

For discussion on
22 April 2022

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
Robin's Nest Country Park

PURPOSE

This paper reports to Members the major development and management work of the Robin's Nest Country Park (RNCP) since its formal establishment on 1 March 2024, as well as the progress of facility enhancement works of other country parks.

BACKGROUND

2. The Policy Measures of the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address stipulated the designation of RNCP within 2024 for nature conservation and public enjoyment, as well as formation of an ecological corridor with the Shenzhen Wutong Mountain Scenic Area to promote ecological integration between Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The Government has completed the statutory procedures for designating RNCP under the Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208). The RNCP designation order took effect on 1 March 2024.

3. RNCP, occupying an area of about 530 hectares at Sha Tau Kok in the northeastern part of the New Territories, is the 25th country park in Hong Kong, which lies on a continuum of mountain ridges stretching from the Shenzhen Wutong Mountain Scenic Area to the north, and Pat Sin Leng Country Park to the south (Annex 1). The natural habitats at Robin's Nest consists of secondary woodland, shrubland and upland grassland, and presents a pleasant landscape of high aesthetic value. RNCP is rich in biodiversity, with over 500 plant and animal species identified therein, many of which are of high conservation value. RNCP is also rich in cultural heritage resources, including the two MacIntosh Forts, which are Grade-2 historic buildings, the Lin Ma Hang Lead Mine, etc.

4. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) is implementing active management measures in RNCP for conservation, recreation

and education purposes, and regulates it under the Country Parks and Special Areas Regulations (Cap. 208A) (the Regulations) to protect the natural environment, landscape and heritage resources, and enhance biodiversity therein. In addition, the AFCD is collaborating with Shenzhen Municipal Planning and Natural Resources Bureau to formulate a joint work plan for the “Wutong Mountain - Robin’s Nest Ecological Corridor”, with a view to enhancing ecological connectivity and integration between the two places. Details of various work are provided below.

NATURE AND ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

5. RNCP comprises habitats and wildlife species of high ecological value. For example, the upland grassland on Robin’s Nest is an important habitat for the Chinese Grassbird. Red Azalea and Chinese New Year Flower that bestrew the slopes are both protected plants. Lin Ma Hang Lead Mine is a bat roosting site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)¹. The dense secondary woodland on the northern slope of Robin’s Nest is a key component of the terrestrial ecological corridor between Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

6. The active management work being conducted by the AFCD at RNCP includes regular patrols of ecologically sensitive sites; enforcement of the Regulations to protect the environment from damage; establishment and maintenance of firebreaks to prevent and control hillfire; planting of native trees and shrubs to enhance existing habitats; conservation of the upland grassland where Chinese Grassbird inhabits; and conservation of local flora and fauna.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG-SHENZHEN ECOLOGICAL CORRIDOR

7. The rolling hills and intertwining natural streams on Robin’s Nest provide diverse habitats for a host of wildlife. In addition, Robin’s Nest is geographically connected with the Wutong Mountain in Shenzhen, thereby forming a cross-boundary ecological corridor between the two places.

¹ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are land or marine-based sites by reason of their biological and/or geological importance. The listing of SSSI is primarily an administrative device to alert government departments about the scientific importance of such sites, and that due consideration should be given to conservation when developments at or close to these sites are proposed. The AFCD is consulted for proposed developments at or in the proximity to SSSIs. Proposals for SSSI can be initiated by AFCD, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions or individuals. Any proposals must be supported by scientifically robust evidence. In general, AFCD is responsible for assessing scientific importance of the relevant sites.

