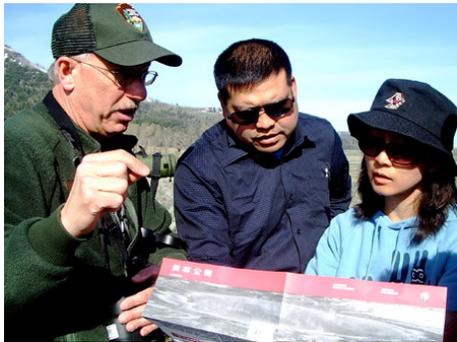


China Protected Areas Leadership Alliance Project

Strengthening Leadership Capacity for Effective Management of China's Protected Areas

Executive Summary



The China Protected Areas Leadership Alliance Project (CPALAP) is a multi-year initiative launched in 2008 under a partnership between the China State Forestry Administration, the East-West Center, and The Nature Conservancy China Program. CPALAP focuses on informing leaders and training trainers through formal and informal activities that facilitate shared learning. The primary objective is to strengthen capacity for effective management of China's protected areas by exposing nature reserve managers and appropriate government officials throughout China to successful and innovative conservation management strategies, practices, tools and techniques being

utilized in protected areas across the United States.

In designing CPALAP, the project partners agreed that leadership can be the most important attribute in the toolkit of a conservation manager, and that there were few if any opportunities in China for reserve managers and key government officials to learn about best conservation management practices. Improving capacity for protected areas management in China had become a fundamental and urgent issue for the State Forestry Administration, as China transitions from a traditional caretaker role to a modern adaptive stewardship matching key conservation targets with the need of local communities.

Since 2008 CPALAP has organized and conducted annual month-long programs that combine intensive classroom training in China and collaborative planning workshops at the East-West Center in Hawaii with broad-ranging field studies of protected areas across the U.S. All activities are designed specifically to share America's conservation management experiences with China; promote solid relationships between U.S. and Chinese conservation experts; and create real opportunities to work together to more effectively address key conservation management challenges.

The project has already had a considerable impact in strengthening China's conservation management leadership capacity—connecting nature reserve managers and government policy makers throughout the country and building an active network of knowledgeable professionals dedicated to improving the management of protected area systems.

*A comprehensive conservation management manual based on the learning and experiences, including case studies, from the project's first three years will be published by the China International Publishing Group in the fall of 2011 in both English and Chinese. The manual, *A Chinese Perspective on U.S. Protected Areas*, concentrates on seven main focus areas: Conservation Management Strategies, Threats, Wetlands Management, Visitor Management, Interpretation, Community Outreach, and Tools and Technologies. It will be a required part of the curriculum in all China State Forestry Administration protected area management training programs and may serve as a reference for China's 12th Five Year Plan for the Nature Reserves. The manual will also be used by several colleges and universities in China.*



Project Participants

To date, a total of 301 Chinese and U.S. representatives have participated in CPALAP: 93 from China and 208 from the United States. The 93 participants from China include high level State Forestry Administration officials in key central and provincial government posts throughout the country; directors from 36 of China's 51 national model nature reserves; national park policy advisors; and educators from Beijing Forestry University.

The 208 conservation management experts from the United States enthusiastically participated in the program, sharing their time, expertise, information and materials, insights and experiences on conservation management issues and practices with their counterparts from China. These participants include national park superintendents and concession and facilities managers; state park directors and planners; wildlife refuge managers; forest rangers; fisheries, wildlife, natural resource, watershed and wetlands biologists; botanists and vegetation management specialists; fire management officers; environmental, solid waste, and natural resource engineers; interpretive rangers, docents, and nature museum curators; and environmental educators, community outreach and volunteer program coordinators.



The intensive nature of the month-long program has created many special opportunities for meaningful interactions between the Chinese and U.S. participants. Both the classroom and field study components of the program have encouraged new and expanded exchanges concerning best management practices. The site visit experiences, in particular, have provided the Chinese participants with a comprehensive look at protected areas management across the U.S. in a wide variety of settings including national parks and forests, state parks and recreation areas, wildlife refuges, private nature preserves, and public-private conservation areas.



