

A Chinese Perspective on U.S. Protected Areas

— A Resource for China's Protected Area Managers

Edited by *Guangzhi Yu*, PhD

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FOREWORD

I

Biodiversity is a condition which human beings depend upon for their very existence, and is also the basis for sustainable economic and social development. Furthermore, the establishment of nature reserves (protected areas) is one of the most direct and effective means to preserve biodiversity.

The history of the establishment of nature reserves by human beings already spans more than a century. The German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) established the first natural monuments at the beginning of the 19th Century in order to protect natural ecology. Internationally, the designation by the U.S. government in 1872 of the first national park at Yellowstone is generally considered the first case in the world of a nature reserve. Since the advent of the 20th century, undertakings concerning nature reserves have developed very rapidly. In particular, since the end of the Second World War on the global level we have seen the establishment of several international organizations that have been engaged in publicity, cooperation, scientific research, and other activities in this area. For example, there are UNESCO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Nature Conservancy (TNC). Throughout the world, nature reserves have been constantly increasing in terms of number and the amount of physical area devoted to them, and they have also become symbols of national culture and progress.

China is one of the twelve top nations in the world in terms of biodiversity, and enjoys a very important and distinctive position as far as global biodiversity and its protection are concerned. Since the establishment of its first nature reserve in 1956, China already has a

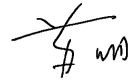
history of developing nature reserves that exceeds 50 years. By the end of 2010, China had already established 2,588 nature reserves with a total area of approximately 148 million hectares, accounting for 14.7% of the nation's total terrestrial land area.

As the government agency responsible for managing all these nature protection areas throughout the country, China's State Forestry Administration has been implementing the National Construction and Development Plan for Forestry Protected Areas of China initiated in 2006, and at the same time has been engaged in the process of promoting the establishment of model nature reserves, selecting 51 national-level nature reserves to serve as prototypes for other nature reserves. Concurrently, the SFA has launched demonstration projects for the development of these nature reserves and selected 51 national model reserves. The agency plans to gather together and summarize the administrative experiences and methods that are most appropriate for China's nature reserves by bolstering management and development within these model reserves in order to promote effective management of China's nature reserves.

In order to develop the management capacity of senior administrators, especially those in State-level nature reserves, the Forestry Administration has promoted interchanges together with the Nature Conservancy (TNC), and in 2008 they jointly initiated the "China (State-level) Protected Areas Leadership Alliance Project" (CPALAP). Based on the project agreement, from 2008 to 2010 a total of 78 managers and practitioners from China's 51 model nature reserves and senior officials from government agencies with authority over protected areas participated in one month of training and study, which consisted of systematic understanding and exchanges regarding various aspects of protected areas in the United States, including the history of protected areas in the United States, administrative principles, management techniques and modes, etc., needed to establish a stable, nature reserves network, expand interchanges and provide a stable platform.

This book, "A Chinese Perspective on U.S. Protected Areas: A Resource for China's Protected Area Managers," has been compiled based on the training and TNC study materials with the objective of facilitating our working together to give further scope to the guidance

and model usage of the cooperative program for the establishment of capabilities for senior managers in protected areas. The book offers systematic presentation of facts and analysis concerning U.S. protected area management strategies, threats, wetlands management, ecotourism management, commentaries, community education, management tools and techniques, and various other facets, so as to effectively bolster their usability and sustainability. I am confident that this book can serve as an important tool for managers of China's nature reserves to understand and study advanced principles derived from management and experiences in U.S. protected areas. I hope that we will be able to take our cooperation with the U.S. side one step further concerning the establishment of protection for wild flora and fauna and the establishment of nature reserves, and thus jointly be able to make greater contributions to the mission of protecting biodiversity throughout the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by 'M' and 'M'.

Su Ming

**Deputy Managing Director
International Cooperation Center
State Forestry Administration**

FOREWORD

II

For more than 50 years, the East-West Center has been promoting better relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific and the US through collaborative, high-quality programs that expand knowledge, address critical policy issues, and build capacity in the region. The China Protected Areas Leadership Alliance Project (CPALAP) is an outstanding example of this.


Launched in 2008, CPALAP is a partnership of the East-West Center, The Nature Conservancy's China Program, and China's State Forestry Administration. The primary goal of CPALAP has been to build human capacity for effective management of China's protected areas.

