



WWF China

newsletter

January – March, 2009

China's landmarks go dark for Earth Hour



Beijing's National Stadium, the Bird's Nest, turns off its lights for Earth Hour

©David Alaire/WWF-China

The iconic Bird's Nest and Water Cube were among the many landmarks across China that were blanketed in darkness for an hour on 28 March as their lights were switched off to raise awareness about the need for action on climate change.

Part of Earth Hour, the global climate change awareness campaign, the landmark structures were among a series of prominent buildings in the Olympic Park area that went dark from 8.30pm in a dramatic display of support for the global lights off initiative. In the flagship Beijing event, the lights were first switched off at Ling Long Tower, followed by Pangu Plaza, the Olympic Park streets, the Bird's Nest, and the Water Cube.

Shanghai matched the capital's commitment by switching off the iconic Oriental Pearl Tower, Shanghai World Financial Center, and district and municipal government buildings across the city. The Power Valley JinJiang International Hotel in Baoding and the Drum Tower in Nanjing likewise flicked the switch.

At a special Earth Hour event on the top floor of the Pangu Plaza's hotel, partners and the media looked across the Olympic Green as some of China's biggest icons went black. WWF China country representative Dermot O'Gorman said the statement for action on global warming was being made "loud and clear" in China.



Shanghai goes dark! From the Shanghai World Financial Center the Jinmao Building, Oriental Pearl Tower and much of Pudong District switch off.
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"What's most impressive about Earth Hour in China is how many ordinary people across the country have signed up to switch off their lights. This sends a powerful message to the world that people in China want action on climate change now," he said.

"We are excited to see that the Earth Hour is supplementing the government's efforts in raising environmental awareness and energy-saving know-how among the public, and find that the enthusiasm we've seen from ordinary people around China for Earth Hour has far exceeded our expectations."

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WWF leads new sustainable strategy for China-Africa trade

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown acknowledged in early February the important role the UK must play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by encouraging sustainable trade between China and Africa. This includes support from the UK Government for a WWF project on sustainable trade in forestry and timber between China and East Africa.

Investment by the Department for International Development (DfID) will enable WWF to work with stakeholders in Africa, China and the EU to improve the quality of aid, trade, and investment reaching East Africa, thus safeguarding the future of its natural resources and protecting livelihoods.

David Nussbaum, Chief Executive of WWF-UK, says: "China presents an enormous economic opportunity for East Africa, but the region is yet to fully reap the benefits. With support from DfID, WWF will help ensure East African countries can capitalise on this aid and investment to ensure the long term sustainability of their resources and economies. This will bring long term benefits for both sides."

In recent years, China has become a significant investor and trade and aid partner for East African countries such as Tanzania, Mozambique, and Kenya. East Africa is rich in natural resources, including timber, and Mozambique and Tanzania now export more than 50 per cent of their timber to China. Timber harvesting is occurring at an unsustainable rate with predictions that in Mozambique, the resource will be exhausted in five to ten years.

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Reconnecting fragmented habitats: new panda corridor under construction



Construction of the Tudiling Tunnel begins
©WWF China

Construction on the Tudiling Tunnel, an important project that will move traffic off a major road that slices through a stretch of panda habitat, officially got underway on 2 March 2009.

The new tunnel will provide a direct route for vehicles travelling on Provincial Road 302 from Beichuan and Mianzhu, about 140km northwest of Chengdu. The project is expected to be finished in two years.

Located in Maoxian County, Aba Prefecture, Tudiling provides the only connection between two isolated populations of wild giant pandas in the Minshan landscape. The completed tunnel will restore 11km of road and over 8,000ha of surrounding area back to wild panda habitat. Tudiling is also in the watershed of the Min and Fu rivers and reaches an elevation of 2,200m at its highest point.

WWF is cooperating with the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), the Sichuan Forestry Department, Sichuan Institute of Forestry Investigation and Planning, Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Mao County Forestry Bureau on the new panda corridor.

James Leape, Director General of WWF international, reached common ground with the Sichuan government on Tudiling corridor restoration and tunnel construction during a visit in April 2007. The same year, WWF supported a Mao County forestry bureau project along Provincial Road 302 that replaced stretches of Chinese pine with arrow bamboo. The project aimed to restore biodiversity and reclaim some of the endangered animal's lost habitat. So far, 60ha of forest has been successfully restored.

