

World Natural Heritage Site

State Party: China

**STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT
THREE PARALLEL RIVERS OF YUNNAN
PROTECTED AREAS**

National Forestry and Grassland Administration

NOVEMBER 2024

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1. Executive Summary

This report furnishes explicit responses to the relevant questions in the decision at the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2023 regarding the Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage Site (hereinafter referred to as the property) and the Reactive Monitoring Report from the 2013 mission.

Concerning the ecological restoration on post-mining sites. The ecological restoration in the property and its buffer zones was conducted by combining natural and artificial measures. Natural restoration was implemented in high-altitude areas through mountain closure for natural regeneration. In contrast, artificial restoration was conducted in low-altitude areas, and substantial progress has been made on in some plots.

Regarding the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). It was carried out by the requirements of the Guidelines and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in the Context of World Heritage, and a draft outline has been formulated to date. The SEA outline will be submitted with the State of Conservation Report to the World Heritage Center, and we welcome any comments and suggestions from the experts.

Regarding the invitation to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Advisory Mission. We hope that IUCN will provide insightful suggestions on the SEA outline submitted, and we will carefully research into these comments and suggestions. Based on a clear understanding of these suggestions, we will expedite the SEA formulation, and further consult and communicate with IUCN once the SEA has taken shape.

Regarding the Dulongjiang 35kv interconnected powerline project. During the project construction, mitigation measures were strictly implemented, and full-process supervision and management were carried out. After the project was put into operation to ensure further the effective protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and integrity of the property, the project contractor launched a post-evaluation of the project in April 2023. The post-evaluation report is submitted herewith to the World Heritage Center (WHC), and this will allow the review specialists to gain a good understanding of the methods, processes, relevant data used, and conclusions of the evaluation. Strict management and monitoring will continue to be implemented to ensure that the OUV will not be impacted.

Regarding the progress of the two power transmission lines in Deqin County. The power generation and transmission project of the Sanchahe first and second-level hydropower stations in Deqin County was completed in August 2018, and the 110kV power transmission and transformation project in Deqin County was completed in April 2020. Both projects cleared relevant procedures in accordance with the legal, regulatory, and planning requirements prior to construction activities, and the projects passed

environmental checking and acceptance after completion.

Regarding the conservation management plan for the heritage site. The plan has been formulated by a special technical team, and feedback and suggestions have been solicited from stakeholders to make necessary modifications and improvements to the relevant content. The draft Conservation Management Plan will be submitted to the WHC as an annex to the State of Conservation Report for expert review.

About establishing a management efficiency assessment system for the property. The management efficiency assessment system has preliminarily taken shape. In order to test the rationality and operability of the assessment system, it was assigned to various management agencies for self-assessment in 2023. The technical team has also studied *Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0* released in November 2023. We will further optimize the assessment system based on the feedback from the previous self-assessment process.

2. Response to the WHC 45th Session Decision (Riyadh, 2023) (WHC/45COM7B.81)

2.1 Paragraph 1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.

2.2 Paragraph 2. Recalling Decisions 37 COM 7B.12, 43 COM 7B.5 and 44 COM 7B.182 adopted at its 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively.

2.3 Paragraph 3. Commends the State Party for its unequivocal commitment to strictly prohibit mineral extraction within the property and its buffer zone.

The Chinese government will continue strictly enforcing supervision and inspection and carry out relevant law enforcement measures to terminate illegal mining activities.

2.4 Paragraph 4. Appreciates the further clarifications regarding the evolving governance and management framework for the complex serial property, including post-mining restoration, and requests the State Party to continue the implementation and monitoring of active and passive activities to ensure the ecological restoration of former mining sites in the property and its buffer zone.

The Chinese government has long attached great importance to the ecological restoration of mining sites in the property and its buffer zones. Since the complete halt to the mining activities in the property and their buffer zones in 2018, ecological restoration has been progressively carried out on the post-mining sites.

2.4.1 Continuing natural restoration

As reported in the State Conservation Report 2022, ecological restoration on post-mining sites continued with afforestation in high-altitude areas. To improve the effectiveness of afforestation, competent government departments at all levels have been strictly enforcing

corresponding management and protection mechanisms, supervision, and inspection. Vegetation on post-mining sites is recovering.

2.4.2 Preliminary progress from artificial restoration

After mining activities were phased out, the local government departments in Weixi County, located at a relatively low altitude in Diqing Prefecture, have been testing ecological restoration with artificial measures.

(1) Baseline survey

Professionals and technicians from various departments including natural resources, forestry and grassland, ecological environment, and water affairs collaborated and conducted a baseline survey of mines and identified the areas to be restored, restoration methods, ground vegetation and soil types, and vegetation development.

(2) Development of Restoration Plan

Based on the altitude, climate, vegetation, and the conditions of the sites, an ecological restoration plan is formulated for systematically carrying out artificial restoration of post-mining areas in the low-altitude regions. The plan elaborates on the restoration measures, selection of native tree species for planting, planting patterns, and forest tending.

(3) Carrying out forest tending

For the post-mining sites where ecological restoration projects were implemented, forest tending teams were mobilized and their scope of tending and tending measures were assigned. Close attention is addressed to the state of restoration and enrichment planting was conducted to enhance the effect of ecological restoration depending on the survival rate.

The lead and zinc mine exploration site in Pule Village, Weixi County, located in the buffer zone of the property, has seen significant results after nearly 5 years efforts of ecological restoration (Figure 1).

