



In loving memory of Jane Torrance 31 May 1958 – 16 January 2008

Plateau Perspectives Annual Report 2007

Strategic Planning for a Better Future:

Developing Partnerships for Community-based Conservation & Sustainable Development in the Sanjiangyuan Region of the Tibetan Plateau

— A Global Family —

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1. Background (history)

1998	Plateau Perspectives (PP) is founded in Canada
1998	PP assists in the development of the Tibetan grassroots NGO Upper Yangtze Organization (UYO) and the establishment of community protected areas in Suojia district (Zhiduo County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture)
1998-02	PP enlists the support of the Biodiversity Working Group, China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (BWG/CCICED) to assist UYO in developing more people-centred strategies for conservation
1999	PP gives binoculars and work tents to 16 herders to serve as wildlife monitors in Muqu and other communities of Suojia district
2000	PP International Director, Marc Foggin, publishes doctoral dissertation with a case study of community efforts to conserve biodiversity in Suojia district ^{1, 2}
2000 –	PP supports the establishment of the Muqu community centre with the establishment of a school (2000-05), clinic (2006-07) and environmental training centre (2008)
2001-04	PP assists in development and execution of DEFRA-funded project with local partners UYO and the Qinghai Environmental Protection Bureau ³
2002	PP registered in Canada as a non-profit organization (no. 88353 0511 RR0001)
2002-04	PP collaborates on SSHRCC-funded regional community health project ⁴
2004	PP recognized in Scotland as a charitable organization (no. SC036202)
2004	PP assists in the production of EC-funded participatory video of nomad life ⁵
2004 –	PP carries out 'Yangtze Rivers Headwaters Sustainable Development Project' ⁶
2005	PP incorporated under Corporations Canada (business no. 83622-7678)
2005	PP organizes and hosts a strategic planning meeting with the SNNR 7

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¹ Foggin, J.M. 2000. Biodiversity protection and the search for sustainability in Tibetan plateau grasslands (Qinghai, China). PhD dissertation. Arizona State University, Tempe, USA. 397 pp.

² Foggin, J.M. 2005. Highland Encounters: Building new partnerships for conservation and sustainable development in the Yangtze River headwaters, heart of the Tibetan Plateau. In: J. Velasquez, M. Yashiro, S. Yoshimura and I. Ono (editors). 2005. Innovative Communities: People-centred Approaches to Environmental Management in the Asia-Pacific Region. Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University (UNU) Press. 360 pp.

³ DEFRA-funded Fauna & Flora International project, 'Research, survey and biodiversity planning on the Tibet-Qinghai plateau, China' (project no. 10009).

⁴ Foggin, P.M., M.E. Torrance, Drashi Dorje, W. Xuri, J.M. Foggin and J. Torrance. 2006. Assessment of the health status and risk factors of Kham Tibetan pastoralists in the alpine grasslands of the Tibetan Plateau. Social Sciences & Medicine (63): 2512-2532.

⁵ European Union-funded Macaulay Institute project, 'Natural Resource Management in the Mountain Regions of Asia: Community-Led Research Requirements (NORMA)' (project no. FP6-510664).

⁶ See Plateau Perspectives website, http://www.plateauperspectives.org.

⁷ Foggin, J.M. 2005. Promoting Biodiversity Conservation and Community Development in the Sanjiangyuan Region: Proceedings of a conservation planning meeting, with agreed priority action points. Unpublished report. Plateau Perspectives Qinghai Office, Xining, China. Can be downloaded from http://www.plateauperspectives.org/downloads.htm.

2006	PP begins NORAD-funded project on environmental management ⁸
2007	PP opens official Permanent Office in China (reg. no. 78144734-9)
2007	PP signs Memorandum of Understanding with the Northwest Plateau Institute of Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, for a joint research programme on the conservation of grassland ecosystems and biodiversity in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture ⁹
2007	PP participates in the development of the SNNR's priority <i>'Yicun Yidian'</i> project (i.e., the Tibetan Community Conservation Network project) ¹⁰

Plateau Perspectives' work to date has been carried out primarily in Zhiduo County of Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, China. In 2006 official invitations were extended by the government to begin work in two other counties as well, namely Zaduo and Qumalai counties. This has occurred in 2007 with new projects to improve community health already underway and planning begun for new community-based conservation activities.

Together these three counties encompass the headwaters of three major rivers – the Yellow, Yangtze and Mekong rivers – which influence the lives of millions of people downstream. Effective protection of the region's natural resources and sustainable community development are therefore of vital importance to China and the world.

To achieve this, Plateau Perspectives has sought over the last few years to partner with local Tibetan organisations (NGOs) and government agencies including the Management Bureau of the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR), with an additional aim of increasing involvement of local Tibetan herders in decision-making and project implementation.

