

Secretary for the Environment visits Shing Mun Country Park

The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, accompanied by the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, Dr Leung Siu-fai, visited Shing Mun Country Park this morning (September 27) to inspect the damage caused by Super Typhoon Mangkhut to the country park facilities, as well as to see the progress made in clearing fallen trees.

As a large number of trees have fallen or have broken branches, the facilities in the country parks have suffered varying amounts of damages. In the previous week, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has been inspecting various park areas at full strength, in addition to making continuous efforts to clear fallen trees and repair damaged facilities with the assistance of various groups, so that some recreational sites could be reopened for the public to enjoy the Mid-Autumn Festival. The AFCD indicated that the department would continue to clean up the parks, in a bid to restore the country parks and reopen facilities for the public according to priority. The AFCD called on the public to visit its website for the latest updates on relevant facilities. The AFCD also reminded the public and hikers not to leave behind kindling in the country parks as there are many fallen trees with withered branches and dry leaves, which are highly inflammable, so as to avoid further damage to the country parks.

Mr Wong was briefed by Dr Leung on the AFCD's arrangements for dealing with the fallen trees. The AFCD has long been implementing measures to recycle yard waste (such as tree trunks and tree branches, etc) collected from conservation work for plants in the country parks. The AFCD explained that external yard waste might bring pests and diseases or seeds from external species, and consequently they are unsuitable for stockpiling in the country parks, which may cause harm to the natural ecology there. As for fallen trees in country parks caused by the passage of typhoon this time, the AFCD will, as far as possible, cut them into logs for use as materials for providing country park facilities in future. Leftover wood and branches will be piled mainly on site for natural decomposition to release nutrients back to nature.

During the visit, Mr Wong Kam-sing also chatted with some staff members and volunteers who have helped to clean up. He thanked all AFCD staff and volunteers for their efforts in nature and ecology conservation, as well as for their contributions to restore the country parks.

Mr Wong also noted that many members of the public and groups had volunteered to clean up waste in the countryside and on the shorelines after the passage of the typhoon. He thanked the public for their selfless contributions and care for nature. He said that all relevant government departments (including the AFCD, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Marine

Department) are fully devoted to the cleaning of waste and debris onshore, as well as other relief work. At the same time, the Government is providing support for participating organisations through the platform of the Inter-departmental Working Group on Clean Shorelines, including reminding them of safety guidance for cleanup activities, providing cleaning tools and materials, and assisting in transporting and handling waste collected. Mr Wong also called on members of the public who are interested in participating in shoreline cleaning activities to check out the Facebook page on clean shorelines (www.facebook.com/cleanshorelines/) for information on relevant activities organised by various groups.

Mr Wong said, "The Environment Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department will continue to work together with other departments on the post-typhoon relief work, such that the scenic views in country parks, beaches and shorelines and relevant facilities can be restored for the public's enjoyment."