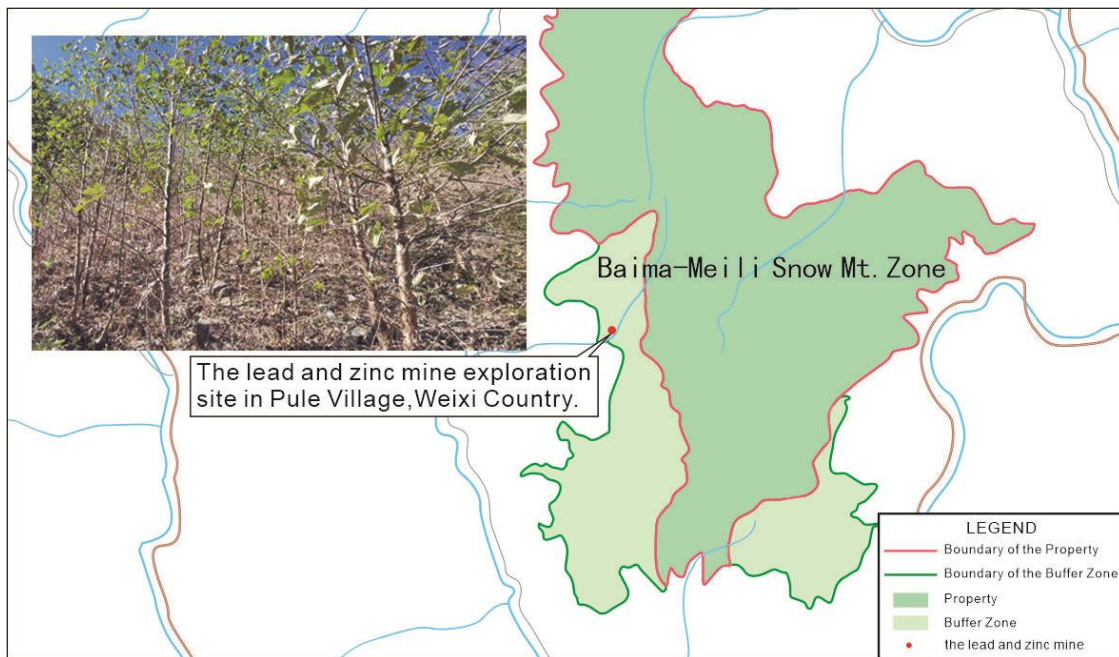


Figure 1. Performance of artificial restoration project at the lead and zinc mine exploration site in Pule Village, Weixi County

Safeguarded by the institutional mechanism, technical and financial support of Yunnan Provincial Government for ecological restoration in the post-mining sites, and by integrating the experiences from ecological restoration in the low-altitude regions in recent years, these efforts will continue progressively.

2.5 Paragraph 5. Notes that discussions regarding the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are ongoing, but regrets the limited tangible progress and urges once more the State Party to further improve and finalise the SEA, in line with international best practices and the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to ensure that the SEA includes an assessment of indirect and cumulative impacts of both the upstream and downstream catchments of Nujiang, Lancang and Jinsha Rivers, so that the results can inform management and decision making for future developments.

The Three Parallel Rivers property is located in northwest Yunnan, China. This area harbors world-class natural heritage of geological and geomorphological relics and is one of the biologically richest and ecologically most diverse regions in the world. The heritage site and its buffer zone cover a large area, spanning 1.77 million hectares and involving five prefectures (municipalities) and 11 counties (districts). The region has over three million people, of whom approximately 90,000 are living in the property and its buffer zone. The area is home to 14 ethnic groups, including Tibetan, Naxi, Yi, Pumi, Lisu, Nu, Drung, and Bai, making it a gathering place for ethnic minorities in the border regions of

China.

The economic and social development in the region lags behind, especially in Diqing and Nujiang prefectures, which occupy vast areas of the property and its buffer zone. In terms of GDP in Yunnan province. Although the components of the property and buffer zone in Diqing Prefecture account for 53.2% of the Three Parallel Rivers property and 40.8% of the land area of Diqing Prefecture, it ranks second to last in GDP in the province. The parts of the property and buffer zone in Nujiang Prefecture account for 37.2% of the heritage site and 45.3% of the land area of Nujiang Prefecture, the GDP of Nujiang Prefecture is the lowest in the province (Figure 2).

