



NEWSLETTER

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When all giant panda habitats are integrated into a whole network protected at landscape level, it will function like a beating green heart. In this green heart, forest and grassland are its muscles, rivers and lakes its blood, the songs of cicadas and frogs its rhythmic beats, and winds and rainbows its beautiful color. Let's join hands to protect this beating green heart. By 2030, a viable giant panda population will live in the well-managed forests of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, which in turn will provide ecological services to the people living further downstream.



A Long March: A Green Heart for Green Reconstruction

With half-period on-the-ground implementation of the Green Heart of China-Integrated Landscape Conservation and Sustainable Development in Giant Panda Ranges in the Upper Reaches of the Yangtze River, a mid-term project progress review was carried out of the overall programme through onsite seeing and indoor workshop with attendance of implementation teams of WWF China, network partners of WWF Netherlands, UK and Switzerland, during February 20-26, 2009. This review was held under special but difficult conditions of 5.12 earthquake, which caused severe damages to infrastructures and panda habitats.

With a green heart for green reconstruction, the field trip tracked the earthquake causes along Qinling, Minshan and Qionglai Mountains, covering thousands of roads in panda areas.

Keeping on efforts for a smooth exchange

In the earlier spring, the Guanyinshan Nature Reserve is diffused with fog, trees are covered by crystal snow, and pandas may play with their kids. Among the five isolated giant panda populations in Qinling Mountains, this nature reserve plays a very important role in its location to connect the east and west populations. However, the National Road 108 since 1970s has aggravated the degree of population isolation. The Qinling Tunnel since 1999 has created a change to reconnect the isolated populations through vegetation recovery along the abandoned roads. WWF has initiated the recovery of this tunnel corridor by planting 100 ha of bamboo stands. Bamboos are growing vigorously. The director of nature reserve says panda droppings were found near 300 meters along the abandoned road, and other wild animals frequently were captured by infra-cameras, showing the habitat improved for pandas. "Keeping on our efforts, a smooth exchange of pandas along the tunnel corridor will come soon," he shows a hope.

Hopes flying with bees

The Qingmochuan Nature Reserve, the western gate of Qinling, plays a bridged role in reconnecting giant panda populations between Qinling and Minshan. The earthquake caused severe losses to this nature reserve, 3 of 6 protection stations were totally destroyed, 3 communities need wholly resettle, and villagers from 2 communities will lose their agricultural lands. Considering the geographical specialty and earthquake causes, WWF has expanded the bee-keeping project to benefit more households. Near 200 beekeeping boxes were distributed to villagers, followed by more relevant m

asures and technologies. "I am deeply moved by attendance of hundreds of villagers in this event, and WWF as a global organization for environment protection, it is our duty to introduce new alternative livelihood solutions," Dr. Matthias Diemer from WWF Switzerland says in his ceremony speech. "It needs mutual actions to find new feasible solutions to alternative livelihood and alternative energy, so we are wanted to know what you really need," Fan Zhiyong ,director of Species Programme added. Laughing, smiling, hopes flying with bees.

In tea gardens, we have seeded the hopes

WWF has demonstrated 3,000 ha of tea plantation in Yuquanba village to increase the income of local communities. Tea seeds have been planted since August 2008, and villagers will harvest after 3-5 years. In the tea garden, WWF network partners are showing strong interests asking the local project manager how many years to harvest and how much the villagers benefit. We have a same destination in the tea garden to seed hopes together.



The earliest, but the worst

Wolong as one of the earliest nature reserves, but now it is the worst for collapsed houses, destroyed road and numerous landslides by earthquake for its close to the epicenter. The entry to nature reserve is closed to the public. Permitted and guided by local policemen, we had a chance to see what really happened. Along the way, there are full of rocks, cracks, broken bridges, collapsed houses and numerous landslides.

The report by nature reserve says 98% of houses were collapsed, and 3 protection stations were completely destroyed. Numerous landslides caused 7,870 ha of habitat loss, covering 6.9% of the total. The total losses are up to 1.768 billion RMB.

The previous panda breeding and research center, supported by WWF, is also totally destroyed and abandoned, waiting for evaluation for its possible use. Except 1 dead and 1 missing, other 41 captive pandas are safe, but temporarily transferred to other places. A new semi-nature breeding and research center covering 66 ha is on the site selecting in Huangcaoping for structure designing, where 3 villages with 150 households need to resettle down in the lower areas, and they will lose agricultural lands, but aided by governmental insurance system.

