



WWF CHINA MINSHAN PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Co-monitoring & patrolling network to be built among nature reserves in Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi

From July 27-30, 2005 WWF Minshan Landscape Programme visited Dongyanggou and Maozai nature reserves (NRs) in north-eastern Sichuan and Qingmichuan nature reserve in the south of Shaanxi. We negotiated with related parties to set up a co-monitoring and patrolling network in Dongyanggou NR and Maozai NR of Qingchuan county in the north-eastern Sichuan, Baishuijiang NR, Yuhe NR and Jianshan NR in southern Gansu and Qingmichuan NR in the southern Shaanxi.

These six nature reserves at the boundary of Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi provinces are threatened by poaching activities more seriously than other places due to unclear administration responsibilities. To better conserve the panda habitat in this area, the WWF Minshan Landscape Programme is planning to set up a monitoring and patrolling network among these NRs, and will further support Maozai, Yuhe, Dongyanggou and Qingmichuan NRs' capacity build-up in the next step.

The area connecting the six nature reserves is Yaodu town of Qingchuan County, and it was identified in 2003 as a WWF priority area WWF for its critical role as panda corridor.

New nature reserve to be built in southern Gansu

Boyu-Zhongluhe nature reserve is to be built in Zhouqu and Wenxian County of southern Gansu, according to the negotiation between WWF and Gansu Forestry Department. The deal was reached at the end of June during WWF's visit to northern Minshan. This new nature reserve will connect two different populations of giant pandas, known among scientists as the Minshan C population and the Minshan A population.

Besides supporting the set-up of the new nature reserve, WWF is to support the capacity build-up of southern Gansu's nature reserves and the legalization of the Jianshan nature reserve.

During the June visit, many flowering bamboos could be seen all over the mountains. According to the Sichuan Forestry Department, there are 9 species of bamboo flowering in Sichuan Province which account for 30% of all edible bamboo species. There are 237 square km of flowering bamboo coverage in Sichuan, which represents only 1.36% of the panda-edible bamboo distribution area in Sichuan (Data, by April, 2005). However, the distribution is asymmetric and is concentrated in northern Minshan.



Considering the serious situation facing giant pandas, Mr. Fan Longqing, species officer of Minshan Landscape Programme met with the management of nature reserves in northern Minshan and communicated with them on the emergency plan on saving sick giant pandas. WWF is going to provide trainings and equipment for those nature reserve staff in monitoring and patrolling.

Revitalizing indigenous local culture to help communities and nature in the panda habitat

Traditional cultural values in the Minshan Mountains stress the importance of harmony between nature and humanity. That harmony has been broken in recent decades as both traditional culture and the natural environment suffered neglect. To reverse this trend, WWF is working to improve the capacities of ethnic communities in the Minshan Mountains to recover their indigenous knowledge and to control and use their natural resources through the application of this knowledge.

'By working with local communities in the panda habitat, WWF aims to foster a resurgence in local culture and traditions,' said Lin Ling, head of WWF's Minshan Landscape Programme. 'We believe that this will in turn help produce enormous benefits for natural conservation in the region.'

WWF recently organized a workshop aimed at nature reserve staff in Minshan on how to adopt local indigenous knowledge into conservation. An expert from the Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples (IKAP) network, Dr. Hermann J. Tillmann, led the workshop. The IKAP network aims to promote the revitalization and continued utilization of indigenous knowledge, and to build networks to incorporate indigenous knowledge and culture into local development work.



Costumes of Qiang People Drawn In the Practice at Napu Village

Twenty-five people took part in the workshop, including staff from 12 nature reserves as well as from Laohegou Forest Farm, Partnerships for Community Development and Conservation International. The workshop took place June 19-25, 2005 in Maoxian County, Sichuan province.

After the workshop, each reserve drafted their own proposals on incorporating indigenous knowledge and culture into biodiversity conservation in their region. WWF will select one or two of these proposals to support and help carry out this year.