Between 2008 and 2011, CPALAP provided nature reserve managers and key government officials with hands-on learning opportunities focused on innovative conservation management practices taking place in a wide range of protected areas across the United States, including federal, state, local, and private parks, reserves, and wildlife refuges. To date, three month-long study tours have connected SFA management with their peers and with the government officials responsible for their legal and financial support. Workshops and field studies in Beijing, Honolulu, and across the U.S. have also opened participants' eyes to innovative thinking—both in China and the United States—about ways to resolve vital protected area management challenges. Nature reserve managers from 36 of China's 51 National Model Nature Reserves; 42 State Forestry Administration officials from key central and provincial government posts; and 15 conservation management advisors and educators from throughout the country have participated in the

project, sharing experiences and management challenges with 208 of their U.S. colleagues.

This reference book is the direct outcome of the need for information identified during these CPALAP study tours. We are grateful to the editor, Dr. Lucy Yu (Yu Guangzhi), who served as a liaison between the three partners for three years. She accompanied all or part of all three study tours, and then spent six months at the East-West Center working very hard to pull together the information she believed would be most helpful to her colleagues in China, producing the text in both Chinese and English.

The East-West Center, The Nature Conservancy's China Program, and China's State Forestry Administration hope conservation managers in China find this reference manual helpful. We also hope to continue working together to protect valuable natural and cultural resources while strengthening the relationship between our two nations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles E. Morrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Charles E. Morrison, PhD

**President
East-West Center**

FORWORD

III

China and the United States, located respectively on the western and eastern shores of the Pacific Ocean, are two nations endowed with abundant natural resources. However, one is a developing country, while the other is an established economic power.

In today's China, the lifestyles of people are undergoing enormous changes, with many people enjoying opportunities to acquire automobiles, build homes or travel the world. Nevertheless, at the same time we are faced with a calamity in regards to the excessive use of natural resources, and before our eyes this conflict between protection of nature and economic development is becoming more acute by the day. In accordance with national policies for sustainable development, we need to search for feasible and effective schemes for avoiding these kinds of conflicts and mitigating any threats.

China can boast of the greatest number of nature reserves and various other kinds of protected areas (more than 2,600) in the world. But at the same time don't we need to be worried as to whether these areas which are already under the scope of legal protection truly are receiving the effective protection they require?

During the past decade the Chinese government has been steadily researching and drawing up a group of laws for the protection of natural resources compatible with the needs of economic development. Indeed, the need for such a course has become more and more pressing. More than at any time in the past, it is clear to us that although China may have enjoyed abundant biodiversity and incomparably beautiful mountains and rivers—providing the natural resources and capital whose use has enriched our lives—we cannot

ignore the threat posed by the unrelenting depletion with each passing day of our natural resources which is staring us in the face.

Four years ago, the Chinese branch of TNC (The Nature Conservancy) and that organization's headquarters held a training course in cooperation with the East-West Center in Hawaii designed to enhance leadership capabilities for China's national-level organized system of designated model nature reserves. With financial support from TNC, managers from these 51 model protected areas and officials from the State Forestry Administration responsible for work in the protected areas successively underwent a systematic course of training, and separately conducted on-the-spot investigations within various types of U.S. protected areas introduced in this book. Just as the book describes, they carried out extensive interchanges and friendly discussions with their U.S. counterparts concerning problems in China. Later, we entrusted Dr. Yu Guangzhi, who had been in charge of the training, to edit this book, comprised of various kinds of research and reference materials. We hope that it will prove somewhat helpful for those friends who would like to pay more attention to China's efforts at nature protection and sustainable development.

"A Chinese Perspective on U.S. Protected Areas: A Resource for China's Protected Area Managers" offers a systematic introduction to various protection efforts in the United States designed to protect that nation's precious natural heritage and resources, ranging from those of the Federal Government down to the actions of various members of the general public, along with the diverse U.S. laws related to protection which have been formulated. The book also explains where the funds for nature preservation have come from, how during the process of economic development the United States was able to preserve intact its natural resources, and how what is most important is that at the same time the United States was able to build the kind of great prosperity it enjoys today. Of course, during the course of both economic development and nature preservation, Americans had to negotiate a tortuous path filled with many twists and turns and were forced to learn many lessons. These too are discussed within this book. They can serve as valuable lessons for us.

