



WWF Qinling Project Newsletter

Issue 13 October to December 2006

Special thanks to WWF Netherlands and the Foundation of Ermenegildo Zegna for their financial support of Qinling Project Phase II.

Participatory Approach Adopted in the Second Eco-Tourism Training

Following the first eco-tourism training for NR team in June, 2006, which has been evaluated as a great success by the participants, WWF organized the second sustainable eco-tourism planning and management training on Oct 23-28, 2006, mainly targeting at NR decision makers. Over twenty participants from nature reserves which are currently operating or planning to develop eco-tourism attended the training.

The objective of this training is to analyze the latest concept on sustainable eco-tourism development, clarify basic principles, standards, as well as related policies/regulations, and thus help the decision makers to better comprehend the eco-tourism vision by considering biodiversity conservation, culture heritage protection and sustainable community development. The training is lectured by three experienced experts in tourism research, laws and regulations, tourist dispute handling, and planning/management.

Apart from theoretical lectures, the training has introduced participatory approach, by which independent thinking as well as team work was promoted. For instance, one topic was to design logos and slogans for each nature reserve. After the design, representatives were required to present their ideas to the listeners for comments. All participants have delivered impressive works, depicting nature reserves with creative drawings, well-written slogans, and a true love for nature reserve.

After the three-day training, participants evaluated it by positive feedback and suggestions for future improvement. Two experts also paid a visit to Heihe Forest Park and Laoxiancheng Nature Reserve, and gave constructive advice to tourism development.



↑ The training combines the lecturing and participatory approach, which has scored very good effects.



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Construction of Laoxiancheng EE Centre in Progress as Planned

Starting from July 1, 2006, WWF has been working with Laoxiancheng Nature Reserve and Zhouzhi County Government to construct a Bamboo Lodge with an EE (Environmental Education) Centre. Now the construction goes as planned and the basic structure of the environmental education center took shape already. The construction has been paused in late November, 2006 as the temperature is too cold for any infrastructure work. The work will be resumed in next spring.

The purpose of the center is to educate tourists before they enter the nature reserve. Also it will create a platform to train and build the capacity of the nature reserve and local community. In addition, the lodge and education centre will provide more job opportunities for local communities and generate more income for Laoxiancheng Nature Reserve's monitoring and patrolling work.



↑ Construction sites of Laoxiancheng Environmental Education Center



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Wildlife Conservation Presentation Educates School Kids

On Nov 3, 2006, an interesting wildlife conservation class is jointly organized by WWF and Guanyinshan Nature Reserve in Longcaoping Primary School in the Qinling Mountains. What makes this activity even more significant is that Mr. Yong Yange, one of the most distinguished panda experts in China, presents the lecture to these small panda fans. The one and half hour presentation is instructional and vivid with panda photos and videos, which are very exciting to the kids because most of them only spot pandas on the drawing books. All the kids here are from mountain areas and they don't really enjoy any access to information as the city kids do. Thus the class is filled with laughter, surprises and joy. And all the six teachers and several parents attended class with great interest.

This day is a series of happy events and this panda's life presentation is just one of them. A small scale book donation ceremony started the day and WWF presented dictionaries, extra-curriculum books and other reading materials to the shabby little library which only has a dozen of old books. And the day is ended with an award delivered to each student who sat for the contest following the conservation class. They are rewarded with stationeries for their effort and enthusiasm to be part of the wildlife conservation force. One of the top awards goes to a five-year boy who lives with his mom in the school as their home is too far away in the mountain.

The purpose of this activity is to prepare students with the concept of wildlife conservation at an early age and they might influence their parents or relatives and persuade them not to do any poaching, herb collection and logging. This day's activities is a component of the Qinling Tunnel Giant Panda habitat management project jointly launched by WWF and Guanyinshan Nature Reserve in September 2005, which focuses on bamboo forest restoration, habitat management and sustainable community development in this corridor area.