Following the workshop, the trainees practiced their newly acquired skills for two days in Xiaoheba and Napu Villages, close to the Baodinggou Nature Reserve in Maoxian County. The area was chosen for its rich cultural heritage, home of the Qiang culture, which dates to the Shang dynasty (1600 BC–1046 BC). Participants learned about the Qiang's indigenous knowledge, and identified ways to apply it to conservation projects in the nearby nature reserve.

WWF has recognized the Minshan mountain range in Sichuan and Gansu as a particularly outstanding landscape for unique and endangered wildlife, with important populations of giant panda, clouded leopard, golden monkey and the world's richest variety of pheasants. The Minshan programme covers parts of sixteen counties and 27 nature



Qiang People in Maoxian County

reserves and is populated by close to 4.6 million Han, Tibetan, Qiang, Hui, and Baima people. WWF together with a wide range of stakeholders has developed and is implementing an approach to conservation in Minshan that balances the ecological, social, and economic needs of the landscape.

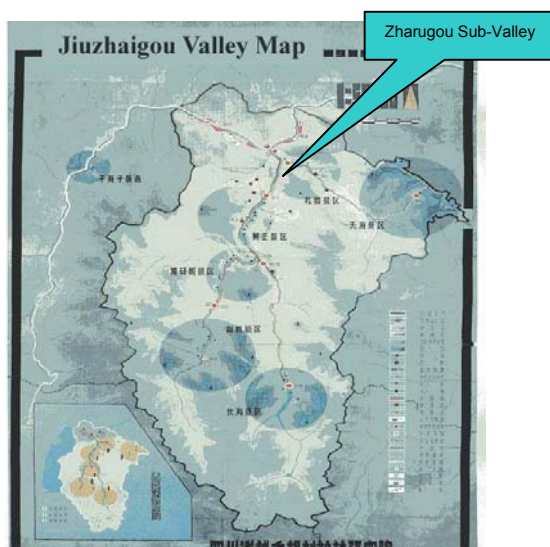
Background Information

- If you would like more information regarding indigenous knowledge and bio-diversity conservation, please visit www.ikap-mmsea.com

Officials from Zharugou in Jiuzhaigou Valley UNESCO World Heritage site take part in WWF study tour

Covering an area of 5290 sq km in northern Sichuan province, the valleys and mountains of Jiuzhaigou county are home to a number of endangered species, including the giant panda and Sichuan golden monkey. Jiuzhaigou Valley became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1992. It is now a popular tourist site in attracting an average of more than 7000 tourists per day. Within Jiuzhaigou, the Zharugou Sub-Valley, with an area of 106 sq km, was opened to tourists in 2003. The area shares a boundary with Baihe nature reserve, which is an important habitat for the endangered golden monkey.

Since 2003, WWF has been working on an ecotourism plan for Zharugou Valley. An ecotourism study tour to Yunnan province took place June 9-16, 2005. Seventeen representatives from the Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, surrounding nature reserves, and forest farms and local communities participated in a WWF study tour of Yunnan province's eco-tourism experience. Uttara Crees, an international ecotourism expert that worked with WWF's project in Wanglang Nature Reserve, served as an eco-tourism consultant for the study tour.



Participants of the study tour visited successful examples of eco-tourism sites including Napahai nature reserve, the Jisha village, and Hamagu nature reserve in Shangri-la (a non-governmental nature reserve). For example, Hamagu was established in May 2003 with WWF's support by local inhabitants of Hamagu village. The area is rich with Tibetan culture and wetland resources, and it has successfully run community-based eco-tourism, with per capita income in Hamagu village increased to 400 yuan in 2004 from less than 300 yuan before the reserve's establishment. Conservation awareness amongst villagers is high and villagers do regular voluntary patrolling. The study tour helped participants understand the meaning of real eco-tourism, and how to design eco-tourism products. "After the study tour, I became aware that Zharugou Sub-Valley has great potential in developing eco-tourism," said one representative.