Asking by Dr. Matthias Diemer how long the eco-tourism will be restored since it seems that all are related to eco-tourism, "It depends on road reconstruction. Road construction will start in May 2009, and finish within one and half year," explained by staff of nature reserve.

The nature reserve showed some concerns on the term-over of ecological forest compensation. Mr. Fan suggested to establish a compensation system after national ecological forest compensation policy.

WWF has conducted a series of projects such as monitoring and patrolling, wood-saving stove, home stay eco-tourism, drinking water for humankind and livestock, waste management, etc., but almost all piloted projects were totally destroyed by earthquake.

Wolong is the earliest for itself and WWF, but now it is the worst. All depend on time and confidence.

Once a pond, but now dried up

The name of Longxi-Honghou Nature Reserve in Chinese is a dragon pond, but now this pond totally dried up for water flow changes caused by Earthquake.

In Nanyue village, a mountain called Nan Yue flew off and hit the opposite, 3 families buried, 9 dead, and the village manager survived but pushed 8 meters away by the mass airflow. In this village, 7 communities with 400 households and 780 villagers live near the entry of this nature reserve, and 19% of houses were collapsed.



The communications and education center, one of 3 protection stations, was totally destroyed by the earthquake. With investigation of 1.4 million, it covers 800 square meters for 700 animal samples and 2000 plant samples for communications and education. WWF shared one section for its communications and education as well as other relevant works. It is waiting for recommendations by expert evaluation.

The sun was setting down to the hill. Looking back the green clusters of bamboos over slope of the hill behind the center, Mr. Fan signed, “That is the suitable place pandas like to go.”

Escape or rescue

In the visit of Baishuihe Nature Reserve, a similar disaster falls down to a community. A pitch of mountain flew off to the opposite, and buried 10 home stay households, and some on their banquet.

The bridge to Wangjiaping protection station was collapsed. Standing on the bank of river, we can see that the houses of protection station and village were in shambles. But it is highly moved to hear the patrollers got out of protection station to rescue villagers when the earthquake happened

Daping protection station was also totally destroyed. In the relief actions, WWF supported establish a removal house for this protection station.

Zhongba village as demonstration site, WWF supported 4 biodigestors, but one destroyed by the earthquake, providing three meals a day and hot water for a household in summer, and 45 wood saving stoves, saving about 70% of wood comparing to the traditional stoves.

WWF supported the pipeline for drinking water to 3 communities with 91 households and 426 villagers in this village.

The director says that forest ownership reform will start soon. “Is it a challenge or chance for giant pandas?” WWF network partners concerned. “We need the solutions,” he explained with uncertainties, “WWF may conduct some pilot works to seek some feasible solutions.”

Ending words

Over 30 years with efforts, WWF have made a deep friendship with giant pandas and people there, but all are gone with this earthquake. We are again standing at a starting point. It is a long way to create a better future for giant pandas. All depend on the time and confidence. A long march has launched out into the green reconstruction with a bigger ambition echoed by the mid-term project review of the Green Heart of China.

Tunnel Construction for Giant Panda Corridor

The construction of Tudiling Tunnel was official launched in Mao county on March 2, 2009. Two years later, the Sichuan provincial road 302 cackling on Tudiling will be abandoned and all the vehicle s to Beichuan and Mianzhu can go through directly via the tunnel but not tramp over Tudiling.

Tudiling is located in Mao county, Aba prefecture. It is the watershed of Min river and Fu river. Its highest level is 2,200 m above the sea. In history, Tudiling is the only connection between A and B populations of Minshan wild giant panda. The tunnel will make 11 km road abandoned and 8,000 ha area restored back to panda's natural habitat. Therefore, the tunnel will be significant for giant panda and its habitat conservation in Minshan.

Supported by Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), WWF cooperated with Sichuan Forestry Department, Sichuan Institute of Forestry Investigation and Planning, Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Forestry Bureau of Mao county together to kick off the restoration of Tudiling panda corridor.

During his visit to Sichuan in April 2007, James Leape, the General Director of WWF, reached a common ground with Sichuan provincial government on Tudiling corridor restoration and tunnel construction. In the same year, WWF supported Mao forestry bureau to carry out small-scale restoration along 302 national road through cutting down Chinese pine and planting arrow bamboo to restore biodiversity and blaze space for panda. So far, 60 ha of man planted forest has been restored successfully.

