

Green Lantau Association
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**Green Lantau Association
Winter and Spring 2015 Newsletter**

Administration and Membership

In remembrance of Jacky

GLA has expressed condolences to the family of our long-time member and one time GLA Executive Committee member Jacky Andrews who left us this spring. We shall remember Jacky for her keen observation of the environmental situation, especially in her village in Mui Wo, and for helping GLA deal with cases of littering and improper execution of public utilities and government engineering works. Her persistence and perseverance in striving towards resolutions of these issues has been of encouragement to all of us. We remember her with gratitude.

In remembrance of Cheryl

Lantau cattle have lost their best friend. The Committee was shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Dr Cheryl McMeekan, the vet at the SPCA in Mui Wo. She was an excellent vet; professional, dedicated, and a kind and caring person, with a wonderful way with handling animals. She was a key member of the local community in looking after dogs and cats, but she also played an important role in the management of the feral cattle – helping to establish the selective de-sexing of herds as a sensible alternative to wholesale culling, and would always help with injured cattle, in her own time and at any hour of the day or night. She was a wonderful person, and a credit to her profession, and she is sorely missed.

Thank you

GLA has expressed gratitude to Don Latter, the founder of the Transition South Lantau project for his help in promoting sustainable life styles and organic agriculture on Lantau Island and for circulating the TSL Newsletter for the past several years. Don is moving to Australia and we wish him all the best there. Dragon Tail Farm, located between Tai Tei Tong and Luk Tei Tong villages, continues to be operated under Don's assistant, Bhola.

2014-2015 GLA AGM

The GLA 2014-2015 AGM took place in the Squash Court of the Mui Wo Leisure and Cultural Services Department's Sports Centre from 10.30 to 12.00 on Saturday 13th December 2014. The meeting re-elected the three-member outgoing GLA Executive Committee comprising Bob Bunker (rbunker@netvigator.com), Sally Bunker (sally@leafy.hk) and Christian Masset (asap700@netvigator.com).

GLA Executive Committee meeting

The Winter and Spring GLA Executive Committee Meeting was held in Mui Wo on 16.6.2015 Besides dealing with ongoing GLA monitoring of the Lantau environment and actions taken to protect the island from illegal as well as legal developments, the GLA committee decided on closer cooperation with the five-member Save Lantau Alliance. At the same time GLA has agreed to become a supporting organization for the AFCD-launched "The Beauty of the Lantau Country Parks", accessed through the link http://www.natureintouch.gov.hk/outdoor/activity/nit_2011/0/665.

Case Reporting

Below are updates and reports on issues GLA has dealt with in winter and spring 2015. These have been subdivided into geographical areas to facilitate reading. Member questions and comments on these items are welcome, as is the reporting of new items that may not yet have come to GLA attention. The intensification of development projects on Lantau requires greater attention and contribution on the part members of the community who care about the preservation of the Island's natural environment.

Tai O

CEDD Yat Chung River Wall project

This project has now been largely completed and no additional environmental impacts are expected.

Tai O River Promenade trees

At GLA's request LCSD has recently restored six tree pits and trees that had earlier been removed apparently legally, but in suspicious circumstances. GLA will thank LCSD and also suggest that efforts are made to protect all trees along the promenade especially in view of recently unveiled CEDD plans to fell many of them to make way for coach parks.

CEDD GEO slope works at Pak Shan

GLA drew EPD attention to CEDD GEO works that featured untidy site maintenance and littering leading to environmental pollution. Following EPD intervention the GEO stockpiling site on the river side and the assembly point at the foot of Pak Shan were tidied up. Direct communication with GEO is currently ongoing to deal with other aspects of this project, as a result of which GEO has abandoned attempts to use mountain stream water to feed drilling machinery and has started to use metered public water instead. The GEO response has been positive and we do not expect additional major environmental issues in relation to this contract.

CEDD GEO works at Sun Fung Village, Tai O Road

Following a GLA report to EPD, CEDD GEO has agreed to withdraw a buried pipe that had been installed between their Tai O Road site and the slope draining into the Tai O River. The pipe had been connected to a sedimentation tank and had apparently been designed for the overflowing of muddy water into the river. Excess muddy water will now be removed from site instead. Site materials that had been scattered in nearby woodland have been retrieved and stockpiled within the site. On a related matter, CEDD GEO slope works on a section of Tai O Road further uphill were completed without environmental incidents earlier this year.

LD Slope works near Ling Yan Monastery Road

LD Slope Works Section occupied, without permission, a Government Land site along Ling Yan Monastery Road which had been had been under GLA watch as it had been the scene of an illegal tree cutting incident three years ago. A report about oil pollution and littering was made to EPD. Upon EPD's visit, the LD contractor quickly agreed to clean up the affected patch of soil and remove all materials from site. GLA hope vegetation will eventually re-grow if the affected site remains undisturbed.

