

Plateau Perspectives Annual Report 2014







PLATEAU PERSPECTIVES

Community Development & Conservation

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Linking Society, Culture and Nature in
the Tibetan Highlands & Central Asia

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Letter from the Director

We have a real debt of gratitude for the many people who have contributed to the projects and activities of Plateau Perspectives in 2014. From local community and government partners to our field staff, visiting experts and the support received from headquarters in Canada and Scotland – every colleague and partner has been essential to the successes noted in this annual report. This was not a straightforward year, with a variety of transitions occurring at the level of project management and leadership as well as some hurdles to overcome in regard to expansion into new regions, but the outcome has certainly been worthwhile!

In the following report you will note advances made in the development of community-based ecotourism, health and rehabilitation services, rural development, agricultural trials, and environmental conservation...

In regard to expansion into new regions, following a decision by the board of directors (in 2013) to extend the geographic scope of our mission, Plateau Perspectives has taken its first steps in the Himalayan region and in Central Asia, with startup activities now agreed (and initial plans made) in the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Jesse Montes is collaborating with fellow lecturers and researchers at the Royal Thimpu College to help develop apiculture as a tool for teaching/learning as well as promote sustainable agriculture. He also is exploring opportunities in mountain tourism research. In Ala Archa National Park (Kyrgyz Republic), Amadeus DeKastle is carrying out his graduate research in entomology with a focus on the diverse butterflies of the snow capped Tianshan Mountains; Plateau Perspectives is collaborating with him to develop a digital field guide for the wildlife in this region, with in-built citizen science capabilities. These are very exciting beginnings for us in community-based conservation and sustainable development in our extended area of work, within the great mountain regions of Asia.

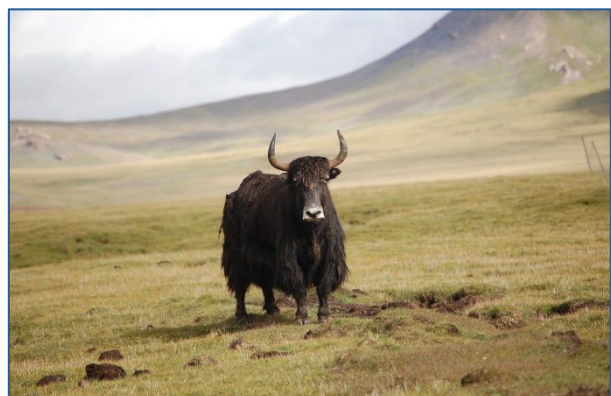
Finally, in Western China where our journey began more than a decade ago, a process of nationalizing our Xining Representative Office also has begun. Most of the projects carried out in 2014 were supported and led by national director Doug Henderson, together with several long-term senior national colleagues. This work now continues under a newly registered national office – still within the global *Plateau Perspectives family* – under the leadership of Dr Gongbo Tashi, professor emeritus of Tibet University. Plateau Perspectives China currently has seven staff members and a local board of national directors. For all these friends and colleagues, and for so many reasons – we look back on 2014 as an extraordinary year with both challenges and exciting developments as well new beginnings in the Tibetan Plateau region and further afield.

We are glad you can join us in this journey!

Sincerely,



Dr J Marc Foggin
International Director
Plateau Perspectives



Rehabilitation Services in Yushu Prefecture

Plateau Perspectives has been providing technical assistance for establishment of rehabilitation services in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. In 2014, a training course was provided in the Disability Centre that Plateau Perspectives helped furnish and equip. A team of Swiss experts in occupational therapy, physiotherapy and massage therapy provided training in the newly established Centre. Fifteen trainees from each of the 6 counties of Yushu Prefecture were present, along with several Yushu Disability Centre staff. While some trainees had very little experience and others had worked a few years already, all expressed their expectations and needs were met. With enthusiastic participation, trainees gained a greater understanding of the broader aspects of care, with a shift in emphasis from passive receipt of care to that of active participation by patients.

