

2 November 2011

Butterfly Surveyors Discovered Vandalism in Yuen Tun Ha
Green Power Worries about the Impact on Butterflies

In October 2010, Green Power's Butterfly Surveyors carried out routine surveys at Yuen Tun Ha and found damage at the site. A tract of land next to the hill path going to the village was cleared. Signs of herbicide spraying were discovered. The affected area was 15 meters by 15 meters. In addition, a dozen 1-meter long white plastic sticks, with fluorescent paint on them, were erected along some 700 meters of the hill path. The sticks seemed to be used for marking location. It is worrisome that planning of large-scale work is ongoing.

Plastic sticks seemingly used to mark location along the entire hill path pointed to the possibility that road works was planned. If the hill path is converted into open concrete road that is easily accessible, large-scale development will follow. The natural ecology of Yuen Tun Ha will definitely be affected. The affected hill path belongs to government's land, any works carried out on it without permission is illegal. The affected area is also catchment area of the Water Services Department and rainwater collected will be used for drinking. Spraying herbicide by the hill path will pollute the drinking water as chemicals flow into the catchment with precipitation. Green Power has written to different government departments in late October to request following up of the incident.

In fact, Yuen Tun Ha was vandalized earlier in 2010. In July 2010, Green Power received report from the public that large area of vegetation along the hill path withered. It was later discovered that herbicide had been sprayed and some land was even burned. Some trees along the path were damaged or even ring-barked. After follow up action by Green Power and various government departments, the vandalism stopped. Unfortunately a new round of damage is ongoing. It is believed that somebody is trying to downgrade the conservation value of the area through serials of vandalism acts.

Yuen Tun Ha of Tai Po was included in our Butterfly Surveyor Scheme in 2010. After a year of effort, at least 65 species of butterflies, including 3 very rare and 7 rare species, were recorded at Yuen Tun Ha.



Press Release

In the 2010 incident, mainly shrubs were cleared and they were food for many adult butterflies and caterpillars. Now if the hill path is turned into a vehicle road, the development of Yuen Tun Ha will certainly accelerate and further diminish the survival of butterflies. Our Butterfly Surveyors will continue to collect comprehensive butterfly ecological data at Yuen Tun Ha to monitor its ecology. The data can also become important reference in conserving Yuen Tun Ha.