

Class: 5A

Name: Ng Po Shing, Roy

Topic: Hill fires in Hong Kong

Dear Editor,

As a dedicated environmentalist, I am writing to air my view on the recent news article apropos of the consecutive occurrence of hill fires in Hong Kong last week. The destruction of country parks, which are of high ecological value, is the last thing that Hong Kongers want to witness. For fear of this, the significance of country parks as well as the suggestions to protect them will be elucidated in the following as the advocacy of environmental conservation.

To commence with, country parks play a vital role in ecological conservation. Covering a total area of 44,312 hectares, country parks comprise of a host of beautiful vistas: scenic hills, woodlands, reservoirs and coastlines, to name but a few. Biodiversity places a high degree of reliance on country parks as they provide the habitat for a variety of animals. Endangered animals, including but not limited to Hong Kong, such as the cascades frog, black-faced spoonbill, mule's foot fern, and Chinese bahaba are kept safe under the protection of country parks, albeit being at the mercy of the dynamic weather. After the countless times of destruction we have imposed on to nature encompassing excessive urbanisation, deforestation and land reclamation, shouldn't we preserve the country parks to retain nature's vigor? Shouldn't we at least demonstrate a bit of empathy by not destroying the country parks? Human beings should bear the disrepute of our brutality. In fact, we all owe animals an apology. Now country parks, as the panacea to preserve biodiversity and wildlife, should be profoundly valued under our protection, be it burdensome or effortless.

Incalculable ecological value aside, country parks are of an immense significance for recreation and education of citizens. Living in Hong Kong, which is among the most competitive cities in the world, citizens would like to escape from the exasperating and stressful reality of their heavy workloads. Country parks are a place of sanctuary for citizens to release tension and loosen up. For example, people can make good use of various facilities including tables, benches, barbecue pits and so forth. Additionally, not only do country parks provide platforms for recreation, they also play an imperative role in education. For instance, the Biodiversity Education Centres as well as community-involved conservation programs have been pioneered with a view to educating the general public. As a result, Hong Kongers' quality of life, such as

their physical, mental, and societal health would be boosted by virtue of country parks.

Had we not protected country parks well, such enormous values would have vanished for good. It is our responsibility to continue to protect our country parks by any means necessary so as to let it benefit both nature and mankind comprehensively.

On the individual level, all we can do is not destroy anything in our country parks. For example, properly extinguishing cigarettes butts and avoid producing flammable rubbish. Better still, don't smoke. After doing these, I believe that there will no longer be occurrences of hill fires or land contamination in the future.

It is also worth noting that the government should spare no pains to ameliorate this problem. Through imposing stricter controls, tightening, enacting and enforcing stricter laws on illegal destruction, they will become a deterrent and citizens will refrain from destroying country parks. On the other hand, the government should inculcate the awareness of environmental conservation into people's minds by means of stepping up education and publicity via mass media or other platforms.

All in all, it is hoped that the general public will attach more importance to the significance of country parks and the suggestions aforementioned. The future of both nature and mankind are at the mercy of our own hands. Please fulfill our civic responsibilities, be it wholeheartedly or obligatorily.

Yours faithfully,

*Chris Wong*

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