There are about 700 wild giant pandas in Minshan, which are divided into two populations, namely, A and B, by the scientists. Tudiling is the connecting point of the two populations. It was the only path for wild animals in Minshan, such as giant panda and gold monkey in history. The only path was blocked in 1950' because of logging, farming and road construction. In 1980's, people planted a big area of Chinese pine. For many years, other kind of plant is almost extinct because of the high density of Chinese pine. Normally, there are only 190 pines per hectare. However, in Tudiling, the number is over 2,200.



Tunnel construction has been launched in Tudiling corridor areas for reconnection of isolated giant panda populations.



Establish Community Development Funding System to Promote Eco-economy Development

The main constraint for villagers to develop economy is the lack of financial and technical support. Traditionally, “Rural Credit Cooperative Union” is the common provider for villagers to take a loan. However, due to the complex procedures, the need assurance of warrantor and some other petty liability may fail the application, so villagers might have no ways to get a due loan to develop. Sometimes even the fund is available, but without technical support, problem still can not be resolved. So how to break through these limitations, not only provide fund but provide technical support in order to establish a long-term favorable mechanism to ensure sustainable economic development has become an obvious problem. After intensive discussion with the Pingheliang NR, WWF Xi’an Office has provided a solution which was combined with ECBP project. At present, a “community development fund” has been established successfully in Pingheliang NR, Shaanxi Province. The purpose of this fund is to encourage local residents to develop alternative livelihood, minimize the negative impact of natural environment. This project is different from traditional model as it respects local residents own desires, allows them to select the most suitable development mode for themselves which greatly motivated them to participate in the project. WWF Xi’an Office will organize technical trainings; provide financial support from “community development fund” to the local residents to help them alleviating poverty as early as possible. At present, the project is implemented smoothly.

A New Attempt with a Special Background

Promoting the ownership reform of collectively owned forest is one important decision made by Chinese government which is a necessary requirement to ensure and enhance rural basic management system. At present Shaanxi Province has 8.87 million ha. of collectively owned forest which takes up 43% of Shaanxi land areas. The right of about 6 million ha. has be contracted to individual households, but other 2.87 million ha. , the ownership is unclear, benefit apportionment is not balanced. So how to ensure villagers to obtain interest, meanwhile, the ecosystem of forest will not be damaged by excessive use, so the sustainable development and management of natural resources can be ensured that means harmonizing the financial benefit and ecological conservation has become a new challenge in this new situation. WWF has accumulated relative experience during long time natural resources conservation work. Facing this new challenge, we hope to get cooperation and then contribute to the new situation to achieve a win-win on the conservation and economic development. After investigation and preparation, Huangguanshan Nature Reserve, Ningshan County has been selected as a cooperative pilot site. WWF wish to obtain successful cooperation for further engagement.

Sustainable Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine

In the Qinling mountains, there is one kind of traditional Chinese medicine- Galla Chinensis, it has functions such as arresting coughing, diarrhea, hematemesis, edema and also anti-oxidant. It is only distributed in East Asia: China, North Korea, Japan and the South Peninsula. In China, because Qinling mountains was rich in Galla Chinensis in the past, it was honored as “one of the five treasures in Qinling”. The Galla Chinensis is produced from insect gall, mainly from aphids which parasitize a plant called Rhus Chinensis Mill in summer and on moss in winter. However, in the 1990s, because of related economic benefit, people cut the forest randomly, damaging the ecosystem in Qinling Mountains. As the result, the insect gradually lost its habitat, so the output of Galla Chinensis was reduced accordingly. As a result, people could not see this treasure very easily anymore.

There is another kind of treasure in the Qinling Mountains—Asarum. Because it has functions such as arresting fever, and properties such as an antibiotic effect and calmness, it also encountered local residents’ excessive excavation. They even put it in the daily diet to seek a medicinal effect. But the local residents actually don’t know if the Asarum taken in too high dosage, it will bring some side-effects. This kind of behavior has brought serious consequences for some people. for instance: kidney failure and so on.