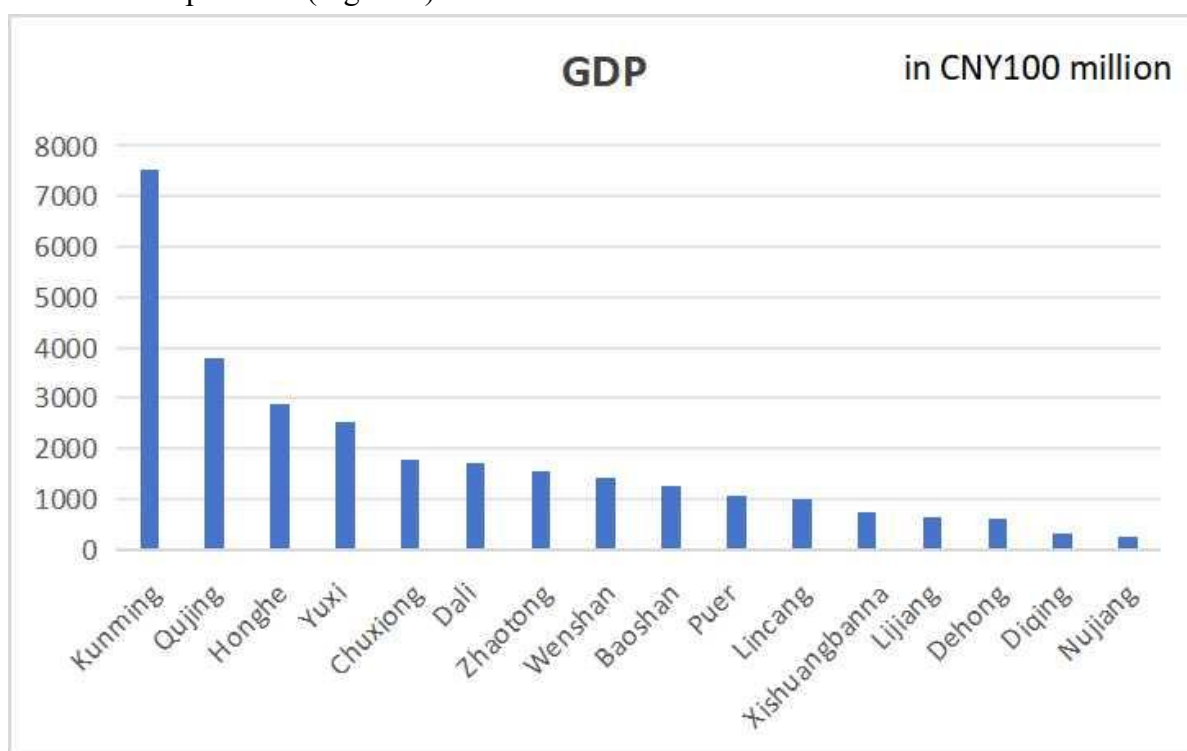


Figure 2. GDP of the prefectures and municipalities in Yunnan Province in 2022

Meeting the economic and community development needs of the northwest Yunnan region and ensuring the effective protection of the Three Parallel Rivers property remain huge challenges confronted by heritage managers. The preparation of a strategic environmental assessment for the heritage site, incorporating environmental, social, economic, and other factors into the evaluation, will contribute to formulating sustainable policies, plans, and strategies for the region, which is crucial for the effective protection of the property's OUV.

2.5.1 Selection of Technical Team

Starting in 2021, with the efforts of Yunnan Forestry and Grassland Administration, special funds have been appropriated again to initiate the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Through research, consultation, and other methods, professional domestic teams with

strong technical competencies were commissioned to undertake the task. During the selection process, key considerations included professional background, disciplinary diversity, the composition of the expert panel, their understanding of the international standards for requirements related to world heritage, and rich research experiences in the Three Parallel Rivers. Eventually, Yunnan Institute of Forest Inventory and Planning was chosen as the technical team to complete the work.

Yunnan Institute of Forestry Inventory and Planning has national Class A certification for forest inventory and planning and Class A certification for engineering consultation. It primarily undertakes inventories, monitoring, planning, evaluation, and research related to the inventory and monitoring of forest, grassland, wetland, and desert resources in Yunnan Province, biodiversity, ecological environment, planning and impact assessment of nature reserves, evaluation of ecosystem services, and planning for resource conservation and utilization. Among its professionals and technicians, 56 are professor-level engineers, 180 associate professor-level engineers, 331 engineers, and 104 assistant engineers with expertise in forestry, ecology, environmental engineering, geology, botany, zoology, landscape architecture, and nature reserve management. Through long-term fieldwork in investigations and research, they are experienced with the OUV, conservation and management status, socio-economic conditions, and regional development of the Three Parallel Rivers property. In order to perform this task efficiently, heritage experts from top domestic universities, such as Tsinghua University and Peking University, renowned scholars from Guizhou Normal University, Yunnan University, Kunming University of Science and Technology, Southwest Forestry University, Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland Sciences, as well as experts from various sectors, including power and energy, transportation, water conservancy and hydropower, tourism, landscape, geology, architecture, and urban-rural planning in Yunnan Province were invited to participate in the project.

2.5.2 Workplan preparation

The formulation team conscientiously studied the IUCN Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment for World Heritage in 2013 and the Guidelines and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context jointly released by UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN in 2022. Several consultation meetings and seminars were held with the participation of relevant heritage experts and scholars to discuss the project implementation methods, technical focus, challenges, etc., and a technical roadmap was built, and the work plan formulated (Figure 3).

2.5.3 Development of the SEA Outline

The SEA formulation is a highly challenging task as it needs to meet relevant technical requirements while conforming to current Chinese policies and meeting the needs for sustainable socio-economic development and regional livelihoods. Based on in-depth study

and research, the formulation institute drafted the SEA outline. Considering that the outline has many imperfections and would require improvement in many areas, it is submitted along with the State of Conservation Report to the World Heritage Center, hoping to obtain guidance and assistance from specialists in relevant fields to assist the completion of the SEA formulation.