Many people received assistance as part of the training. For example, one woman who could no longer walk and had been cared for by her family for many years has now learned to make noodles – much to her own delight as well as that of her family! Additional financial support was also provided for a woman who required surgery. Altogether, local carers and patients as well as the trainers have benefited enormously from this project.



Longduo Village Clinic

In memory of Jane Torrance

The Longduo Village Clinic was built in 2014, named in memory of Jane Torrance who cheerfully dedicated years of hard work to support the people of the Tibetan Plateau, through the actions of Plateau Perspectives. The clinic is established in a village at the foot of Namche Barwa, one of the most spectacular mountains in the world. Longduo is a remote village in great need of medical services.



Herders Cooperatives

The Kegawa Herders Cooperatives continues to grow and develop well with continued support from Plateau Perspectives' field staff. The scope of local business activities is expanding, and Plateau Perspectives is following up on several invitations to assist with setting up other herders cooperatives in neighbouring areas.

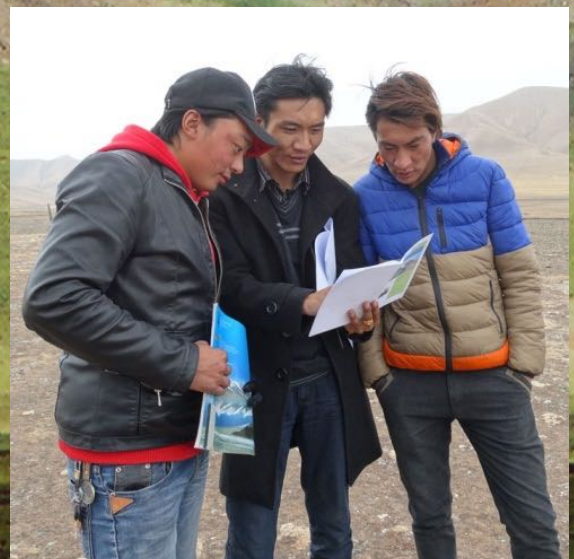
Community participation in conservation

Five members of Kegawa Cooperative recently established environment committees that have carried out structured conservation monitoring across their territory, to protect the area's unique flora and fauna.

Social enterprise activities

One group is registering a community tourism subsidiary to localize some of the benefits of future tourism in the region. This community-owned and operated ecotourism company has locally trained rafting guides, together with rafting equipment, tents and other related infrastructure.

New herder's associations also are being established in the region. Several have asked for assistance with training in veterinary care and monitoring of grassland conditions.



Ecotourism Development

Ecotourism is still considered a key source of income for herders as they work together in cooperatives.

Rafting and kayaking were developed as core components with the Shanghai-based D-Starine group and members of the Kegawa Herders Cooperative. Rafting equipment was procured for the cooperative, rafting trainings were provided, and promo videos were produced to support the nascent local rafting industry. Other land-based tourism elements also have been developed to offer a range of community ecotourism experiences, including wildlife tours (bird watching), hiking, kiting, and archery as part of cultural tourism. Kegawa Herder Cooperative, with Plateau Perspectives support, prepared to register a subsidiary company that will implement ecotourism in conjunction with larger tour operators in the province, thus aiming to retain more of the economic benefits of tourism within the community.

Plateau Perspectives aims to provide the following building blocks for local ecotourism development:

Training workshops were conducted, including:

- Rafting guide training
- Seminar on land-use planning and setting up national parks
- Completion of a community based cooking class (begun in 2013)
- Training program in handicrafts carried out for Kegawa Cooperative members

Wildlife monitoring – Progress was made at community level, for example the Lari ‘grassland monitoring’ plan, as well as wildlife observations documented while undertaking rafting training and reconnaissances.

Two large safari-style *Barebones* tents also were successfully trialled and traditional black felt tents were procured for use in community tourism.