The field studies have enabled the Chinese to gain direct knowledge of “back of the house” visitor support infrastructure management policies, controlled burn fire management strategies, and alien plant species control at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming and Yosemite National Park in California; to understand how people and wild lands can coexist through well-planned and regulated preservation and development activities in northern New York's Adirondack State Park; to see bison and grassland reintroduction and recovery programs in action on the American Prairie Reserve in eastern Montana; to learn about urban wetland restoration techniques in Jamaica Bay Gateway National Recreation Area and the New Jersey Meadowlands; and to become familiar with innovative preservation of national parkland through public-private partnerships such as Presidio National Park in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco and Governor's Island National Monument in New York City Harbor.

Project Objectives

- A core of at least one-hundred and fifty senior officials and nature reserve managers with improved professional knowledge and skills to lead a nationwide movement for more effective management of China's protected areas.
- Strengthened leadership of protected areas systems through continuing dialogue and mutual learning.



- Shared understanding at the central government and field levels of best practices for dealing with the legal, social and political challenges of effective protected areas management.
- Improved domestic and international understanding of and cooperation with China's conservation efforts.

Training Needs Identified by the China State Forestry Administration

- Laws, regulation and enforcement, including issues of land ownership and zoning systems.
- Management systems, including conservation area planning, management, business and financial planning, and human resource issues such as staff training, performance evaluation and volunteer participation.
- Scientific research and monitoring, including technical guidelines on biodiversity baseline surveys and long-term biodiversity monitoring and management systems.
- Public outreach and awareness building, including educational programs, visitor center and website design, broadcast and written materials and other outreach strategies.
- Strategies for engaging local communities in resource management, including social mobilization and livelihood improvement activities designed to contribute to improved community participation in land management.
- Sustainable use strategies, such as determining the capacity for land and water resource use, user fees, and innovative eco-tourism management.



Classroom Training in China



Prior to coming to the U.S., Chinese participants are required to complete one week of intensive classroom training at the School of Administration, China State Forestry Administration, in Beijing. The curriculum is taught by selected faculty from top Chinese universities, experts from The Nature Conservancy China Program, high-level government officials, and representatives from other key organizations. Through a series of presentations, case studies and discussion, the curriculum includes a global overview of conservation management practices; critical issues such as protected area design and management, impacts of climate change

and other key threats to biodiversity; and ecotourism. Other key components of the training are protected area law, legislation, regulation and enforcement; and public policy and finance.

Collaborative Planning Workshop at the East-West Center

At the end of the field study, Chinese participants engage in a one week collaborative planning workshop. The process includes large and small group discussions to consolidate knowledge gained from the classroom training and field visits; discuss lessons learned; and integrate the information from a cultural context. Working with a U.S. National Park expert in facilitated sessions, the participants draft team reports and develop key elements of conservation management work plans for their nature reserves. The group also participates in leadership and team building exercises designed to promote awareness and recognition of group dynamics and values and new perspectives on leadership, cooperation, communication, group problem solving and decision-making.



CPALAP Phase II

Program Review and Capacity Building Workshop & Yunnan Nature Reserves Study Tour

At the end of 2010, the CPALAP partners agreed to review the results of the first three years of the project and create a conservation management manual that captures the experiences and examples of U.S. protected areas management best practices that are most useful for Chinese nature reserve managers and government officials *from their perspective*. To accomplish this, the State Forestry Administration (SFA) invited representatives from the East-West Center, The Nature Conservancy, and selected U.S. protected areas management experts to participate in a program review and capacity building workshop in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China. The SFA also organized a one-week study tour of four important nature reserves in Yunnan following the workshop to enable the U.S. experts to visit with their Chinese counterparts and discuss how they could continue to work together. The nature reserves included Yulong Snow Mountain, Lashi Lake, Gaoligongshan and Baima Snow Mountain.

This workshop and study tour provided an important opportunity to build the CPALAP alumni network in China and the U.S. and to encourage continuing exchanges between conservation management experts in both countries.



Over a period of two full days, workshop participants discussed the experiences and impacts of the China Protected Leadership Alliance Project to date and how the outcomes could better inform future project efforts. The workshop was attended by 50 high level SFA officials from Beijing and provincial forestry headquarters throughout the

country; directors of model national nature reserves; and representatives from The Nature Conservancy China Program and the East-West Center. The East-West Center representatives brought four U.S. conservation management experts with them to China: two from the U.S. National Park Service (Chief of Interpretation and Head of Concession Management, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park); one from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (wildlife biologist); and one from the New York State Adirondacks Park system (Head of the Natural Resource and Scientific Services Division).