In its work Plateau Perspectives exhibits 5 distinctive characteristics:

- PP integrates the conservation of biodiversity and community development
- PP considers and values the "local" local environments, cultures, indigenous knowledge
- PP develops joint partnerships with Tibetan communities, government and NGOs
- PP aims to develop replicable models of conservation and community development
- PP seeks to achieve economic and ecological sustainability in all fields of work

Plateau Perspectives also embraces 10 core values in its work:

- Professional excellence in all work
- Performance (results-based evaluation of work)
- Generosity (love for neighbours, care for the environment)
- Integration of development, conservation, and the Christian faith
- Partnership between community, government, and outside expert advisers
- Focus on community initiatives, and government policies that affect communities
- Commitment (what will it take to get the job done, not what can we gain)
- Servant attitude (how can we assist each other achieve joint goals)
- Humility (we don't have all the answers, only suggestions)
- Integrity and honesty in both life and work

⁸ Collaborative development project with Norserve, 'Integrated development project, Yushu Prefecture' (project no. 10654), with funding from NORAD through the Norwegian agency *Bistandsnemnda*.

⁹ See http://english.cas.ac.cn/eng2003/dmk01a/pdf/63/Northwest%20Institute%20of%20Plateau%20Biology.pdf

¹⁰ See Xinhua News, http://www.qh.xinhuanet.com/2007-11/30/content_11810280.htm; also see Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture government website: http://www.qhys.gov.cn/news/view.asp?id=1275&cataid=256.

2. Summary of project activities, 2004-2007

	2004	2005	2006	2007
GENERAL				
Setup of offices	Zhiduo field office established			Xining Representative Office established
		HEALTH		
Doctor training	3 courses, ~50 doctors		1 course, ~6 doctors	1 course with ~25 doctors
Midwife training		1 course, ~25 women	1 course, ~6 women	and ~15 women workers
Immunisations	Suojia (measles)	Suojia (measles, diphtheria, tetanus, pertusis, polio and Hepatitis B)	Planning for Zhahe immunisations	Zhahe immunisations completed in Dec 2007
Village clinics		Jiongqu clinic	Yaqu, Muqu, Kouqian and Dasheng clinics (built and furnished) in Zhiduo	Monitoring of clinics (see left), plus development of Lari, Zhandou, Qirong and Cuochi clinics in Zhiduo, Zaduo and Qumalai
Water quality			Begin testing water for heavy metals (arsenic)	Testing for 5 heavy metals, three counties
		EDUCATION		
Village schools	Muqu classrooms	Yaqu kitchen	Muqu kitchen	
Village school livestock herd			'Yak-2-School'	'Yak-2-School'
Zhiduo Minorities Middle School	English classes, with teacher training	English classes, with teacher training		
		ENVIRONMENT		
Training wildlife monitors	Basic training given, worksheets developed	Jiongqu (kiang) and Muqu (snow leopard)	Muqu (snow leopard), Cuochitan and Yaqu (black- necked cranes, other wetland birds)	Planning for snow leopard surveys, and monitoring of wetland birds
Planning meeting with SNNR et al., assisting SNNR		Workshop on wildlife monitoring & research, field trip, conservation planning meeting	Fieldwork with SNNR Suojia staff, workshop on bird conservation	Community meetings with SNNR for development of the 'Yicun Yidian' project
Community festivals		Jiongqu community festival	Muqu and Yaqu community festivals	Lari community festival
Education materials			Bird booklet, 3 posters	Reprinting of bird booklet
Focus groups on rangeland mgmt.			Discussions on natural resource management	Exploratory trip regarding possible climate change-related project
Grassland exclosures			Exclosures in 3 habitat types, 3 replicates each	Grassland ecological study, including grazing impact
OTHER WORK				
Ecotourism	Feasibility study		Ecotour trial, 2 villages	
PRA Video	Participatory video	Meeting in Scotland		
Needs assessments			Needs assessment trips to Zaduo and Qumalai	Continuation of needs assessment in Zaduo and Qumalai counties

3. Detailed description of project activities

3.1. Overview of work by location

Xining City

Xining is the provincial capital (population ~1 million people) of Qinghai Province, and the location of our permanent office in China, the Plateau Perspectives Xining Representative Office, which was registered under the provincial Industry & Commerce Bureau in May 2007.

Zhiduo County

Plateau Perspectives continues to collaborate with the Government of Zhiduo County and the grassroots NGO Upper Yangtze Organization. Zhiduo (population ~ 4,000 people) is where most of our conservation and development work has been undertaken to date and the location of our field office in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

This year has seen the establishment of four village clinics (Muqu, Yaqu, Kouqian, Dasheng), assistance given to a fifth clinic (Lari) and the continued good operation of a sixth clinic (Jiongqu) — all of which greatly enhance people's access to health care. Education has been supported by the continued implementation of the successful "Yak-to-School" project, supported by many generous donors worldwide. Finally, biodiversity protection is being promoted through our new, formal partnerships with the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve and also the Northwest Plateau Institute of Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, with primary support coming from the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD). Finally, the Canadian Ambassador in Beijing approved a new Canada Fund project to build a training centre for community-based conservation and development in Muqu village in 2008.



Qumalai County

In October 2007 two doctors from Cuochi village in Qumahe district were given two weeks of indepth healthcare training, followed by a fieldtrip to their remote home area where further training was given in the form of joint assessment and treatment of more than 50 patients. The situation of the Cuochi village clinic was assessed and support subsequently organized with the help of the Snowland Great Rivers Environmental Protection Association (SGREPA).