WWF and Carrefour help local communities in the panda habitat to market green products

Local communities and Carrefour have laid the groundwork for a 10-day 'green' products promotion in Carrefour stores in Chengdu, Chongqing, Wuhan and Changsha beginning October 14. The promotion will include green products such as honey and tea produced by communities living adjacent to nature reserves.

"When consumers buy these products, they help people living around nature reserves in the Minshan Mountains make a living that is environmentally friendly, thereby contributing to the preservation of forests and wildlife

including pandas," said Ding Jing, WWF China's Corporate Partnership Manager.

From July 6 to 8, WWF and Carrefour organized a training session on the marketing of green products from local communities living in the panda habitat. Representatives from four panda nature reserves - Wanglang, Baihe, Baishuijiang and Baodinggou - attended the training held at a Carrefour branch in Chengdu.

Surveys on Tudiling corridor management in progress

July is a busy month for WWF's Feasibility Study on Establishing Panda Corridors in Tudiling supported by CEPF. To carry out this project, WWF is cooperating with specialists from Sichuan Forestry Department on an animal survey, with the Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences on a socio-economic survey in the Tudiling panda habitat, with the Sichuan Forest Inventory Academy on survey maps preparation and database setup, and with the Chengdu Ecological Research Centre of China Academy of Science on vegetative restoration & a plant baseline survey in the Tudiling panda habitat.

The Wildlife Resource Survey Conservation & Management Station of Sichuan Forestry Department (SFD) finished their survey on animals in Tudiling corridor from at the end of the month, and completed the database on amphibians & reptiles, birds, beasts, insects and fish in that area. The database will deliver a clear concept on the situation of giant pandas and other wildlife within the Tudiling corridor, and will provide baseline information for the construction and monitoring of the corridor.

The other two survey teams are expected to finish the survey work in the field by September. This Feasibility Study on Establishing Panda Corridors in Tudiling aims at persuading the Maoxian county government to construct a tunnel in Tudiling corridor instead of road.

Minshan Initiative: Rural teachers participate in environmental education training

"Close our eyes, and open our ears..." It becomes so quiet around us suddenly that we begin to hear all kinds of natural music, such as the bickers, the tweedles, the songs of cicadas, and the rustles of wind through the leaves. This is one of the mutual active activities designed for the environmental education trainings to help rural teachers understand how to lead their students to be friends of nature, to feel nature and to know nature.

From August 15 to 23, WWF organized environmental education trainings targeted at rural teachers in communities around Baodinggou, Longxi-Hongkou, Qianfushan and Jiudingshan nature reserves. Almost 70 rural teachers participated in the workshops in total. The workshops

received support from WWF Environmental Education team, and also the support from the Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding Research Center (CGPBRC) and the Roots and Shoots Program of the Jane Goodall Institute China. From the trainings, participants learned many international and domestic cases on environmental education, including the cases of WWF, CGPBRC, and R&S.

“Such activities are very novel and active for us,” said Mr. Zhang of the Zhong Xin Primary School in Dujiangyan city. “We learned a lot of information and tools on environmental education through these activities.”



Baodinggou, Longxi-Hongkou, Qianfushan and Jiudingshan nature reserves are the habitat for the giant pandas known among scientists as Minshan population B. The communities neighboring these nature reserves have better economic conditions than many other communities and depend less on natural resources. But along with the economic development in these areas, tourism activities have greatly affected the environment and are bringing a new threat to conservation work there. In order to help these nature reserves mitigate pressures from human activities, improve the environmental awareness of communities and tourists, and cultivate a group of environmental educators for communities, WWF has decided to co-operate with nature reserves in environmental education. The workshops targeting country teachers is one part of this initiative.