As part of its efforts to protect nature, in 1998 TNC first entered

China, and in cooperation with kindred spirits and various groups in society has since then been indefatigably pioneering new aspects of environmental protection. Looking at things from this juncture, we can see that following two years of investigations, explorations and preparations, and with the support of local governments and business leaders who have a strong sense of social responsibility concerning nature protection, we were able to establish the Western Sichuan Nature Protection Fund. This fund has in turn been able to manage China's first public welfare-type scientific nature reserve. Among other things, we have also drawn lessons from the several experiences overseas, so as to introduce to China internationally advanced scientific protection concepts and methods.

The power of learning is tremendous and astonishing. I hope that the concepts, methods and examples presented in this book will afford you many pleasurable insights and much inspiration, and prove helpful you in all the protection work you engage in.

Let us work together to bring a more beautiful spring to environmental protection efforts in China.



Zhang Shuang

**Director
The Nature Conservancy China Program**

PREFACE

Background

The China Protected Areas Leadership Alliance Project (CPALAP) is a multi-year initiative launched in 2008 as 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.

Between 2008 and 2010, CPALAP organized and conducted three, annual, month-long programs that combined 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 were 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 conservation management challenges in both countries.

Study Tour Participants

During these three years, a total of 301 China and US representatives participated in CPALAP: 93 from China and 208 from the United States. The 93 participants from China included 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, experiences and insights on conservation management issues and current practices with their counterparts from China. U.S. participants included 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 project was guided by Meril Dobrin Fujiki, Seminars Development Coordinator, East-West Center Seminars Program.

Partner Biographies

The 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. 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 Nature Conservancy China Program

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

In 1997, The Nature Conservancy introduced the concept of a national park system to government officials and began advising the government on how best to establish this type of protected area. An official MOU for the Yunnan Great Rivers Project (YGRP) was signed in 1998, and in 2001, President Jiang Zemin asked that the YGRP serve as a model for all of China. TNC China began working in partnership with government officials at many levels to conduct a nationwide assessment of China’s conservation priorities. The result is a comprehensive, scientific “blueprint” (map) of the country’s important biodiversity along with a plan to redesign and expand the nature reserve system. In 2007, China established the first national park—Pudacuo National Park—in China’s Yunnan Province. This park now serves as a model for additional protected areas which are being added as China builds its national park system.

A Resource for China’s Protected Area Managers

A Chinese Perspective on U.S. Protected Areas, has been compiled to fill a need that became apparent during the three CPALAP study tours. Although China’s conservation managers were eager to understand the U.S. protected areas system, there was no comprehensive summary available. Valuable time was spent identifying and explaining things such as management authority, types of protection, tools and strategies, and eventually, project participants agreed on the need to capture relevant information in a

manner that would be useful in China.

The book focuses on seven main issues: Conservation Management Strategies, Threats, Wetlands Management, Visitor Management, Interpretation, Community Outreach, and Tools and Technologies. It will be a useful tool for all China State Forestry Administration protected area management training programs and may serve as a reference for China's next Five-Year Plan for Nature Reserves, and will also be available for use by colleges and universities in China.

About the Editor

Dr. Guangzhi (Lucy) Yu was the ideal candidate to compile this book. She joined The Nature Conservancy China Program in 2003, and was responsible for coordinating eco-regional management of targeted existing nature reserves in the northwestern part of China's Yunnan Province. Her work included providing technical support and guidance to nature reserve managers, adapting conservation methodologies, building partner capacity, both locally and nationally, and developing conservation plans based on the best science available, as well as demonstrating conservation practices on the ground. Dr. Yu holds a doctorate in conservation biology from the Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. She served as TNC's manager of the China Protected Areas Leadership Alliance Project, helping to design and teach the Beijing segment and personally accompanying the first two study tours. She accompanied high level SFA officials and joined in the East-West Center wrap-up sessions for the third tour. Her strong academic background, and her experience in the field and with the study tours, made her the ideal person to create a resource that would meet the needs of China's nature reserve managers and government officials as they strive to bring world-class management to China.

Carol M. Fox

**Director, Special Projects
East-West Center**

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