

8th December, 2022

“Leave No Trace” Appeal Continues despite Drop in Hiking Waste

Local green group Green Power announced the findings of its latest “Hong Kong Countryside Rubbish Survey”⁽¹⁾ conducted year-on-year since 2016. The findings indicated that the public pays an average of 2.4 visits to the countryside every month, while respondents who considered waste problem on hiking trails as severe came down by 20% from its record high over the past two years. Among the types of waste discarded, tissue papers were the most common, followed by food packaging and disinfectant wipes. On average each visitor produced one to two pieces of such rubbish items during their outing, similar to previous two years.

Green Power cautioned that following the government’s relaxation of social distancing measures and reopening of barbeque pits and campsites under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, countryside waste would expect to rise. The green group urges the public to reduce waste at source and bring away their own rubbish when visiting the countryside.

Slight drop in plastic and other waste

Mr. Henry Lui, Senior Conservation Manager of Green Power, said that on average the respondents visited the countryside 2.4 times per month, which was close to last year’s figure (2.5 times). **Mr. Lui** remarked that visiting the countryside had become a new habit under the pandemic, but was glad to see the boom of countryside waste had been alleviated.

In the past two years, more than 60% of the respondents agreed that waste problem on hiking trail was severe, reaching a record high of 67% last year. **Mr. Lui** pleased to note the percentage came down to 50% this year, an almost 20% drop compared to last year and hoped to see continuous improvement.

Among the types of waste discarded, tissue papers were the most common (65%), followed by food packaging (60%) and disinfectant wipes (44%). On average, each visitor produced one to two pieces of such rubbish items during their outing. As for plastic waste, each visitor produced about 2.2 pieces on average, a slight decrease from 2.5 pieces last year.

Mr. Lui reminded that although the figures might appear insignificant, the underlying consequences should not be overlooked. He suggested visitors should reduce countryside waste at source with habits such as bringing our own handkerchief and reusable tableware during outing.

Regarding the handling countryside waste, while most respondents said they would take away their own rubbish, over half of the respondents would discard certain types of rubbish such as disposable tableware, tissue papers and disinfectant wipe in the countryside rubbish bins instead.

Mr. Lui explained that many visitors were unwilling to take away such rubbish due to hygiene concerns. As the discarded items could be easily blown away by strong winds or raided by wild animals, the best way would still be “Take Your Own Litter Home”.

UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

The United Nations Environment Programme announced the “UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration” in June last year, forewarning the urgent need to save the world’s ecosystems in the upcoming decade. The survey found that 75% of the respondents were completely unaware of the topic. Near 60% of the respondents stated that the government should play the leading role on the issue.

Mr. Lui pointed out that the United Nations proposal aimed to call for individuals’ contribution, such as participating in clean-up activities, reducing waste at source, and keeping the countryside and coastal areas clean. He hoped that the public would join hands in practicing green hiking and protecting the ecosystem.

The 30th Clean Up the World in Hong Kong

With support from **HK Electric**, **Green Power** is organising **the 30th Clean Up the World in Hong Kong** with the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** as this year’s theme. Apart from promoting ecosystem restoration and green hiking on the campaign Facebook page, an Instagram account (#cleanuptheworldhk) was created this year to enhance public engagement. A video competition inviting entries to promote “Leave No Trace” is also underway till 23rd December 2022.

Also as part of this year's programmes, **Green Power** teamed up with **HK Electric** volunteers in conducting several clean-up activities on Lamma Island, the Southern District and Central and Western Districts, sharing tips with the public on ecosystem restoration and green hiking.

Notes to Editor

“Clean Up the World” is an international activity organised under the United Nations since 1993. This annual event is now held in more than 130 cities around the globe with over 35 million participants. Green Power has been the official organiser of the event in Hong Kong since the start with full support from HK Electric. A range of activities under different themes are organised to engage the public in waste reduction.

Echoing the theme of UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration this year, a short video competition was held to enhance public awareness of “Reducing Countryside Waste”. Winner will receive a cash prize of HKD 3,000. Deadline for submission is 23rd December, 2022. For details, please visit <http://bit.ly/cuw-vc>

Clean Up the World in Hong Kong Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/CUW.HK

Clean Up the World in Hong Kong Instagram account: @cleanuptheworldhk

⁽¹⁾ *The annual “Hong Kong Countryside Rubbish Survey” was first launched in 2016. This year’s survey was conducted between 28th September and 15th October, 2022. A total of 306 successful responses were received. The survey was conducted online with respondents 16 years old or above, and had visited the countryside within the past year.*

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