

Joint Statement: Green groups respond to the incorporation of Tai Long Sai Wan into Country Park

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In 2010, a public outcry occurred after unauthorized land excavation at Tai Long Sai Wan highlighted loopholes in the way in which Country Park enclaves are protected against development. The government has since fulfilled the promise it made in the incident's aftermath and incorporated Tai Long Sai Wan, Kam Shan and Yuen Tun into their respective Country Parks; a decision which will soon be tabled for "negative vetting" by the Legislative Council. The "Save Our Country Parks" alliance, formed by local environmental concern groups, is urging Legislators to approve this designation order. This will become a critical and positive precedent for the safeguarding of other Country Park enclaves.

Tai Long Sai Wan (TLSW) is a renowned Hong Kong natural heritage site. A permanent scar was left in this spot in 2010 after one hectare of land was subject to unauthorized excavation. This, unfortunately, is just the tip of the iceberg. Dr Michael Lau, Senior Head of the Local Biodiversity and Regional Wetlands Programme at WWF-Hong Kong says, "This incident and the destruction of other enclaves reflects that government has to take more stringent protection measures to ensure the conservation, landscape, educational and recreational values of Country Parks are safeguarded for all Hong Kong people."

The "Save Our Country Parks" alliance welcomes the HKSAR government decision to protect these valuable enclaves by incorporating the first batch of three enclaves – Tai Long Sai Wan, Kam Shan and Yuen Tun – into Country Parks. We believe that to properly protect Country Parks against illegal or incompatible development in enclaves of high ecological and conservation value such as TLSW, their incorporation into Country Parks is the only option, as it will allow regular patrolling and timely enforcement of any illegal development. Their inclusion will have the additional benefit of enhancing the enclaves' ecological, geological, landscape, education and recreation value through active conservation management by the Agriculture,

Fisheries and Conservation Department.

The “Save Our Country Parks” alliance urges both the government and the Legislative Council to expedite the incorporation of other high value enclaves into Country Parks to guarantee the integrity of our Country Park system. Determination and action to conserve our world-class natural heritage is critical today to ensure that future generations will continue to enjoy Hong Kong’s Country Park resources.

Signatories (in alphabetical order):

1. Ark Eden Foundation
2. Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong
3. The Conservancy Association
4. Designing Hong Kong
5. Friends of the Earth (HK)
6. Friends of Hoi Ha
7. Friends of Sai Kung
8. Greeners Action
9. Green Power
10. Green Sense
11. Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
12. Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society
13. Society of Hong Kong Nature Explorers
14. WWF-Hong Kong

