



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

PO Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

928 638-7779 phone
928 638-7609 fax
www.nps.gov/grca

Grand Canyon News Release

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Contact(s): Maureen Oltrogge
Phone number: 928-638-7779
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Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent signs Sister Park Arrangement with Yuntaishan World Geopark in China today

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Steve Martin and Han Yueping, Superintendent of Yuntaishan World Geopark in China signed a Sister Park Arrangement between the two parks in a ceremony today at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China.

In April 2007, a delegation of representatives from Yuntaishan World Geopark, local government officials from Henan Province, China, and representatives from Beijing Normal University visited Grand Canyon National Park to initiate discussions between officials of the two national parks regarding the establishment of a sister park arrangement to further mutually beneficial cooperation between the two parks and the two countries.

The purpose of a “sister park” relationship is to promote international cooperation and support for the mutual benefit of both parks and the peoples of both countries. The relationship allows the parks to benefit by sharing experiences and approaches to collaboration, including local efforts to work with gateway communities, regional and local economies, friends groups and partner organizations. This is generally accomplished through the exchange of managerial, technical and professional knowledge, information, data, technology, training, and experience.

At the invitation of Yuntaishan and the Ministry of Construction officials, Park Superintendent Steve Martin, along with Jacob Fillion, Branch Chief for Environmental Education traveled to China, for further discussions on a sister park relationship with Yuntaishan World Geopark.

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Those discussions culminated in the signing of today's sister park arrangement. "We are here to sign an arrangement between two great countries and two great national parks – Yuntaishan World Geopark and Grand Canyon National Park," stated Martin. "Both parks preserve extraordinary geologic, cultural and natural resources that are important locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. They offer people of their countries and visitors from around the world opportunities for learning and recreation and provide important economic opportunities."

Mt. Yuntai Park was created in 1987 by the Provincial Government of Henan Province. In 1995 it was given national status by the State Council of the People's Republic of China and in 2003 UNESCO authorized it in its first group of World Geoparks, recognizing it for its geologic significance. It has seven national designations in China - as a National Key Scenic Area, a National AAAAAA-grade Tourist Attraction, National Geologic Park, National Forest Park, National Natural Heritage, National Water Conservancy Scenic Area, and National Natural Reserve of Macaque.

Yuntaishan World Geopark is located in Xiuwu County of Jiaozuo City, 70 kilometers northwest of Zhengzhou City the capital of Henan Province. It has a total area of 190 square kilometers and includes 11 scenic spots. It is rich in both natural and cultural resources with deep canyons, cloud filled valleys, deep gorges and high waterfalls. The highest peak in the park is Zhuyu Peak rising 1,308 meters above sea level.

"Although not twins, the two parks share enough to be "sisters"," stated Martin. "The geology of both parks is similar with rivers that cut through rocks from the same geologic time periods forming deep canyons and gorges; both parks have significant resources; both parks receive millions of visitors annually; and although at different states of development, both parks have interpretation and education programs in place to educate and inform the visiting public."

Through the arrangement, the two parks will seek to enrich the experience and training of personnel in both parks through projects of international cooperation that may include the exchange of technical and professional knowledge and personnel, information, data, technology, training and experience. Areas of cooperation will potentially include sharing information in the

field of geological research; sharing technical assistance and experiences in the areas of environmental education and interpretation; developing models and opportunities for sustainable tourism, and the development of a national level interpretation training program based on the National Park Service Interpretive Development Program.

Park Superintendent Martin closed his remarks at today's ceremony with, "We are honored to be here to sign this agreement with Yuntaishan World Geopark – this is the beginning of great cooperation between the parks and our countries. From our brief visit, we feel that Yuntaishan has not only the scenery, the history, and the geology – but it also has excellent management...We look forward to this as the first step in a long journey together."

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Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Steve Martin at signing ceremony with Yuntaishan World Geopark officials.

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