

China
Agroforestry in the Mountains of Southwest China

News from the Field

August 2015
Conservation International

Baseline Survey of the Project Site

In April, we conducted a biodiversity and carbon storage baseline survey with the help of experts from the China Academy of Sciences and Xinhua Normal University. We collected data on birds and insects in the project area and in the surrounding sapling forest. The data will be compared with data collected after the introduction of the agroforestry system in order to see how biodiversity in the area is affected. Baseline carbon storage data were collected for three types of land: natural forest, sapling forest, and bushwood, the latter of which will likely be the site of the agroforestry system. The before and after carbon storage of each land type will be compared to determine the carbon storage changes in different ecosystems.



Collecting insects



Carbon storage investigation

Agroforestry System Construction Continues

Construction of the agroforestry system has been continuing throughout this past reporting period and most of the planned project area has been cleared. Corn and soybeans will be planted for soil amelioration, and a species of vetch has been planted for weed control. The first soybeans were harvested at the end of July. The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is not permitted in the project area. A customized pest control light and sticky traps have been tested in a pilot area to determine their effectiveness in controlling pests.



Planting soybeans

Environmental Education in Ganpu Primary School

An environmental lesson was conducted at the only primary school in Ganpu Township. The students learned about people's relationship with ecosystems, particularly the connection they have with forests. By watching a video, playing games, and doing experiments, the students learned how important forests are to their lives and how they can keep these forests healthy. The lesson ended with students painting pictures and making traditional paper cutouts as a way to express what they feel is a healthy forest.



Playing game in environmental education activity



Works of painting and paper-cutting by students

Conservation Agreement with the Community Settled

The content of a conservation agreement with Ganpu village has been decided on after a series of discussions with the local community. The agreement clarifies detailed evaluation criteria and the responsibility of the community. The Environmental Protection and Forestry Department of Li County are responsible for monitoring and assessing the project. We are finally ready to launch efforts based on the conservation agreement.

Improving the Plan for the Agroforestry System

Conservation International and our partner from the Chengdu Agriculture and Forestry Science Academy have met with local government officials and villagers to discuss how to adjust the construction plan for the agroforestry system to match the current land situation. This updated plan was sent to the Li County government in order to apply for funding that will support the construction of roads, electrical power facilities, and pig sties.



Panoramic view of the agro-forestry demonstration area

Public Relations

Photos and videos were taken of the baseline surveys and the agroforestry system construction process, and of the environmental lesson at the Ganpu village school. These will also be used in the project newsletter and in an introductory video.

Plan for Next Quarter

We plan to finish construction on the agroforestry system. A study tour is being organized to visit the agro-forestry and eco-friendly agriculture model farms, and training for controlling pests on fruit trees is being planned. Monitoring equipment is being built to monitor water loss on different types of land, and we are collecting materials to record the project and to ensure there are video records. The conservation agreement was signed at the opening ceremony in July.

Tibetan Paper-Cutting

Among the various traditional art forms of Tibet, paper-cutting is still largely unexplored. While it is a form of folk art, it is also deeply rooted in nature and religious beliefs. Traditional patterns include the Earth, Sun, Moon, and the stars, combined in a way that embodies the geometric cosmology of Tibetan Buddhism. Another common pattern is the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism: the parasol, two golden fish, the conch shell, the lotus blossom, the banner of victory, the vase, the Dharma Wheel, and the eternal knot. The use of animal figures, however, is forbidden in Tibetan paper-cutting because it symbolizes the killing of these animals. Even today in many areas of Tibet, paper-cuts are widely used as decorations in shrines and on altars.

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