

For information**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS****Designation of Special Areas for the Hong Kong National Geopark****Purpose**

This paper provides supplementary information on the proposed designation of Double Haven Special Area, High Island Special Area, Sharp Island Special Area, Ung Kong Group Special Area and Ninepin Group Special Area (“the five proposed Special Areas”) for better protection of the geological resources within the Hong Kong National Geopark (the Geopark).

Background

2. The Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs (LegCo EA panel) discussed the designation of the five proposed Special Areas for the Geopark on 28 June 2010 [CB(1) 2324/09-10(03)]. At the meeting, Members had provided advice and views on different aspects of the proposed designation. At Members’ request, the Administration now provides more information on the measures and manpower resources for protecting and conserving the five proposed Special Areas, as well as the means of access to these areas and the facilities to be provided at these proposed Special Areas.

Supplementary information***Measures and manpower***

3. The five proposed Special Areas, all on government land, are geologically important sites with diverse and special geological features. After the proposed designation, they will be under the control and management of the Country and Marine Parks Authority, who is the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, and be protected and regulated by the Country Parks Ordinance as well as the Country Parks and Special Areas Regulations.

4. Under the powers of the Country Parks Ordinance, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) would arrange park wardens to patrol the five proposed Special Areas regularly. AFCD and relevant departments would take enforcement action against suspected unauthorized developments and activities on these proposed Special Areas when necessary. In addition, the AFCD will undertake publicity and education activities to enhance the public awareness of not to cause nuisance or damage to the geological features.

5. An addition of 16 civil service posts and around \$20 million recurrent funding have been allocated to AFCD for the management, publicity, education, patrolling and law enforcement for protecting and conserving the Geopark. These additional resources have already catered for the need to manage the proposed Special Areas.

Visitor Facilities

6. The management objectives of the five proposed Special Areas are primarily for the purpose of nature and geo-conservation. For keeping the naturalness of the proposed Special Areas, provision of visitor facilities are limited to absolute necessity. Educational facilities, information boards, advisory signs for reminding visitors about safety at the Special Areas, etc. would only be provided at suitable locations.

Special Area	Visitor Facilities
Double Haven Special Area	: Information boards introducing attractions of special geological interests on Ap Chau. Other visitor facilities will be limited to advisory signs.
Sharp Island Special Area	: A geo-trail with information signs introducing attractions of special geological interests on Sharp Island. Other visitor facilities will be limited to information boards, advisory signs and litter bins.
High Island Special Area	: Limited to advisory signs.
Ung Kong Group Special Area	: Limited to advisory signs.
Ninepin Group	: Limited to advisory signs.

Accessibility

7. Out of the five proposed Special Areas, Sharp Island and Double Haven are easily accessible by Kaito or hired ferries. For the Special Areas where land-based tours are not recommended for safety and geo-conservation reasons, visits to these isolated islands would be confined to boat excursions by hired boats.

**Environmental Protection Department
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
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