8. Over the past few years, the AFCD has been in dialogue with the management authority of the Shenzhen Wutong Mountain Scenic Area, exchanging experience various aspects including seedling production, tree care, hillfire prevention and removal of harmful plants, as well as exploring joint efforts to enhance the cross-boundary ecological corridor. To facilitate the implementation of work in an orderly manner, the AFCD has been liaising with the Shenzhen Municipal Planning and Natural Resources Bureau through exchange forums, site visits, communication and coordination. The AFCD and the Shenzhen counterpart also met up in Shenzhen twice in June 2023 and March 2024 to discuss the formulation of a joint work plan for the “Wutong Mountain-Robin’s Nest Ecological Corridor”. The work plan will cover short-, medium- and long-term measures, including setting up an ecological data exchange platform; conducting biodiversity monitoring and research on both places; controlling harmful species; and exploring ways to improve the ecological connectivity of the border areas, with a view to promoting ecological integration between Hong Kong and Shenzhen. The work plan is expected to be finalized this year, and will subsequently be implemented timely by both parties.

PROVISION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

9. The Robin’s Nest area, with its undulating hills in a picturesque natural setting, is optimal for hiking and nature appreciation. The AFCD has been constructing recreational facilities in RNCP, including a hiking trail network, picnic areas and viewing points. Currently, two hiking trails — Robin's Nest Country Trail (3.5km) and Lin Ma Hang Country Trail (2.6km) — are open to the public. The hiking trails link up Shan Tsui of Sha Tau Kok in the east with Lin Ma Hang Village in the west, and it is normally a four-to-five-hour’s walk along the two hiking trails (Annex 2). The AFCD has installed information boards, directional signs and distance posts along the trail to give clear guidance for hikers. In addition, viewing points have been set up near Hung Fa Chai to allow the viewing of the sweeping vistas across Starling Inlet and Wutong Mountain.

10. The entrance of the hiking trails at Shan Tsui of Sha Ta Kok and Lin Ma Hang Village are currently open to the public. Both locations are accessible by bus and minibus, whereas the section of Lin Ma Hang Road between Wang Lek and entrance of Lin Ma Hang Village is still within Frontier Closed Area (FCA). To facilitate visitors going to RNCP via Lin Ma Hang Village, the AFCD has constructed a connecting path on the hillside outside the FCA, allowing visitors to reach the Lin Ma Hang Country Trail and Lin Ma Hang Lead Mine Cave without trespassing into the Lin Ma Hang Road FCA section. At certain spots along the connection path, stairs and stepping stones were built, railings added,

with overgrown grasses removed and slope-edges stabilized.

11. The AFCD will construct a rain shelter and install various thematic interpretation panels in RNCP within this year, and will build other hiking trails and facilities at suitable locations to enrich visitors' experience of nature and appreciation of cultural heritage. As the easternmost part of the Northern Metropolis (covering Robin's Nest) has been positioned as part of the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle in the Northern Metropolis Action Agenda, the AFCD will progressively enhance the hiking trail network and ancillary facilities to support development of the Northern Metropolis along such direction.

VISITOR SERVICES

12. Robin's Nest and the nearby Sha Tau Kok area have rich ecological and cultural heritage resources, such as the Hakka culture. The AFCD is currently collaborating with local communities to gather and compile relevant information, as well as formulate publicity and education programmes. The AFCD has also been disseminating information about the hiking routes and attractions in RNCP in an appealing way through multiple channels, including websites, social media, information boards and waymarks. Campaigns have also been rolled out to promote "hiking etiquette", as well as the messages on countryside conservation and safety precautions. Relevant information has been posted online since the first quarter of this year. In addition, the AFCD is in close communication with relevant departments and local villagers to explore the feasibility of providing tourism supporting facilities for RNCP.

13. To tie in with the designation of RNCP, the AFCD has provided information on transportation, hiking trails and attractions on its website since the first quarter of this year. Waymarks have also been installed at trail entrances to facilitate visitation. Given RNCP's recent establishment, public awareness of the hiking trails and local environments is subject to further enhancement. As such, the AFCD has arranged guided tours and education services at the main entrances and major scenic spots of RNCP during weekends and public holidays in peak hiking seasons. Visitor control will also be implemented when necessary to avoid any disturbance to the natural environment of the country park and nearby villages.

