



Dongting Lake Newsletter

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Gradual improvements in capacity building of protected areas

Project implementation system

Supervision and monitoring of this project

The Project Management Office (PMO) held the third project steering committee (PSC) meeting in Changsha. Gui Xiaojie, chief engineer of Forestry Department of Hunan Province, Shen Xinping, director of Hunan Dongting Lake Water Conservancy Engineering Administration, head of Division of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade of Department of Finance of Hunan Province, and director of Division of Nature Protection of Department of Ecological Environment of Hunan Province participated in the meeting. Representatives of PSC member units affirmed the progress and achievements of the project after hearing the report of PMO, and put forward valuable suggestions for the follow-up of the project.

The agenda of the meeting included: 1. Summarizing the project work in 2018; 2. Arrangement of the work plan and budget for 2019; 3. Preliminary review of the proposed modifications and adjustments to the budget per output of the project; 4. Review of the use of project funds; 5. Financial training plan for the relevant Protected Areas.

Financial status

Project grants: Until May 31 2019, the PMO has received \$1,397,371 in grant and spent \$1,009,527 (including \$154,691 for the first agreement for payments for four protected areas) with a balance of \$387,844.

Co-financing funds: PMO has received RMB 1,200,000 (\$169,779) of provincial supporting funds and spent RMB 791,319.56 (\$111,958). The balance is RMB 408,680.44 (\$57,821) and the interest of the special account is RMB 13212.49 (\$1,869.33).



Project progress

Integrated Monitoring System is beginning to take shape

On the morning of March 6, Forestry Department of Hunan Province held a conference in Changsha to promote the construction of the monitoring and control system of "Sky, space and earth integration" in Dongting Lake. The Wetland Center, Division of Protected Areas and Information Center and other divisions of FDHP, together with relevant personnel of the four project-focal protected area management bureaus and the experts of the project Integrated Management Information System and Sinda Zhonglin (Beijing) Science and Technology Information Co., Ltd. participated in the meeting. The monitoring and control system of "Sky, space and earth integration" in Dongting Lake includes space-based (satellite remote sensing, navigation, communication), sky-based (aerial remote sensing), and ground-based (video surveillance, ecological monitoring, intelligent mobile terminal, and other Internet of Things means) technologies, combined with network transmission system and GIS technology, to achieve accurate, continuous, and comprehensive monitoring on the data of land use change, natural disasters, management activities, resource dynamics, and non-biological factors (meteorological and hydrological) within and around the region, providing timely and effective information support for ecological protection, resource management and leadership decision-making.

"One NR, one law" in Protected Areas



Seminar on Revision of Wetlands Protection Regulations for West Dongting Lake

The preliminary draft of the Regulations on Protection of West Dongting Lake as Internationally Important Wetlands in Changde City was completed. The people's congresses of Hanshou County, Changde City and the relevant government departments have completed the special investigation on "One NR, one law" in the West Dongting Lake Nature Reserve.

During March 17 to 23, a research team of staff members from Agricultural Committee of the Municipal People's Congress, Legal Work Committee of Municipal People's Congress, Municipal Justice Bureau, Municipal Forestry Bureau, Municipal Ecological Environment Bureau, the Hanshou County Judicial Bureau and other units, led by Tan Huili, chairman of the Agricultural Committee of Changde City People's Congress carried out special studies and investigations on wetland legislation of Kunming and Dali City in Yunnan Province, Xixi wetland in Zhejiang Province, and Nanchang city in Jiangxi Province. In the drafting process of the Wetland Protection Regulations, the Nature Reserve Management Bureaus held a series of seminars and symposiums to solicit opinions from all sides.

HIGHLIGHTS

On March 1, the "Regulations for the East Dongting Lake National Nature Reserve of Yueyang City" was officially enacted. The Regulations clarified the planning, protection, governance, supervision and related legal responsibilities of the Nature Reserve. The promulgation and implementation of the Regulations provide a strong legal guarantee for the management of the Nature Reserve, which marks a new stage of development with rules and laws to follow for management.