An outdoor sports and rafting competition was held in Yushu in late October 2014 to raise awareness and further advance ecotourism and adventure/rafting tourism in the region. This event was led by D-Starine and supported by Plateau Perspectives staff. A television film crew from Beijing documented this unique rafting competition to promote the industry in Yushu and the Tibetan Plateau. The municipal tourism leader attended and recognized the importance of rafting as a significant component of community-based ecotourism, pledging his support; they now plan to hold the first *Sanjiangyuan International Rafting Games* in Yushu in 2015 with full support from the new national sports bureau.

Community Development Fund

A Community Development Revolving Fund previously set up by Plateau Perspectives in Zhiduo County continues to operate well, run by the community's management committee. It is now on the third round of loans, with a 100% repayment rate to date. There is significant potential for this type of development fund to be replicated in numerous communities in Western China, as part of the national Eco-compensation schemes (similar to *payments for environmental services*). Such a revolving fund model can help to address chronic poverty. A final evaluation report by national research colleagues summarized the overall project experience with recommendation for replication, as this model can serve for effective poverty reduction and promote community governance to help China's poorest and hardest-to-reach peoples.



Environmental Clean-up

In August 2014, Plateau Perspectives sponsored a community clean-up after the Kegawa Tibetan Horse Festival in Lari village of Zhiduo County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Such popular cultural and sporting events often leave much garbage in their wake. Plateau Perspectives organized 52 members of the local community to spend part of a day to clean up the litter, providing a truck and garbage bags, and encouraging participation with free T-shirts and food. Afterward, local NGO staff led a discussion with participants about social and environmental responsibility.



Agricultural Development

Quinoa Crop Trials

Quinoa trials have expanded into the Tibet Autonomous Region under the supervision of Gongbo Tashi, Professor Emeritus at Tibet University. This project aims to help alleviate poverty by growing a crop at high altitude that increases household level economic returns from the land. Trials of different varieties in different ecological conditions are expanding, and a private sector partnership is supporting quinoa agricultural development with the processing of the product through to its final packaging for sale.

Cordyceps (caterpillar fungus) collection

Plateau Perspectives sponsored a five-day training workshop that explored sustainable harvesting of the medicinal Yartsa gunbu, *Cordyceps sinensis*, in relation to household economic development and conservation of grassland resources. Topics included:

- The relationship of household economic development with collection of the plant
- The economic contributions of *Cordyceps* to local farmers and herders in the 16 main producing areas
- The natural habitat and condition in which *Cordyceps sinensis* may develop and grow in the grassland environment
- Possible conflict between environmental conservation and resources management
- Participatory approaches in rural development



Sallachy Gathering (Vision Meeting)

Plateau Perspectives members from Scotland, Canada, China and USA gathered in Sallachy Lodge in Sutherland, Scotland, in August 2014 – bringing together trustees and directors, members of Plateau Perspectives' international Council of Reference and field staff in order to reflect on the past decade and to consider our vision for the future.

It was an exciting time of learning about latest relevant research, past and current work and current needs in the region – so that our priorities and the scope for the future of Plateau Perspectives could be determined. It was a time of celebration and gratitude for all that has been achieved, bringing together the rich experience and expertise of all the participants as well as renewing our vision for the years ahead.

