

Update on WILD11/WILD China Project

Overview –We’ve had a very productive, 24 month “Consultation Phase” concerning a proposed WILD11 China, during which we initiated provisional planning, including many and diverse meetings in China at all levels, and of course internationally. Many NGOs and agencies are eager to become Programme Partners and create many outcomes.

During this process, Wilderness Foundation Global (WFG, Cape Town, represented by the WILD Foundation) was joined by the Paulson Institute (US/China, represented by Rose Niu) and EcoForum Global (China, founded and chaired by Zhang Xinsheng, President of IUCN, and represented by CEO Alex Zhang), as WILD11 ‘Co-Conveners’. We formed an excellent working relationship with the Government of Yunnan and two universities in Kunming, as well as a very productive partnership with Prof YANG Rui at Tsinghua Un (Beijing). Wild Wonders of China (Staffan Widstrand) is the principal visual media (China) conservation partner.

Current Status—After the first endorsement by the Yunnan Provincial Government and others, it became clear that highest level participation and influence would be best accomplished through a consortium of Beijing-based “Co-Hosts”, while still doing specific elements of the project in Yunnan. Therefore, WFG recently signed a Co-Hosting “framework agreement” with the China Institute for Strategy and Management (CISM) and Global Times (a division of Peoples Daily Media Group, the largest media group in China, the official communications organ of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and equivalent to ministry rank). Senior leadership at the People’s Daily approved (with enthusiasm) that WILD11 should meet in China in association with them and submitted our application to the Publicity Committee of the CPC for formal approval, including the request that relevant Ministries join the consortium. We await word from CPC.

Some Specifics Underway – During this process we are moving ahead on our “WILD China Project” that will hopefully lead to a WILD11 in late 2019, a year before the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) Convention of the Parties (CoP) in Beijing. We are as well-placed as possible in this application process, but of course in China nothing is guaranteed. We expect rapid assessment and interaction, according to our Co-Hosts. They agree with our proposition -- arrived at thru their own analysis – that the WILD11 process could add substance and value to the national policy of Ecocivilization

In the meantime, we proceed with building a framework for the wilderness concept in China (where there is extremely little understanding of “leaving nature alone.”) We are working with Chinese collaborators on practical initiatives that will provide needed outcomes. One of the central goals of the WILD China Project/WILD11 process is to build within China (and continue to strengthen globally) a policy, academic, and professional understanding of the wilderness/wild nature concept; to demonstrate how wild nature adds significant value into Ecocivilization and China’s commitment to protected areas; and how this is an important part of the global conservation paradigm in terms of the CBD and United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

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We intend that “wilderness as a natural solution” will be demonstrated in all sectors – financial, biodiversity, climate change, social, business, etc). Some of the very initial, practical steps and outputs already underway in this process by our colleagues and various partnerships that have come together in this project (details are available if needed):

- the first peer-reviewed Journal in China on wilderness; Journal of landscape Architecture (done);
- the first China wilderness inventory, confirming approx. 52% of China remains in wilderness condition (primarily in the West, but pockets across other areas), by Dr Yang Rui and Cao Yue (Chinese, done), and an updated paper being prepared for English language publication in International Journal of Wilderness;
- major public global wildlife art exhibition in China, with the National Museum of Wildlife Art, USA (in process);
- Wild Wonders of China expeditions, Staffan Widstrand (in process);
- a wild rivers project, with Yunnan University, Dr Alan Watson and Chinese collaborators (in process);
- research and recommendations for a proposed, future National Wilderness System for China (planned);
- translation into Chinese of IUCN Best Practice Guidelines for Category 1B, Wilderness, with Tsinghuas University (Beijing) and SW Forestry University (planned)
- “Remembering Rhino”, a photo exhibition and book publication in China by “Wildlife Photographers United,” initiated by UK photographer Margot Raggett. (under discussion)
- and more.



Please direct questions to Vance Martin vance@wild.org

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