Management Planning Work Continue to Advance

In April, Jiang Yong, the management planning specialist, went to project focal Protected Areas (PAs) to hold "stakeholder symposiums" and "training sessions in management planning", collecting opinions and suggestions, and organized personnel to conduct

"SWOT" analysis on nature reserves to scientifically evaluate the current situation of each protected area. Stakeholders, such as the administrative bureaus of the PAs, county departments and township governments in the protected areas, participated in the seminars and training sessions, with a total of about 200 people.



Symposium on Management Planning in West Dongting Lake Nature Reserve



Symposium on Stakeholders in South Dongting Lake Nature Reserve

Steady Implementation of Capacity Building in Protected Areas

In January, Peng Song, information technology specialist of the project, conducted a comprehensive Integrated Information Management System (IIMS) training for Dongting Lake in Hengling Lake Nature Reserve, which improved the software operation and application capabilities of NR staff. The event also laid a foundation for speeding up the construction of the IIMS of the NR and improving the management efficiency of the Nature Reserve Management Bureau.

From March 27 to 28, a 2-day training on bird identification and monitoring was conducted in East Dongting Lake National Nature Reserve, involving 13 participants. From May 15 to 16, the project fishery expert Li Deliang led a training on fish protection for the staff of the reserve, with a focus on knowledge of fish resource conservation and specimen-making techniques.



Bird monitoring training in East Dongting Nature Reserve



Yiyang Wetland Protection and Bird Habitat Protection Training

From March 27 to 29, South Dongting Lake Nature Reserve organized a training on wetland and bird habitat conservation. The training invited Wang Mingxu, director of the PMO, Dr. Zhang Chen, Chief Technical Advisor, Professor Zhou Xunfang, the Legal Specialist, and Professor Deng Xuejian, bird expert of the project to give lectures. The training covered history and development trend of the construction of nature reserves in China, identification and monitoring methods of common birds in South Dongting Lake, and advice on development of bird watching industry. More than 200 people attended the training.

On March 22-23, the West Dongting Lake Nature Reserve Management Bureau invited Professor Zhong Yongde and other four ecotourism experts to conduct a training of "Ecotourism Demonstration Project" for 70 farmers/fishermen in West Dongting Lake. The trainees were deeply inspired and had a new understanding on how to develop ecotourism, which laid a good foundation for the development of rural ecotourism in West Dongting Lake.

Community co-management



Licensing of the demonstration site of Wangjiang Liushui Village Farm

Since January 2019, under the guidance of Professor Zhong Yongde, an ecotourism expert, the West Dongting Lake Nature Reserve Management Bureau has been conducting field surveys on ecotourism resources of Leshan Street community, Longchihu village, Liujiashan village around Longchihu Lake. Researches on the development of ecotourism activities in the region were conducted, and the ecotourism resources and tourism market in the region were analyzed. Zhong Liqin, the secretary of the CCP committee of the Nature Reserve Management Bureau, and other leaders visited communities to mobilize the farmers for the proposal of establishing the West Dongting Lake Ecotourism Association. Hanshou County Tourism Bureau licensed the "Ecotourism Demonstration Site" to the ecotourism associations such as Sanjian Aquatic Food Company, Qunhu Leisure Farm, and Dongting Xiangmeng Hair Crab Experience Hall. In May, the West Dongting Lake Nature Reserve Management Bureau and Professor Zhong Yongde's team jointly completed the first draft of the Guidebook on Wetland Ecotourism of West Dongting Lake as an Internationally Important Wetland.

The integrated agricultural management model of East Dongting Lake NR has entered the implementation stage. In December 2018, under the guidance of the project's Social and Economic Specialist, the East Dongting Lake Nature Reserve Management Bureau and the local village group held a symposium at the Chunfeng Management Station. Since January 2019, more than 30 cooperation agreements have been signed.