WSD pipe replacement works

In May GLA intervened directly at a WSD site in Nam Chung Village where an attempt was being made to dump surplus excavated materials into the sea. Workers complied with GLA advice and halted the dumping. A further GLA inspection of the same site in nearby Fan Kwai Tong village revealed additional improper disposal of materials. EPD assistance was sought and promptly obtained in directing WSD to remove all surplus excavated materials from site. We are now in touch with the WSD engineer for these works and discussing the safe removal of numerous replaced asbestos pipes from site. WSD has since held asbestos handling drills for their site workers and believe the workers are capable of safely dealing with asbestos materials. Special EPD-approved asbestos wrappers are now being deployed on site and removed asbestos pipes will temporarily be stored in locked and sealed containers while awaiting removal by an EPD-registered specialist contractor with a license to handle toxic and hazardous materials.

Abandoned river boats

In response to a GLA report EPD has looked into the ownership of long abandoned boats, one of them carrying disused refrigerators on board. The case was referred to MD which is planning to remove the boats from the river within June, so as to prevent them from being washed out to sea by typhoons, potentially causing environmental pollution and obstruction to sea lanes. Assorted refuse stored near the boats will also be removed as part of the same operation. GLA has thanked MD for their understanding and readiness to assist in dealing with the situation.

Wang Hang footpath railings

DO have agreed with a GLA suggestion to provide railings along a short open section of the footpath accessing the Wang Hang footbridge. The purpose of the railings is to make access to the wetlands more difficult, while also taking care of pedestrian safety aspects. The area in question had become a favourite spot for large-scale open burning of sacrificial offerings, which affected crab and mangrove habitats and caused littering and air pollution. The work was recently completed by HyD.

Fan Kwai Tong railings

DO accepted a GLA suggestion to replace old rusting iron railings at the seaside stretch of the Fan Kwai Tong footpath with recycled plastic railings similar in design with those of the wetlands promenade. The installation of the new railings was recently completed.

Tung Chung

Tung Chung Remaining Development Study

There has been no further GLA input into the Tung Chung further development plans, as government has indicated it would proceed with the works regardless of concerns expressed about likely damage to the river system and Tung Chung Bay water circulation. As a green group GLA are finding that it is increasingly arduous to communicate with a government bent on economic development at all costs and by all means possible. We support other green groups that are engaged in Tung Chung habitat preservation work.

Proposed third runway at HKIA

Like the Tung Chung development, the airport's third runway is one of those predetermined projects that stand above environmental concerns and public opinion. Once again, an unsustainable development project is being pushed forward regardless of local conservation and global climate preservation concerns. Unable to work on this on our own, GLA supports work by other green groups that strive to protect the health of the North Lantau marine ecosystem, which is the breeding ground for dolphins.

Airport management

GLA has been observing and commenting on various aspects of Airport Terminal management, in particular, the retention of cooled air through properly functioning automatic doors, the daylight lighting intensity and smoking control efforts at various places around the airport. Communication on these issues continues, as well as on the content of HKAA public opinion surveys that GLA believe to have been partly designed to elicit desired replies favourable to HKAA and the third runway project.

Mui Wo

Wo Tin Slope Works

As a result of further efforts by the residents, GLA and EPD, LD has finally agreed to instruct its contractor to remove all materials from Wo Tin Village that had been left behind after completion of slope works two years ago. This case is now resolved.

Felling of LCSD trees

Three mature and one smaller tree near the Mui Wo Government Offices were felled by LSCD in May for unknown reasons. Local residents have complained. GLA is looking into the case.

Banyan tree near Housing Authority site

Action by local residents and the Humanist Association have prevented the planned felling of the large banyan tree located near the boundary of the Housing Authority development site. The felling of this impressive tree had been decided simply to make excavation work within the site easier for the site engineers. GLA has expressed support for the action of local residents and the Humanist Association.

Felling of large tree near Chung Hau Public Toilet

Local residents have expressed concern about the felling of a large healthy tree close to the DSD worksite near the Chung Chung Hau Public Toilet in late May. GLA plans to make enquiries about the reasons for the felling.

Felling of large trees along footpath to Round Table Village

GLA discovered and reported to EPD and DLO an unexplained felling of half a dozen mature trees in wooded Government Land along the footpath connecting Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road to Round Table Village. The case has been referred to AFCD. So far no responsible parties have been identified and the possible reason for the felling remains unknown. The nearby CEDD Mui Wo Phase I Works Office have indicated they do not have any knowledge related to the incident.