This lamentable information has all been obtained from the conference of “traditional medicinal plant protection, sustainable management and monitor” held on 12 to 13 March in Xi’an. The experts who attended this conference declared this information. Due to the revelation of these problems such as: over-excavation of medicinal plant resources, public lack of environmental protection consciousness, particularly in the penury area, the wild medicinal plant is major income for local residents and so on, the conference was convoked by WWF Xi'an project office coordinated with Shaanxi Province forest division, Sichuan forest division, Shaanxi Pingheliang nature reserve, TRAFFIC, IUCN, WWF Beijing Office, the representative from Dacigou village as well as professionals from university which are all related to ECBP project.

During the conference period, everybody spoke freely, debated mutually, brought many precious proposals combining the actual situation and many years floor-line working experience. On occasion even when the break time was coming, the addresser still spoke sincerely, and the audiences were also concentrated on the presentation, meaning that nobody realized that the conference was approaching the end. The atmosphere of conference was warm and lively, it even attracted waiters to listen. Everyone who attended this conference has a passion for natural resource conservation, and they provided some effective solutions through the different points of view for the implementation of ECBP.

The mountain area in the middle and upper basin of Yangtze River has the important value in biodiversity conservation not only for China but also for the whole world. How to reasonably protect, develop, and sustainable manage and guide the local residents to develop substitutable livelihoods has become more and more arduous and honorable duties for natural resource conservation staff. It requires that we continuously summarize experiences and create new ways to carry out tasks to arouse people’s consciousness of natural resource conservation. Let us look forward together to that day which is full of happiness and satisfaction...for what reason? Eg: for the progress we have made.



Intensive group discussion in the workshop.

Green Agriculture for Cleaner River

“Last year, our association sold about 30 ton Sichuan pepper to Carrefour throughout the country, ”Mr. He Youxin, from Mao county pepper association was introducing his experience to the farmers in Yunqiao village on January 6, 2009.

Mr. He was invited by WWF to come to Yunqiao and Ande villages in order to exchange his experience in green agriculture development.

Yunqiao and Ande villages, located in Pi county close to Chengdu, are just besides Botiao and Zouma rivers. The two rivers are the tributaries of Min river, where WWF is implementing freshwater conservation project. It is good for the rivers’ health to promote green agree culture, which can effectively reduce the pollution of chemical fertilizer and pesticide, in the two villages. With the competitive market, farmer’s association is the best way to promote green agriculture in the two villages.

The pepper association was established in 2005 in Mao County. With WWF’s support from 2006, the association achieved a great progress in capacity building, marketing and green agriculture development. In the last two years, they successfully promoted their products with Carrefour supper market chain throughout the country.

Mr. He shared his core experience, such as organizational structure, sales and technical service to the villagers. “Association needs a leader with passion, power and foresight. At the same time, this guy should be selfless and pay back to the community,” he stressed.

Through such experience exchange, the villagers from Yunqiao and Yuantian obtained a lot of knowledge about operation of farmer’s association. During the meeting, they also discussed about eco-agriculture certification and registration of farmer’s association.

In the near future, WWF will cooperate with Sichuan Agriculture Department to make a all-rounded environment survey for the two villages and formulate an integrated development plan.



He Youxin (in the front) is introducing his experience.

Establish Health Archive For River

The common citizen would participate river health scorecard action after the Spring Festival.

This news was from a scorecard conference held by WWF and Chengdu Urban River Association (CURA) in the early January 2009. River health scorecard was kicked off in 2008. Despite of the earthquake, it grasps more and more attention from the general public. In 2009, WWF and CURA will conduct it for Fu River, the mother river of Chengdu.

“As pilot project, we hope that it will be promoted to the entire Yangtze basin and provide a new way for river conservation,” Mr. Ling Lin, the head of WWF Chengdu Office, said in the meeting.

The participants included experts, volunteers, and local media. During the meeting, they fully appreciated the project’s achievements. They also provided many constructive suggestions in scorecard contents, survey method and general public’s engagement.

It is long-term and dynamic work to set the health archive for river. WWF and CURA will continue it in 2009 and call on volunteers from this city to participate this activity.

The report of river health will be developed into different versions, such as public version, enterprise version and government version in order to accelerate more sectors of the society, including government, enterprise, citizen and farmer in river conservation.



Botiao River Health Scorecard Report issued in the meeting.

River Scorecard Action

WWF and CURA (Chengdu Urban River Association) jointly held a River Scorecard Action, named “Love Chengdu, Love Water”, on March 7, 2009. More than 20 citizens participated. They started from Chengdu’s freshwater resource – Botiao river to Fu river, one of the two urban rivers of Chengdu and ended at Huanglong brook.

