

China EnviroData Weekly

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CEW

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During the battle between human being and SARS, we cannot make a clear conclusion now of where did the SARS virus come from, but the virus makes us suffer a lot. We cannot help thinking and finding the reason. Is it because of what we done to the nature and environment, pollution, over developing and so on?

Our economy and natural recourses cannot develop without rest. With more and more resources and material are knowing and using by people, more and more problems are threatening to us, such us boom population, sever pollution, bad ecosystem, etc. Is it our wrong and bring us to the SARS virus?

CEW editors provide this special issue at this special time. In this issue we selected Top Ten News and most important policies from No.30 (21st Oct 2002) to No.55 (28th Apr 2003).

First, let's take a look at the changing of China ecosystem in half year.

Twenty natural lakes disappear in China each year on average

The newest research report from State Forestry Bureau shows that twenty natural lakes disappear in China each year on average.

In the eastern and central regions, during the past 50 years, China lost about 1000 natural lakes due to enclosing tideland for cultivation. Hubei province had 1052 lakes in 1950s. Only 83 are left at present.

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Human Activities Cause China's Desert to Advance 300 km Toward the South

After analyzing the large volume of data about ancient environmental change collected from the "Loess Plateau Transition Belt" near the "big bend" of the Yellow River, scientists from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the University of Western Australia and the University of Arizona concluded that the desert in northern China has advanced three degrees in latitude or about 300 km towards the south.

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Underground Water Level in Beijing Declines by more than 65 cm

According to a report from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Water Resources, the average depth of underground water in plains was 18.23 m, which is 65 cm deeper than 2001, and which is 11.78 m deeper than that of early 1980. Underground water storage has decreased 6.031 bln cu m in total. Excessive underground water pumping is responsible for a 1262 sq km area of seriously excessive pumping in downtown Beijing.

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Shrinking of Glaciers in Xinjiang Autonomous Region Accelerates

According to an investigation by the Xinjiang No. 1 Glacier Environment Monitoring Station, the melting of the glacier in Xinjiang accelerated due to factors such as global warming and other human activities. The Xinjiang No. 1 glacier, shrunk by 3.5m on average each year.

Since 1964, the size of the glacier in Xinjiang has been reduced by 20 percent, the ice amount has been reduced by 18 percent, but the altitude of the permanent snow line of the mountainous region in Xinjiang increased by 60m.

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Northeast Soil Erosion

China's black soil is distributed in the four provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning and Inner Mongolian, covering approximately 1mln square km. Now soil erosion area has amounted to 276,000 square km. Soil erosion costs Heilongjiang Province 2 to 2.5 bln kg grains per year. Lost soil builds up in rivers and reservoirs and reduces water discharge capacity. Silt damages canals and dams, making conservancy facilities futile. Now every year the black soil erosion is about 0.7 to 1 cm. If this tendency continues, in 50 yrs the black soil layer will disappear.

(Issue #40)

China Faces Severe Mineral Resources Shortage in the Coming 20 Years

The Global Mineral Resources Strategic Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Geology has submitted a report of China's Demand for Mineral Resources in the Coming 20 Years. Experts studied the relation between economy and production demand for mineral resources in developed countries such as Britain and the U.S. and new economies such as Japan and South Korea. The model predicts both China's and the world's demands for energy and resources in 20 years.

For the first time Chinese scholars predict that China's important mineral resources will be unsustainable. Over 6 bln tons of oil, 2 trillion cubic meter of natural gas, 3 bln tons of steel, 50 mln tons of copper and 100 mln tons of fine aluminum shortage are ahead.

(Issue #41)

Overfishing in China

According to a survey done in May of 2002, Zhoushan's dredging catch was 300,000 tons, worth RMB 1.3 bln (USD 156 mln). Both figures were lower than those of the previous year by 8.7% and 13.3% respectively.

(Issue #50)

Jilin Province Facing River Break-offs

Four of the nineteen major rivers in Jilin Province of Northeast have stopped running and over 400 of the 1400 plus small size reservoirs are dry up. Jilin Province is faced with its most serious drought on record.