CEDD Works – Large scale destruction of trees

GLA has protested to the CEDD Phase 1 Mui Wo Works Office for the continuing felling of trees that had earlier been identified for retention and protection. The recent felling of some ten of the healthiest remaining trees to the north of the Lai Lai Care Home came as a complete surprise as it was in breach of agreements reached between CEDD and GLA over the past five months. In response GLA has requested an immediate halt in all tree felling and transplanting activities within the entire CEDD Mui Wo development area. GLA members residing in Mui Wo are invited to pay attention to trees within this area, especially the line of trees between the Lai Lai Care Home and the LSCD Children's Playground.

Park'n Shop delivery lorry

A report was made to EPD in relation to the practice by Mui Wo Park'n Shop to allow their delivery lorry to stand for sometimes well over an hour with its main engine on while delivering goods to the supermarket. The noise and fumes from the standing vehicle affected pedestrians on the pavement as well as nearby shops, including Park'n Shop itself. Upon EPD intervention, suitable advice was given to the supermarket manager and the driver. The nuisance has since been addressed.

South Lantau

Pui O East River track

Members of the public as well as GLA made enquiries about the status of a private track extending over the Pui O East River near the Nam Shan garage, as well as the culverting of a short section of the river. We were advised that this was considered to be unauthorized development on Government Land and appropriate action was being taken.

Pui O Lo Wai storage

The abandoned car on Government Land near the Lo Wai village sitting-out-area has probably become the longest-running case of unresolved dumping handled by GLA. First raised with EPD and DLO several years ago, the issue was again reported last year. Nothing having happened, GLA recently drew EPD's attention to it for the third time and EPD again reminded DLO to work on this. It looks as if there may be unusual difficulties in relation to the removal of this particular abandoned vehicle.

Tong Fuk footpath reconstruction

HAD/DO having consulted GLA on plans to substantially reconstruct an old footpath linking Tong Fuk Village to the water catchment, GLA construction suggestions have been adopted. The existing section of concrete footpath would be preserved and a path extension to the water catchment would be built with stones, if possible retrieved on site. Further information is expected when detailed plans are ready.

HyD bus bay and car park improvement works

Over the past half year HyD has completed four small projects along South Lantau Road, Keung Shan Road and Tai O Road respectively, to create additional car parking spaces and new bus bay at Lo Uk Village in Pui O, to provide coach and car parking spaces in Shek Pik west and to form a new bus bay at the Ling Yan Monastery bus stop. Though these works required the removal of planters and the relocation of a number of trees, GLA did express reservations about these works as they were generally useful and had only minor environmental impacts.

Hong Kong Island and New Territories

In line with GLA tradition to report and deal with environmental issues outside of the Islands District that come to our attention, the cases below were addressed over the past half year.

Siu Sai Wan hill path

The dumping of construction materials along the hill footpath connecting Siu Sai Wan to Tai Long Wan was reported to EPD with an annotation that ASD works on a public sitting-out-area were in progress nearby. The dumping was confirmed by EPD and referred to DLO for rubble clearance. ASD was reminded to pay attention to site tidiness.

Tai Long Wan Beach

The spilling of concrete affecting natural rocks and the dumping of beach signs on the shoreline at the LSCD Tai Long Wan Beach was reported to EPD. LSCD responded by agreeing to remove loose items as well as as much of the concrete as possible from the rocky side of the beach area.

Pok Fu Lam Road

The dumping of WSD surplus excavated materials onto wooded Government Land near Ebenezer School on Pok Fu Lam Road was reported to EPD, and WSD was requested to clear the rubble. GLA followed up until satisfied that all WSD items had been retrieved from the affected woodland, which we also found to be home to wild boars. GLA additionally advised WSD engineers to personally attend to environmental issues related to their works rather than leaving them in the hands of contractors and consultants.

Tsuen Wan Waylee Industrial Building

A report was made to EPD in relation to plastic processing fumes affecting the public footpath along the Waylee Industrial Building in Tsuen Wan. EPD requested modifications in the design of the vents, so that fumes would be directed upward, enabling better dispersal. GLA noted that this industrial building being surrounded by residential units, tight emissions controls would be desirable. In two follow up visits, no odour or smoke was observed.

Discovery Park diesel generators

EPD was alerted to very serious black smoke emissions from auxiliary power generator exhaust pipes installed on the walls of Discovery Park Shopping Centre. An EPD inspection revealed that while using the generators, fuel pre-heating requirement had been omitted, leading to excessive black smoke emissions. The issue was subsequently resolved. GLA further suggested that standby power generators should be tested occasionally, but now allowed to be used as a permanent source of additional power supply.

Discovery Park pedestrian bridge

During renovation works of the very long pedestrian bridge connecting the Tsuen Wan MTR station to the Discovery Park Bus Terminus, it was observed how the remaining narrow pedestrian space was affected by renovation fumes and insufficient ventilation. In response, EPD requested the Discovery Park management to increase ventilation, seal construction areas and consider reducing the length of sections of the bridge being worked on. This advice was accepted and the issue was largely resolved.