The participants marked the score according to the smell, transparency and situation of garbage along the river. The score of this time would account 30% of 2009 final score. The suggestions from these citizens would be brought to the annual report of river health scorecard.

The participants found that the water quality is so different in the upper, middle and lower river. The water is so clear that people can see the riverbed in the up stream because it is directly from Min river. However, the water becomes thick and smelly in the middle and lower part of the river. Furthermore, the garbage and construction make it worse along the river.

“In the past, I did not think the river has such close relation with my life. I learnt so much this time and hope to participate more similar activities in future,” a participant said.



Collecting water from Botiao river.

Wetland Study Tour in Hong Kong

WWF organized a study tour for wetland conservation and management in Hong Kong from March 9 to 13, 2009. The important local partners and stakeholders of WWF-TCCC program in Sichuan participated the trip. The visitors went to Mai Po, a world famous wetland nature reserve in Hong Kong in order to learn how Hong Kong people's experience in wetland conservation.

Hong Kong is a city with huge population and very limited space. However, the people still keep space for wetland conservation. They established wetland nature reserve and park to popularize wetland conservation knowledge to the general public. Therefore, WWF designed this trip for the local partners and stakeholders to learn the knowledge and experience in wetland conservation, environment education and river basin management.

Wetland eco-system is a critical part of a river basin. Its powerful eco-function, such as water cleansing, flood preventing as well as its biodiversity, is irreplaceable for big river basin conservation. Mai Po, for example, is only 380 hectares. As the last relay station for the migrate bird from Siberia to Australia, Mai Po has rich biodiversity, including more than 400 vertebrates, including 27 endangered birds. There will be 58,000 birds living through the winter in Mai Po. It also has the largest mangrove forest of China, which provides a paradise for many animals.



Giant Pandas in Wild: Beyond the Numbers

With almost sixty-years efforts by Chinese governments and 30-years by WWF on giant panda conservation, what a real situation is now faced to giant pandas in wild? The report by Fan Zhiyong, Director of Species Programme of WWF China, at Chinese National Geography Forum unveils the mask beyond the numbers.

“The fragmentation is a real challenging problem for giant pandas in wild,” Mr. Fan says, “It is not only the habitats, but the information, management, and administration as well.”

The nature reserve-based management for giant pandas has been initiated by Chinese government as early in 1965, exceptionally for giant panda as a specific species, particularly with two expansions in 1990s and afterwards. Currently, the number of nature reserve is up to 68. Without any doubt, this management system has played a very important role in securing the habitats for giant pandas. However, Fan pointed out that the demarcation of those previous nature reserves were largely based on the ir administrative boundaries, but not on the practical panda habitat reconnections. The arbitrary boundary fragmentation consequently has transmitted the similar fragmentation effects on the system of information, management and administration.

There are about 1600 giant pandas in wild, but they are fragmented into about 18 sub-populations from 3 or 5 to 200 individuals with habitat isolation one to another. More seriously, Fan analyzed that besides the sub-adults, the old and weak individuals, the reproductive potentiality is very limited for those small isolated populations, even for big ones, if not reconnected.

“Large scale infrastructures, exploitation, and mass tourism have exaggerated the fragmentation, degradation and loss of giant panda habitats,” Fan showed his concerns through case studies of road, railway, dam, and mining by WWF, “More seriously, the most of their impacts are irreversible.”

“A landscape conservation network is urgently needed for an integration and reconnection of habitat, information, management, and administration,” he appealed.

The brittle productive characters have made giant pandas more difficult to tackle the above issues.



Fan Zhiyong, Director of Species Programme of WWF China gave a report on giant pandas on Chinese National Geography Forum.



Panda friends on the forum.

6-8 years of sub-adult period, they can only give an estimated maximum of 6 babies in life, not so many as we expected. This number is even over estimated for as short as 2-3 days of oestrus period of both sexes, once annually. Once missing up the mating chances, the rather that censoriously in mate choices, both sexes have to wait for another year.

The newly born panda babies are small size of the naked mice, 100 g around, 1/900th of the mother, and need a long time of tender care by female pandas. Unlike the kangaroos with a baby pouch, leaving babies alone when getting out to seek food are dangerous.

The low survival rate of panda babies and sub-adults is more or less related to these evolutionary behavioral and reproductive characters, and become serious among those isolated small populations.