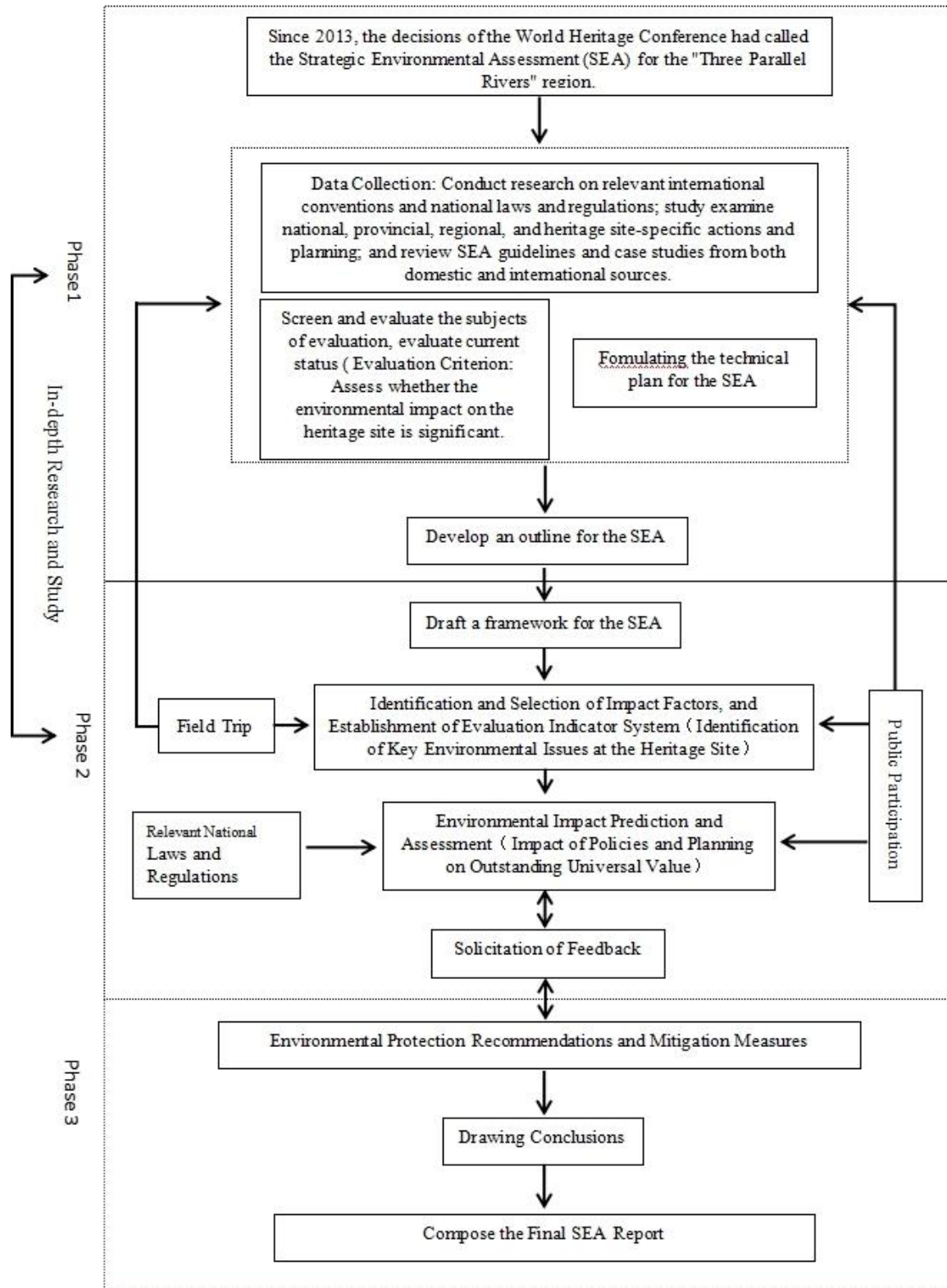


Figure 3. The SEA Technical Roadmap

2.6 Paragraph Six: Reiterates its encouragement to the State Party to invite an IUCN Advisory mission to that effect.

We are submitting the outline of the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage Site to the IUCN specialists for review as an annex to the State of Conservation Report, hoping that the experts will put forward constructive opinions on the contents of the outline. We will then proceed with the SEA preparation based on a full study of the opinions and suggestions of the experts and then make further consultation and discussion with the IUCN experts after the draft SEA is formulated.

2.7 Also recalling the recommendation of the 2013 mission to avoid the construction of transmission infrastructure within the property and its buffer zones and Decision 44 COM 7B.182 in which the State Party was requested to explore alternative options to the Dulong River power transmission line as proposed, expresses its utmost concern that the transmission line project, which crosses the Gaoligongshan National Nature Reserve component of the property and for which an Environmental Impact Assessment identified impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, has been completed and is operational, and also requests the State Party to urgently provide details of the alternative options it assessed, and the mitigating measures it took during construction and is now implementing to ensure the protection of the OUV during the operation of the transmission line.

The 35kV transmission line project in Gongshan County, Dulong River, is a crucial livelihood project by the Chinese government to address the livelihood needs of the Dulong ethnic people and to consolidate the achievements in poverty alleviation. The project was completed and put into trial operation in May 2022, playing a crucial role in meeting residents' power needs in Dulongjiang Township and fully promoting the rural revitalization strategy.

2.7.1 Mitigation measures taken for the outstanding universal value of the heritage site

In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment of the 35kV Transmission Line Project in Dulongjiang Township (hereinafter referred to as the EIA Report), multiple mitigation measures were taken during the project construction and operation of the facility.

First of all, during the construction of the project, the principles of "minimizing temporary land use and minimizing vegetation damage were observed from the beginning by using the existing roads and country roads as much as possible to transport materials, science-based construction operations, rigorous management, and mitigating environmental disturbances". Corresponding mitigation measures were implemented to protect forests, landscapes, geological and geomorphological relics, as well as biodiversity.

Second, after the construction was completed, steel cables and scaffolds were dismantled, and construction debris was cleaned up in time. Vegetation in temporarily occupied forest

land was restored. Patrols for the safe production and operation of the transmission lines were regularly carried out to detect timely forest fires and other disasters that could be triggered by lightning strikes and human activities. Other human activities beyond necessary operational maintenance were rigorously regulated and controlled to reduce disturbances to the Gaoligong Mountains Nature Reserve.