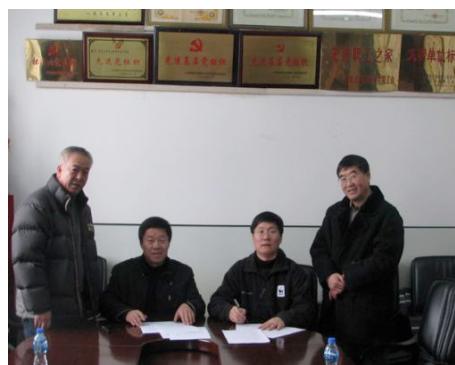
There are an estimated 700 wild giant pandas currently living in the Minshan landscape. But logging, farming and road construction cut off the crucial Tudiling link in the 1950s, putting the

area's species in jeopardy. Further problems emerged in the 1980s when newly planted high-density Chinese pine effectively choked off the growth of many native plants. There are usually only 190 pines per hectare; however, at Tudiling, the number exceeds 2,200 per hectare.

Amur tigers back in focus

- Major conservation agreement is signed between WWF China and Heilongjiang Wildlife Institute

A new Amur tiger conservation agreement was signed on 19 January 2009 between WWF China and Heilongjiang Wildlife Institute, which is under the supervision of the State Forestry Administration (SFA). The agreement falls under the framework of the 2008-2009 WWF & SFA MoU, and marks a major leap forward in the efforts to protect the critically endangered species.



Signing the agreement © Heilongjiang Wildlife Institute

Domestic and international parties have agreed to develop the “Changbaishan plan”, which aims to improve conservation efforts in the Amur tiger's northeastern habitat. Local support is being supplied in Dahuanggou, [where signs of the rare tiger were spotted](#) three times in 2008, and Nuanquanhe, an area that borders Jilin, Heilongjiang and Russia. Establishing a snare-free zone will be the first project at both demo sites, with support coming from the SFA.

For more information on Amur tigers in China, click [here](#).

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River Scorecard Action in Chengdu



Participants collect water from the Botiao River ©WWF China

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 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.

Green agriculture for a cleaner river

“Last year, our association sold about 30 ton Sichuan pepper to Carrefour throughout the

country,” said Mr. He Youxin, head of the Mao County Pepper Association while discussing his experience with farmers in Yunqiao village on January 6, 2009.

Mr. He was invited by WWF to visit Yunqiao and Ande villages to share what he’s learned about green agriculture development with some of the area’s farmers.

Yunqiao and Ande are near Chengdu in western China’s Sichuan Province, close to the Botiao and Zouma rivers. Both are tributaries of the Min River, where WWF now runs a freshwater conservation project. Green agriculture is an important aspect of freshwater conservation as it can help reduce pollution from chemical fertilizer and pesticides. And in a competitive marketplace, a farmer’s association is one of the best ways to promote green agriculture in both villages.

The pepper association was established in 2005 in Mao County. WWF entered the picture a year later, and the association has made significant progress since then. Over the last two years, the group of farmers successfully promoted their products at Carrefour supermarkets across China.

Mr. He shared his work experience and offered advice on sales and technical services that should be offered to villagers. “The association needs a leader with passion, power and foresight. At the same time, they should be selfless and give back to the community,” he stressed.

In the near future, WWF will work with the Sichuan Agriculture Department to conduct a comprehensive survey on the two villages for and formulate an integrated development plan.



He Youxin (front) talks with local farmers
©WWF China

In Focus: Features and Commentary



WWF representatives presented 200 beehives to Yuquanba village residents. Beekeeping and tea plantations are some of WWF’s main strategies to support and restore sustainable livelihoods of the communities in and near the Qinmochuan Nature Reserve. ©WWF China

Visiting China's Green Heart

By Zeng Ming

From Feb 20 to 27 2009, a visiting delegation composed of WWF staff from the UK, Netherlands, Switzerland and the China Programme Office visited five giant panda nature reserves in Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces. The trip was held to mark the halfway point of the Green Heart of China, the landscape panda conservation programme that started in 2007. This is the first time most of the group traveled across the three main panda landscapes, held a live panda in the arms, and to stayed overnight in temporary prefab houses.

From 2km to 300m

The journey started from Guanyinshan Nature Reserve in Qinling mountains, where WWF supports the construction of a panda corridor to

connect two of the biggest panda habitats in Qinling Mountain. National Road 108 cuts through the nature reserve, and a section above the Qinling tunnel was abandoned in 2005. The Qinling tunnel was built in 2001 by the government to shorten the distance and improve road security. WWF grabbed the opportunity to work with the Guanyinshan reserve to restore this section as a panda corridor. About 10 kilometers of the road was closed, bamboo planted, and neighbouring communities offered training on how to best protect the area's natural resources. Gradually, with less human disturbance, more and more wild animals started to use this area again. According to reserve staff, infrared cameras have captured traces of takins on many occasions, and traces of wild pandas have also been found during regular monitoring and patrolling. The nearest spot we found traces was only 300 meters away from the road. "I remember the panda traces we saw was 2 kilometers away from the road when I visited here one and a half years ago," said Diane Walkington from WWF UK, "now we're seeing them 300 meters away!" However, it may take much longer for the endangered species to stroll across this short distance.