The past earthquake has caused the severe affections on giant pandas, most potentially the fragmentation of panda habitats and the isolation of panda populations, derived from large areas of vegetation loss for landslides and their secondary causes. These affections may keep a long time. “Although the estimated direct habitat loss is about 2.5% of total, it needs to keep in mind that the loss is up to 5% to 55% in specific individual nature reserves with corridor role of geographic locations for reconnection,” Fan says.

“I had a heartquake when I made a field trip to earthquake areas over a half year later,” Fan shows his feeling by pictures, “It really needs time to recover the life of humankind and habitats of pandas.”

It is not over appraised that both China and the world have kept all efforts to strengthen giant pandas. It is the earliest protected species in 1962, followed by nature reserve-based system in 1963. The giant panda is also a pioneer species to conduct the cooperation with international organization in 1981, and to save through a national action since 1983, copulated through a key protection species as national Class I since 1988 and a conservation and management plan in 1992. For the earthquake in particular, Chinese government has initiated a post-earthquake reconstruction programme for giant pandas.

However, the real effects and implementation of all these conservation plans and actions has largely depended on a powerful giant panda conservation friendly biased law and long-term conservation plans and budgets. In fact, there has been only the Law of Wildlife Conservation in China since 1989, but the habitats for key species and the compensation to human-wildlife conflicts, both very important for conservation success of giant pandas for huge amount of nature reserves in the remote undeveloped areas.

Taking America as a good example for releasing a specific law with a long term conservation plan and budget to save a national bird, the bald eagle, since 1940, “as a Chinese national treasure, it is now the time to release a giant panda protection biased law for its long-term living survival,” Fan ended.

Down to Business: Five Flavours, One Goal

By Tony Cunningham

Any successful business needs careful planning based, realistic advice and partnerships between multiple stakeholders. Developing sustainable “green businesses” in remote areas for an international market is particularly challenging. Despite these obstacles, the ECBP, run coordinated through WWF Chengdu office project, now has a solid basis for making business links. Based on experience, it is strategic to focus international enterprise development efforts on one species first, then based on the ability to produce good quality, in sufficient quantity, on time and at the right price, then other species can follow at a faster pace. In essence, what the ECBP project in the Upper Yangtze ecoregion is doing is developing partnerships to enhance the opportunities for small-scale producers, enabling business, local government and producers to work together in a multi-stakeholder process. The challenge is choosing the “winning” species. After a year of hard work on ecological and socio-economic baseline surveys for many species, that is exactly what has been done.

A significant leap forward was made during the recent visit of Josef Brinckmann to the ECBP project area. As a result, we are well down the path to achieving a major project goal: improving local livelihoods in the project area through links to an international market. Josef is Vice-President of Research and Development for Traditional Medicinals in California and a leading consultant to the International Trade Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. The focal species that offers win-win benefits is *Schisandra sphenanthera* (nan wuweizi), which is listed in China’s pharmacopoeia alongside its better-known northern relative, *Schisandra chinensis* (bei wuweizi). Both species have the same therapeutic uses and are famed for being five flavoured seeds – literally wu/five (五) wei/flavour (味) zi/seed (子). In Korean, wuweizi fruits are known as *omija* and are used to make a tea (*omija cha*). In Japan, they are called *gomishi*. Very few Traditional Chinese Medicines (TCM) have all five flavours: sourness (shuan), bitterness (ku), spicyness (or pungence) (la), saltiness (xian) and sweetness (tian). These different flavors of TCM not only mean different medical functions, but they also represent different aspects of our lives and are an analogy for progress in the ECBP project:

- **Suan** (sour): More than a flavour, this reflects the purity of the natural landscapes in the nature reserves close to the ECBP areas. It also links to our curiosity, which drives our research in this project;
- **Ku** (bitter): That the ECBP project area was affected by a major earthquake was bitter for the area’s people and for its inevitable effect on project progress;



Josef Brinckmann with a local farmer and member of the Shui-jin TCM Producers Association at one of the ECBP pilot-study villages near to Xuebaoding Nature Reserve in the Upper Yangtze eco-region.