Third, in order to effectively manage the heritage value and carry out environmental protection concerning the Dulong River 35kV transmission line project in the Gaoligong Mountains area, the Gongshan Management Protection and Management division of the Gaoligong Mountain National Nature Reserve has undertaken full-process supervision and management of the construction and development. The work techniques and methods were standardized, and work disciplines were enforced. The supervisors lived, ate, and patrolled the mountain together with the construction personnel. The staff of the construction contractor were supervised strictly to comply with project design documents, relevant laws and regulations of the nature reserve, and specific supervision work requirements.

2.7.2 Post-Evaluation of Project Impact

Since the project was put into trial operation in May 2022, in order to track down the implementation of mitigation measures in the project area and ensure effective protection of the OUV and its integrity, the construction client initiated a post-evaluation of the project by an invited domestic heritage expert team in April 2023. The expert group conducted field investigations and monitoring in the project area, collected, and compiled, analyzed the data, and ultimately composed the Project Post-evaluation Report (PPR).

The PPR provides an assessment of impacts from the project in six aspects: the aesthetic values (criterion vii), geological and geomorphological values (criterion viii), ecological process values (criterion ix), biodiversity and habitat values (criterion x) of the Three Parallel Rivers world natural heritage property, as well as its impacts on the integrity and management of the property, and impacts to the social and livelihood dynamics. The findings of the assessment showed that, during construction and subsequent operation of the facilities, the project posed no negative impact on the OUV and its integrity of the Three Parallel Rivers property based on the inscription Criteria (vii) and (viii). After the project was completed, vegetation along the transmission lines rapidly restored, and some sensitive species, including dhole (*Cuon alpinus*), takins (*Budorcas taxicolor*) and pheasants have adapted to the existence of the facilities. This indicated that there' s no negative impacts to the OUVs related to Criteria (ix) and (x). The mitigation measures proposed in the EIA Report were implemented and are effective, and the project has created significant positive impacts on the conservation management of the heritage site and the livelihood of community. Other potential impacts can be eliminated by further implementing the mitigation measures proposed in the EIA report and the Post-assessment Report (See Annex 2 for details).

Herewith the PPR is submitted to the Heritage Centre so that the specialists will be informed of the methodology, process, relevant data, and conclusions of the assessment. We will continue to carry out strict conservation management and monitoring of the region to ensure that the OUV and integrity of the project site will not be affected.

In the IUCN Reactive Monitoring Report on the State of Conservation of the Three Parallel River World Heritage Site, China, it was pointed out that (in recommendation 4) that "the construction of power transmission infrastructure should be avoided within the sites and their buffer zones" as the Three Parallel Rivers World property and buffer zone span vast an area of 1.77 million hectares where about 90,000 are living. Electricity is the most basic production and living needs of the residents across the heritage site, and these people should not be deprived of their right to use electricity in daily life simply because they have lived for generations in the property and its buffer zone. A large number of demonstrations and evaluations have been carried out, and the 35kV transmission line project in Dulongjiang Township has considered the environmental impact posed by the project, especially the potential impact on the world heritage, in the stages of site selection, design, construction and operation, had mitigated the impact on the property as much as possible. The PPR fully assessed the project's impact on the OUV of the property and concluded that the negative impact on the outstanding universal value and integrity of the Three Parallel Rivers property during project implementation was minimal and controllable. These impacts were eliminated after implementing the mitigation measures. Therefore, we also call on the international communities to pay attention to the basic living needs of the local residents in the property and buffer zone while addressing their attention to the Three Parallel Rivers property. We hope to receive more support for those projects essential to the livelihoods of some local residents and with minimal and controllable impacts on the outstanding universal value of the property. China will continue to strengthen supervision and ensure a balance between the world heritage conservation and sustainable development of local communities.

2.8 Paragraph 2.8: Further recalling concerns expressed by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN over other power transmission projects crossing the property and its buffer zones confirmed by the State Party via letter in March 2019, including two ongoing projects in Deqin County 1) ‘Sancha River first stage and second stage hydropower station transmission and transformation projects’ and 2) ‘110KV Power Transmission and Transformation Construction Project’, and further requests the State Party to provide updates on the status of these projects.

Supplementary information about the project construction progress of “Phase I and II of the Sancha River Hydropower Station Transmission Project” and “110 kV Power Transmission Project” was submitted to WHC in 2019. Based on field investigations and verification with local authorities and construction parties, the specific progress of the two projects is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Project Progress Status

Project title	Approval documents for site selection of the scenic and historic area	Environmental Impact Assessment Approval Document	Time of completion	Project check and acceptance
Deqin County Sancha River first-level and second-level power Transmission line Project	In May 2017, Yunnan Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (Yun Jian Jing Han [2017] No. 205) approved the site selection plan for the construction project.	In August 2017, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Environmental Protection Bureau (Di Huanping [2017] No. 7) approved the environmental protection measures in the report and required strict implementation of environmental protection mechanisms during the project construction.	August 2018.	Passed environmental protection check and acceptance in July 2019.
Deqin County 110KV Power Transmission and Transformation Construction Project.	In December 2016, Yunnan Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (Yun Jian Jing [2016] No. 660) approved the site selection plan of the project.	On February 10, 2020, the Department of Yunnan Provincial Department of Ecology and Environment (Yun Huan Shen [2020] No. 2-4) approved the project to be constructed according to the nature, scale, content, location, route, and pollution prevention measures prescribed in the environmental impact assessment report.	April 2020	Passed environmental protection check and acceptance in 2020.