This community development aid fits well in the broader context of the Cuochi community's partnership with the national nature reserve and recent delegation to them of significant stewardship responsibilities (community co-management), as well as being a natural follow-up of Plateau Perspectives' earlier support (in 2001) given to the village school, village clinic medicine fund, and the training and equipment (binoculars) that were given to the community wildlife monitors in the early start-up phase of the Friends of the Wild Yak NGO. (For more detail on this community's work, see http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/1309-Building-communities-and-saving-the-environment).

The development of this work in Qumalai County, like most of our projects to date, has been assisted greatly by The Barbour Trust, which consistently has given us the ability to respond strategically to new requests for assistance in community health and related areas of need.

Zaduo County

Following an exploratory visit to Zaduo County in late 2006 at the invitation of a county vice-governor, Plateau Perspectives requested support from First Fruit, Inc., to replicate the model of rural health care that was developed in previous years in Zhiduo County with the generous support of The Barbour Trust and a partnership between Geneva Global and First Fruit, Inc. In 2007 two village clinics were built, one near the source of the Mekong River and the other near the source of the Yangtze (Dangqu) River, both in very remote, high grasslands areas inhabited by Tibetan herders. The construction of a third village clinic is planned for 2008. In addition, in November 2007 a two-week health training course was given in the county town attended by over 30 healthcare workers from rural districts.





3.2. Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD)

"Community Development and Biodiversity Conservation in the Sanjiangyuan Region of the Tibetan Plateau" (Integrated Development Project, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture)

Project goal

To improve the quality of life of Tibetan herders and to conserve biodiversity in the grassland, wetland and mountain habitats of the Sanjiangyuan region

Project objectives

- To improve social services for Tibetan communities, including health and education
- To enhance economic opportunities available to Tibetan herders, both rural and urban
- To build capacity of the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve to plan and implement effective conservation measures
- To empower Tibetan communities and NGOs through education and capacity building for the sustainable management of natural resources

Anticipated outputs

- Increased access to and quality of social services for Tibetan communities, including health and education
- Increased opportunity for Tibetan herders to learn about and participate in new income generating activities



- Improved understanding of the wildlife and ecology of the Sanjiangyuan region, with enhanced capacity of the Nature Reserve to protect and manage its natural resources
- Enhanced capacity of Tibetan communities and NGOs to participate in conservation and sustainable development activities

Important cross-cutting themes:

- Capacity Building
- Gender Equality
- Environmental Sustainability

Several significant achievements were made in 2007. Following the outline of a work plan submitted to BN and NORAD, we have successfully carried out the following project activities:

Wildlife conservation with the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR)

This area of work aims especially to build the capacity of SNNR for conservation in ways that promote the empowerment of Tibetan communities and that in the long-term also enable more sustainable and equitable forms of rural development. The general approach adopted is known as community co-management of natural resources in which government bureaus and leaders choose to work with local people as genuine partners.

Following a strategic planning meeting in October 2005 and positive relation-building efforts carried out through 2006, one of this year's main achievements has been the development of a genuine and formal partnership with the SNNR – now with a signed and chopped 3-year project agreement –

reached through a participatory, collaborative process between April and December 2007. Key in this process was the planning and hosting of a meeting on-site in Suojia district with local community and NGO representatives, government leaders, SNNR and Plateau Perspectives in attendance. The outcome of the meeting and associated collaborative wildlife surveys was a draft plan with agreed priorities for the "Community Conservation Network" (Chinese: *Yicun Yidian*) project, which already has begun to receive media attention as the first priority conservation project to be undertaken in the Nature Reserve.

Local herders were also given some basic training at the above meeting, particularly in the use of standard scientific methodologies for wildlife monitoring purposes. Conservation needs of the elusive snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*), Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsoni*), Tibetan wild ass (*Equus kiang*), wild yak (*Bos grunniens*) and black-necked crane (*Grus nigricollis*) were highlighted and plans made for an appropriate conservation-oriented research programme. Steps have already been taken to initiate a detailed programme of study and community-based conservation of snow leopard in the project area in 2008 (see Box 1).



Wildlife monitoring, with local capacity building

Surveys were made of the ecologically significant Cuochitan wetland, in Suojia district, with emphasis on determining bird species diversity and a migration timeline. Climate change may lead to changes in bird migration dates, hence such information could be developed to serve as a bio-indicator of regional/global change. SNNR also carried out extension work on avian flu and Plateau Perspectives assisted in the setup of a new ecological monitoring station.

In Chadan district of Zaduo County, south of Suojia district, Plateau Perspectives provided monitoring worksheets to four community leaders who are keen to document wildlife sightings in such a way as to promote biodiversity conservation. These monitors also were given binoculars to assist in the work.

Other forms of capacity building for local NGOs and communities

Plateau Perspectives was an invited participant at a local community meeting in Lari village, Duocai district, which helped to raise people's overall awareness of environmental issues and the need for conservation measures to be adopted. One main topic of discussion was human-wildlife conflict, with special attention given to the serious damage that can be inflicted by the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*). A variety of measures to mitigate this problem were discussed and several will be trialed in the coming



year. Snow leopard and the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) can equally inflict significant damage to local herders' livelihoods, particularly through livestock predation. Use of electric fences, guard dogs, shelters and other methods has been discussed.

Plateau Perspectives also was invited to join and participate in a meeting in Xining in December 2007, sponsored by local environmental NGOs, on community co-management work in the source area of the Yangtze River.