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Regulation

Issue #56	Regulation	Released by	Execute time	Full Text
Preface	China	2003	2003	http://www.cctv.com/news/china/20021029/100005.shtml
Ecosystem	Environmental Impact Assessment Law	.10.28	.9.1	http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/PI-c/220501.htm
Regulation	Regulations on Agriculture and Wild Plant Protection		2002	http://www.mwr.gov.cn/20021226/slxw/slxw10625.htm
Top Ten	Prevention and Treatment of Radioactive Pollution Law (Draft)	2002	2002	http://www.chinaiaq.com/18883.pdf
	Regulations of Returning Farmland to Forest	.11.19	.1.20	http://www.mwr.gov.cn/20021226/slxw/slxw10625.htm
	Indoor air quality standard	2002	2003	http://www.chinaiaq.com/18883.pdf
	New Prairie Law	2002	2003	http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/huanjing/285575.htm

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China determines the 6 key points of great western development

The State Council western development office declared that 6 main key points on Nov. 2002 for the great western development have been determined:

1) Strengthening of ecological protection and construction. Returning of farm land to forest. It is preliminarily planned that 14.67 mln hectares of farmland will be returned to forest. 17.33 hectares of forest will be planted on barren hills and mountains. Herd-landbeing rested to restore grassland should start ASAP. Treatment on 66.67 mln hectares of heavily degraded prairie is planned.

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2) Continue to quicken infrastructure construction. Infrastructure construction includes water conservancy, transportation, energy, communication, and municipal government... Speeding up of the construction of strategic projects like Qinghai-Tibet railroad, West-East gas transfer, West-East power transfer, hydro-junction, and main road construction. Ensuring infrastructure construction can obtain break through in 2010.

3) Strengthening rural infrastructure construction, quickly improving farmer's living and production conditions

4) Devoting major efforts to developing technology and education. Promoting dry agriculture, water saving agriculture and "advantage-resource" development.

5) Actively promoting unique economy and driving forward key regional developments. Actively promoting high tech industries like new energy, new material, organic medicine, and information software. Improving western China's self development ability through "advantage-resources" like hydro resource, natural gas, petroleum, coal, non-ferrous metal, leopoldite, phosphorite, rare earth... Protection and development of tourism resources.

6) Improvement of investment in the environment, strengthening of the legal system construction, speeding up of reforms and opening up.

(Issue #34)

West-East gas transfer project is fully open for cooperation

The West-East gas transfer project is fully open for cooperation from foreign investors. The construction has started on all fronts.

In July of 2002, Chinese and foreign investors signed the "West-East gas transfer project joint operation framework protocol". The foreign investors include Shell, Exxon Mobil, and concerned Russian enterprises. Chinese investors are

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PetroChina and Sinopec. Chinese companies control 55% of the stocks. Foreign companies control 45% of the stock. The duration of the joint venture is 45 years.

The exploitable hydro energy in western China is about 274.3 mln kilowatt, accounting for 72% of the national total. Right now, only 8% of this resource is tapped, lower than the 19% state average, and much lower than the 22% world average. The prospected coal reserve in western China is 388.2 bln tons, accounting for 39% of the total reserve in China. A low percentage of this coal is used to generate electricity locally. Much of it needs to be transported out by train or automobile.

(Issue #35)

113 key air pollution prevention cities designated

SEPA publicized the “atmosphere pollution prevention and treatment key city definition scheme” on Nov 2002. The cities listed in the scheme include municipality directly under the Central Government, provincial capital, and “opened-up” cities along the coast, key tourism cities, and special economic zones. According to the newest urban atmosphere pollution prevention and treatment plan, through energy structure adjustment, promoting clean production, and controlling vehicle tail gas, the atmosphere quality in the 113 key cities including Beijing and Shanghai will reach state standard by 2005.

(Issue #36)

Key Construction Projects Subject to Environmental Scrutiny

The impact of more than a dozen multimillion-US-dollar projects will be closely monitored in a push to limit environmental damage, it has been revealed on Dec 2002. The 13 projects -- including the Golmud-Lhasa section of the

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Qinghai-Tibet Railway and the construction of pipes to transfer natural gas from the country's west to the east -- all have the capability to cause ecological damage.

In China, an environmental impact assessment must be undertaken before a construction project is started, while inspections must be carried out to see if the project causes pollution after it is completed. Although such a system is feasible and effective for industrial sites, it cannot ensure that the construction of railways, roads and other similar projects will not have a negative environmental impact. The major environmental impact of such projects usually took place during the building phase and by the time they are completed, ecological destruction is irreversible. Environmental monitoring throughout the project is necessary to harmonize its economic and social functions with its surroundings. But the environment is not the only concern, as China now also pays more attention to surveying and assessing cultural and historical relics before starting a construction project.

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China's Water Conservancy Blueprint in 2010

China's Ministry of Water Resources outlined the country's eight-year water conservancy development program on Jan 2003.

Minister of Water Resources Wang Shucheng said water was a fundamental resource for life and social production, as well as a decisive element in ecological improvement.