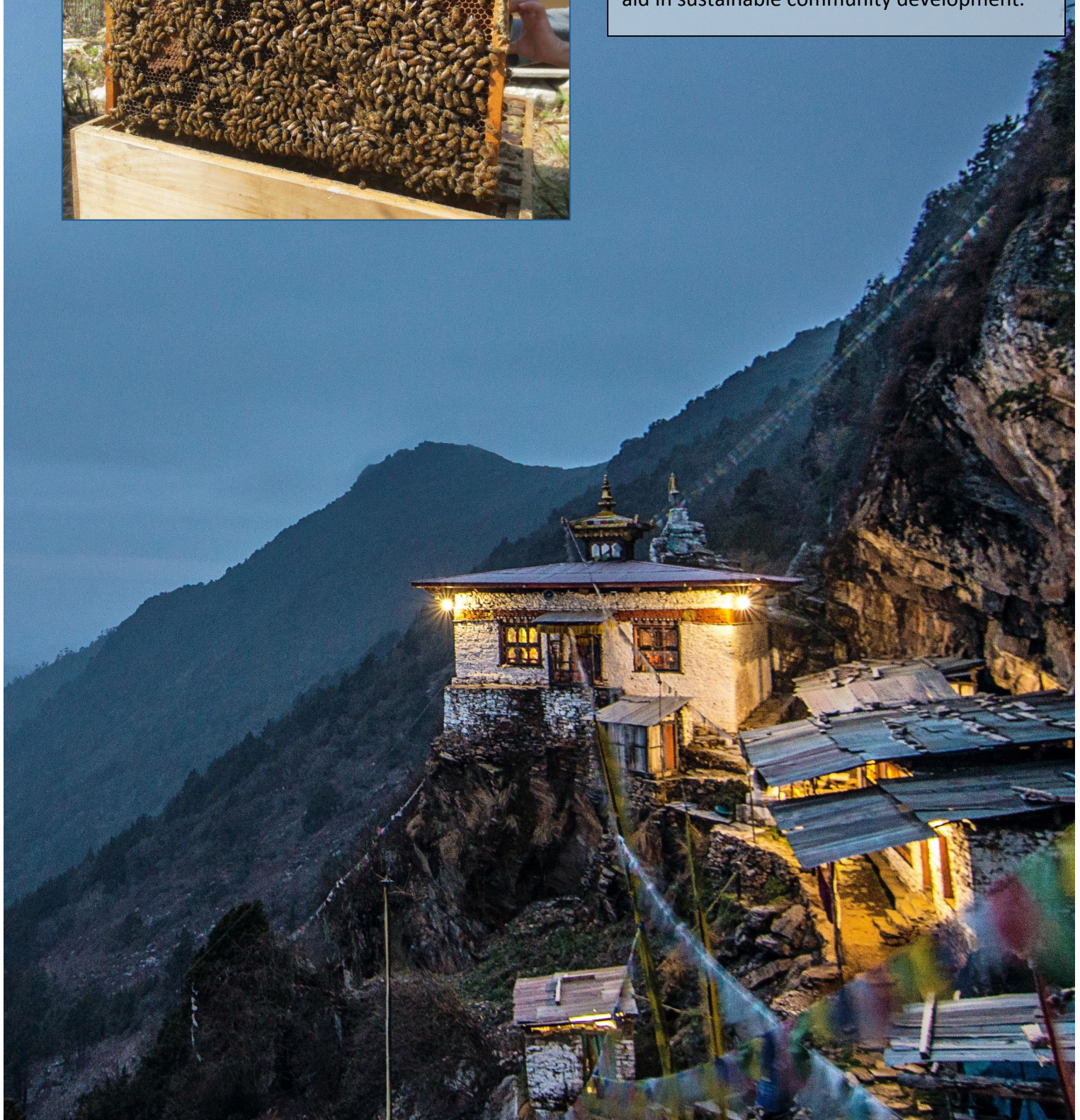


Kingdom of Bhutan



Beekeeping

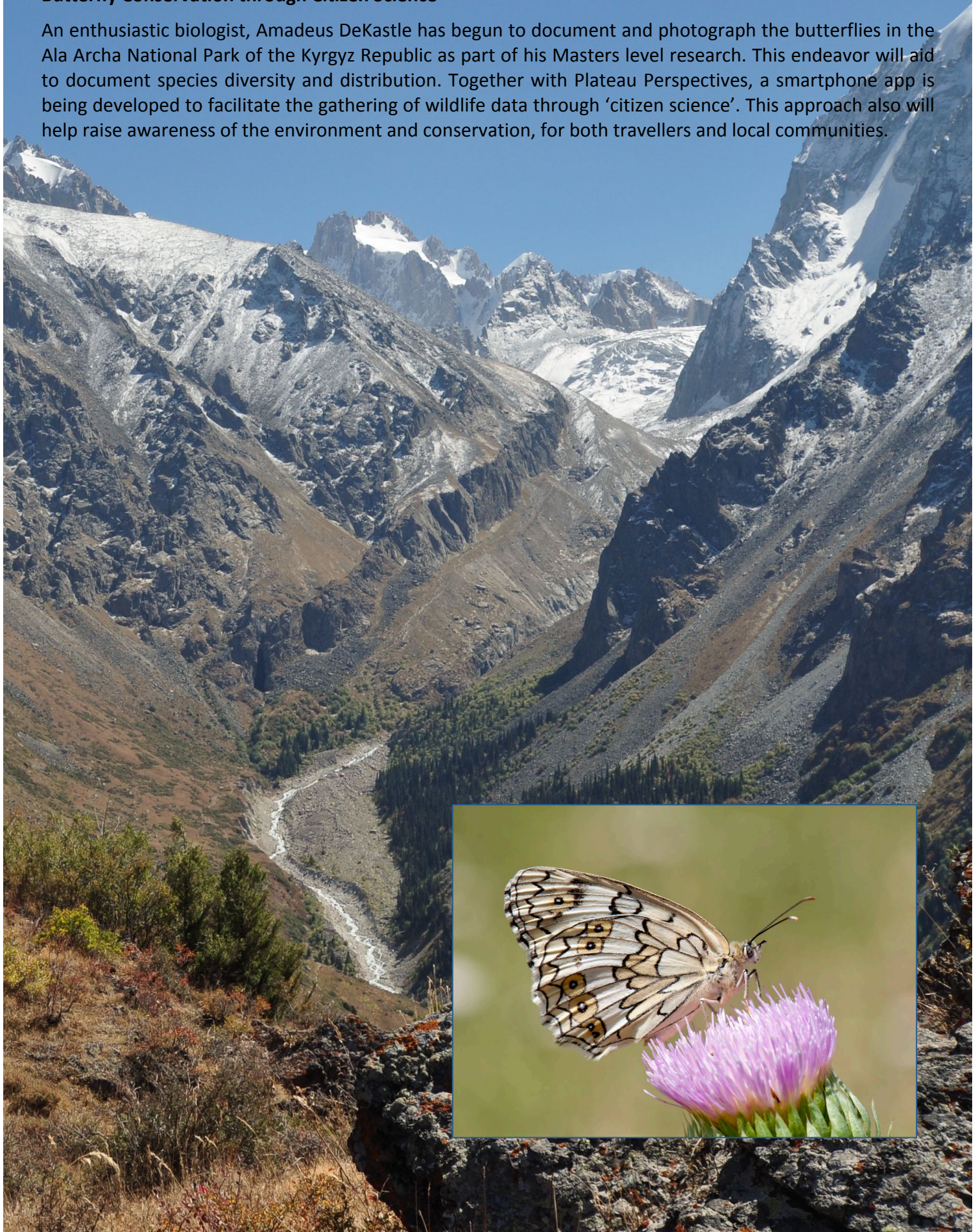
A beekeeping project has been initiated at the Royal Thimphu College. The objectives of the project are three-fold: to improve local crop yields, to increase field based curriculum for an Environmental Management course, and to aid in sustainable community development.