Box 1. Snow leopard conservation as a tool for community empowerment

The Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR) is one of the largest reserves in the world. With a land area of approximately 153,000 km², the reserve is larger than England and Wales combined. Furthermore, as it encompasses the source areas of the Yangtze, Yellow and Mekong rivers, protecting the grassland ecosystems is important not only for local Tibetan herders, but also for many millions of people downstream.

The SNNR aims both to protect the biodiversity of the Tibetan Plateau and to promote sustainable livelihoods for Tibetan herders living in the nature reserve. In this context it launched its first major conservation initiative in November 2007, the "Community Conservation Network" project (Chinese, *Yicun yidian*). The main purpose of this project is to develop a new model of conservation, i.e., working collaboratively with local communities to protect the natural environment.

This integrated conservation project includes three main, inter-related strands of work:

- (1) Environmental education & raising conservation awareness
- (2) Resolution of human-wildlife conflict such as livestock predation
- (3) Wildlife research, beginning with the rare and endangered snow leopard

The snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*) is both an internationally endangered species and a State Class I protected species in China. However it is reported to be relatively abundant in the project area. It therefore has been selected by the project partners as a priority target species for joint conservation efforts, both to enhance its protection and to start developing effective multi-stakeholder partnerships for conservation in the Tibetan Plateau region.

Project methodology and timetable are still being developed, but the anticipated community impact is clear: Instead of being seen as harmful for wildlife or as perpetrators of environmental degradation, local people can contribute positively to national and international conservation efforts. In this way some negative perceptions may be mitigated and Tibetan herders (and their pastoral livelihoods) may come to be seen by a wider public in China, including politicians and decision-makers, as ecologically sustainable.

Local communities are empowered when their traditional ecological knowledge and management practices are respected. In this co-management project we aim to work with local herders as co-equal partners in conservation.

This snow leopard conservation programme will make use of standard SLIMS transect surveys, monitoring by local Tibetan herders, and non-invasive automatic camera trapping techniques.

References:

McCarthy, T.M., and Chapron, G. 2003. Snow Leopard Survival Strategy. ISLT and SLN, Seattle, OR, USA. 105 pp.

Jackson, R.M., Roe, J.D., Wangchuk, R., and Hunter, D.O. 2005. Surveying Snow Leopard Populations with Emphasis on Camera Trapping: A Handbook. The Snow Leopard Conservancy, Sonoma, CA, USA. 73 pp.

Ecological grassland study focused on natural resource management

In order to better understand the ecology of Tibetan grasslands, and to elucidate interactions between grasslands and domestic livestock, plant cover and biomass were assessed in both fenced and unfenced plots. The identification of plant species was done by a national researcher at the Northwest Plateau Institute of Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. The entry of vegetation data is currently underway.

In addition, Plateau Perspectives has helped catalyze relationships between different national partners, particularly between a management agency (SNNR) and an academic/scientific body (NWIPB/CAS). Such cross-sectoral work is not common, but it is essential for work to be effective in the long-term. For this purpose, Plateau Perspectives not only has a signed cooperative agreement with the Nature Reserve, but also a signed MOU with the Chinese Academy of Sciences for joint research aimed at conserving Tibetan grasslands and biodiversity in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

3.3. Geneva Global

"Building Rural Health Services for Tibetan Nomads in the source areas of the Yangtze and Mekong Rivers, Qinghai Province, China" (Zaduo County)

The people in western Zaduo County live a nomadic lifestyle and thus are totally dependant on livestock and the grassland for their survival. Due to high altitude, low precipitation and a long and harsh winter, the vegetation is sparse and grassland is degrading. The local people are extremely poor and have almost no access to health care. As in Zhiduo County, women deliver their babies in cold and unhygienic circumstances, often with no-one to help. For example we have met families in rural Zaduo County where a man has been widowed twice and lost six infants, cannot support his other children, and now is despairing of life; mothers are dying in childbirth; young children are dying from treatable and preventable diseases; and for the survivors, there is almost no hope. Medical care is largely inaccessible.

In this context we now are being asked to help with the establishment of three local clinics to be staffed by village doctors who will be trained in part by Plateau Perspectives. This follows the model previously developed in Zhiduo County. The aim of this project is to work together with local communities and relevant government authorities (such as the Health Bureau) to improve people's health and well-being in the remotest parts of Zaduo County. The project's specific aim is to improve



access and quality of health care, and thus to prevent illness. Of the three village clinics planned, the *Qirong Clinic* in Chadan district and the *Zhandou Clinic* in Zhaqing district have already been built, but the *Daying Clinic* in Moyun district will not be built until 2008 (it could not be built this year due to extremely poor road conditions).

The clinics provide the infrastructure for village doctors and women's health workers to work closer to the homes of the local people. Building clinics equally enables the administration of a government-subsidized health insurance scheme, making the health services financially more accessible. The storage and administration of medicines will be facilitated and will be replenished through a revolving fund. Public toilets and a safe disposal unit for soiled dressings, needles, etc., will be built. Finally, a good water supply will be sought so that good health practices may be modelled by the health workers in the local communities.

"Grant to expand community health work in Tibetan areas by building three rural clinics, training health workers, and implementing immunization programs" (Zhiduo County)

The proper management of the three village clinics built in 2006 was discussed on a number of occasions with local community leaders and NGOs – and finalized in late 2007 following monitoring work undertaken by Plateau Perspectives.

