

**Legislative Council
Panel on Environmental Affairs**

Proposed Lantau North (Extension) Country Park

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' views on the proposed designation of the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park.

Background

2. Country-side areas that are confirmed to contain high ecological value are designated as country parks under the Country Parks Ordinance (Chapter 208). Once designated, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department will undertake management of the area for the purposes of protecting natural resources including vegetation and wildlife, promoting education on the natural environment, providing recreation opportunities, and preserving and maintaining buildings and sites of historic or cultural significance. Where appropriate, facilities and services for public enjoyment and recreation will be provided.

The Proposed Country Park

3. The proposed country park extension at North Lantau covers an area of approximately 2,000 hectares that runs to the north, north-east and east of the existing Lantau North Country Park. It embraces most of the undeveloped land stretching from Tai Shan above Penny's Bay in the east to Tai Ho, Tung Chung and Sham Wat in the west. It is bounded to the south by the Lantau North Country Park and to the north by the North Lantau Highway and the new town at Tung Chung. The hilly area north of Silvermine Bay and south of Discovery Bay is also included in the proposed extension area. A map showing the preliminary boundary of the proposed country park extension is at **Annex**.

4. The area of the proposed country park has been identified as one of the potential country parks in the Territorial Development Strategy Review in 1993. Further in-house study on the ecological value of the area conducted by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department confirmed that the area is suitable to be designated as a country park in terms of its conservation value, landscape amenity and recreational potential, for the following reasons -

- (a) the proposed area covers large areas of secondary woodlands, shrubland, grassland and fresh water habitats. It contains high biological diversity which includes 76 hectares of montane shrub forests, over 200 species of native and protected indigenous plants, and vast area of well-developed upland forests;
- (b) the hilly landscape in the proposed area with upland valleys provides highly scenic backdrop for the urban area on Lantau Island; and
- (c) the proposed area has the potential for development into a variety of recreational sites such as hiking trails, picnic sites, footpaths for family walk, and other suitable educational facilities. The upland areas also provide scenic spots for viewing the new airport to the north, rural landscape to the south and wilderness among the mountainous areas and upland valleys.

Way Forward

5. We are now in the course of consulting relevant parties including the Country and Marine Parks Board, the Advisory Council on the Environment, the District Council concerned, interested parties and green groups regarding the proposed designation. The draft map of the proposed country park, after incorporating comments gathered during the consultation, will be gazetted, tentatively in June 2000. The gazetted draft map will then be made available for public inspection when the public can raise objections against the designation. All objections will be heard by the Country and Marine Parks Board. Our plan is to designate the proposed country park in early 2001.

6. Members are invited to comment on the proposed designation of the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park.

Environment and Food Bureau
April 2000