Sister Park Arrangement
Between
Wudalianchi National Park
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development
People's Republic of China
and
Hawaii Volcanoes National Park
National Park Service
United States of America

BACKGROUND

Since May 8, 1998, the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) and the Chinese Ministry of Construction's Office of Scenic Affairs have cooperated under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning the conservation, preservation, and management of national parks and other protected natural and cultural heritage sites for the purpose of conservation, recreation, economic development and public education.

Now known as the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MHURD), the Ministry is committed to systematically protect and effectively manage Wudalianchi National Park by providing unified and coherent management. The site was officially designated as Global Geopark and World Biosphere Reserve.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (HAVO), under the U.S. National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, was established by Congress on August 1, 1919, to protect, conserve, and study the volcanic landscapes and associated natural and cultural resources and processes, and to facilitate safe public access to active volcanism, diverse geographic settings, and wilderness, for public education and enjoyment. HAVO was designated as an International Biosphere Reserve in 1980 and as a World Heritage Site in 1987.

Based on discussions between officials of the two national parks during a May 2011 visit to China, the U.S. National Park Service's Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and China's Wudalianchi National Park wish to establish a sister park relationship for mutual benefits to further mutually beneficial cooperation between the two parks and the two countries.

DESCRIPTION OF BOTH SITES

2-1 Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park encompasses 333,000 acres (1,335 square kilometers) and is located on the island of Hawaii. The park protects, studies, and provides access to Kilauea and Mauna Loa, two of the world's most active volcanoes; preserves endemic Hawaiian ecosystems; and perpetuates the traditional Hawaiian culture connected to these landscapes.

The park's active volcanoes serve as a living laboratory for scientific investigations that began over a century ago and continue to advance global understanding of volcanic processes. The park also preserves, protects and interprets the largest and most continuously active volcanoes in the United States, and provides the best physical evidence of the island building processes that created the 2000 mile long Hawaiian archipelago. It also protects unique and diverse ecosystems that are the result of the active volcanic landscape, wide climate variation and extreme isolation of the Hawaiian Islands. Over 90% of the native plants and animals are endemic to the Hawaiian Islands, many of which are rare, endangered and threatened with extinction.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park also interprets the traditions and embraces the spiritual significance of the native Hawaiian culture and encompasses a vast array of cultural resources that document over 600 years of human lifestyles and activities on an active volcanic landscape.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the "sister park" relationship is to promote international cooperation and support for the mutual benefit of both parks and to enrich the experience and training of the personnel of both parks through projects of international cooperation. The relationship allows the sisters 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 may be accomplished primarily through the exchange of managerial, technical and professional knowledge, information, data, technology, training, and experience.

COOPERATION

Through years of protecting and managing these parks, each nation has gained invaluable experience. With the improved knowledge of the importance and value of national parks, protected areas and world heritage sites, each country has strengthened mutual exchanges and cooperation, which improves the protection, preservation and management work in a comprehensive way for the benefit of future generations.

Areas of cooperation may include:

- Resource management methods and techniques for restoration of previously ditched or otherwise altered wetlands, forest and other habitat restoration, cross-site comparison of ecological issues, control exotic or alien species, monitoring of air and water quality
- Electronic communication and technical information exchanges, including software programs for science and resource management applications,
- Environmental education techniques, programs, and facilities, including plans and designs for youth education camps and curriculum
- Recreation and ecotourism management and planning, including private and public partnerships for development and economic development

• Development of volunteer and "Friends" organizations for park support and stewardship
• Concessions and other commercial services management
• Interpretation brochures web development
• Sharing park management methods and philosophies, by way of promoting exchanges of staff, resource reports and best practices
• Sharing management methods and techniques such as geographic information systems (GIS), cave fauna inventory, fire management
• Providing research opportunities and study-tour programs for general administrators and professional experts, in such fields as geology, biology, ecology, etc.
• Cooperation in broadening the global network, by way of participating in conferences and field-work, organized by each party.

A Sister Park Action Plan should guide future cooperation on a biennial basis, which may be designed and accepted by the two parks before submitting to MHURD's Office of World Heritage & Scenic Affairs, including the provincial authority, and to the NPS Office of International Affairs, by the end of November of that year. In addition, a status report on annual activities and/or accomplishments is to be provided to the same offices within MHURD and NPS each January.

UNDERSTANDING IN IMPLEMENTATION OF EXCHANGES

Cooperation under this relationship should initially be 5 years. The term may be extended or modified in writing, or cooperation may be discontinued at any time by either park; written notification of discontinuation should be provided.

Both parks are to fund their own participation in this relationship. It is generally understood that when personnel of one park visits or are detailed to the other, the park sending the employee is to be responsible for the cost of travel to and from the receiving country and receiving park is to generally be responsible for travel and living expenses in their country: each exchange is to be negotiated individually and is dependent upon available resources.

Wudalianchi

Wudalianchi is located far from any plate boundary (c.1800 km west of the Pacific Plate subduction zone), and its occurrence is connected to deep (4-600km depth) stagnation of subducted ocean floor. The accumulation of the ocean floor slab has caused the overlying continental crust to slightly dome and extend, enabling the incipient formation of a rift valley in this part of NE Asia. The unusual geotectonic setting and origin of the volcanic field make it one of the world's most important places for research into deep Earth processes and their influence on the formation of surface landforms. Wudalianchi also represents an exceptional location for the study of species adaptation of biotic communities. At the same time, Wudalianchi is the youngest volcano, which is famous for its volcanic geological landform sights, beautiful barrier lakes and a number of natural mineral springs with medical and health function. Wudalianchi is also called "natural volcano museum" and "opening volcano textbook", which is also the world famous volcanic geological tourist resort.

Although not twins, the two parks share enough to be "sisters." To protect the world-class geological and biological resources of each park is the center of their missions, significance and challenges. Both parks would like to provide rich opportunities for understanding landforms and how they influence ecosystem and human development. With common interest in global economy, global environmental changes and the opportunities and challenges faced, for the protection of world heritage sites around the world, we propose the "Sister Park" relationship will be further strengthened by exchanges and cooperation in science and culture, environmental protection and other programs within the two parks.

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Signed by electronic signature, on the day of December 31st 2013, in English and Chinese.

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