

China

Agroforestry in the Mountains of Southwest China

News from the Field

April 2015

Conservation International

Baseline Survey of Project Site

In January and February, we conducted a baseline survey of the soil conditions, the ecosystem, the socioeconomic status of people in the area, and their agricultural habits. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data on the socioeconomic status of the people and on their attitudes towards eco-friendly agriculture and towards the conservation of collectively owned forests.

Experts in ecosystems and agriculture collected soil samples from fields with different land use patterns. The data will be used to support the management of the demonstration site and for comparison with data gathered after the completion of the project so that soil quality improvement results can be evaluated.

Agroforestry System Construction Begins!

Agroforestry system construction began in the middle of March. Land clearing, irrigation system installation, fertilization, and planting of apple seeds are underway on the approximately 1-hectare site. Goat manure is the main fertilizer.

The entire construction process, including the building of a water pipeline, a power supply system, and housing, as well as planting of crops, is schedule to take at least another half a year.



Clearing the land in preparation for agroforestry



Laying irrigation pipes



Purchasing apple saplings

Tending Saplings in Collective Forests

In late March, the local Environmental Protection and Forestry Bureau, our partner in this project, tended to the saplings in the collectively owned forests in Ganpu village. About 20 villagers removed the lower branches of the saplings and tended to the young cypress trees to help them grow better. They also planted saplings in areas that had been damaged by goats.



Removing young cypress tree branches

Communication and PR

The processes of the baseline survey and the agroforestry system construction were documented with photos and video that are being used in project newsletters and video presentations and promotions.

Plans for April to June 2015

We will complete the baseline survey by collecting data on biodiversity and carbon storage. We will also continue building the agroforestry system and clearing the land of the entire demonstration area. Environmentally themed lessons will be conducted at the Ganpu village elementary school and villagers will be given training in controlling the pests that damage the fruit crops. We are planning the project's opening ceremony and are continuing to gather information that will be used for project PR.

Tibetan New Year

The Tibetan New Year, known as Losar, falls on the same day, February 19, as the Han people's Spring Festival. Over several days villagers wore traditional costumes and celebrated with folk dances and toasting songs, then culminated each day with an evening feast shared among neighbors at which traditional Tibetan cuisine and Chinese bacon were served. On the third day of Losar a religious ceremony called Weisang was held in people's homes or at the local temple. At Weisang, highland barley of the hills or rooftops is burnt to pray for peace and a good harvest in the coming year. The celebration also integrates Han customs such as a family reunion dinner, the hanging of red lanterns, the writing of red couplets (a form of Chinese poetry consisting of two lines), and the lighting of fireworks.

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