Several nature reserve managers from across China who had participated in CPALAP, gave presentations illustrating the impact of their experiences in the U.S. and providing a status update on the action plan activities in their own protected areas. The action plans were developed by the reserve managers during the collaborative planning workshops that took place at the East-West Center after the U.S. field studies.

The group also reviewed the draft of the manual, *A Chinese Perspective on U.S. Protected Areas*, and provided feedback and suggestions on how best to present the material so that the manual serves as a true working document created by Chinese for Chinese. They emphasized that the manual should be based on Chinese experiences with experts in America's national parks and protected areas and include success stories and case studies on applying the lessons learned and best practices to policies, strategies and activities in their own parks and protected areas in China.

Project Partners

East-West Center

Officially known as the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, the East-West Center is a public, nonprofit national and regional research and education institution with an international board of governors. The East-West Center was established by the United States Congress in 1960 to strengthen relations among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. The Center serves as an international hub for education, dialogue, training and cooperative research on critical issues of common concern throughout the region in the following ways:

- Developing global leadership through educational programs and exchanges that help current and future leaders think, act and work with deep understanding of the people and issues in this dynamic region.
- Providing timely and relevant information through publications, media and internet, briefings, lectures, interviews, and in-depth programs.
- Analyzing problems and offering solutions through collaborative research that affects people's lives and is of special value to policymakers.

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- Anticipating and resolving conflicts by promoting mutual understanding, mediating disputes and reducing tensions in the region.
- Strengthening regional cooperation by sharing best practices and dialogue with key regional organizations.
- Building lasting networks together with partner organizations and alumni in the U.S., Asia, the Pacific and throughout the world.



The Center is organized as a public-private partnership with operating funds from the U.S. Congress and program funds principally from private agencies, individuals, foundations, corporations, and government of the region. The Center conducts its activities with a staff of nearly 200– the majority is headquartered on a 21-acre campus in Honolulu, Hawaii that offers office, administrative, conference, and guest and student housing facilities– and a small staff directs an office in Washington, D.C.

The East-West Center has a network of nearly 60,000 program alumni and 600 partner organizations from around the region and the world.

China State Forestry Administration

The State Forestry Administration (SFA) is the central governmental agency in China responsible for managing all forestry and other natural conservation initiatives. The Government of China recognizes that ecological development is a long-term commitment and has identified “building an ecological civilization” to be important to achieving the harmonious development of human beings and nature. To accomplish this, the SFA is accelerating the development of modern forestry and rehabilitation of wetland and grassland ecosystems to strengthen natural conservation efforts.

The China State Forestry Administration’s primary functions include:

- Drafting legislation, and enforcing laws and regulations related to reforestation, forest resource conservation, and forest ecosystems.
- Developing strategies and plans related to the management and use of the central fund for forestry-related activities.
- Managing state-owned forest resources and coordinating nationwide assessments, monitoring and data collection of forest resources.
- Directing conservation and sustainable utilization of wildlife resources (directory of key protected species, wildlife and wetland nature reserves, international agreements on wetland conservation and import/export of rare, endangered or protected species).
- Coordinating research, education, international exchange and human resource development.

The Nature Conservancy China Program

The Nature Conservancy China Program (TNC China) was established in 1998. Over the past thirteen years, TNC China has worked locally with communities, government agencies, academic experts and other partners to help protect the fragile ecosystem, magnificent landscapes and ancient traditions of greater China, from the rugged mountains of Yunnan Province to the waters of the South China Sea.

The Nature Conservancy introduced the concept of the national park system to government officials and advised the government on how best to establish this type of protected area. In 2007, China established the first national park– Pudacuo National Park– in China's Southwest Yunnan Province. This park will serve as a model for a new Chinese national park system.

TNC China has been conducting a nationwide assessment of China's conservation priorities based on the work in Yunnan and partnership with the Chinese Government that will result in a comprehensive, scientific map of the country's important biodiversity along with a plan to redesign and expand the nature reserve system.