Other News

Zharugou Eco-tourism Tour Guides Training

WWF co-ordinated an eco-tourism training with the Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, held from August 20 to 24. The training program is facilitated by Uttara Crees, an international ecotourism expert, and teaches participants how to improve eco-tourism interpretation ability and eco-tourism guides' capacity. 43 representatives from Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, Zharugou community, Tagong village community of Ganzi prefecture, and Mianzhou tourism agency participated the training.

WWF support monitoring work of nature reserves

At the end of June, WWF and the Ruorgai County Forestry Department supported a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) training mainly targeting the staff of nature reserves in Ruorgai County, including Baozuo nature reserve which mainly engages in panda conservation. GIS is an important tool that can be applied into biodiversity monitoring, anti-poaching and patrolling.

Baozuo nature reserve is the habitat for giant pandas of Minshan C population, which mainly survive in the northern Minshan and the whole Minshan C population has only about 26 giant pandas according to China's Third National Panda Survey. Thus, the monitoring and patrolling work in Baozuo nature reserve, the most northern part of Minshan C population's shelter in Sichuan, is very pivotal for protecting the giant pandas of the Minshan C population.

Related Information:

On August 25, WWF donated ArcView 3.3 (GIS software) to Baishuihe nature reserve, Longxi-Hongkou nature reserve, Qianfushan nature reserve, and the Grain for Green Office of Sichuan Forestry Department. All partners of WWF Minshan Landscape Programme will receive the ArcView GIS software donated by WWF.

Captive Giant Panda Released to Longxi-Hongkou

On August 8, a captive giant panda called Sheng Lin No. 1 was released into Longxi-Hongkou Nature Reserve. Sheng Lin No. 1 was first found on a tree in downtown Dujiangyan City and then was sent to the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Wolong for careful physical examination and observation. The Sichuan Forestry Department will monitor her movements in the wild for one year. Sheng Lin No. 1 is the first panda released with careful discussion and plan in China, although the panda releasing history in China traces back to 1980's.

China's Third National Panda Survey initiated in 2000 shows that the panda population has been keeping increasing steadily in China and there have been already 161 captive giant pandas by 2003. However, the situation of wild pandas is not optimistic in China because of habitat fragmentation. For example, though the Minshan Mountains are home to the largest population of wild giant pandas on the earth, the pandas surviving there are separated into three different populations (known among scientists as Minshan A, B and C populations). And even in the smallest habitat of pandas, Xiao Xiangling, the giant pandas have also been separated into two different populations (Xiao Xiangling A and B populations) by the National Highway No. 108. Due to the fragmentation of panda habitats in China, the survival and breeding of wild pandas faces increased threats, especially for the smallest populations.

Aimed at assuring the survival and breeding of all small populations of giant pandas, reducing the burden from increasing captive giant pandas, and improving the scientific research skills on panda conservation, this releasing event was launched as one part of the national giant panda conservation project. The next step project is to release more captive giant pandas to the Xiangling Mountains.

Upcoming Events

- An eco-tourism planning workshop with stakeholder participation will be held in Jiuzhaigou Valley from September 9- 11, 2005
- The Landscape Restoration Technical Guide Book will be delivered through a promotion workshop on August 30, 2005

Staff Introduction:

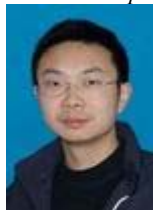
Name: Mr. Jiang Zeyin

Title: Sichuan Programme Associate

Background: Mr. Jiang Zeyin is experienced in conservation work. He graduated from Sichuan Agriculture University and worked for Xuebaoding Nature Reserve for 5 years.

Starting time of work with WWF: December 27, 2004

Current responsibility: Assist Mr. Fan Longqing's work in the species program.



For more information, please contact:

Ms. Zhao Jie

*Room 606, Wu Ding Yuan Shan Yang Zuo, No. 100 Bei Er Duan,
Yi Huan Lu, Chengdu 610081, China.*

Tel: +86 28 68003625

Fax: +86 28 83199466

Email: jzhao@wwfchina.org

Website: www.wwfchina.org/english