Newsletter December 2021

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PROJECTS

Official launch of the Pu'er Sustainable forest management demonstration and training base

With the continuous and joint-efforts from APFNet, the forestry authorities in Yunnan province and Pu'er city and the Southwest Forestry University, the APFNet Pu'er Sustainable Forest Management Demonstration and Training Base, focusing on showcasing best practices in sustainable forest management in tropical and subtropical area, launched on July 27, 2021. It is the second demonstration and training base for Adding Green for Asia and the Pacific, the first one having launched in 2019 as the APFNet Multifunction Forest Management Demonstration and Experience Base in Chifeng city, Inner Mongolia, focusing on demonstrating the best practices of sustainable forest management in arid and semi-arid areas.

The APFNet Pu'er Sustainable Forest Management Demonstration and Training Base will offer opportunities to conduct scientific research related to forests and forestry, forestry training, environmental education and a platform for information exchange and policy dialogue to promote sustainable forest management in the Greater Mekong Subregion and other regions in Asia-Pacific.

Exploring best practices of combating desertification in Horqin Sandy Land, Northern China—A sound feedback on a mid-term evaluation

An independent evaluation team visited Sanyijing forest farm of Aohan Banner in Chifeng Municipality for a mid-term evaluation (MTE) on the project "Demonstration Project of Vegetation Restoration and Management and Utilization of Forest Resources in Greater Central Asia phase II (Chifeng sites)" during 6-8 September 2021 to check the project performance, provide guidance and recommendations to the remaining project activities. With document review and interviews followed by the field visit to the project sites, the project received positive feedback from the evaluation team. The project site, located in the famous Horqin Sandy Land, is characterized by extremely dry weather, desertification, and low vegetation coverage which have led to poor livelihoods, declining species diversity, and sand storms in the past decades. To promote forest restoration, combat desertification, and improve ecological and economic benefits in the region, APFNet has adopted diverse strategies such as desertification prevention and control, vegetation restoration, and sand industry. By building demonstration zones with a collection of various advanced and mature technologies,

the project has showcased the typical models of vegetation restoration, forest management, and utilization of forest resources in similar areas in the Greater Central Asia. Building upon the success of the first phase of the project, the second phase was officially launched in May 2020 for a 3-year duration. The total fund of project is $1,456,000, among which $1,148,000 is supported by APFNet.

For more details

APFNet supports installing forest fire monitoring systems to reduce fire risks

Since 2014, APFNet has supported several economies (including Laos, Cambodia, and China) to install the “Forest Fire Monitoring and Early Alarming System (FFMEA)” through its demonstration projects, aiming to monitor forest fires and protect the forest resources. The FFMEA system is a state-of-the-art solution for monitoring forest fires, which uses front-end monitoring equipment installed on a tower in the forest area and back-end command and control platforms in the control centre to automatically monitor fire outbreaks. The forest fire monitoring tower can be left unattended, monitoring in real-time throughout the day. The system’s precision turntable – the "forest watcher” -can cover a radius of 15km within 30 minutes and has a target positioning accuracy of 100 meters.

In China, forest fires happen frequently, especially in the winter season (from January to April) due to monsoonal influences, and the threat remains serious each year. Based on forest fire records provided by the Forest Fire Management Office of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration in China, the annual average number of fires in China between 2000 and 2020 was 6,283 (range from 1,153 to 14,144) and the average burned area was 183,126 ha (range from 18,161 to 1,123,751). It is also estimated that the human-caused fires accounted for more than 95% of all forest fires. Therefore, the early detection of active forest fires is crucial in protecting forest resources and human communities whose livelihood depends on the forests. Recently, with the digitalization of spatial information and new remote sensing technologies the detection and monitoring of forest fires has become more efficient. Human patrolling for forest fires have been partially replaced by a high-tech forest fire auto-detection system.

Over the past few years, more frequent and catastrophic forest fires have occurred around the world. Forest fires tore across the Brazilian Amazon, imperiling the world’s most biodiverse forests, and even the frozen lands of Siberia and Alaska have suffered unprecedented wildfires. Small-scale fires are a natural process to help the forests clear off the underground shrubs and allow the forest to regenerate. However, large-scale, hot fires can cause considerable destruction to both forest ecosystems and human communities.

WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

How to Balance Conservation and Utilization of Forests in China - Informing forest policy through on-the-ground experiences

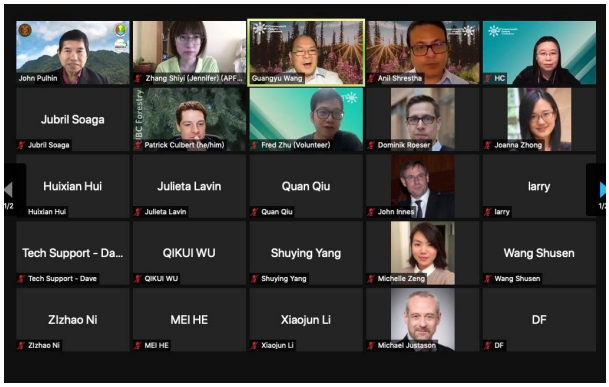
APFNet hosted a discussion forum titled “Forest Management in China: Balancing Conservation and Utilization” at the newly established APFNet Pu’er Sustainable Forest Management Demonstration and Training Base from 30-31 July 2021. This forum enabled a critical exchange and exploration of the policy and regulations regarding different Chinese forest types, while contrasting it with experiences of sustainable forest management on the ground.