In 2007 Plateau Perspectives also provided assistance with logistics for critical immunizations in Zhahe district of Zhiduo County and provided funds for the purchase of the Hepatitis B vaccine. A digital monitor showed that the cold chain was kept at least as far as the county town. From there, vaccines were given to village doctors for distribution. Plateau Perspectives did not travel on any of these trips as they were organized successfully by the Health Bureau, Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and township government leaders.

The furnishing of *Kouqian Clinic* was completed in 2007 and a doctor was finally assigned to the clinic in the autumn. It is now in operation and record keeping has begun. *Yaqu Clinic* is staffed by a village doctor and two women's health workers, and it is running well. It is the busiest of all the village clinics, seeing around 500 patients per month. One of the women health workers organizes the record keeping well. The doctor originally assigned to work at *Muqu Clinic* moved away and there was a delay until a replacement doctor could be found.



However the clinic is now furnished and equipped and open for patients to visit.

3.4. The Barbour Trust

Core funding for Plateau Perspectives' community health programme in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, China

The original clinic built by Plateau Perspectives in 2005 together with the local community and the county Health Bureau, *Jiongqu Clinic*, is said to be operating well, as is the *Dasheng Clinic* that was built in 2006 with co-funding from NORAD. In addition, village leaders in Duocai district approached Plateau Perspectives with a request for financial assistance to help equip and furnish *Lari Clinic*. The clinic is now run by two doctors, one of whom attended a Plateau Perspectives training course last year, along with two women's health workers.

The two village doctors practicing at the *Cuochi Clinic* in Qumahe district of Qumalai County (north of Zhiduo County) came to Zhiduo for a two-week medical training course. Additional training was also given on-site in Cuochi and the clinic's situation was assessed first-hand, which led to assistance being given for the provision of furniture and basic equipment to this village clinic as well.



A further training course was given in Zaduo County (south of Zhiduo County) in November 2007, with doctors invited from the north-western districts, namely Chadan, Moyun and Zhaqing districts. However many other village and townships doctors attended as well, giving rise to a total of more than 40 attendees. The number of participants was therefore restricted in the afternoon sessions

and only 30 doctors came, allowing for more participatory training and practice sessions. The local doctors participated well and nearly all requested further medical trainings in the future.

Testing of water quality (heavy metals) in Zhiduo, Zaduo and Qumalai counties

Water testing was begun this year to assess quality at each clinic site. One illness that causes much suffering, observed in several nomad areas of Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, is an acute form of gout. We therefore have chosen to begin testing for lead and molybdenum. With a new portable spectrophotometer, we also have the ability to test for copper, fluoride and arsenic. Much copper is mined in the Tibetan region, and fluoride and arsenic are found at high levels in other parts of China.



3.5. "Yak-to-School" project

Development of the Muqu village school livestock herd (Zhiduo County)

The herd of the Muqu village school prior to the "Yak-to-School" project consisted of only 50 yak and 30 sheep. This was clearly insufficient even to feed the school children. With support from many individual donors, Plateau Perspectives provided funds to purchase more yak and sheep in 2006 and 2007. All the animals survived and bred well such that the livestock herd by August of this year was 300 sheep, 500 lambs and 150 yak. The autumn brought the annual sales (which reduced the herd size again) and this helped pay for salaries and food for the children. Final purchases will be made next year in an attempt to make the livestock herd sustainable.

3.6. Canada Fund, Embassy of Canada, Beijing

"Muqu Village Training Centre for Community-based Conservation and Development" (Zhiduo County)

The Canada Fund, administered by the Embassy of Canada in Beijing, has approved Plateau Perspectives' and the Upper Yangtze Organizations' cooperative project of building a training centre for community-based conservation and development in Muqu village, Suojia district. Planning and construction will begin in early 2008.

Project objectives, as described in the Canada Fund proposal

The project will build upon nine years of progressively more ambitious local community mobilization in the ongoing struggle to demonstrate to the higher tiers of government the effective role that local communities can play in the conservation of biodiversity.

The building of a sustainable development research centre managed by the local community on the Tibetan Plateau will serve as a focal point for ongoing local initiatives to enhance the sustainability of environmental (i.e., grassland) management, including wildlife and habitat conservation, and sustainable livelihood development. The initiative will also provide a site that will serve as a community training and scientific research centre that will permit the local staging of a wide range of activities, including mother-and-child-health and public health training, grassland management research and adult literacy and technical (e.g., vocational) education.

Ultimately the project seeks to contribute to the continuing effort to provide an alternative model to policy-makers who remain committed to the current policy of rural depopulation throughout Tibetan areas of western China, while in the process the project will also give local people a means for greater involvement in the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives.

4. International Council of Reference

Professor Calvin DeWitt

Calvin DeWitt is a retired Professor of Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and former President of the Au Sable Institute. He is a physiological ecologist and ecosystems ecologist with a focus on wetland ecosystems. At Au Sable Institute he administers a programme that serves 60 Christian colleges and universities in North America, India, and Africa with courses in Christian environmental stewardship.