14. In addition, the AFCD is producing a series of videos on various themes, including natural landscapes, biodiversity, war relics, the MacIntosh Forts, Lin Ma Hang Lead Mine and rural culture, to promote the unique attractions and

relevant history of the Robin's Nest area to the public. The videos are scheduled to release on social media and other platforms between the third and fourth quarters of this year, in order to step up the promotion of RNCP ahead of the 2024 peak hiking season.

15. The Lin Ma Hang Lead Mine at the northwestern corner of RNCP was once an important site of Hong Kong's mining industry. Occupied by Japanese troops during the fall of Hong Kong in World War II, the lead mine holds memories of brave resistance put up by Lin Ma Hang villagers and the Dongjiang Guerilla Force against the Japanese. The long abandoned mine pit is now an important bat habitat in Hong Kong, and was designated as a SSSI in 1994. Currently, the AFCD, in collaboration with the Civil Engineering and Development Department, is revitalising the lead mine into an open museum to create an enhanced visitors' experience by showcasing Hong Kong's mining history, war relics and bat ecology, as well as the unique cultural landscape of the site. The lead mine is now cordoned off for strengthening and revitalisation works, and is expected to be open to the public upon completion of works by end-2024.

16. War relics at Robin's Nest are mainly concentrated at Shan Tsui at the eastern part of the country park. The AFCD has engaged experts to collect relevant historical information and will install interpretation panels at suitable locations along the hiking trail so that visitors could appreciate the cultural heritage and understand the relevant history while hiking.

17. The AFCD is working with the Office of the Communications Authority and other relevant departments to explore ways to improve mobile network coverage in RNCP, so that visitors to RNCP could contact rescue units and to allow the rescue teams to identify their locations more easily under emergency situations.

FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS OF OTHER COUNTRY PARKS

18. To enrich visitors' experience, the Government has earmarked \$500 million in the 2021 Budget to carry out a number of facility enhancement works in different country parks. The AFCD has taken forward a number of country park facilities enhancement works in phases, as elaborated below –

- (a) The first phase of works includes reconstruction of public washrooms at Bride's Pool (Pat Sin Leng Country Park) and Tai Tam Tuk (Tai Tam Country Park); provision of a new public washroom at Pak Kung Au

(Lantau South Country Park); and setting up a viewing platform overlooking the spectacular scenery of Po Pin Chau in Sai Kung East Country Park. These works will commence soon and are expected to be open to the public progressively between 2024 and 2025.

- (b) Second phase enhancements include the provision of new public washrooms at Long Ke Wan Campsite (Sai Kung East Country Park) and Twisk Campsite (Tai Mo Shan Country Park) and reconstruction of the public washrooms at Aberdeen P.H.A.B Site (Aberdeen Country Park); provision of viewing platform overlooking Aberdeen Upper Reservoir (Aberdeen Country Park) and associated accessible facilities; and construction of outdoor free exploration play area at the Lions Nature Education Centre (Tsiu Hang Special Area). The Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) is conducting initial survey investigation and preparatory works for detailed design. These facilities are expected to be completed progressively between 2025 and 2026.
- (c) As regards third phase enhancements, the AFCD is currently collaborating with ArchSD to construct or reconstruct the public toilets at Lau Shui Heung (Pat Sin Leng Country Park), Tung Lung Chau Campsite (Tung Lung Fort Special Area), Tai Tong Barbecue Area 6 (Tai Lam Country Park), Hok Tau Campsite (Pat Sin Leng Country Park) and Quarry Bay Tree Walk (Tai Tam Country Park (Quarry Bay Extension)). Preparatory works for these projects are now in progress and initial investigation is expected to commence in 2024/25.

19. In addition, the AFCD commissioned feasibility studies on projects such as the setting up of an open museum of historical relics and the provision of tree top adventure and new type of camping facilities in country parks in the second half of 2022. The feasibility studies aim to determine the site locations, design, modes of operation, fee levels and operation requirements, etc., of these facilities, which included the organisation of activities to collect the views of the public and relevant stakeholders. The AFCD anticipates to complete the three aforementioned studies and estimate expenditure by 2024, and will soon commence the pre-construction investigation and the detailed design of the relevant projects after taking into account the recommendations of the study reports.

