Wise Uses of Wetlands for People, Conservation, and Flood in the Lake Dongting, China

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Length: 6300 km, the 3rd longest river
Area: 1.8 M km² (2.4 time of EU25; 7 times of the UK)
Background

- Rich of biodiversity
- Land of Fish and Rice
- Water infrastructure
- Wetlands/lake reclamation
- Disastrous Floods and Droughts
- Aquatic environment deterioration
- … …
1650 km² of lake lost
Problems in a polder community
Problems in a polder community

• Simplified economic structure (rice production)

• Cost for flood resisting
  - timing, labour, and investments (80% of income)

• Poverty

• Social problems
WWF’s Demonstration Project in Xi-pan-shan-zhou Polder

Partners for Wetlands (1999-2005, funded by WWF Netherlands)

• 110 ha, with a population of 580
• Reclaimed in 1972
• Flooded in 1996, 1998 and 1999
Farmers participating the planning and training of alternative livelihoods
Biogas – Organic Food Production – Eco-tourism
Alternative livelihoods:

Organic food production

Fish cages in the lake

Pig, chicken, duck raising:
- 80% of households
- Technically easier
- Small investment, low economic risk, but quick returns

Organic farming:
- Greenhouse vegetable
- Organic fruits
A new farming pattern

Alternative livelihoods 25%

Others 12%

Cash tree 17%

Organic food 17%

Off-farm employment 38%

Rice 8%
### Project-Resulted Income Per Household (unit: RMB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3196</td>
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</tbody>
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Comparison of incomes of project-households and non-project households

- Cash income per household
- Cash income per capita

**Project household in Xi panshanzhou Pol der**

**Non-project household in near Pol der**
Project household in Xi panshanzhou Pol der
Non-project household in Xi panshanzhou Pol der
Non-project household in near Pol der
Social impacts

• More leisure time; more off-farm employees
• Free of floods
• Raised environmental awareness
• Organic Farming Association (Project exited in 2001)
• An example in China
Environmental Impacts

• 110 ha of wetland restored as flood retention area

• 6 rare fish species recovered (include Acipenser sinensis, Anguilla japonica, Luciobrama macrocephalus, Ochetobius elongates, Myxocyprinus asiaticus, Siniperca roulei);

• 12 fish species of special economic value increased

• Aquatic plants restored: 10 new species

• Migratory birds returned: 10 new species - Total number tripled
Drivers of Success

- Wise uses of wetlands for people, conservation, and flood retention can and often do go hand in hand.

- Well-tailored livelihoods as the top priority and entering point.

- Favorable policy and strong government support.

- Strong partnership with local agencies.

- Institutional arrangement in community (OFA).

- Adaptive management.
DON’T

- not focusing on conservation

- not offer the your solutions, but help to find out with community

- not for a project, but find the motivation to develop a project

- not a international conservation expert, but a “farmer” speaking local dialect
You’re part of the solution!

www.panda.org
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