

Illegal Development in Shui Mong Tin, Ma Shi Chau

Association of Geoconservation, Hong Kong (“AGHK”) would like to express our serious concern over the ecovandalism in Shui Mong Tin which totally reflect the Government’s impotence in land stealing and illegal development in rural areas, the lack of co-ordination and communication between various Government departments and their indifference to the damage done to our invaluable Special Area – Ma Shi Chau.

When we suspected there was unauthorized development at Shui Mong Tin, Ma Shi Chau on Sep. 21, 08, we immediately reported in writing to Lands Department and Town Planning Department requesting their investigation. Lands Department replied us that the site belonged to private land for agricultural usage. They did not receive any submission of development plan and they had referred the case to Town Planning Department for follow up.

It was unfortunate that our complaint was not closely followed up which led to the current development in Shui Mong Tin. The trees were cut and cleared, the shell beach was levelled, various levels of platform were built, concrete retaining and boundary walls and drainage connections were constructed. The construction also blocks the geo-appreciation walking path during high tide. It is even unbelievable and ridiculous that encroachment on Government Land is being unnoticed until our recent report on Jan. 29, 08. The development is a serious environmental nuisance.

We are highly disappointed and frustrated that since our report since Jan. 29, 2009, none of the Government Departments including Lands Department, Planning Department, AFCD, Environmental Protection Department, Building Department and Drainage Services Department have given us a satisfactory reply about the solution to the damage done.

Ma Shi Chau is one of our Site of Special Scientific Interests and Special Area endowing with invaluable geological heritage of over 280 millions years of age. According to the recent announcement of the Government, it is also one of the proposed sites of the Geopark. Any destruction or damage which might be irreparable to the scientific, educational and aesthetic values of our geological heritage must be prevented.

AGHK urged the government to immediately resolve the stealing of Government land and illegal developments; to review the current legislation to penalize the culprits and to improve existing measures to better protect our assets. Departments concerned must step up law enforcement actions and enhance their environmental awareness and co-ordination.

Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong

Cindy Choi

Convener: Publicity/Public Relationship