20. In order to promote green tourism, the Tourism Commission, in collaboration with the AFCD, has implemented the “Enhancement of Hiking Trails” programme since 2018 to enhance tourism supporting facilities of 20 hiking trails in country parks which are popular and with tourism appeal. The

enhancement works mainly include improvement to existing hiking trail network, control of soil erosion at trails, enhancement of vegetation coverage, addition of lookout points, enrichment of visitor information, etc. The AFCD completed the first phase of enhancement works involving 10 hiking trails in late 2022, and the first two trails of the second phase enhancement works in late 2023, that is, Tai Tong to Wong Nai Tun Reservoir (Tai Lam Country Park) and Lion Rock Historic Walk (Lion Rock Country Park). The remaining works will commence in stages.

ADVICE SOUGHT

21. Members are invited to note and provide comments on the aforesaid major development and management work at RNCP, as well as the progress of facility improvement projects of other country parks.

Environment and Ecology Bureau
Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department
April 2024

深圳
Shenzhen

深圳市梧桐山風景區
Shenzhen Wutong Mountain Scenic Area

白虎山
Pak Fu Shan

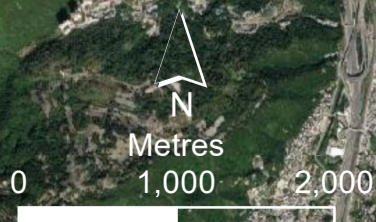
紅花嶺郊野公園
Robin's Nest Country Park

