



21 September 2016

(Press Statement)

**Green groups jointly call for extension of
proposed Tung Chung River Nature Park**

(The following statement will be sent to Mr Lam Sai Hung, JP, Acting Director of Civil Engineering and Development, and Chairman and Members of Town Planning Board)

Green groups jointly propose to extend the Tung Chung River Nature Park so that it covers both the eastern and western sections of the river, and the estuary.

To implement this proposal, the Government is to resume the private land along the Tung Chung River and the estuary as part of the Tung Chung New Town Extension Development Plan, and to manage the extended Tung Chung River Nature Park as a public amenity for leisure, recreation and appreciation of nature, as well as a drainage facility to control flooding.

Tung Chung River largely retained its natural state from Hong Kong's second and third highest peaks, all the way down to the shallow estuary in Tung Chung Bay. It offers one of the few remaining natural low land habitats and is exceptionally rich in aquatic and coastal biodiversity. It includes many rare and endangered species, such as the Philippine Neon Goby (*Stiphodon atropurpureum* 紫身枝牙鰕虎魚), Beijiang Thick-lipped Barb (*Acrossocheilus beijiangensis* 北江光唇魚), Chinese Horseshoe Crab (*Tachypleus tridentatus* 中國鬚), Seaweed Pipefish (*Syngnathus schlegeli* 舒氏海龍), Swinhoe's Egret (*Egretta eulophotes* 黃嘴白鷺), as well as the Common Birdwing (*Troides helena* 裳鳳蝶) and Collared Crow (*Corvus torquatus* 白頸鴉).

In the zoning plan for Tung Chung Valley gazetted on 08/01/2016, a river park is proposed to cover only the eastern section of Tung Chung Valley. It is zoned as OU (For River Parks only), and is expected to be managed by the Drainage Services Department. The western section of the river and

the estuary are currently zoned for conservation uses including Coastal Protection Area (CPA) and Conservation Area (CA). The green groups now propose that the western section of the river and estuary should also be included under the zoning of OU (For River Parks only).

Over the past two decades we observed a proliferation of incompatible developments and eco-vandalism in Tung Chung River Valley. Ecologically degraded land areas increased from 4.8% in 2007 to approximately 13% in 2015.

Unless the private lands along the river banks and estuary are resumed under the New Town development plan, and managed and patrolled by relevant government departments as part of the River Park, these areas would be doomed. Government has at times itself admitted that under the current planning and environmental laws, it is unable to safeguard private land from environmental destruction.

The additional land acquisition cost is estimated at between \$200 and \$300 million. This proposal will benefit the land owners, as well as local residents and visitors.

The green groups' proposal to extend the River Nature Park will ensure the long term sustainability of Tung Chung River and the estuary as a natural resource for the use and enjoyment by existing and future residents of Tung Chung New Town, protect ecologically sensitive habitats, and allow the management of local flood hydraulics.

Designing Hong Kong
Eco-Education & Resources Centre
Green Power
Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
Lantau Buffalo Association
The Conservancy Association
WWF – Hong Kong

Overview of Tung Chung River Nature Park



In the zoning plans for the Tung Chung Valley gazetted on 08/01/2016, the river park covers the eastern section of Tung Chung Valley (blue striped outline). It is zoned OU (For River Parks only).

The green groups propose that the western section of the river and estuary (red dotted outline) are also included under OU (For River Parks only).

These areas are currently zoned for conservation uses including Coastal Protection Area (CPA) and Conservation Area (CA). Unless the private land along the river banks and estuary are resumed under the New Town development plan, and managed and patrolled by relevant government departments as part of the River Park, these areas would be doomed. Under the current planning and environmental laws, government is unable to safeguard private land from environmental destruction.