Government officials from the Department of Forest Resources Management of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, the Chifeng Forestry and Grassland Bureau (Inner Mongolia Province), the Lin’an Forestry Bureau (Zhejiang Province), the Pu’er Forestry and Grassland Buearu (Yunnan Province), experts from Chinese Academy of Forestry, the Yunnan Academy of Forestry, and forestry practitioners executing APFNet’s projects in Beijing, Anhui Province, Zhejiang Province, Yunnan Province, and Inner Mongolia Province discussed the specifics of the two main forest types defined by the Chinese Forest Law: Public Welfare Forests and Commercial Forests. Additionally, Zhang Jinfeng, the expert from Yunnan Academy of Forestry, introduced forest management at demonstration sites of APFNet's Pu'er project during field trips. Not only did the meeting participants learn about the management practices applied in the Betula alnoides forests and the Pinus kesiya var. langbianensis forests in the two different forest types, but they also provided valuable recommendations to the Pu'er practitioners on improving ecological conditions under current regulations.

Presenting APFNet’s support in sustainable forest management

education at the 20th Commonwealth Forestry Conference

The 20th Commonwealth Forestry Conference, hosted by the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia, Canada was held online from August 16 to 18, 2021. Forestry experts from over 46 economies shared their knowledge and experience on topics such as bio-economy, ecosystem services, forest education, careers, technology and innovation for modern forest management, benefits, valuation, community engagement of urban forests, forest fires, insect outbreaks, and seed transfer from climate change, as well as indigenous and community forestry. It brought together practitioners and researchers from governments across the globe while welcomed audiences from the forest industry, scholarly, and indigenous communities to promote collaborations across economies at various levels from policy to on-the-ground actions, and to encourage the showcasing of existing projects while focusing on cross-economy collaboration that makes a difference.



Zhang Shiyi, a project manager from APFNet attended the session "Lessons learned in delivering the Innovative SFM Online Courses amid the Pandemic" and give a presentation regarding APFNet's support on SFM education on 16 August, the first day of the conference. Recognizing the urgent need for this topic in the region, the contribution of Asia Pacific Forest Education Coordination Mechanism (AP-FECM), which is an APFNet initiated mechanism for collaboration amongst forestry universities, is to improve the access to education in the field of forestry, targeting the improvement of teaching quality, curriculum and research capacity chiefly among forestry universities, but also policymakers and practitioners in the Asia-Pacific region.

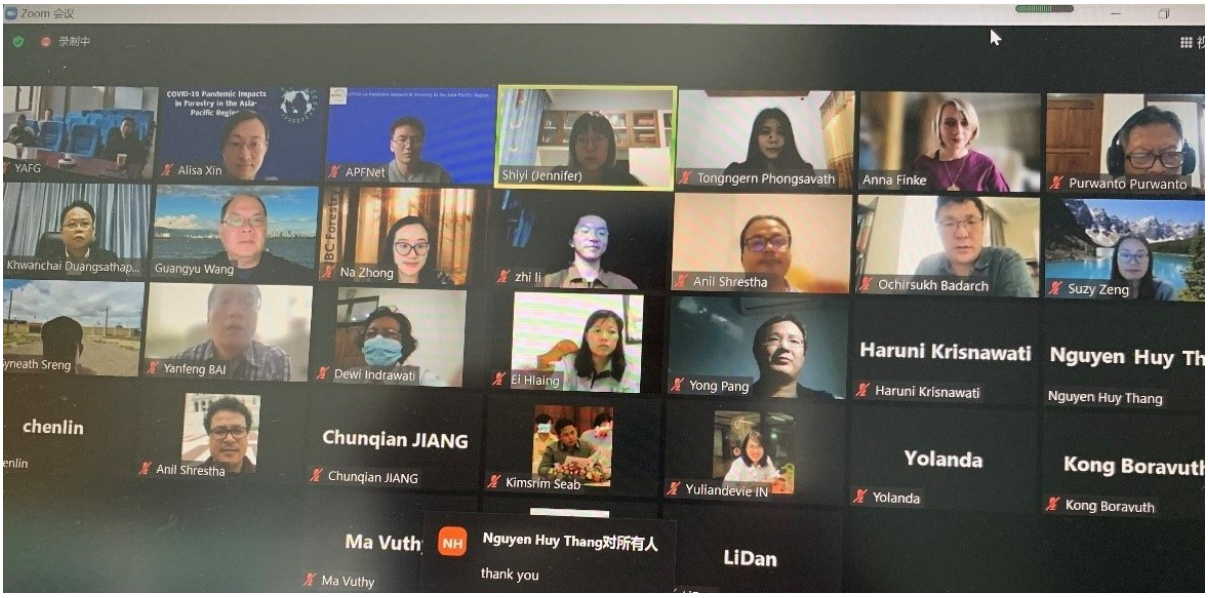
APFNet was at the IUCN World Conservation Congress!