*Dried nanwuweizi (*Schisandra sphenanthera*) fruits.*

- **La** (spicy or pungent): This reflects three things. Firstly, the challenges that people face in post-earthquake reconstruction. Secondly, the aggressiveness with which people increased their harvests of wild medicinal plants as a source of cash immediately after the earthquake. Thirdly, the challenge (and opportunity) of ensuring practical outcomes for people's livelihoods and nature from the ECBP project;
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- **Xian** (saltiness): Apart from the salty flavour, *xian* is considered to link to something colourful. Not only is this the case with the beautiful red fruits of many species of *wuweizi* (*Schisandra*), but also the rich and colourful cultures using *wuweizi* and other plants in so many ways.
- **Tian** (sweetness): Finally, the sweetness of success: the link with a caring, new business partners in developing a market for the southern *wuweizi*.

Samples of *nan wuweizi* have been collected from two pilot-study sites for quality control tests. This fruiting season, the first 500 kg batch of fresh fruit will be properly dried, processed and packed by the Producer Association started by the ECBP project and then transported to Shanghai. Harvesters will get a stable price at a better rate than they have received before for this product. By September 2009, a sustainable harvest management plan and will have been completed. So will a scoping study with recommendations for organic certification. Based on this trial shipment, a full scale, sustainable harvest will start in 2010.

This sweet success has wider implications than for *wuweizi* enterprises. It can also be a new model way of linking conservation, livelihoods and enterprise. Why is this link between small-scale producers and modern markets important? All over the world, consumer awareness and the “retail revolution” are reshaping the way herbal medicines and foods are produced, procured and retailed. This can affect the whole value chain—from consumers, to retailers, to wholesalers, processors and producers. Common questions about herbal medicine products are: Where does this product come from? Is it of a high quality, safe and effective? Is it produced without pesticides and inorganic fertilizers? For wild harvested species in international markets, consumers also want to know: is it sustainably harvested? How do local people benefit? This trend has big implications for the competitiveness and future viability of small-scale producers. With the right sort of support, small-scale producers can be efficient and reliable providers of quality produce – and good business partners. The first focal species may have five flavours – but this is our one goal - good, sustainable business benefiting livelihoods and landscapes.

WWF Launched Integrated Conservation in the Upper Jialing River

WWF, cooperating with Pingwu county government, officially launched integrated conservation in Huoxi river, which is the upper reaches of Jialing river on January 13, 2009. Furthermore, a management team, composed by a deputy head of Pingwu county, senior manager from Huaneng Company, was established to coordinate all conservation-related issues.

Sustainable Development Continued in Disaster Area

WWF carried out post disaster survey in Napu and Lili villages in Mao county from February 16 to 22, 2009. WWF consultants visited the farmers and organized group discussion among them. According to the farmer's real needs, WWF and the villagers got together to develop each development plan. At the same time, the consultants also helped the villagers establish two management teams in each village. The management team will play very important roll in future sustainable development project.

The Mao County Pepper Association Appreciated WWF

March 10, the Mao County Pepper Association presented an honorable flag to WWF Chengdu Office in order to appreciate what WWF had done after the earthquake.

Liangshan Water Bird Brochure

Liangshan Water Bird Brochure was developed for local nature reserve staff by the end of this March. This brochure was designed to improve the ranger's capability of identifying water bird. The brochure also records *Plegadis falcinellus* during the pre-survey, which is the second time to see this kind of endangered bird.

Reconstruction in Laohegou

With WWF support, Laohegou forest farm completed series construction activities recently. The farm facilities were badly damaged by the earthquake. They repaired the eco-lodge and environment education center. The farm workers also used some timbers by the earthquake to build a wild animal observing station. With the reconstruction, this farm resumed its capability of eco-tourism.

Environment Education in Liangshan

An environment education survey was jointly carried out in the community and the school neighboring the nature reserve by WWF and Liangshan Forestry Bureau from November 2008 to March 2009. The follow-up workshop was also held during the same period. A new environment education strategy for the community and school in Liangshan was developed based on the field investigation and workshop with local partners.

Irrigation System Construction in Longxi-Hongkou

Diageo, a global drinking business, via WWF, supported Lianhe village in Longxi-Hongkou nature reserve to set up irrigation system in order to help the villagers resume their agriculture. The village was seriously damaged by the 5.12 earthquake in last May.

WWF Xi'an Staffs Visited Disaster Area Again

Supports by the eco-friendly building designer, a two-day trip to Qingmuchuan Nature Reserve was carried out to discuss the next phase of major reconstructed activities that are scheduled to be implemented over the first half of 2009.



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