The permissions of Yunnan Provincial and Deqin County People's Government and the related departments were obtained. The project construction plans were reviewed by the management agencies of the scenic and historic areas. Relevant procedures were cleared in conformity with the Regulations on Scenic and Historic Areas and the Revised Master Planning of the Three Parallel Rivers Scenic and Historic Area (2005-2020), and the Detailed Planning of Meili Snow Mountains sub-area of the Three Parallel Rivers Scenic and Historic Area (2012-2020), etc., then the project construction started.

During project construction, in line with the environmental protection requirements, the principles of “science-based construction operations, rigorous management, and

minimizing environmental disturbances” were accorded to minimize the impact on the OUV of the property. After being put into operation, the environmental protection departments set up acceptance working groups to inspect the environmental protection of both projects. The findings of the check and acceptance show that both projects have cleared all required environmental protection procedures, implemented the environmental protection prescribed in the EIA report and relevant approval documents, strictly enforced environmental protection regulations, and all environmental protection indicators complied with the monitoring standards.

2.9 Paragraph 9. Notes with appreciation ongoing consultations about the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) involving various administrative levels, experts and the public, but reiterates its request to expedite the development of the CMP and Management Effectiveness Assessment (MEA) system in line with the recommendations of the 2013 mission, requests furthermore the State Party to submit the updated draft CMP to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, and encourages the State Party to widen the scope of the possible IUCN Advisory mission so as to also encompass dialogue about the CMP and the evolving MEA system.

2.9.1 Conservation Management Plan

The Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage Site covers a vast area, broad scope, and complex situations in its conservation and management. In order to formulate the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) of the Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage Site, the project team conducted in-depth research over the past two years on the resource status, management situation, economic status, and community development demands in the property. Combined with the feedback from public opinion surveys, the formulation team started the CMP formulation.

From the formulation of the work plan to the formulated draft report, the formulation team consulted domestic heritage experts multiple times and solicited opinions and suggestions from heritage managers in the 11 counties (cities, districts) related to the eight components of the heritage site, and those from relevant competent departments such as land resources, transportation, environment, water resources, tourism, energy, and stakeholders, e.g. community managers, to make subsequent modifications and improvements.

The draft CMP has been formulated in accordance with China's current management mechanism and administration framework. Currently, the Chinese government is establishing a protected natural areas system with national parks as the mainstay (PNAS-NPM) and concurrently implementing the integration and optimization of protected natural areas. Different categories and levels of protected areas within the Three Parallel Rivers property will be merged into one single protected natural area management system. Relevant laws and regulations will gradually improve, and the draft CMP shall also be modified accordingly. The draft CMP with the State of Conservation Report has been submitted here to WHC for review. We hope that the WHC will provide constructive opinions and suggestions so that we can optimize and amend the plan further.

2.9.2 Management Effectiveness Evaluation System

In response to the recommendations of the 2013 Reactive Monitoring Mission, Yunnan Province has been working on the establishment of a management effectiveness evaluation system. Through the arduous efforts of multiple partners, the management effectiveness evaluation system was preliminarily established in 2022, with the evaluation indicators and methods largely formed. In 2023, Yunnan Provincial Forestry and Grassland Administration dispatched the system to various management agencies of the Three Parallel Rivers property for self-evaluation as a means to test the rationality and operability of the evaluation system. As the heritage site involves different categories of protected natural areas at different levels, the managers of these conservation designations and other stakeholders, provided valuable opinions and suggestions for the system during the evaluation process.

In November 2023, we noticed the official release of *Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0* by UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN. Focusing on evaluating management effectiveness, the toolkit provides self-evaluation methods that guide heritage managers to understand the value and importance of world heritage in-depth and precisely, enabling them to carry out better-targeted heritage conservation and management. The technical team is studying the translated toolkit conscientiously, and we will further optimize the evaluation indicators and methods in the management effectiveness evaluation based on the opinions and suggestions collected during the previous self-evaluation process to ensure that the evaluation will be more scientific, objective, and operational.

3. Other Existing Conservation Issues That May Affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property

The Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage was inscribed on the *World Heritage List* for its outstanding universal value. Since its inscription, the property has confronted enormous challenges in conservation and management due to the sluggish economic and social development of the region, which has led to acute conflicts between conservation and development. The Chinese government has long adhered to the ideology of sustainable development, fully mobilizing the enthusiasm of governments at all levels, universities and colleges, research institutes, community residents, and social organizations to actively participate in the conservation and management of the world heritage. After decades of concerted efforts, substantial progress has been made in the property in biodiversity conservation, research and monitoring, environmental quality improvement, public education, and community development. However, as the Three Parallel Rivers property spans a vast area, it is still confronted with numerous challenges in conservation management.

3.1 Biodiversity Conservation

With the concerted efforts of government at all levels, universities and colleges, research institutes, and social organizations over the years, significant achievements in biodiversity conservation have been made in the scope of the property. The latest statistics in 2022 show that, compared to the time of inscription, the higher plants have increased from over 6,000 to 7,008 species, with an addition 1,000 species; the mammals have risen from 173 to 197 species, an increase of 24 species; the birds has increased from 417 to 634 species, an increase of 217 species; and amphibians have increased from 36 to 40 species, an increase of 4 species.

Records of the new species and their new distributions represented by the Nujiang River golden monkey (*Rhinopithecus strykeri*), Gaoligong white-browed gibbon (*Hoolock tianxing*), *Megacodon stylophorus*, and Dulong River stink frog (*Odorrana dulongensis*) are continuously discovered. New distribution records of species such as the snow leopard (*Codonopsis javanica*), Asian golden cat (*Pardofelis temminckii*), clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*), and little leaf elm (*Ulmus microcarpa*) are growing.

