



Spoonbills Speak

echoes across the Pacific

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SAVE OUTRAGED OVER EIA APPROVAL

Without warning, the EIA (environmental impact assessment) for the Bin-nan Industrial Complex was approved on December 17, 1999. It appears that the March 2000 presidential election was a factor in the decision – according to the *Taipei Times* this action was an attempt on the part of KMT candidate Lien Chan to pander to business interests.

Environmentalists, legislators, and local fishermen immediately expressed outrage. SAVE has called upon Taiwan's scientific community to speak out. "In the glare of the international spotlight the same brush of cronyism and corruption taints all involved. It is a poor reflection upon the validity and legitimacy of scientific study if science is so easily bought and sold... We call upon the many EIA committee members who were left out of these secret and undemocratic proceedings to stand up and oppose this decision."

The controversy over the industrial complex has exposed what environmentalists are calling, "a large gap between Taiwan's economic development policies and global environmental protection trends, notably the reduction of total carbon dioxide emissions, preservation of biodiversity in wetlands and protecting water resources." The committee members have angered environmentalists, who claim the needs of the black-faced spoonbill have been neglected since no specific plan for preserving their habitat was included in the EIA.

With no fewer than 30 conditions attached to Bin-nan's approval, a great deal of uncertainty still exists. The protection



Spoonbills foraging

area for the critically-endangered black-faced spoonbill currently proposed by the government is woefully short of the 100,000 hectare area needed. Activists continue to press for the project's proposed site to be designated a "Wetland of International Importance" under the Ramsar Convention.

SCIENTISTS INVESTIGATE EIA

In early January a delegation of scientists and planners from U.C. Berkeley investigated the recent approval of the Bin-nan EIA. Meetings were held with the EPA director, Council of Agriculture officials, NTU scientists, the Kaoshiung mayor, national legislators and advisors, local NGOs, and the Chi-ku fishermen.

The conclusion of the investigation paints a bleak picture for environmental protection in Taiwan. U.C. professor Tim Duane concluded that the environmental impact assessment process as presently administered "has no teeth". Professor Matt Kondolf exposed fatal flaws in the lack of comprehensive planning for critical limited water supplies. Professor Randy Hester announced the formation of an international committee to monitor the Taiwan EIA process.

PRESS CONFERENCE REJECTS EIA LAW

By Taiwan Correspondent Wan-chih Yin

In a January 21st press conference in Taipei, organized by SAVE Taiwan, activists blasted the Bin-nan EIA approval with criticisms. At the beginning of the conference, a black-faced spoonbill candidate, played by a member of SAVE, stepped on a booklet of implementation rules for the Environmental Impact Assessment Law, to express the anger and disappointment over the approval. The candidate also announced its "environmental black-paper" supported by dozens of local groups, 50 legislators, and professors from U.C. Berkeley, including Randy Hester, Matt Kondolf and Tim Duane.

Three main strategies were proposed to continue to fight the Bin-nan complex. First, revise the existing EIA legislation. More than 50 legislators have signed to support a more environmentally-sound law. Second, focus on a sustainable regional plan for southern Taiwan with the hope that the allocation of water resources may lead to eventual rejection of the Bin-nan complex. Third, promote a monitoring group including legislators, experts, and local groups that will closely watch the project as it attempts to meet its multiple conditions of approval. To SAVE, the most important meaning of this press conference was to announce that the approval of Bin-nan is not complete and that the battle will continue.

HAPPY FOR PRESIDENT!

By Taiwan Correspondent Wan-chih Yin



The black-faced spoonbill will not be absent from the hottest news stories in Taiwan. Recently, SAVE members from National Taiwan University introduced this endangered bird as Taiwan's latest "candidate" in the current presidential election. "Happy", a shortened version of the black-faced spoonbill's Taiwanese name, is a character created by SAVE

to express the plight of the spoonbill, which is seriously threatened by the Bin-nan EIA approval.

Why does Happy want to join the campaign? Because although the Bin-nan EIA has been approved against all reason, none of the candidates has so far expressed any concern for the issue. Happy will announce its "black-paper" policies one by one, trying to get a response from other candidates and force them to express their views on Bin-nan and the environment.

Please visit Happy's election headquarters on-line at <http://www.bp.ntu.edu.tw/~savetwn>.

WETLANDS EXCHANGE UNITES ACTIVISTS

This December delegates from Russia, China, and Taiwan met with Bay Area environmentalists to discuss the protection of Asian migratory birds and their wetland habitats. SAVE hosted two delegates from Taiwan for the exchange, which was organized by Earth Island Institute's Baikal Watch and China Biodiversity Project. The participants saw a variety of Bay Area projects dealing with land conservation and habitat protection. They also strategized to protect the Oriental white stork, the crested ibis and the black-faced spoonbill.

The exchange fostered cooperation across international boundaries and resulted in the formation of the East Asia Migratory Bird Network. The objective of the network is to enhance both local and inter-regional research, conservation, and restoration programs aimed at the wetland habitats of



Exchange participants in spoonbill disguise

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migratory birds and other species. The network could be a powerful tool for the long-term survival of these birds which depend on a number of habitats for their survival.

SAVE UPDATE

Student Delegation Headed for Taiwan

Students from Randy Hester's environmental planning studio, along with SAVE members, will be make a trip to Taiwan in March. The group will share their findings and further their research of the spoonbill and the surrounding environmental issues.

Spoonbill Auction

In February, SAVE hosted a fundraising auction in honor of Taiwanese New Year. SAVE would like to thank everyone who contributed to the effort, which raised almost \$2,000.

SAVE Report Available

A second printing has been made of SAVE's report, which details its research and alternative proposal for the Bin-nan site. To purchase a copy, please contact us at the email or phone number listed above. Prices are \$25 by hand-delivery, \$30 by U.S. mail, and \$35 by international mail.

HELLO FROM CHI-CHAO THE SPOONBILL



Hi guys! What's new? I've been so busy since I wrote you last. My new 'friend' Junichi is a real political activist, and has made me excited about political and environmental issues too. Now I know what you guys have been raising such a ruckus about . . . if we don't speak up, we might lose our beautiful home.

I've been spreading the word about Chi-ku and working hard to get Happy elected president. In between, me and my friends are busy showing off for all the tourists in Chi-ku. After all, they might be the key to us staying here in the future. Gotta go!

Love, Your Friend, Chi-chao.