

News Release



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U.S. and China Commit to 2011-2013 Dialogue Advancing Nature Conservation

Representatives of China’s State Forestry Administration met with officials at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Arlington, Virginia, on April 7-8, 2011 to plan and agree on a nature conservation dialogue for 2011-2013. The bilateral exchange is to address topics ranging from endangered aquatic species and habitat management, to public education and outreach. The agreement expands the scope of activities and increases the depth of exchange between the two countries while building upon 25 years of cooperation.

Six delegates from the People’s Republic of China participated in the meeting, along with 22 representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“I’m optimistic and hopeful that China and the U.S. can help lead the way in wildlife conservation and enhance increasingly vulnerable natural resources,” said Teiko Saito, Assistant

Director for International Affairs. Zhang Hongyan, head of the Chinese delegation and Deputy Director General of the State Forestry Administration's Department of International Cooperation, said his country considers "bilateral cooperation between the U.S. and China is very critical, and very important."

Cooperative activities will include restoration, management, and conservation of wetlands; a study of the effects of river engineering projects on important fish species; and a bilateral discussion on wildlife trade inspection, enforcement, and staff training.

The 2011-2013 program builds on successes realized during 2007-2010 exchanges, most notably a Third International Symposium on Ecology and Biodiversity in Large Rivers of Northeast Asia and North America, which brought together over 150 researchers, river engineers, wetland managers and conservation biologists from the U.S., China, and Russia to discuss management of large rivers and associated natural resources.

The meeting was coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's *Wildlife Without Borders* program for Russia and East Asia. Herb Raffaele, Chief of the Division of International Conservation, which oversees the *Wildlife Without Borders* program, noted the importance of international cooperation for wildlife conservation. "If we do not take advantage of learning from one another, then each country will have to reinvent the wheel and learn from its own trials and errors," said Raffaele. "It can be costly, not only financially, but ecologically as well."

To learn more about the U.S.-China Nature Conservation Protocol and read the 2011-2013 "Annex 11" agreement, visit the *Wildlife Without Borders* China program webpage, <http://www.fws.gov/international/DIC/regionalprograms/china/china.html>.

Wildlife Without Borders also provides support through grant funding for the conservation of Asian elephants, tigers and gibbons in China.

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