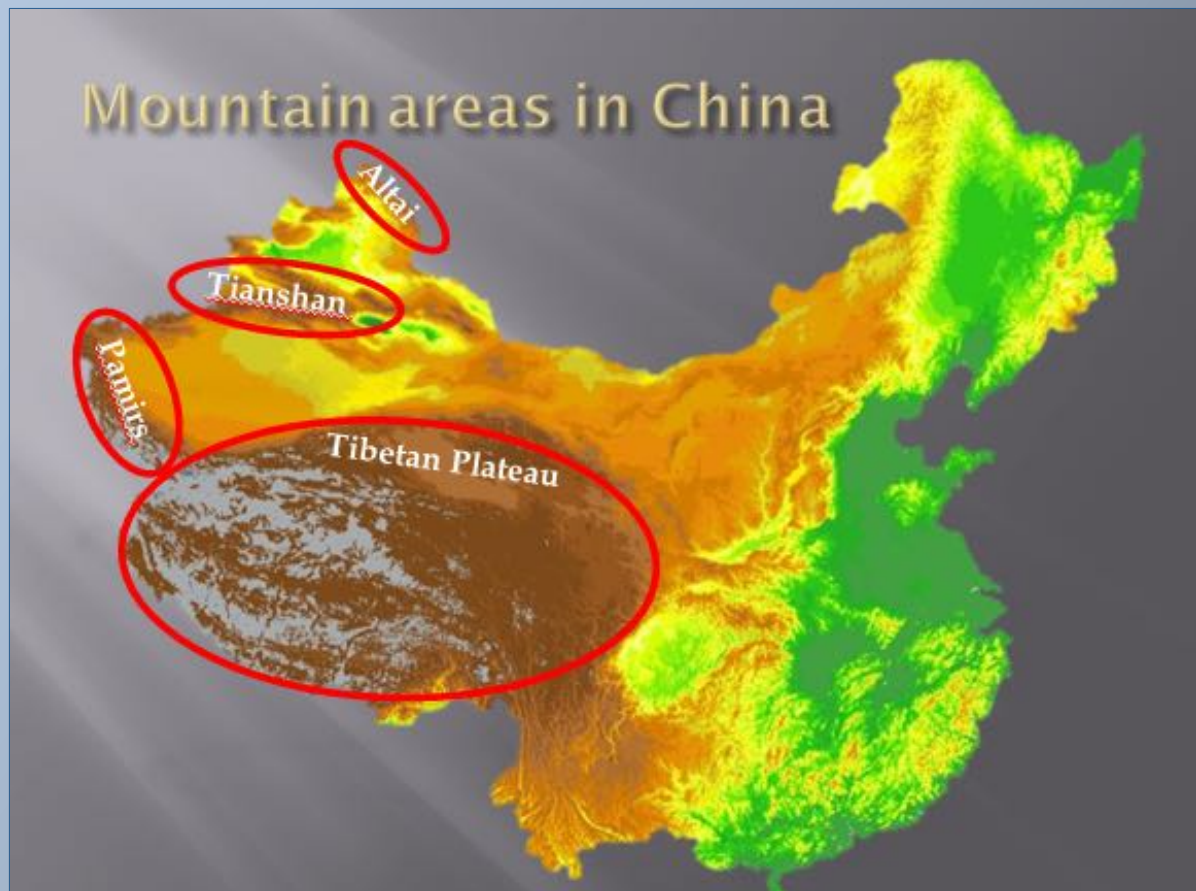
Kyrgyz Republic

Butterfly Conservation through Citizen Science

An enthusiastic biologist, Amadeus DeKastle has begun to document and photograph the butterflies in the Ala Archa National Park of the Kyrgyz Republic as part of his Masters level research. This endeavor will aid to document species diversity and distribution. Together with Plateau Perspectives, a smartphone app is being developed to facilitate the gathering of wildlife data through 'citizen science'. This approach also will help raise awareness of the environment and conservation, for both travellers and local communities.



Geographic Scope



Who's Who?

