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OCBC BANK PARTNERS NPARKS TO LEAD FIRST-OF-ITS KIND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME FOR CONEY ISLAND PARK

Collectively, OCBC Bank management and staff are the single largest donor to commit funding of S\$250,000 and volunteer efforts to enhance habitat at Coney Island Park by planting over 50 species of native coastal plants, including rare and endangered plants

Singapore, 29 June 2017 – Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited (OCBC Bank) and the National Parks Board (NParks) today announced the launch of a five-year habitat enhancement programme for a four-hectare plot of land at Coney Island Park. Over 50 species of native coastal plants will be introduced to this plot using the Maximum Diversity Restoration method, making it the most diverse habitat enhancement project planned for Coney Island Park since its opening in 2015.

Over the next five years, an estimated 1,400 OCBC staff volunteers will be working with NParks on activities ranging from identifying plant species to be planted, propagation, maintenance, coastal clean-ups, and conducting learning expeditions to rally strong support for conservation efforts in Coney Island Park.

A total of S\$250,000, primarily contributions from OCBC Bank management and staff, will be donated to the Garden City Fund¹ to support this programme.

NParks' Nature Conservation Masterplan, introduced in 2015, seeks to guide and coordinate NParks' biodiversity conservation efforts by integrating various programmes and projects across parks and nature reserves. Coney Island Park is one such area that has been identified for habitat enhancement.

OCBC Bank management and staff are making this possible with their donations to support the propagation and planting efforts. Many of the species to be introduced are critically endangered in Singapore, such as the Small-leaved Nutmeg (*Knema globularia*), Silver Bush (*Sophora tormentosa*) and

¹ The Garden City Fund is a registered charity and Institution of Public Character established by the National Parks Board in 2002. Donations to the Fund go towards conservation, research, outreach and education initiatives to support Singapore's vision of being a City in a Garden.

the Damak-damak Tahun (*Scolopia macrophylla*), which was believed to be extinct until it was rediscovered in 2014. At present, Coney Island Park is the single known locality in Singapore where the Damak-damak Tahun is found. Through the habitat enhancement programme, more specimens will be introduced to help re-establish a population.

The plants introduced will act as seed sources for the subsequent regeneration of the natural ecosystem, building up the overall plant diversity in this area. The enhanced habitat in turn provides more food and shelter for fauna, including the Rusty-breasted Cuckoo, the Spotted Wood Owl and dragonflies like the Sultan and Lined Forest-Skimmer.

Work started as early as 31 May 2017 when 20 volunteers partnered NParks staff on a trip to Coney Island Park to locate and propagate several endangered plant species. These were then brought to NParks Pasir Panjang Nursery to be nurtured until they are sufficiently mature to be planted in the habitat enhancement area.

From 2018, visitors to Coney Island Park can look forward to a richer forest habitat, the first step towards building a thriving community of flora and fauna.

The commitment of S\$250,000 comes from donations from OCBC Bank Group CEO and fund-raising activities organised by staff for various CSR activities.

This initiative fits in nicely under OCBC Bank's corporate social responsibility programme – known as the #OCBCCares Programme – which supports various causes including environmental sustainability, vulnerable children, youths and families; disadvantaged elderly and special-needs people.

Timely initiative to support NParks' species recovery programme

The launch of this programme is timely; just a month ago in May 2017, NParks had released findings showing that over 500 species have been discovered – or rediscovered – in Singapore over the past five years. In addition, close to 100 threatened animal and plant species have been identified for conservation under NParks' species recovery programme.

“We need to make special efforts to conserve them – which is why we aim to repopulate some of these species on Coney Island,” shared OCBC Group CEO Mr Samuel Tsien.

Mr Tsien had also requested that especially interesting plants be brought to take root in the habitat enhancement area.

He explained, “My thought is that, when we bring our families, children, youth, special-needs people and, especially, the elderly from our charity partners on walking tours here next year, I want them to experience the excitement, and, for the older people, the pleasant recall of their childhood days – when they don't have interactive cyber games such as Counterstrike, or Candy Crush to

engage in, but interacting with the nature at parks and gardens which was part of the grown up process.”

“I also want to stimulate as much curiosity and learning as possible amongst the children and special needs people about the plants and insects that we call this place home,” he added.

Commending OCBC Bank staff for their spirit of giving, Professor Leo Tan, Chairman of the Garden City Fund said, “OCBC Bank’s initiative to lead this habitat enhancement programme is a good example of how corporations can complement government and community efforts to co-create a City in a Garden. I hope more organisations will follow OCBC Bank’s lead and step forward to do likewise.”