↑ Wildlife conservation presentation by Mr. Yong, one of the most famous panda experts in China.

↗ Book donation



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CPO Finance Training is Held in Xi'an

On Nov 6-7, 2006, a CPO finance training is held in Xi'an to enhance the professional capacities of whole finance team and to ensure the effective & efficient support to CPO. The trainers are Elma Krijgsman from WWF NL and Billy Wu from WWF International. This training provides a great opportunity for the team to understand donor's financial requirements, and to comply with WWF international policies.

The main topics include project cycle management and project cycle budget management, WWF NL's financial requirements, contractual compliance, 3rd party contract management, contract preparation procedure & budget negotiation, preparation of cost effective budget, and key areas for program finance review and etc.

The whole Beijing finance team, field offices' financial staff and all of the Xi'an office staff participated in the training. During the training group discussions are also held so that program staff and finance staff could communicate on how to enhance the work efficiency.



↑ Elma Krijgsman from WWF Netherlands is giving the presentation



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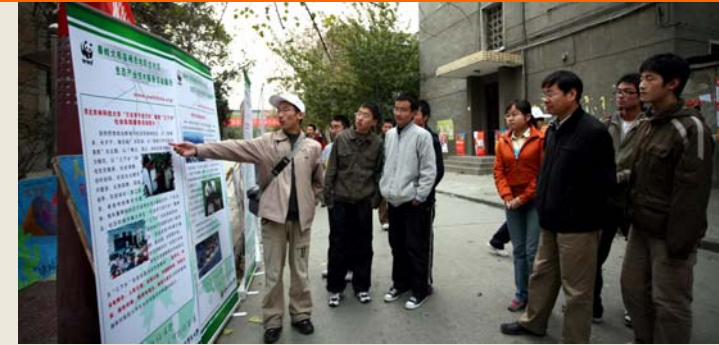
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WWF Volunteer Tour Exhibition Mobilized More College Students

As a follow up of the WWF Qinling Giant Panda Habitat and Neighboring Communities Economic Development Project organized in July 2006, volunteers in Northwest A & F University have held a tour exhibition in selected colleges in Shaanxi province to publicize the project achievements and mobilize more students to participate in similar community work.

This tour exhibition includes two major sections: WWF's work in the Qinling Mountains, and volunteer participation in the community work. It has traveled to more than four colleges during the weekends in late November and early December. All the partnering college authorities have given very positive support to the organization and coordination of this activity. Take Xi'an, the capital city of Shaanxi province as an example, the exhibition was held in Northwest University and Northwest Polytechnical University, two of the most famous universities in the Northwest region, and the viewers reached around 2000. Over 700 students took part in the exit interview, giving suggestions/comments and also expressing wishes to be part of the project. Many viewers have left their contact forms to be volunteers.

This vivid photo exhibition is a very useful tool to publicize WWF's image among the young students who will be our potential partners in project work and the major nature conservation force in the future.



↑ Exhibition guided by student volunteers to interact with viewers.



↑ Students are giving suggestions/comments on the organization of this activity.



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Volunteer Awarding Ceremony is Held

On December 26, 2006, WWF and Northwest A & F University jointly held a volunteer awarding ceremony for students with remarkable achievements in the WWF Qinling Giant Panda Habitat and Neighboring Communities Economic Development Project organized in July. The purpose of this activity is to affirm students' effort in community work and to mobilize more students for the next phase cooperation. Over two hundred participants from WWF, Northwest A & F University and Shaanxi Forestry Department attended the ceremony.

This ceremony is the summary of a series of activities organized by WWF and the University on the community project. Since July 10th, 2006, 20 volunteer groups have conducted baseline studies in around 100 villages neighboring nature reserves, visited around 3100 rural households, distributed over 7000 materials and organized 150 trainings, benefiting 3000 villagers. Based on the information collected in the field, students have submitted over 60 proposals, out of which 11 are finalized for implementation with reference to technical support from experts from WWF, Shaanxi Forestry Department and related research institutes. The projects will be implemented in 2007.