COUNCIL OF REFERENCE

Dr Calvin DeWitt, Professor of Environmental Studies,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Sir Brian Heap CBE ScD FRS, Cambridge University

Dr John Hodges, Consultant, formerly with UN FAO

Sir John Polkinghorne KBE FRS, Cambridge University

Sir Ghilleen Prance FRS VMH, former Director of Kew Royal Botanic Gardens

Dr John Sale, former senior consultant for UNDP as biodiversity specialist

Mr Matthias Stiefel, Executive Director, WSP International

Mr David Taylor, Executive Advisor in Humanitarian Assistance, World Vision International

Dr Normal Wirzba, Professor of Theology and Ecology, Duke University

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORS

Dr Marc Foggin, Founder & International Director

Dr Marion Torrance-Foggin, Development and Health Programme Director

FIELD STAFF

Mr Douglas Henderson, China Director

Mr Gongbo Tashi, Senior National Advisor

Mr Huting, Accountant and Office Manager

Ms He Jifang, External Relations

Mr Jigme Rabden, Project Officer

Mr Dundrup, Project Officer

Mr Dorje Jyal, Project Officer

Ms Xu Haiying, Office Assistant

Mr Xu Xinan, Vehicle Maintenance & Driver

Dr Thomas Hoejberg, Rehab Project Manager

Mr John Friberg, Technical Advisor (Civil Engineer)

Mr Jesse Montes, Technical Advisor (Environment / Bhutan)

DIRECTORS (CANADA)

Dr Barry Adams, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Agriculture Centre

Mrs Marjorie Bergen CPA CGA (Treasurer), Manager, SSQ Insurance Company Inc.

Dr Peter Foggin, Honorary Professor, Department of Geography, University of Montreal

Mr Wilbur A Kent (Chair), development expert, Latin America and Caribbean

Mr Robert E Reynolds BCL, private law practice in Montreal, Quebec

Dr Harry Spaling, Professor of Geography & Environmental Studies, The King's University College

Dr Walter Willms, Rangeland Ecologist, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

TRUSTEES (SCOTLAND)

Rev Prof Jeremy Begbie, Thomas A Langford Research Professor, School of Divinity, Duke University

Mrs Rachel Begbie, music teacher, Cambridge

Dr Alistair Emslie-Smith, Lead Clinician, Tayside Diabetes Clinical Network

Dr Katherine Emslie-Smith, General Practitioner, Arthurstone Medical Centre

Dr Darren Evans, Lecturer in Conservation Biology, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Hull

Mrs Sharon Evans, avian ecologist

Rev Prof Alan Torrance (Chair), Chair of Systematic Theology, St Mary's College, University of St Andrews

Dr Charles Warren, Senior Lecturer, Geography & Sustainable Development, University of St Andrews

Financial Summary

Main Donor	Development Project	Amount
Government of Norway and PP General Fund	Capacity Building for Community Ecotourism and Protected Area Management	\$ 167,000 CAD
Ford Foundation	Natural Resource Management and the Development of Herders Cooperatives; incl. Revolving Fund and Ecotourism	\$ 29,000 CAD
CEDAR Hong Kong and Barbour Trust Scotland	Development of Rehabilitation Services in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	\$ 86,000 CAD
Jane Memorial Fund, New Zealand Embassy, Barbour Trust Scotland	Construction of Clinic in Eastern Tibet (incl. funds for completion in 2015)	\$ 41,000 CAD
Canada Fund	Quinoa agricultural development trials	\$ 86,000 CAD
MacArthur Foundation	Project planning and launch workshops, market incentives for conservation	\$ 19,000

Financial figures are approximate only, due to fluctuating currency exchange rates.

Partners and Sponsors

We thank the following organizations and institutions for their assistance over the past year.



Norad



Digni



HimalPartner
Tid L. Tibetmisjonen



FORDFOUNDATION



CFLI - FCIL

Canada Fund for
Local Initiatives

MacArthur
Foundation



CEDAR FUND
施達基金會



中國科學院
CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



We also wish to thank

- Qinghai Forestry Department
- Sichuan Shuguang Research Centre
- Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve
- Yushu Prefecture Disabilities Association
- and all our private donors



Photo credits:

Amadeus DeKastle, Marc Foggin, Doug Henderson, Jesse Montes, Gaby Scheidegger



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Scottish Charity no. SC036202