Forest landscape restoration in China was already well underway when the Bonn Challenge and the New York Declaration on Forests announced global forest restoration targets and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration was launched. China has already significantly increased its forest area by 138 million ha and forest cover from 8.6% to more than 23% since 1949. The increase is largely attributed to national ecoforestry programmes implemented since 1978. The earliest and largest is the Three-North Forest Shelterbelt Programme which spans over 400 million ha – nearly half of China's land area – with a planning horizon of 73 years.

Learning from four decades of implementation, APFNet's senior consultant David Cassells will share his perspectives from field visits and research at the Three-North Programme to the IUCN World Conservation Congress. Policymakers, field practitioners and other forest stakeholders inside and outside China can draw from China's experience in the development and implementation of these large-scale programmes. The world desperately needs more forests of sufficient quality in the right places to help address the challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation and to help meet peoples' environmental, social and economic needs. The Three-North Programme and its successors' scale of implementation and achievements has many lessons for all who are interested in the sustainable conservation, management and restoration of forests.

Transforming challenges to opportunities: sharing experiences on forest management under COVID-19 pandemic impacts in the Asia-Pacific Region

The COVID-19 pandemic has been giving a significant impact on each sector and every level of development worldwide. APFNet launched an online meeting titled "COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts in Forestry in the Asia-Pacific Region" on 17th November 2021. At the meeting, nearly 50 APFNet project partners from over 15 economies in the Asia Pacific region attended, including 10 speakers from Cambodia, Lao PDR, China, Myanmar, Indonesia and Canada who shared their experiences on implementing projects during the ongoing pandemic situation.



Ms Anna Finke, Director of APFNet Project Management Division opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. Ms Shiyi Zhang, as moderator, introduced the main objectives of this meeting: providing an opportunity for project partners to share their experiences and views on APFNet project implementation and management under the COVID-19 crisis and improving communication and

networking among the project partners. The meeting covered four topics including forestry education, training and career; forest construction and technology development; community forestry and forest restoration; and project management under the pandemic.

Forest carbon accounting webinar showcased APFNet projects and exchanged experiences in carbon measurement methodologies

As the agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU) sector represents 20-24% of net anthropogenic emissions, accounting for carbon stock and emissions in forests is deemed important in the global effort of combatting climate change. As such, APFNet launched an online meeting titled "Holding Forests Accountable - APFNet Forest Carbon Accounting Zoom Webinar" on December 8th, 2021, to provide a platform not only for APFNet's project partners to share carbon-related project knowledge but also for experts and practitioners from relevant fields to exchange experiences on forest carbon measurement. More than 65 people attended the webinar.

So far APFNet has launched five projects to research carbon accounting methodology or measure forest carbon in different locations in China, the Greater-Mekong Subregion (GMS), and Southeast Asia. Five of the speakers from the webinar were representatives of these projects, and Dr Wang Guosheng from the Academy of Forestry and Grassland, Inventory and Planning of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China provided the context of measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) and Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

Participants have all learned something from the webinar. One participant from the audience was planning to bring Lidar-obtained data into the curriculum of their university. A full report summarizing APFNet and its carbon-related projects will be produced and published on the APFNet official website. The original announcement, the recording of the webinar, and presentation slides can be accessed here.

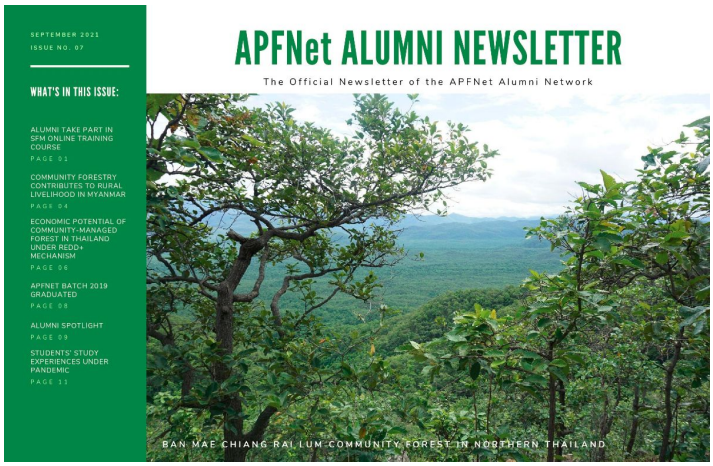
COOPERATION

MoU signed between APFNet and Research Institute of Topical Forest

To promote sustainable forest management in a tropical area, Dr De Lu, Executive Director of APFNet, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dr Dapin Xu, Director of Research Institute of Topical Forest, Chinese Academy of Forestry (RITF) in December 2021. Both sides agreed to establish an international exchange centre on tropical forest in Hainan, China and strengthen cooperation on demonstration projects, policy dialogue, capacity building and natural education-related tropical forest.

PUBLICATIONS

The 7th edition focuses on sustainable forest management practices in different Asia-Pacific economies. Community forests show remarkable potential in boosting rural livelihoods and economic benefits to international carbon markets. Click on the poster to find out more!



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