The populations of a flagship species, the Yunnan golden monkey (*Rhinopithecus bieti*), have increased from about 1,400 individuals of 10 herds at the time of inscription to over 3,800 individuals of 24 herds. In the past two decades, there has been an increase of 14 herds, totalling over 2,400 individuals.

An internationally endangered wildlife species, *Budorcas taxicolor*, is traditionally distributed in the upper section of Gaoligongshan National Nature Reserve. In 2021, images and videos of their activities were shot for the first time in the Longyang section of Baoshan at the southern extremity of the reserve, indicating that the species population has been dispersing and the conservation achievements were remarkable.

The vegetation and ecological corridor restoration project in the habitats of Yunnan golden snub-nosed monkey implemented in Yunling Provincial Nature Reserve was selected as a representative case of ecological restoration in China for CBD COP15.



Photo 4. Vegetation and ecological corridor restoration in the habitats of Yunnan snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus bieti*)

The area where the Three Parallel Rivers property is located has complex natural geography and diverse climatic types, and numerous species are unknown to humans and have yet to be discovered. Meanwhile, complexed by global climate change, more stringent requirements are raised for biodiversity conservation.

3.2 Scienced research and monitoring

For a long time, the management institutions of the property have actively cooperated with domestic and overseas scientific research institutes, universities and colleges, environmental protection organizations, foundations and non-governmental organizations in science research, protection and monitoring, and have successively carried out the China-Dutch Forest Conservation and Community Development Project, the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF) Sustainable Forestry Development – Protected Area Management Project (GEF); Thirteen social organizations and science research institutions, including the Yunnan Provincial Green Environment Development Foundation, established Yunnan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey Conservation Network, published and released *The Conservation Green Book of Yunnan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey*, and accomplished *Project Report of Yunnan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey Full Region Dynamic Monitoring*. For the protection of the Nujiang snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus strykeri*), the world's fifth species of golden primates discovered in 2011, Nujiang Prefecture has established a leading group for the conservation and science research of the species and monitoring system was established for the species.

In 2005, Yunnan Province took the lead in proposing the “species with extremely small population (SESP)” conservation initiative, and through practice and exploration, a comprehensive protection system integrating resources conservation (resource investigation and monitoring, *in-situ/near-situ/ex-situ* conservation, endangerment system research, germplasm resource preservation, artificial breeding and wild release, etc.), multi-channel cooperative financing mechanism of “government departments, research institutions, social public welfare organizations, local communities”, conservation technology training and experimental demonstration, science popularization and knowledge dissemination has been instituted for protecting the plant species with extremely small populations.

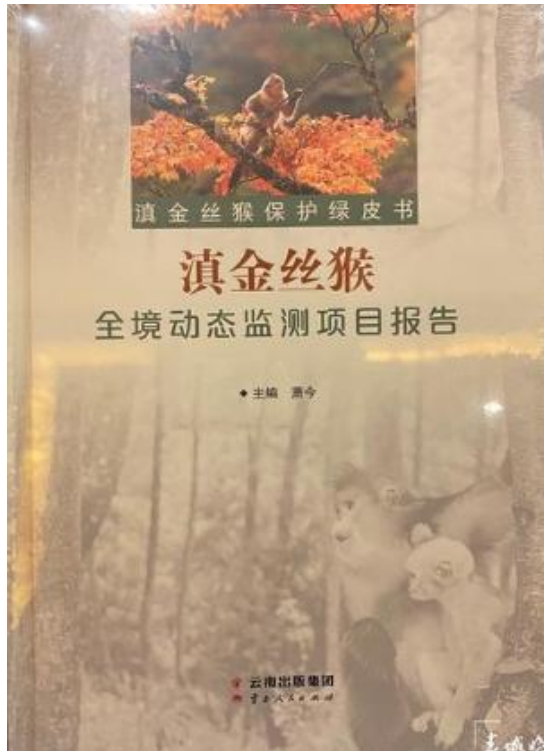


Figure 5. The Conservation Green Book of Yunnan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey

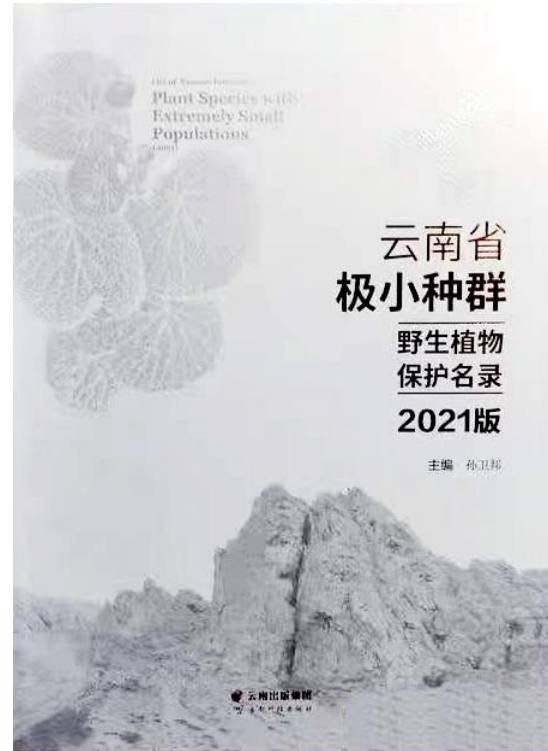


Figure 6. Plant Species with Extremely Small Populations in Yunnan Province

In order to further strengthen the forest resources monitoring system and understand the situation in the region in real-time, Yunnan Province has also established the Smart Forest and Grassland Big Data Platform and the Yunnan Provincial Protected Natural Areas Integrated Management Information System, which combines satellite remote sensing data and high-resolution images to carry out comprehensive monitoring of the property and its buffer zone.



