Although the footpaths are excluded in the planning application, Green Power will seek alternative footpath alignment and design to gain support from different stakeholders.

## **Education and publicity programmes**

### *Visitor Centre*

Since April 2018, Green Power has been searching appropriate locations and village houses to establish a visitor centre. In August 2018, a village house in Cheung Uk was chosen. Consent from the land owner was sought and the corresponding formalities were completed in March 2019.

Renovation works of the village house were completed in April 2019. The visitor centre is expected to commence operation in May 2019.

### *Education activities*

Programme	Target no. of participants	Total no. of participants (by 3-Apr-2019)	% of completion
Outreach school talk	2,500	1,180	47.2%
<i>Remarks: Outreach school talks were offered to 4 secondary schools and 1 primary school</i>			
Guided tour	1,200	298	24.8%
Night tour	300	--	--
<i>Remarks: Recruitment for night tours will be initiated in May 2019</i>			

### *Publicity*

- 1 feature article in Green Power's Green Country magazine in June 2018 (Management Agreement project)
- 13 news articles (online and printed) in local media after a media tour organised in November 2018
- 1 feature article in Sing Tao Daily on 19 November 2018 (conservation of Sha Lo Tung)

- 10 news articles (online and printed) in local media after a media tour organized in December 2018 (hindrance by villagers)
- A thematic website for this Management Agreement project was launched in November 2018. Content of this website includes Sha Lo Tung's history, ecological values, the needs and difficulties in conserving Sha Lo Tung and details of this Management Agreement project. Recruitment of participants for various programmes and activities will be carried out through the website.

#### *Publication*

- 5,000 pieces of pictorial cards have been published as teaching tools and souvenirs for the participants of our guided tours, night tours and school talks. Selected wildlife species in Sha Lo Tung are included in the pictorial card.

### **Difficulties Encountered & Remedial Measures**

#### Slippage of wetland restoration work

Wetland restoration work is proposed in the intensive management areas, which involves the establishment of an eco-pond and artificial marshes. Excavation and land filling will take place during the construction of pond and marshes. In September 2018, Green Power submitted to the Town Planning Board a Section 16 application, so that excavation and land filling can be carried out during the first dry season in the project period of this Management Agreement (i.e. from November 2018 to March 2019). However, since Green Power needed to prepare additional information on the details of the proposed wetland restoration works as requested by government departments and various concerned organisations, the application was withdrawn in November 2018.

In January 2019, Green Power submitted a new Section 16 application to the Town Planning Board. In addition to the application itself, an Environmental Assessment Report was attached to supplement key information on our wetland restoration works. However, as Green Power failed to get the application approved by the end of first dry season in the project period (i.e. March 2019), any excavation and land filling works for the eco-pond and artificial marshes can only be carried out in the second dry season (i.e. from November 2019 to April 2020).

#### Remedial measures:

From now to November 2019, Green Power will carry out wetland restoration measures other than excavation and land filling, in the intensive management areas which do not require Town Planning Board's approval. They include:

- The removal of exotic plants and plant species incompatible with wetland habitats.

- The restoration of old irrigation system to inundate areas of the proposed eco-pond and artificial marshes.
- Transplant of selected wetland plants into the marsh area on a trial basis.

#### Slippage of agricultural activities

Since October 2018, ground preparation works for the rest of abandoned farmlands had been carried out prior to full-scale agricultural activities. On 5 November 2018, several villagers disturbed our staff and contractors with harassing acts and language. To avoid any confrontations with the villagers, ground preparation works was suspended. The case was reported to the Police repeatedly by Green Power. Green Power tried to resume the ground preparation works from time to time. However, certain villagers showed up and interfered with our work almost every day in November and December 2018.

Since November 2018, Green Power had worked with the land owner and his legal representative to apply for an injunction. On 21 December 2018, a formal injunction was granted by the court. It forbids certain villagers from entering the project area. On 27 December 2018, ground preparation work for the farmlands resumed. The work was completed in mid-January 2019.

After the ground preparation works had been completed in mid-January 2019, the members and volunteers of Sha Lo Tung Greenfields started to plough and plant on the farmlands. However, the villagers concerned continued to disturb and provoke the members and volunteers of Sha Lo Tung Greenfields outside the area covered by the injunction. In this connection, agricultural activities cannot be carried out full-scale. In February 2019, only 520m<sup>2</sup> of farmlands was operating, which deviates from 5,000m<sup>2</sup> of farmlands recommended by Green Power in the Management Agreement.

#### Remedial measures:

After the ground preparation works for the farmlands had been conducted, Green Power urged “Sha Lo Tung Greenfields” to plough the farmlands and start cultivation as soon as possible. We intended to rectify the problem of slippage due to villagers’ harassment in November and December 2018. However, hindered by certain villagers, “Sha Lo Tung Greenfields” was unable to recruit enough volunteers to conduct agricultural activities.

In February 2019, Green Power suggested Sha Lo Tung Greenfields to employ a contractor to plough and open up the farmlands. Professional workers are often less susceptible to the vigorous actions of villagers. On 24 March 2019, 5,000m<sup>2</sup> the farmlands were ploughed and opened up. Some of the farmlands were planted with food crops such as pineapple and sweet corn.

### Establishment of new footpaths

In August 2018, the alignment of new footpaths was designed by Green Power. The initiative of building the new footpaths was included in the Section 16 application submitted by Green Power in September 2018. However, public comments revealed grave concern on the new footpaths, including habitat fragmentation and additional visitors drawn by the footpaths.

#### Remedial measures:

The establishment of eco-pond and artificial marshes as part of the wetland restoration work should be given a priority in this Management Agreement. In this connection, the first planning application was withdrawn in November 2018 and footpaths were omitted in the second planning application to Town Planning Board. Green Power will liaise with different parties and clarify the design and benefits of the footpaths before submitting another planning application for the construction of footpaths. It is also necessary to review the alignment and design of the footpaths to minimise the potential ecological impacts.

### Visitor centre

According to a tentative work plan submitted by Green Power, a visitor centre to be set up by renovating an old village house should operate since the fourth quarter of 2018. However, the land owner needs more time to clarify the ownership of the village house, and ensures the village house would be free from other developments in the future. Green Power could not occupy the village house and commence any renovation works as per the schedule.

#### Remedial measures:

The land owner had clarified the ownership of the village house in mid-March 2019 before Green Power occupied it. The renovation works of the visitor centre is expected to complete in April 2019. It is expected to commence operation in May 2019.

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