NParks CEO, Mr Kenneth Er added, “Conservation requires long-term effort from everyone, and such initiatives to enhance habitats are integral to our overall plan to conserve our native biodiversity. This project will go a long way in helping the natural ecosystem of Coney Island Park to recover and thrive, and we appreciate OCBC Bank’s help in conserving our natural heritage for future generations to come.”

A new venue for nature appreciation and social bonding

With OCBC’s support, additional features will be sensitively added to heighten visitors’ experience of taking leisurely walks on Coney Island Park. Walking trails through parts of the habitat enhancement area will bring them closer upfront, to examine the different tree species. Benches along the trails will offer respite to many, including the beneficiaries that OCBC volunteers plan to bring to visit the island.

Ms Krystle Kow, who regularly plans community engagement activities and rallies her colleagues from the Group Operations and Technology Division to volunteer, is looking forward to organising learning expeditions for children and youths as well as leisurely walks with the elderly. “Walking in the forest surrounded by greenery and the natural sounds of its inhabitants can be a calming experience. Besides being a healthy social activity, such outings encourage bonding over nature, among staff and our guests”.

SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

Official hashtags: #OCBCCares #ocbcbank #coneyisland #habitat enhancement

Keywords:

OCBC, #OCBCCares, OCBC CSR, Coney Island habitat enhancement



Suggested tweet: OCBC partners NParks to lead the most diverse habitat enhancement programme planned for Coney Island Park since its opening; #OCBCCares for the environment



Suggested Facebook post: OCBC partners NParks to lead the most diverse habitat enhancement programme planned for Coney Island Park since its opening. Collectively, OCBC Bank management and staff are the single largest donor to commit funding of S\$250,000 and volunteer efforts to enhance habitat at Coney Island Park by planting over 50 species of native coastal plants, including rare and endangered plants

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About OCBC Bank

OCBC Bank is the longest established Singapore bank, formed in 1932 from the merger of three local banks, the oldest of which was founded in 1912. It is now the second largest financial services group in Southeast Asia by assets and one of the world’s most highly-rated banks, with an Aa1 rating from Moody’s. Recognised for its financial strength and stability, OCBC Bank is consistently ranked among the World’s Top 50 Safest Banks by Global Finance and has been named Best Managed Bank in Singapore and the Asia Pacific by The Asian Banker.

OCBC Bank and its subsidiaries offer a broad array of commercial banking, specialist financial and wealth management services, ranging from consumer, corporate, investment, private and transaction banking to treasury, insurance, asset management and stockbroking services.

OCBC Bank’s key markets are Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Greater China. It has more than 610 branches and representative offices in 18 countries and regions. These include the 340 branches and offices in Indonesia under subsidiary Bank OCBC NISP, and over 100 branches and offices in Hong Kong, China and Macau under OCBC Wing Hang.

OCBC Bank’s private banking services are provided by its wholly-owned subsidiary Bank of Singapore, which operates on a unique open-architecture

product platform to source for the best-in-class products to meet its clients' goals.

OCBC Bank's insurance subsidiary, Great Eastern Holdings, is the oldest and most established life insurance group in Singapore and Malaysia. Its asset management subsidiary, Lion Global Investors, is one of the largest private sector asset management companies in Southeast Asia.

For more information, please visit www.ocbc.com.

About the Garden City Fund

The Garden City Fund is a registered charity (T02CC1634C) and Institution of Public Character (IPC000104) established by the National Parks Board in 2002. The Fund works with corporations, organisations and individuals to better engage members of the public through conservation efforts, research, outreach and education. In doing so, we hope to cultivate a love for the environment, promote a sense of ownership, and encourage the community to play its part in preserving Singapore's legacy as a lush and vibrant City in a Garden. For more information please visit www.gardencityfund.org.

About National Parks Board (NParks)

National Parks Board (NParks) is responsible for providing and enhancing the greenery of our City in a Garden. Beyond building green infrastructure, NParks is actively engaging the community to enhance the quality of our living environment.

NParks manages 350 parks and 300 km of park connectors, 3,347 hectares of nature reserves and the Singapore Botanic Gardens. We also manage Pulau Ubin and the Sisters' Islands Marine Park. Adding to this is the extensive streetscape, or roadside greenery, that forms the backbone of our City in a Garden. The island-wide Park Connector Network is also being developed to link major parks, nature areas and residential estates.

As the lead agency on biodiversity conservation, NParks has developed an urban biodiversity conservation model, which aims to conserve representative eco-systems in land-scarce Singapore. NParks also monitors and coordinates measures to enhance the presence of biodiversity in our urban landscape.

NParks is working closely with partners in the landscape and horticulture industry to increase productivity, and provide training for all levels of the workforce. Enhancing competencies of the industry will support Singapore's vision of being a City in a Garden.

For more information, visit www.nparks.gov.sg and www.facebook.com/nparksbuzz.