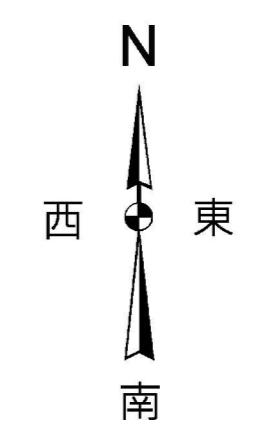
沙頭角
Sha Tau Tok

船灣郊野公園
Plover Cove Country Park

粉嶺
Fanling

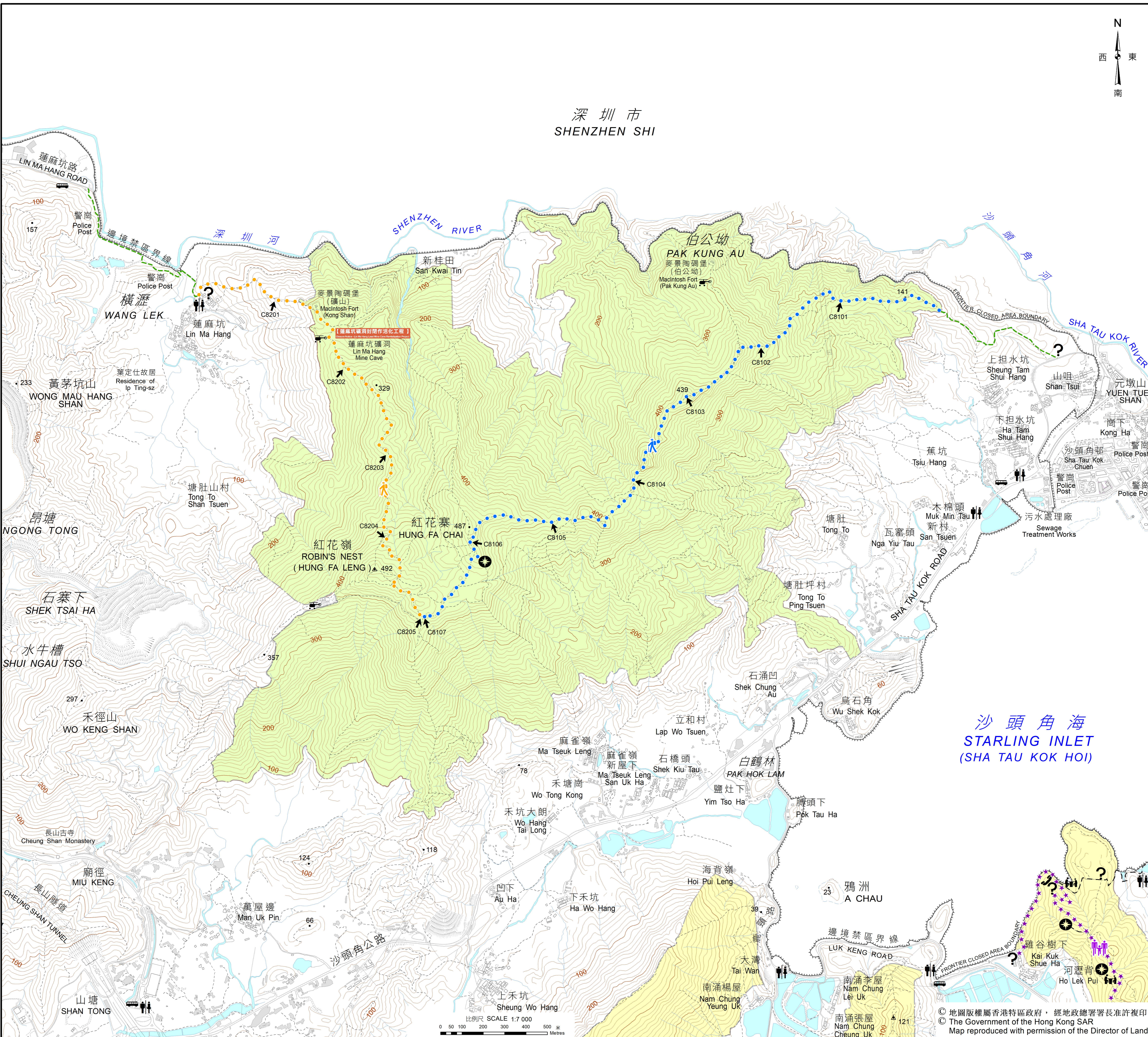
八仙嶺郊野公園
Pat Sin Leng Country Park





圖例
LEGEND

- 紅花嶺郊野公園
ROBIN'S NEST COUNTRY PARK
- 郊野公園
COUNTRY PARK
- 紅花嶺郊遊徑 (3.5公里)
ROBIN'S NEST COUNTRY TRAIL (3.5 km)
- 蓮麻坑郊遊徑 (2.6公里)
LIN MA HANG COUNTRY TRAIL (2.6 km)
- 鳳坑家樂徑
FUNG HANG FAMILY WALK
- 連接小徑
CONNECTING FOOTPATH
- 邊境禁區界線
FRONTIER CLOSED AREA BOUNDARY
- 主要公路
MAJOR ROAD
- 主要小徑
MAIN FOOTPATH
- 沒有維修或不通小徑
UNMAINTAINED / IMPASSABLE FOOTPATH
- 觀景台
VIEWING POINT
- 告示板
INFORMATION BOARD
- 標距柱
DISTANCE POST
- 直昇機坪
HELICOPTER LANDING SITE
- 廁所
TOILET
- 巴士站 / 小巴士
BUS STOP / MAXICAB
- 緊急求助熱線 / 電話亭
EMERGENCY HELPLINE / PAY PHONE
- 郊遊地點
PICNIC SITE



【蓮麻坑礦洞封閉作活化工程】
 Closure Notice - Lin Ma Hang Lead Mine Cave Revitalization Project

蓮麻坑礦洞活化工程現正進行中，預計2024年年尾完成。基於安全考慮，礦洞及周遭工地範圍現已圍封，請勿擅自進入！

The Lin Ma Hang Lead Mine Cave Revitalization Project has been commenced, and targeted to complete by the end of 2024. For safety concerns, please do not trespass into the closed areas, including the main cavern and its surrounding.

最近更新日期 LAST UPDATED	圖則編號 PLAN No.
3 . 2024	IB/RN (Version 1)

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紅花嶺郊野公園
ROBIN'S NEST COUNTRY PARK

你的位置
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