In the area of interface between ecology and Judeo-Christian environmental ethics he is co-author (with Sir Ghillean Prance) of *Missionary Earthkeeping* (1992) and author of *Caring for Creation: Responsible Stewardship of God's Handiwork* (1997).

Sir Brian Heap CBE ScD FRS

Sir Brian Heap is a former Master of St Edmunds College, Cambridge University, and a Fellow and Foreign Secretary of The Royal Society. He is an eminent animal biologist and until recently was Director of the Babraham Institute, Cambridge, and Director of Science, UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. He is also the UK representative on the NATO Science Committee, and has worked with the World Health Organization in China. Professor Heap holds doctorates from Cambridge, Nottingham and York, has published extensively and holds distinguished awards for his scientific work.

Dr John Hodges

Dr John Hodges was responsible for animal breeding and genetic resources in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN where he had wide experience of development agriculture. Previously he was Professor of Animal Genetics at the University of British Columbia, Canada and earlier taught at Cambridge University, UK. He is the former Head of the Production Division of the Milk Marketing Board of England and Wales. He has degrees in agriculture, livestock production and genetics from Reading and Cambridge Universities (UK) and in business administration from Harvard University (USA).

Dr Hodges is co-author of the book *Tropical Cattle: Origins, Breeds and Breeding Policies* (1997). Having analysed the history of genetic gain and livestock in the tropics he recommends an alternative approach to improving quality of life by greater use of indigenous breeds and working together with the local cultures of livestock producers.

Since 1990, Dr. Hodges has worked with the governments and agricultural leaders in Central and Eastern Europe to restructure agriculture. He writes and speaks on Ethics, Genetics and Agriculture examining their influence on the future development of society in Developing Countries and in the West.

Sir John Polkinghorne KBE FRS

Sir John Polkinghorne is an Anglican priest, the former President of Queens' College, Cambridge University, and former Professor of Mathematical Physics at Cambridge University. Dr Polkinghorne resigned his chair in physics to study for the Anglican priesthood. After completing his theological studies and serving in parishes, he returned to Cambridge. During this time, he wrote a series of books on the compatibility of religion and science. These include *Quarks, Chaos and Christianity* (1994), and most recently, *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (2000) and his Gifford Lectures, *The Faith of a Physicist*. Dr Polkinghorne was the recipient of the 2002 Templeton Prize.

Sir Ghillean Prance FRS VMH

Sir Ghillean Prance was for eleven years Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, until his retirement in 1999. Prior to this he was Senior Vice President for Science of the New York Botanical Gardens and Founding Director of the Garden's Institute of Economic Botany. He is an expert on the flora of the Amazon rain forests, having led annual expeditions there over a period of twenty-five years and described more than 450 Amazonian plants new to science.

Sir Ghillean was trained as a plant taxonomist and spent over 8 years on fieldwork and botanical exploration in Amazonian Brazil. He has a world-wide interest in the sustainable development of rainforest ecosystems and conservation generally; as well as being author of 19 books and editor of a further 14 books, he has published over 400 papers of both scientific and general interest on plant systematics, plant ecology, ethnobotany and conservation.

Mr Matthias Stiefel

Mr Stiefel works in Geneva as Executive Director of WSP International, a private organisation affiliated with the UN, which uses action-research and consensus building methodology to assist local and national actors in war-torn societies in consolidating peace and rebuilding their countries. It also assists the UN and the international community in better supporting them in this task. In the early 1970s he was a freelance journalist and consultant in Southeast Asia. In 1986 he resigned from employment with the UN to spend five years as a farmer on a traditional dry-land subsistence farm in the Algarve, motivated by the desire to gain practical field experience of development issues. Mr Stiefel is also an International Trustee (Chair) of A Rocha International.

Mr David Taylor

Mr David Taylor is Director of the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives. Prior to USAID, Mr. Taylor served in the private non-profit sector with ADRA International for 24 years and World Vision for 10 years.

In his current role as Director of USAID/OTI, Mr Taylor's tasks include that of providing assistance to ordinary citizens in fragile, failing or recovering states. His office has partnered with thirty countries over the past ten years, and is currently active in ten countries. In several instances they have supported conservation projects when environmental issues were identified as key factors in the fragility of the state.

Dr Tony Whitten

Dr Tony Whitten is Senior Biodiversity Specialist for the East Asia and Pacific Region at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., where he attempts to achieve the conservation of forests, wildlife, karst biota, and freshwater biodiversity by whatever means. He has written over a dozen books on the ecology and natural history of Indonesia, and works throughout the East Asia region from Mongolia to New Guinea. Dr Whitten manages stand-alone conservation projects, research/capacity projects, a regional project on faiths and the environment, and environmental assessment on other World Bank projects.