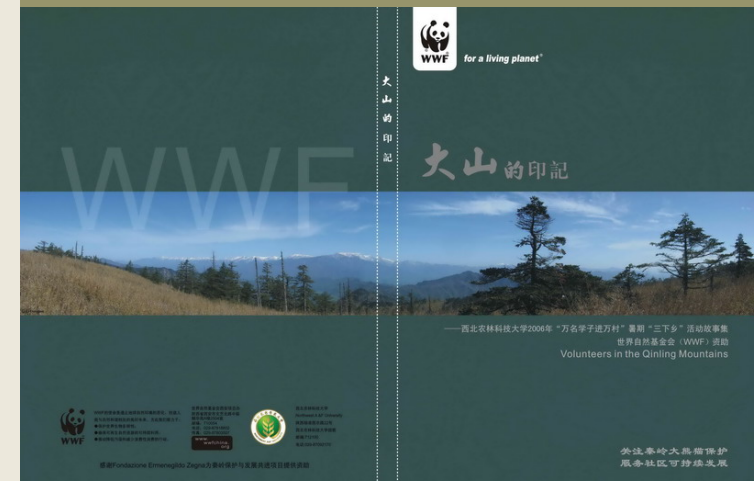
WWF is very confident that with the success of the first phase cooperation the scale and scope of the future projects will be expanded to benefit more community people. "This ceremony is not only a summary of previous achievements. Rather it is a new starting point for us with experience learnt and new challenges ahead. We hope more students could participate in the nature conservation work, and take responsibility to serve the most needed communities," commented by Mr. Liu Xiaohai, Head of WWF Xi'an Office.

One of the associated project outputs includes Volunteers in the Qinling Mountains, a story book written by volunteers based upon their own experience in the community work. "It is a tremendously new experience for me as it provides me the chance to see real rural China and the conservation work done in the Qinling Mountains. For the first time I see my knowledge learnt in the campus and my effort in the community work are transformed into a tangible and feasible proposal, and I do feel rewarded," one of the volunteers wrote in his article.

The project, supported by WWF, will be very important in mitigating the conflict between conservation and development and finding realistic multi-win approaches to realize sustainable development of the communities.



↑ Awarding ceremony



↑ Volunteers in the Qinling Mountains have been published.



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Qinling Project Second Phase Evaluation Conducted

On December 11-19, 2006, Evaluation of second phase of Qinling giant panda conservation and community development project was conducted. The evaluation is led by two external consultants with profound expertise on nature conservation and community development. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the project implementation and impact of phase II (FY 2004 to 2007), based on which suggestions and comments will be given to further strengthen the existing successful experience and improve project performance. The conclusions made from the evaluation will be crucial to the third phase project design as Qinling project is approaching its closing stage of second phase.

Before the evaluation team started for the field trip, Qinling team presented an overall picture of the projects taken in the past, successful experiences learnt and future challenges regarding wildlife (giant panda) conservation and community development. Individual interviews are also made with team members respectively to clarify key index for evaluation. The meeting with our key partner Shaanxi Forestry Department on the second day was very fruitful and encouraging with authorities introducing the wildlife protection situation in the province and the changes brought to the conservation sector and communities as a result of cooperation with WWF.

In the following days, evaluation team visited WWF's other partners in the field, including Heihe National Forest Park, Houzhenzi Township government, Laoxiancheng Nature Reserve, Banfangzi Township government, Guanyinshan Nature Reserve and Northwest A & F University. The field work provided the chances to talk with project beneficiaries and to see real work done for an objective judgment.

The team also met with Plan China, another international NGO working in the province on anti-poverty and community development, and had discussions on different work approaches and roles of NGOs. Both party also exchanged information and expressed wish for cooperation.

The evaluation work has concluded and Qinling team is confident with our expertise and devotion we can move forward for a more promising third phase work.



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