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Down to business: five flavours, one goal

By Tony Cunningham

Any successful business needs careful planning, 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.



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 ©Tony Cunningham

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

Opportunity in crisis must be capitalized on

By Dennis Pamlin

This article originally appeared in the 2009-03-10 edition of China Daily

As President Hu Jintao stated at the National People's Congress, a crisis also means an opportunity. This is very true especially when we talk about the financial and ecological crises together. The financial crisis is generating serious problems today, but these problems dwarf the catastrophe we will face if we do not address the over consumption of natural resources by the rich people on the planet. If everyone were to live like an American in terms of resource consumption, we would need more than five planets.

Scientists agree that a 21st century economy must be extremely resource efficient, still most countries have responded to the current financial crisis by suggesting increased investments in old industries and infrastructure. Even if jobs are created in the short term, unabated investment of this kind will accelerate the destruction of the planet, and generate conflicts between countries as the hunt for scarce natural resources intensifies. China must avoid a solution to one crisis that creates an even bigger problem. Any measure to deal with the financial crisis should be designed to both help people out of poverty, and at the same time help the rich part of the population shift to a resource-efficient lifestyle.

While most countries ignore poverty and only want to increase consumption, China must deal with both and do this in a way that ensures long-term sustainability. This task is difficult, but it also gives China a unique opportunity to become a key provider of truly sustainable solutions, not only for the domestic market but also for the rest of the world.

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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:

- **Shuan** (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;

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News in Brief

WWF launches integrated conservation in Upper Jialing River

WWF and the Pingwu county government officially launched integrated conservation in the Huoxi River, which makes up the upper reaches of Jialing River, on 13 January 2009. A management team composed of the deputy head of Pingwu County, a senior manager from China Huaneng Corporation, one of the five large state-owned power generation companies, has been set up to coordinate all conservation-related issues.

Sustainable development continues in earthquake-hit areas

WWF has carried out post disaster surveys in Napu and Lili villages in southwestern Sichuan, part of the area devastated by a major earthquake in May 2008.

Consultants visited area residents and organized group discussions from February 16 to 22, 2009. According to needs identified during the sessions, WWF and the villagers developed a working plan and set up two management teams in each village. The management team will help insure the sustainable development project continues to run smoothly in the future.

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 ecotourism.

Irrigation System Construction in Longxi-Hongkou

Diageo, one of WWF's global partners, supported Lianhe village in Longxi-Hongkou nature reserve to set up irrigation system to help the villagers resume agriculture. The earthquake that struck southwestern China on May 12, 2008 seriously damaged the village.

Media attention for WWF Biodiversity Report grows

As part of a general burst of attention surrounding the recently released WWF report "First Contact in the Greater Mekong,"—which revealed that science discovered more than 1,000 new species in the Greater Mekong region from 1997 to 2007—ABC America Nightly News recently traveled to the border of Laos PDR and Thailand to report on the story.

[Click here](#) to read the full story or [here](#) to download the report itself.

"Central Section" of Mekong River is of High Importance

New research has shown that the section of the Mekong in northeast Cambodia known by the moniker the "central section" has a very high biodiversity value and contains vital habitat for key species such as the Irrawaddy dolphin.

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Conserving Forests with Rattan

WWF's Sustainable Rattan Harvesting and Production Programme is entering its second phase. Rattan is the collective name for a variety of species in the palm family used primarily in furniture and basket making. [Read more...](#)

Community development fund promotes sustainable development

A major constraint facing rural villages when trying to develop the local economy is a lack of financial and technical support. Traditionally, China's Rural Credit Cooperative Union has been able to fill this void as a source of loans. However, complicated application procedures, the need of a guarantor, and other liabilities means that many applicants don't receive the loans they need. And in cases where funds are available, there is often a lack of technical support for the money to be effectively applied. In the hunt for a solution, WWF Xi'an Office and the Pingheliang Nature Reserve developed a plan that rests on an Environmentally

Conscious Business Practice (ECBP) framework. A community development fund has been established in Shaanxi Province's Pingheliang reserve to encourage local residents to develop alternative livelihoods, while minimizing the impact they have on the environment. The project differs from traditional models because it operates according to the needs of local residents and gives them control over how the money is spent. The WWF Xi'an Office is planning technical training sessions with financial support from the community development fund to help alleviate poverty in the area.

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