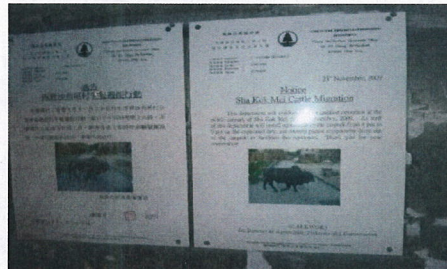




Sai Kung Buffalo Watch

Sai Kung Buffalo Watch is a group of dedicated volunteers who liaise with a network of local Sai Kung community residents, to effectively manage our population of feral cattle in the region. This includes working with AFCD, the local police and other key stakeholders to plan and implement humane policies and procedures to deal with our cattle, manage their numbers humanely and ensure a harmonious balance between human and animal, since November 2009.



The original unsuitable Cattle Transport Vehicle

Since November 2009, we have been working with Friends of Sai Kung (FSK), the Agricultural and Fisheries Department (AFCD) and the SPCA to resolve any conflicts involving people and cattle and come up with a better management plan for our feral cattle.

Preservation and humane treatment of the cattle is high on the priority list, whilst understanding the need for balance between development of the area and protection of our local wildlife, including the cattle.

5 years later, we continue to work with AFCD to manage the Sai Kung cattle through CSR (Capture, Sterilise and Return), rapid response to incidents/accidents, good communication, public education and ensure any injured cattle are tracked and treated by vets (AFCD).

SKBW operates a 24 hour hotline for members of the public to call and we also work closely with Eil Tam of Sai Kung Cattle Angel (our 'sister' Sai Kung Group).

Although the road was rocky to begin with, we now have a realistic, practical and effective relationship with the current AFCD cattle management team. We would like to

take this opportunity to thank them for their continued hard work listening to our suggestions as the 'people on the ground' daily, and for also responding as quickly as possible to urgent cases, sometimes in the middle of the night.

We also appreciate their trust in our judgment regarding the cattle generally as well as individual emergency cases. There is mutual respect between both parties that we wish to see continue in Sai Kung, for the continued good management and welfare of Sai Kung's cattle.

Considering all this we wish to make the following points.....

1. Sai Kung Buffalo Watch support the AFCD Cattle Team's efforts thus far and will continue to work with them in the coming months and years, so long as the currently level of communication and consultation continues.

2. Sai Kung Buffalo Watch has been following the suggestions of 'Cattle Shelters'. We strongly object to any form of shelter for feral cattle in our area. They are unnecessary. The cattle are perfectly capable, as they have done for many years, of sourcing their own shelter in the wild as/when conditions in the weather change.

3. Sai Kung Buffalo Watch wish to strongly push all concerned departments to come together in a timely manner, to plan the location and construction of cattle grids at various places around the Sai Kung Country Park, to further enable the effective management of the cattle.

Cattle grids are standard and effective in both Europe and Australia and the passing off of this request is no longer acceptable. This needs to be planned and implemented in Sai Kung as a matter of urgency.

4. Sai Kung Buffalo Watch strongly suggest the transport department and the police department work together with SKBW and AFCD to implement effective speed reduction measures within Sai Kung, particularly Tai Mong Tsai Road and Sai Sha Road. It is only going to be a matter of time before there is a human fatality and we have been pushing for fixed cameras at known black spots for years. So far, this request, from long term residents who know the issues well, has fallen on deaf ears.

5. Sai Kung Buffalo Watch would be happy to see other satellite NGOs set up in New Territories (Central and North) to rationally, realistically and reasonably assist with management of cattle in these areas. We are happy to assist in any capacity to share

our knowledge and success' as well as things we have learnt how to do differently in the last 5 years.

6. We support the suggestion of setting up a Cattle Task Force involving:- Development Bureau (Civil Engineering and Development Dept., Lands Dept., Planning Dept.), Security Bureau (Fire Services Dept., HK Police Force), Home Affairs Bureau, Environment Bureau, and Education Bureau.

Many of these departments must be involved in timely decisions about the management of the cattle and up to now, this does not happen. Things such as the cattle grids, get passed from department to department and this is no longer acceptable. It prevents the animal management teams and cattle teams from being able to implement practical solutions to issues. This has to change.

7. The understanding of Cattle.

Sai Kung Buffalo Watch members continue to learn from each and every individual case. We accept some cattle will be lost to the weather, cars, injuries, flystrike, broken legs, and other circumstances beyond anyone's control. We always take note of the duty veterinarians opinion on the matter at hand and at times the decision to euthanize, although heart wrenching, is not made lightly. We will continue to do everything we can to minimize these incidences but there is a fine line between humanely managing our cattle populations and their welfare and overstepping that line.

We as Sai Kung Buffalo Watch believe we have found the right balance and this enables rational decision making, for the continued good welfare of the cattle.

We want to continue to see the cattle roam free.

We do not want to see them penned in with fences, shelters or other structures reducing their ability to roam and source their own food and water sources.

We will continue to do public education, operate the 24 hour hotline, respond to emergencies and do all the other work we do with minimal funding.

Thank you for your time.

Carol Biddell

Coordinator, Sai Kung Buffalo Watch

Sai Kung Buffalo Watch (SKBW)

Carol Biddell

Contact Details
24 hr hotline -
Mobile -
Email - skbuffalowatch@gmail.com



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