



# freshwater stewardship in china

The mountains of Southwest China, known as Asia's water tower, are the source of fresh water for more than two billion people. But with a fifth of the world's population, China also consumes vast quantities of water, putting intense pressure on the country's natural resources and its essential ecosystems.

Deforestation along the mighty Yangtze River basin has led to massive soil erosion, which endangers the delivery of fresh water to more than 400 million people and the production of rice – the staple of the Chinese diet.

Through the Center for Environmental Leadership in Business, Conservation International (CI) has worked with many companies to support on-the-ground projects in a strategic market, China, to protect the largest sources of fresh water on the planet.

Southwest China Biodiversity Hotspot



Alcoa Foundation provided start-up support to help develop the framework for a China Freshwater Fund, supporting pilot payment for ecosystem services projects as well as an initiative to conserve high-biodiversity freshwater areas.

Working with FedEx, United Technologies Corporation and DreamWorks, CI implements conservation projects focusing on reforestation in Sichuan Province and planting of native plant species such as bamboo—the giant panda’s primary food source. Reforestation projects prevent soil erosion along rivers, as well as aid in filtering water. Reducing erosion and sedimentation will also improve water quality downstream in both rural and urban areas.

CI and Marriott International recently launched a partnership to support a vital water conservation program in Pingwu County of the Sichuan Province. The program is designed to assist rural communities with sustainable businesses, such as mushroom farming and honey production, which place less stress on the environment. The goal of the program is to make conservation beneficial to local people and encourage forest, wildlife and water protection to be replicated in other areas of the Yangtze River watershed.

CI also joined forces with PepsiCo China Ltd. to raise awareness about the importance of water conservation in China. CI and PepsiCo China created public service announcements telling Chinese youth about the importance of environmental stewardship of the Yangtze River, which aired during primetime coverage of the “Pepsi Voice of the Next Generation” band competition on Zhejiang Satellite TV—reaching 100 million viewers in the 12 weeks they aired.

Combined, these freshwater stewardship partnerships help protect critical ecosystems that are a vital part of Asia’s water tower.



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[www.conservation.org/celb](http://www.conservation.org/celb)

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