

22 October 2017

25th Clean Up the World in Hong Kong

All Rubbish Bins at Hiking Trails Removed by Year End

Green Power Appeals to Public to Reduce Countryside Waste at Source

The 25th Annual Clean Up the World in Hong Kong, organised by **Green Power** and supported by **Hong Kong Electric**, was held today at **Wanchai Gap Park**. In view of the planned removal of all rubbish bins from the country park trails by the government at the end of this year, the theme of this year's event was "Cutting Countryside Rubbish at Source", appealing to members of the public to practice traceless hiking. The results of "Hong Kong Countryside Rubbish Survey"⁽¹⁾ were also released during the event.

The Survey, first conducted last year, examined the issues of waste in the countryside and public opinion on the matter. **Henry LUI, Senior Conservation Manager of Green Power** says that a lot of people still hold the view that rubbish problem is more serious at coastal areas and barbecue/ countryside locations. Food packaging, tissue paper and plastic bags, rated 70%, 68% and 49% respectively by respondents, are the top three categories of waste generated in the countryside. Respondents on average produced 1-2 pieces of rubbish as they went hiking. Similar to last year's survey results, approximately half of the respondents will take away their own rubbish, while the other half will discard their waste in rubbish bins in the countryside.

Reflecting on the survey results, **Mr. Henry LUI, Senior Conservation Manager of Green Power**, commented that while the amount of waste attributed to each hiker may seem negligible, the accumulative consequence is not. Most importantly, most of the waste produce is avoidable. **Mr. LUI** suggested hikers to bring their own towels, bottles and lunch boxes such as rice balls and sandwiches to further cut down waste. He also reminded people that **the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) will be removing all rubbish bins and recycle bins placed along the hiking trails by the end of this year**. Taking waste away and reducing waste at source is essential to preventing the production of waste.

Over 80% of the respondents agreed with the removal of rubbish bins along hiking trails by the AFCD, according to the survey. However, half of them thought that it should be implemented in stages. The policy, supported by promising results in trials that ran between

2015 and 2016, is a step in the right direction. One problem of leaving rubbish in countryside rubbish bins is that strong wind and foraging wild animals may cause the litter to scatter in the countryside. Animals may also mistakenly consume the rubbish as food. **Henry LUI** concluded that rubbish bins along all hiking trails should be removed as soon as possible and believed that the policy will eventually gain public support.

The Survey, on the other hand, revealed opposition to the removal of rubbish bins in campsites and barbecue sites, as indicated by 40% and 50% of the respondents respectively. **Henry LUI** recognised that both raw and cooked food is difficult to take away, hence the general reservation about the removal of rubbish bins in these areas. Leftover food from camping and barbecue activities have a highly adverse effect on the environment, with frequent cases of wild cattle and monkeys scavenging the leftover. **Henry LUI** recommended that people going camping or barbecue should take away all leftover food to avoid interfering with the habits of wild animals. Furthermore, 10% of the respondents would discard fruit peels in countryside, as many hold the view that fruit peels can decompose in the natural environment. However, decomposition of fruit peels does not take place that easily. **Henry LUI** added a reminder that as most commonly consumed fruits are not grown locally and discarding their peel in the countryside can cause environmental and hygiene issues.

With Chung Yeung Festival coming up, a lot of people will go hiking. For the sake of the countryside environment and wildlife, **Henry LUI** reminded people to take their rubbish away. In view of potential booming of rubbish during special dates such as Chung Yeung and Mid-Autumn Festivals, some 40% of the respondents hope to see stricter enforcement of prosecution by the authorities, while 30% of the respondents hope to see an increase in promotional and educational efforts, and the setting up of temporary waste collection points during these dates.

The officiating guests for the ceremony today included **Mr. CHAN Kin Fung, Simon, Assistant Director of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Mr. YEE Tak Chow, General Manager (Corporate Development), HK Electric** and **Dr. CHENG Luk Ki, Division Head of Scientific Research & Conservation Department, Green Power.**

Mr. CHAN said, "Clean Up the World in Hong Kong is a very meaningful event, with Hong Kong joining other cities around the world in waste reduction efforts. Since 2015, the Department has been promoting 'Take your Litter Home' and achieved promising results in working together with the people of Hong Kong to reduce countryside waste."

Mr. YEE remarked, "Hong Kong Electric has always been a supporter of 'waste reduction at source' by actively promoting the use of renewable energy such as wind power and solar energy and has increased the use of clean energy sources such as natural gas. To comply with the Hong Kong Government's emission targets for 2020, our company has received the approval from the government to build two new gas-fired generating units that will be completed by 2022. With the commissioning of these units, the company's gas fired generation will be increased to 55 percent, providing Hong Kong with fresher air and cleaner environment."

Volunteers from HK Electric were divided into two groups to clean up at Aberdeen Country Park and Lung Fu Shan Country Park and collected a total of 29 kg of rubbish and 2 kg of recyclables. At the same time, they promoted Traceless Hiking to hikers.

- (1) "Hong Kong Countryside Rubbish Survey" was conducted between 22nd September and 9th October, with 303 responses received. The Survey was conducted online, targeting web users over the age of 16 who visited the countryside within the past year.

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