

# Bukit Timah Nature Reserve Reopens!

On 22 October 2016, the National Parks Board (NParks) reopened Bukit Timah Nature Reserve following the completion of two years of restoration works and sensitive enhancements to the site. The Reserve was closed from September 2014 to October 2016 to allow NParks to repair and enhance the slopes and trails for public safety, upgrade the Visitor Centre, restore the forest habitat, and conduct a two-year biodiversity survey for the area.

Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance Mr Lawrence Wong, together with the Advisers of Holland-Bukit Timah GRC, planted two *Endocomia canarioides* trees at the site to mark the reopening of the Reserve.



*(Left to right): Garden City Fund Chairman Professor Leo Tan; MP for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC Mr Liang Eng Hwa; MP for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC and Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan; Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance Mr Lawrence Wong; MP for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC and Senior Minister of State at Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and Ministry of Trade and Industry Ms Sim Ann; and NParks Chairman Mrs Christina Ong water two *Endocomia canarioides* trees planted to mark the reopening of the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve.  
(Photo credit: NParks)*

## Restoration Works for the Reserve

Prior to its closure, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve received more than 400,000 visitors each year. Over the years, heavy usage of the Reserve resulted in soil compaction, erosion, and gully formation, causing poor forest regeneration and an unpleasant hiking experience for visitors.

Sections of three slopes along the Main Road trail, which had weakened in recent years, were repaired to ensure slope stability and public safety. NParks also restored trails and repaired steps where necessary, and added intermediate steps to make hiking easier for the elderly and the young.



NParks also carried out sensitive enhancements to protect the Reserve's biodiversity. This included the enrichment planting of native species like Seraya (*Shorea curtisii*) and *Dipterocarpus caudatus* trees alongside the trails to aid in forest regeneration. The existing trail steps were reinforced with an environmentally friendly binding agent, creating porous steps which would allow water to seep into the ground during and after rainfall. Raised boardwalks at various sections of the Reserve and railings along the trails were also installed to encourage visitors to keep to designated trails and minimise any adverse impact to the forest floor.

### Upgraded Amenities for Visitors

Visitors can now enjoy the refreshed Visitor Centre, which incorporates a revamped exhibition hall with sustainable features such as skylight panels that reduce the need for electrical lighting. Surrounding amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains and benches have also been upgraded.

A permanent exhibition in the hall highlights the importance of Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. It also provides information about ongoing conservation efforts, forest ecology, and Singapore's local biodiversity through life-sized animal models, interactive touchscreens, and displays with tactile components.



*Upon entering the exhibition hall, visitors will be greeted by a giant glass display of native plants and animals such as the Sumatran Tiger, Sunda Pangolin, Slow Loris, and Spotted Wood Owl.  
(Photo credit: NParks)*

## Interim Findings from the Comprehensive Survey of Bukit Timah Nature Reserve

While restoration works were taking place, a two-year comprehensive survey of the Reserve's biodiversity — supported by HSBC through the Garden City Fund — was initiated in early 2015.

While the survey will conclude in 2017, interim findings have revealed many rediscoveries and new records in the Reserve, including fauna such as the Malayan Porcupine (*Hystrix brachyura*) and the Slow Loris (*Nycticebus coucang*) which were not recorded in previous surveys. Information from the survey will help NParks to sensitively manage the Reserve.

## Friends of Bukit Timah Nature Reserve

NParks also announced that it is establishing a "Friends of Bukit Timah Nature Reserve" group to encourage the community to actively participate in the conservation of the Reserve and to ensure that education, research and recreation efforts will be sensitive to the Reserve's conservation. This group will include members of the nature community, recreational users, schools, and nearby residents.

With restored trails, raised boardwalks, and an upgraded Visitor Centre, a visit to Bukit Timah Nature Reserve promises to be a more enjoyable experience than before.

Come on down to discover the Reserve's rich flora and fauna! Bukit Timah Nature Reserve is open from 7am to 7pm daily, while the exhibition gallery is open from 8am to 5.30pm daily.