5. Board of Directors (Canada)

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Dr C Warren, Secretary Senior Lecturer, Department of Geography ad Geosciences,

University of St Andrews

Mrs S Warren Art therapist

7. Project staff working in China

Foreign staff (full-time) Position Term of appointment

Dr J Marc Foggin International Director 1998 – present
Dr Marion E Torrance-Foggin Medical Director 1999 – present
Dr Fiona R Worthy PhD (Ecology) April 2006 – present

National staff (full-time) Position Term of appointment

Gongbo Tashi Project Manager November 2007 – present Liu Lingjun (Larry) Office secretary May 2004 – present Xu Haiying Office assistant June 2006 – present

Zhang Bin (Ted) Translator August 2006 – September 2007 Sertsogyi (Helen) Translator September 2006 – July 2007

Jigme Rabden (Timothy) Translator July 2007 – present

Suocai Driver September 2007 – present

8. Project partners in 2007

Short-term visiting experts

Peter Foggin Project management
Ben Henderson Project management
Douglas MacMillan Proposal development
Jared Phillips Wildlife conservation
John Sale Wildlife conservation
Charles Warren Proposal development

Organizations / Institutions

Norserve Partnership in NORAD-funded "Integrated Development Project"

DICE / University of Kent
First Asia Development
The Bridge Fund Partnership in NORAD-funded "Integrated Development Project"
Project development with Durrell Institute for Conservation & Ecology
Cooperation in community development and conservation work
Donation of 100 copies of "Where there is no doctor" in Tibetan

Supporting enterprises

Clark University

Rosetta Stone

TechSoup

Discount on IDRISI (Andes edition) GIS software
Discount on Chinese language learning software
Discount on Microsoft and other software
Discount on email hosting service

Special fund-raising efforts

Bill Baxter and the University Fiddle Group, along with University of St Andrews' Music Centre, put on a special lunchtime concert in March 2007 in aid of Plateau Perspectives and raised £260! Thanks to Alan Torrance and Alison Malcolm for making this possible.

St Mark's Church, Cambridge, selected Plateau Perspectives as "Charity of the month" in November 2007 and raised £500 in support of its work. Thanks go to Rachel Begbie for her valued help.

9. Recent staff publications

General publication

"Plateau Perspectives – helping nomadic pastoralists on the Tibetan Plateau" By Jane Torrance, published in *St Andrews In Focus*, Issue No. 22, May/June 2007 (see last page)

Scientific publications

Foggin, J.M. 2008. Depopulating the Tibetan grasslands: The role of national policies and perspectives for the future of Tibetan herders in Qinghai Province, China. *Mountain Research and Development* 28(1): 26–31.

Hornskov, J., and M. Foggin. 2007. Brief notes on the Altai Weasel *Mustela altaica* on the Tibetan plateau. *Small Carnivore Conservation* (Journal of IUCN/SSC Small Carnivore Specialist Group) 36: 48-49.

Foggin, P.M., M.E. Torrance, Drashi Dorje, W. Xuri, J.M. Foggin and J. Torrance. 2006. Assessment of the health status and risk factors of Kham Tibetan pastoralists in the alpine grasslands of the Tibetan Plateau. *Social Sciences & Medicine* 63: 2512-2532.

Worthy, F.R., R. Law and P.E. Hulme. 2006. Modelling the quantitative effects of pre- and post-dispersal seed predation in *Pinus sylvestris*. *Journal of Ecology* 94(6): 1201-1213.

Foggin, J.M. 2005. Highland Encounters: Building new partnerships for conservation and sustainable development in the Yangtze River headwaters, heart of the Tibetan Plateau. In: J. Velasquez, M. Yashiro, S. Yoshimura and I. Ono (eds). 2005. *Innovative Communities: People-centred Approaches to Environmental Management in the Asia-Pacific Region*. Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University (UNU) Press. 360 pp.

Katzner, T.E., C.H. Lai, J.D. Gardiner, J.M. Foggin, D. Pearson and A.T. Smith. 2004. Adjacent nesting by Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* and Himalayan Griffon Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* on the Tibetan Plateau, China. *Forktail* (20): 94-96.

10. Websites of interest

Books and articles on Tibetan nomads (Center for Research on Tibet) http://www.case.edu/affil/tibet/tibetanNomads/books.htm

THDL map of the Tibetan region (Tibetan & Himalayan Digital Library) http://www.thdl.org/collections/cultgeo/tibet/tibetmap.html

Resources on development in China (Adrian Zenz) http://www.zenz.org/adrian/resources.html

China Internet Information Centre http://www.china.org.cn/english/

UNDP in China http://www.undp.org.cn/

Qinghai News http://www.qhnews.com/english/

A Rocha – Christians in Conservation http://en.arocha.org/home/

The John Ray Initiative – Connecting Environment, Science & Christianity http://www.jri.org.uk

Photos of the mammals of Tibetan Plateau http://www.plateauperspectives.org/gallery/mammals/

Photos of the birds of Tibetan Plateau http://www.plateauperspectives.org/gallery/birds/



11. Financial overview

Approximate income in 2007, all countries

		<u>CAD</u>	<u>GBP</u>
PP Canada	Clinics in Zaduo	36,000	18,000
	Transport fund	5,000	2,500
	Yak-to-School	2,000	1,000
	Sub-total	43,000	21,500
PP China	NORAD project	85,000	42,500
	Canada Fund project	30,000	15,000
	Sub-total	115,000	57,500
PP Scotland	Barbour Trust	27,000	13,500
	Yak-to-School	10,000	5,000
	Gardiner fund	5,000	2,500
	Sub-total	42,000	21,000
	Total income (approximate)	\$ 200,000	£ 100,000

Approximate expenses in 2007, all countries

		<u>CAD</u>	<u>GBP</u>
PP Canada	Clinics in Zaduo	26,000	13,000
	Transport fund	5,000	2,500
	Yak-to-School	0	0
	Sub-total	31,000	15,500
PP China	NORAD project	85,000	42,500
	Canada Fund project	0	0
	Sub-total	85,000	42,500
PP Scotland	Barbour Trust	17,000	8,500
	Yak-to-School	5,000	2,500
	Gardiner fund	0	0
	Sub-total	22,000	11,000
	Total expenses (approximate)	\$ 138,000	£ 69,000

(For exact figures, see annual reports submitted to Revenue Canada, Scottish Charities, etc.)