First Draft of Ecotourism Guidebook

Flagship species conservation and monitoring

In January 2019, the East Dongting Lake Nature Reserve and other 3 protected areas jointly carried out the winter waterbird survey in Dongting Lake. In January, overwintering waterbirds with a number of 240,609 were observed belonging to 7 orders, 12 families and 58 species, of which 191,467 were in the East Dongting Lake NR, accounting for 79.58% of the total. Among the national first-class protected species, there are 71 blackbirds, 22 oriental white storks, 3 Chinese merganser, 11 white cranes, and 2 white-headed cranes, with a number of 109. Among the national second-class protected birds, there are 5,886 white-leaf egrets, 3,772 little swans, 11 white-fronted geese, 871 Grey Cranes, one white-necked crane, with a total number of 10,541. The number of waterbirds has doubled compared to that in 2012. In the special survey of white-fronted goose, a total number of 13,514 were monitored in March, of which 9600 were found in Hongqi Lake in East Dongting Lake. In the David's deer special survey, a number of 103 were recorded in the first quarter of 2019, including 28 in the Hongqi Lake area, 75 in the Zhuizi River area, 53 female adults, 13 male adults and 9 newborn cubs in the Zhaozi River area.

Ongoing Promotional activities

On March 25, West Dongting Lake Nature Reserve and East Dongting Lake Nature Reserve jointly held a symposium on the compilation of local textbooks for the GEF funded Dongting Lake Project. Participants actively

discussed the chapters, contents and compiling methods of the local textbooks, and determined the outline of the textbooks of Dongting Lake. The compilation of textbooks has been officially launched.

Major events

On March 13, the kick-off meeting for the mid-term evaluation on the Securing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in China's Dongting Lake Protected Areas Project (043 GEF Project) was held in Changsha. Gui Xiaojie, chief engineer of Forestry Department of Hunan Province, attended the meeting and delivered a speech. Shen Zhijun, chief planner of the Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Shen Xiping, director of the Provincial Dongting Lake Water Conservancy Engineering Administration attended the meeting. Participants also included the representatives of the member units of the Project Steering Committee such as the head of division of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade of Department of Finance of Hunan Province, director of Division of Nature Protection of Department of Ecological Environment of Hunan Province, and the head of division of Protected Areas, division of Science and Technology and International Cooperation and division of Planning and Finance of Hunan Provincial Forestry Bureau. At the meeting, the PMO reported the progress of the project to the mid-term evaluation expert group. Stephanie Hodge and Yu Xiubo as the mid-term evaluation experts of FAO, introduced the objectives and requirements of the mid-term evaluation.



Mid-term evaluation experts meeting the west Dongting Lake community representatives

From March 14 to 17, the mid-term evaluation expert group went to four project focal protected areas of Dongting Lake to carry out on-site investigation and assessment. After that, the evaluation experts agreed that the GEF project played an active role in the comprehensive management of Dongting Lake. The comprehensive management of Dongting Lake had achieved remarkable results, and the overall indicators of project mid-term evaluation were good, showing a full recognition of the effectiveness of comprehensive management of Dongting Lake by the international community.

Project Overview

“Securing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in China's Dongting Lake protected areas” is a five-year project executed by the Forestry Department of Hunan Province (FDHP) and the Hunan Province Finance Department (HPFD) under the supervision of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and financing through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The total budget of the project is USD 10.55 million, of which USD 2.95 million is contributed by GEF and the other USD 7.5 million is co-financed by FAO and FDHP.

- The project aims to strengthen the existing institutional and policy framework; to promote an integrated, ecosystem-wide planning and management approach; to develop biodiversity and biodiversity friendly production practices to reduce human activity pressure on the Wetlands; and to increase institutional capacity and public awareness and support for wetlands conservation.
- The project consists of four major components:
 - Component 1: Strengthening of institutional capacities for integrated monitoring and management of biodiversity in Dongting Wetlands Ecosystem (DWE);
 - Component 2: Strengthening of management effectiveness of DWE NRs network;
 - Component 3: Mainstreaming of conservation of biodiversity in key sectors in DWE;
 - Component 4: Environmental education and awareness.



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