Other topics

Keep Lantau Beautiful documentary

The “Keep Lantau Beautiful video released a year ago has had several public screenings. We would encourage members and friends who have not already done so to view the video on the GLA website at www.greenlantau.org.

Hill Fire Prevention

Though Ching Ming passed relatively quietly on Lantau generally, in Tai O there were several destructive fires started at hillside cemeteries. Thanks to the consistent diligence, dedication and professionalism of GFS helicopter pilots, the spread of the fires could be controlled and the impact on vegetation minimized. On the other hand, repeated GLA observations suggest that FSD and CAS teams remain largely unaware of the importance of defending firebreaks as a way to contain hill fires within cemetery boundaries. Insufficient FSD training in this aspect is unfortunately emerging as a major hindrance in hill fire prevention efforts.

Lantau cattle

GLA has recently met with a local Mui Wo neighbourhood concern group on cattle to learn about efforts being made to look after the well-being of the Mui Wo herd and about how GLA might be able to assist in this.

Environmental reporting

Members are reminded that incidents of environmental damage can be reported by telephone to the Government Easy Link Line 1823 or by email to tellme@1823.gov.hk. The service can be used for both, enquiries and complaints, and the case will be recorded and transferred to the relevant government department for handling. This arrangement is being expanded to an increasing number of government departments and in some cases even complaints sent to departments directly are now handled by the 1823 integrated service. In recently months some deterioration in the response time during phone calls to 1823 has unfortunately occurred and we hope this is only temporary. For the moment it may be preferable to either phone 1823 late at night or contact the integrated service by email.

Contacts of organizations with which GLA cooperates

GLA has been cooperating with Islands District, Hong Kong and international environmental protection groups, a list of which is provided below.

Islands District

[Association for Tai O Environment and Development](#)

(ATOED)

[DB Green](#)

[Green Peng Chau Association](#) (GPCA)

[Living Islands Movement](#) (LIM)

[Living Lamma](#) (LL)

[Transition South Lantau](#) (TSL)

Wider Hong Kong

[Association for Geoconservation](#) (AGHK)

[Friends of the Earth \(HK\)](#) (FoE)

[Green Power](#) (GP)

[Green Sense](#) (GS)

[Hong Kong Birdwatching Society](#) (HKBWS)

[Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden](#) (KFBG)

[The Conservancy Association](#) (CA)

[World Wide Fund For Nature Hong Kong](#) (WWF)

Boulders Trackways: <https://sites.google.com/site/hongkongbouldertrackways>

Friends of Sai Kung: <http://www.friendsofsaikung.org/>

International

[Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy](#) (CASSE), USA

[Climate Change Campaign](#) (CCC), UK

[Ecological Internet](#) (EI), USA

[Environmental Investigation Agency](#) (EIA), UK

[Optimum Population Trust](#) (OPT), UK

[Rettet den Regenwald](#) (Rainforest Rescue) (RRW), Germany

Names of government departments and public utilities

Below is a list of government departments and public utilities the acronyms of which appear in our newsletters. If you wish to contact any of these departments by email, please just click the relevant acronym.

[AFCD](#) Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

[ASD](#) Architectural Services Department

[CLP](#) China Light and Power Company Limited

[CEDD](#) Civil Engineering and Development Department

[DLO/Is](#) District Lands Office Islands of the Lands Department

[DO/Is](#) District Office Islands of the Home Affairs Department

[DSD](#) Drainage Services Department

[EPD](#) Environmental Protection Department

[FEHD](#) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

[FSD](#) Fire Services Department

[GFS](#) Government Flying Service

<u>GEO</u>	Geotechnical Engineering Office of CEDD
<u>HAD</u>	Home Affairs Department
<u>HAB</u>	Home Affairs Bureau
<u>HyD</u>	Highways Department
<u>HKPF</u>	Hong Kong Police Force
<u>LCSD</u>	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
<u>LD</u>	Lands Department
<u>MD</u>	Marine Department
<u>OFTA</u>	Office of the Telecommunications Authority
<u>OMB</u>	Office of the Ombudsman
<u>PD</u>	Planning Department
<u>TPB</u>	Town Planning Board
<u>WSD</u>	Water Supplies Department

Public transport to Lantau

By sea

[Tai O](#)

[Discovery Bay](#)

[Mui Wo](#)

[Trappist Monastery](#)

By road

[City Bus](#)

[Discovery Bay Transport](#)

[MTR](#)

[New Lantau Bus](#)

[Long Win Bus](#)

End of the Winter and Spring 2015 GLA Newsletter