

## Nature Trail Badge Challenge

"Nature Trail Badge Challenge" recommends six hiking trail routes for participants to visit and complete designated tasks. These routes are all at locations where The Green Earth's "Repair Your Own Trails" volunteer team has carried out trail maintenance. We hope that through this activity, more nature lovers in Hong Kong can learn more about the stories behind hiking trails. Hence, spread the achievements of our efforts, and encourage everyone to take action to give back to nature and cherish these trails.



### Half way across the MacLehose Trail Section 4 (Shui Long Wo – Ma On Shing Village)



Section 4 of the MacLehose Trail is 12.7km long, but we suggest that you only do half of it. If you turn right at the Ma On Shing Country Trail pavilion and walk towards Ma On Shing Village, you will have covered 7.6km. This route still reaches Ma On Au, which is 500m above sea level. Without a supply point you will find it very difficult. However, you will be rewarded with great views of the Inner Port Shelter along the MacLehose Trail. As you enjoy the views of distant hills and the sea, you will know that all your efforts have been worthwhile.

[Download the offline version of the MacLehose Trail Section 4 guide](#)



[Map of the route \(PDF file for download\)](#)

**Route:**  
Shui Long Wo → MacLehose Trail Section 4 → Wan Kuk Shan → Pavilion of the Ma On Shing Country Trail → Ma On Shing Village

**Distance:** 7.6 km

**Duration:** 4 hours

**Difficulty:** ★★★★★

**Supply point:** No supply point along the route

**Let's Leave No Trace!**

Section 4 of the MacLehose Trail is a long climb and is only suitable for experienced hikers with a certain level of fitness. For your own safety, please plan well and prepare supplies before setting off.

You should also "take your rubbish home" and properly bag all types of packaging to prevent it from being scattered on the trail. If you can, please also help with litter picking along the trails.

### Introduction Point I: Scars among hills

Before the MacLehose Trail section 4 there is a cement road. After about half an hour's walk, the road turns right and becomes a natural path where you will notice some sudden little gullies. Many of these are caused by mountain bike tyres. Although there is a designated area in the Country Park for mountain bikes, some visitors have disregarded the rules and brought their bikes in. As a result, the topsoil of the trail has been eroded into several gullies that are dangerous and rugged for walkers to cross.

According to a study of mountain bike trails in Hong Kong published by the International Mountain Bicycling Association in 2011, frequent use of undesignated mountain bike trails by mountain bikers exacerbates the degradation of these trails, leading to soil erosion, soil compaction and trampling of vegetation, eventually leading to wear and tear of the trails and threatening the safety of visitors.

During heavy rain, the amount of water flowing on the trail surface is enormous. You can tell the direction of surface flow by observing how dead leaves pile up on the road surface.

Reference: Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. (2011). Tai Lam Mountain Bicycling Trail Study Executive Summary. International Mountain Bicycling Association. Retrieved from



A gully formed by soil erosion in the middle of the road



The gully on this section of road was eventually repaired with a stone road made of large rocks.



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### Introduction Point II: Volunteer Trail Restoration Case 2023 – The fall of 90 cm

Soil erosion has displaced the stone steps in the middle of the path. One of the gaps between the steps has widened to 90cm, forcing hikers to walk on the edge of the hillside to avoid it. As a result, the vegetation there has died and retreated deeper into the hill. If this section of the path is not repaired, the gaps will widen, making it even more difficult for walkers.



The condition of exposed tree roots can be made worse by soil erosion, which can trip up hikers or mountain runners.



Before repair



Before repair



After repair

### Introduction Point III: Volunteer Trail Restoration Case 2023 – The exposure of tree roots

#### Introduction point location

Rainwater run-off, combined with increased use, leads to loss of topsoil and exposure of tree roots, which not only causes tripping hazards for visitors, but also reduces the stability of the trees.

Volunteers used small stones and soil collected nearby to fill in the gaps between the tree roots and the ground, and large stones were also used to re-construct suitable footholds so that the tree roots could be covered with soil again, protecting them from further damages and allowing visitors to pass through safely.



Before repair



After repair

### Introduction Point IV: Volunteer Trail Restoration Case 2019 – Shortcuts and erosion of the trail corner point

Some hikers leave the path to save time or to overtake other visitors. They make shortcuts on the grass. As more and more people do this, the shortcuts become wider and the plants can't grow, which results in the barren condition shown in the photographs.

While the area was being restored, wooden steps were put in on the old path to make it easier to walk and get people to use the route again. At the same time, dead wood and branches were put on the shortcut to make it more difficult to walk on it.



Before repair



After repair

### Featured Spot V: Transformation of Wan Kuk Shan and Mystery of Hiking Trail – Hopscotch

Wan Kuk Shan is in Section 4 of the MacLehose Trail. If you go up the stairs from Wong Chuk Heung, you will arrive at Ma On Au, where you can rest.

Keep going along the MacLehose Trail and you will come to an edge with great views. You can see Wan Kuk Shan on your left and Pyramid Hill in front of you. This is also a popular place for photographers.

Wan Kuk Shan has a steep downward slope. This means that soil erosion has been made worse by an increasing number of visitors. This has made the area full of gravel and dangerous to hike. So, hikers choose to hike on the nearby hillside. But this is also difficult to pass through. Finally, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department decided to act. They installed wooden steps here a few years ago. This makes it safer for hikers to walk past. It also stops the degradation of the hillside.

Watch our short video clip 'Mysterious Objects on Trails' to find out the mystery of this trail!



Bus: 90  
(Kwong On Bus Terminus ↔ Sai Kung)

Bus: 209X  
(Shekin Central Bus Terminus ↔ Sai Kung)

Bus: 33X (Holiday only)  
(Tseem Wan Discovery Park ↔ Pak Tam Chung)

Bus: 99K (Holiday only)  
(University Station ↔ Sai Kung)

Bus: 74K (Holiday only)  
(Tai Wo Bus Terminus ↔ Pak Tam Chung)

Bus: 269K (Holiday only)  
(Shekin Central Bus Terminus ↔ Sheng Shuk Pier)

Mit Bus: 8070  
(Dayshore Towers ↔ Shui Long Pic)

