

83% of the public support conservation of Nam Seng Wai

Green Groups call for Government to lead conservation efforts

In March this year, the reed beds in Nam Sang Wai were set on fire. The threat to the conservation of Nam Sang Wai is of great concern. Green groups including Designing Hong Kong (DHK), Greenpeace, Green Power, The Conservancy Association (CA), Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) and Friends of the Earth (HK) recruited the Public Opinion Program of the University of Hong Kong (HKU POP) to conduct a public opinion survey. 1,003 people were successfully interviewed on the conservation of Nam Seng Wai.

The poll result shows that 83% of the people interviewed support the conservation of the natural landscape of Nam Sang Wai. 61% of the people support land resumption and non-in-situ land exchange to permanently protect and conserve the natural environment of Nam Sang Wai.

Mr. Hei Man Ng, Campaign Manager of CA, pointed out that citizen's determination to conserve Nam Sang Wai is confirmed by the poll results. It showed that the Hong Kong government should put great effort in conserving Nam Sang Wai. He supplemented that the conservation measures set out in the 2004 New Nature Conservation Policy are no longer practical. Government is urged to review its conservation policy.

Ms. Ming Chuan Woo, Senior Conservation Officer of HKBWS, explained that Nam Sang Wai has a unique ecology and natural landscape. It has been listed as one of the priority sites for enhanced conservation under the New Nature Conservation Policy since 2004. Its importance is similar to the other priority sites. Nam Sang Wai is zoned as Conservation Area and is adjacent to the Ramsar Site, which is well-known around the world. It is an important part of the Deep Bay Wetland Ecosystem.

She pointed out that there is a rich ecological environment in Nam Sang Wai, including fish ponds, mudflats and tidal belts. Its large reed beds are one of the best in Hong Kong. This provides forage and a habitat for many conservation species of birds and wildlife, including the globally endangered Black-faced Spoonbill, Chinese Penduline Tit, Yellow Bittern and the Eurasian Otter. The trees along the fish ponds are also an important habitat for common migratory birds such as the Great Cormorant. Therefore, the ecological environment in Nam Sang Wai must be conserved.

Mr. Chun Yu Kwong and Mr. Hoi Dick Chu, both Legislators, noted the recreational value of Nam Sang for the general public. The government is urged to halt the eco-vandalism. Nam Sang Wai is close to the Yuen Long Town Hall. Apart from having high ecological and conservation values, Nam Sang Wai is also a location for production of movies and TV dramas. It is a very popular rural leisure spot and tourists are attracted to cycle, relax and picnic here during holidays.

Over the past ten years there have been seven fires. However, no one has been arrested. Coupled with the threat of private development, it is suspicious that the government condones this destructive behavior.

Dr. Luk Ki Cheng, Director of Green Power, said that the citizens are not reluctant and even support land resumption and non-in-situ land exchange to ensure the long-term conservation of Nam Sang Wai. Government should make every effort to identify a long-term conservation program for Nam Sang Wai. In the short term, the Government should take measures to prevent the fires and other threats of destruction. It should formulate a management agreement so that the existing habitat can be protected and managed. Only in this way we can ensure that the next generation can enjoy this natural environment.

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