Realizing the sustainable utilization of water resources would help the country build a well-off society in an all-round way, he said.

Therefore, in a bid to give all 1.3 bln Chinese people access to clean drinkable water, to guarantee water supply safety, and to improve the ecological environment, the ministry listed in its 2010 water conservancy blueprint:

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1. Embankment construction of major rivers will all meet their designed quality requirements; out-of-date dams will be renovated or consolidated; anti-flood and disaster-alleviating systems should be built along every major river.
2. The first phase construction of the eastern and central south-north water diversion project will be completed, water shortages suffered by northern cities, such as Beijing and Tianjin, will be fundamentally alleviated.
3. The availability rate of tap water in the country's rural areas will reach 40 to 60 percent.
4. The water consumption volume for agricultural irrigation will remain stable by making the current irrigation system water-saving oriented.
5. About 46.7 mln hectares of natural grassland will be recovered.
6. Soil erosion will be ended on about 500,000 square kilometers; Nearly 1 mln sq km of fragile land will be given special protection and supervision against erosion.
7. Water quality of the country's major rivers will be further improved; the ecological environment of some areas will be enhanced by prohibiting over-tapping of underground water.
8. Another 37 mln rural people will have enough energy for their daily life and social production by building more small-scale hydraulic power plants.
9. A water saving-oriented society will be created through setting market-oriented water charges.
10. A water resources information network with information on flooding and droughts, water resources management and soil erosion alleviation will cover the whole nation.

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The Agricultural Act Bans Invasive Alien Species

The revised the Agricultural Act of the People's Republic of China will take effect on March 1, 2003. The first section of Chapter 64 of this Act states that "Registration and approval is required for all imports of alien species, so are safety measures." The law now includes alien species control. This will stop the import of Piranha, Water hyacinth, cordgrass and others at its source.

(Issue #46)

SEPA proposed Measures for Harmony between Environmental, Economic and Social Development

SEPA put forward 4 initiatives to promote a transfer of means in economic increase on March 2003:

1. To establish an open system of enterprise's activities on the environment and audit on its clean productive process, which aim to meet such requirements: a high proportion of technology, a high economical turnout, a low consumption of resources and less pollution;
2. To set up Eco-industrial parks in dense industrial areas, which reinforce efficiency in resource utilization.
3. To build renewable economy pilots in Hai Nan, Liao Ning and other 32 exemplary cities on environmental protection. Try to work out better-polished policies, norms and blueprints of environmental technology.
4. To improve the so-called Eco-agriculture by carrying out a more enhanced supervision over water and soil practices of vegetable supplier bases, which should result in better food safety.

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Pollution-free Agricultural Products Have a Consolidated Sign Now

According to the "Regulations on Administration of Signs for Pollution-free Agricultural Products" promulgated March 2003 by the Ministry of Agriculture, institutions or individuals with a qualified certificate of pollution-free products will be entitled to print a consolidated sign on their products or packaging. Previous practices must stop.

In the past, signs for pollution-free products are set by different levels of governmental departments without a consolidated representation.

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White Paper on Environmental Protection in Tibet Published

On March 10 , 2003, the State Council Information Office published a white paper entitled Ecological Improvement and Environmental Protection in Tibet. The document, divided into six sections, reviews the progress of ecological improvements and environmental protection work in Tibet; presenting the status quo of this undertaking and envisaging the prospects of sustainable development for the future. The full text of the document follows:
<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2003/Mar/57796.htm>

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Guidelines for Clean Production Technology

The former National Economy and Trade Committee and the State Environmental Protection Agency have recently jointly the "National Guidelines for Clean Production Technology in Major Industries" (second column) on April 2003. The purpose of the Guidelines is to help implement the "Act of Clean Production Promotion " and to facilitate adoption of

advanced clean production technology and techniques in industry. The Guidelines provide detailed description and cost-effective analysis of 56 clean production technologies in metallurgy, machinery, non-ferrous metals, petroleum, and construction materials industries. For a complete version of the Guidelines, please see <http://www.drccu.gov.cn/qjsc/isyxp/200303100078.htm>.

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Next Issue

We'll provide you the second part of this excerpt, include policies review on the water resources industry, solid waste industry etc. Also you'll see the review of most important environmental business information.

About Us:

China EnviroData Weekly is the only bilingual weekly in the environmental field that is produced in mainland China and launched globally at the same time. The weekly is created by Beijing Intellectual Power Consulting Co., Ltd. in March of 2002. New Ventures China Program and IFCE (International Fund for China's Environment) are co-developers of CEW, to subscribe, please check <http://www.ifce.org/>.

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