12. Article published in St Andrews In Focus (May/June 2007)

Jane Torrance reports on an outstanding family-run charity, for which Bill Baxter gave a fund-raising lunchtime concert in the Younger Hall on 14th March.

Plateau Perspectives

- helping nomadic pastoralists on the Tibetan Plateau

In early 2004 I had the privilege of spending five weeks in Olinghal Province in Western China to observe the work being carried out by my sisterin-law, Marion Foggin and her husband Marc, through their charity, Plateau Perspectives, which I administer in the UK. Marion was a consultant in paediatrics and community child health before committing her life to helping improve the health of the nomadic pastoralists on the remote,

high-altitude Tibetan Plateau. Marc has a PhD in environmental biology and is now working with local government and NGOs to find ways of encouraging sustainable development whilst protecting the environment. The main areas of work are in health, education, and natural resource management. They live at extremely high altitude in a small house in Zhiduo with their 4-year old son, Alistair, and other doctors or biologists who periodically come out to help with the work. Cooking

and heating relies on a yak-dung stove and water is collected from a well (a luxury, as most people collect water or ice from the rivers). The toilet is an open-air long-drop outside in the yard – rather a chilling experience when the temperature is -30°C!

Most of Plateau Perspectives' work has been in Zhiduo county, an area of over 80,000km2 encompassing the highestpopulated territory in the Yangtze River drainage basin, with an average elevation of 4500m. 98% of the population of about 24,000 are Kham Tibetan, 90% being pastoralists, and the majority of these are nomadic. Some live in tents throughout the year - others just in the summer. The people have an intricate knowledge of their natural environment and have developed practices to enable them to survive in the harsh conditions. They are dependent on their herds of yak, sheep, and goats. A yak provides meat, milk (also used for cheese, yoghurt, and butter), leather (for shoes), hair (for tents), dung (for heating and cooking), and is also essential for transport. The nomads also eat tsampa (roasted barley flour); they hardly ever eat fruit, vegetables or fish.



Kham Tibetans



Marion, Marc and Alistair

the authorities are

very impressed by the

ways in which Plateau

Perspectives has helped

the local communities

cause for concern, with high levels of infant mortality and limited access to services. People may call on a village health worker who has limited, if any, formal training. If serious problems arise, it may take days before transport is found to reach a hospital and many people cannot afford the hospital care when they arrive. The Health Bureau has asked Plateau Perspectives to help. Following interviews with a

The health situation is

hundred families it became clear that women and child health were seen as being particularly poor. There are no midwives (the women are usually helped during labour by an unskilled female relative or neighbour) and women are reluctant to discuss their problems with village health workers, who are traditionally men. It is common, unfortunately, for women to give birth in the least hygienic areas of a tent (often on the yak dung pile) using dirty cloths so as

not to affect the cleaner areas (as this would be seen to bring bad fortune to the family). Young women, whether pregnant or not, also work much harder than other family members; taking up to half an hour to collect water would be considered

entirely normal. For several years Marion has held doctor training courses throughout the region, but is now also focusing on training women health workers. A women's focus group highlighted the need for education in basic hygiene and in baby and child nutrition. Plateau Perspectives has also carried out immunization programmes against measles and whooping cough. Other health problems identified include tuberculosis and severe arthritis.

Around 65% of men and 95% of women pastoralists in Qinghai Province are illiterate. The lack of education (also poor road conditions) has hampered opportunities for economic development. Traditionally, children have helped their mothers with herding. The latter also do the milking, process the milk products, collect and dry the dung, fetch the water, cook, and do the washing. The men are responsible for killing animals and trading. Since few children have access to even

basic education, Plateau Perspectives has helped the communities to set up two village primary schools, both started as tent schools; they have equal numbers of boys and girls. At present we are fund-raising to provide yak and sheep for the school herds to make the schools sustainable; young animals are sold to pay for the teachers' salaries.

The third main area of work is environmental protection and resource management. Although the



Typical landscape on the Plateau

government has set up the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve to try to protect some of the endangered species and prevent soil erosion, the management of it is crucial. Marc



Jane Torrance

and members of local conservation groups, such as the Upper Yangtze Organization, have worked hard to involve the local herders by giving them binoculars and training them in wildlife monitoring so that the abundance and distribution of wildlife populations can be documented. This participation has also helped to reduce poaching. In addition there has been increased environmental education from primary school level right up to international conferences.

It is hard to get government permission to work in this beautiful, isolated region. However, the authorities are very impressed by the ways in which Plateau Perspectives has helped the local communities and there are leaders in neighbouring counties who are also keen to set up partnerships. Marion and Marc are devoted to their work and committed to continuing in the long-term to help improve the lives of the people living on the Tibetan Plateau.



Young Kham Tibetan boy



Nomad's Tent

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