Photo 7. Smart Forest and Grassland Big Data Center



Photo 8. Yunnan Provincial Protected Natural Areas Integrated Management Information System



Photo 9. Plant survey in the wild



Photo 10. Installing infrared video cameras

With the advancement of science and information technology, the region still needs to strengthen improvements and updates of the research and monitoring facilities and equipment remain to be upgraded, and the research and monitoring capacity and methods need to be enhanced and improved in the region.

3.3 Ecology and Environmental Protection

To enhance the protection of the ecology and environment, the Chinese government has progressively carried out thematic rectification campaigns, such as the Green Shield Action, the Central Ecology and Environment Protection Supervision, and the Forest Supervision, to enforce disciplinary supervision and rectification on environmental issues.

In July 2018, Yunnan Provincial Government issued Notice concerning the Rectification Plan for Issues Related to the Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage Site, requesting “a complete halt to the mineral exploration and mining activities in the three Parallel Rivers World Heritage Property. All the exploration rights and mining rights in effect must be halted, and all exploration permits, and mining permits must be revoked temporarily” . Since then, all the mining activities have been shut down, and those previous active exploration permits, and mining permits were revoked. The ecological restoration of the post-mining sites has also been progressing steadily with the policy, funding and technological support from Yunnan Provincial Government. Restoration measures are being implemented based on the site elevation and ecological environment, and site-specific measures are adopted for the ecological restoration in the posting-mining areas.

Through the concerted efforts of all involved parties for implementing patrolling and tending, afforestation, green tree adoption, environmental monitoring, and eco-agriculture development, the forest cover in the region is increasing with significant improvement in forest quality, and the overall ecological environmental is improving.



Photo 11. Green tree adoption campaign



Photo 12. Forest fire prevention patrol

Ecological protection and restoration in high-altitude areas has always been a hard problem for the heritage managers, which requires not only the wisdom and expertise of domestic and international experts, but also the long-term resolute efforts of all humankind to protect our natural treasures.

3.4 Community development

Nearly 90,000 people inhabit the Three Parallel Rivers property and its buffer zone, including 14 ethnic groups, including Tibetan, Naxi, Yi, Pumi, Susu, Nu, Dulong and Bai, of which 5 ethnic groups (Dulong, Nu, Pumi, Lisu and Naxi) are exclusive to the region.

In order to promote the conservation management of heritage and coordinate community development, the ecological benefits of natural forests and public welfare forests are compensated in the heritage sites and their buffer zones. Ecological ranger jobs and education and training opportunities are provided for community residents. Where conditions allow, economic benefits from tourism are returned to increase community residents' employment and management opportunities; A “government + enterprise + farmer” interest-sharing mechanism was established. Driven by science and technology, the communities are encouraged to develop under forest economic industries with local features such as growing *Amomum tsaoko*, *Ganoderma lucidum*, truffle, etc. Focusing on ecological protection, the development of an integrated business model of forestry, agriculture, and tourism, is needed to achieve the goal of increasing the income of the community from ecological protection.

Social organizations leveraged their advantages by combining the characteristics of community ethnic cultures to promote the development of community ethnic cultural industries. The lives of community residents have been greatly improved, and the community outlook and landscape have also changed dramatically.



Photo 13. Dulongjiang featured Under forest Economy in Dulongjiang - *Amomum tsaoko* spice



Photo 14. Community Assistance - Training to Make Goat Wool Felt in Laojun Mountains

The Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage Site is located in an area inhabited by ethnic groups, and the protected areas largely overlap with the previous extreme poverty area. Although the Chinese government has solved the problem of poverty among the residents of the communities in the region through poverty alleviation, they are still vulnerable groups, and the living standards of residents in some areas are affected negatively due to the impact of global macroeconomic hardships. The community residents in the property are not only the participants in heritage conservation, but also the guardians of the heritage, and the issue of coordinating the heritage protection with the sustainable community development of the community remains to be a huge problem confronted by the heritage managers and local governments.

3.5 Publicity and Education

Public activities were carried out on themed events, such as Cultural and Natural Heritage Day, International Biodiversity Day, World Wetlands Day, etc., to present the rich resources of the area. Documentaries such as *The Baima Snow Mountain between Heaven and Earth*, *Exploring the Golden Monkey of Yunnan*, *The Beauty of Gaoligong Mountains* and *Flying Rainbow of Snow Mountain* were filmed, and popular science books including *The Black Elf-Nujiang Golden Snub-nosed Monkey* and *Nature Observation Manual of Gaoligong Mountains of Nujiang River* were published. In museums, exhibitions to disseminate knowledge of geology, landform, biodiversity, ecological environment, etc, were open to the public. Through CCTV and other media, the monitoring effectiveness of endangered species such as Nujiang golden snub-nosed monkey, *Budorcas taxicolor taxicolor*, Yunnan golden snub-nosed monkey, *Craigia yunnanensis* population, *Moschus berezovskii*, *Neofelis nebulosa*, *Lophophorus sclateri*, *Tragopan blythii*, *Capricornis rubidus*, etc., were continuously publicized. The latest research findings in biodiversity conservation on the property are released to the public in time. The Biodiversity Conservation Achievement Exhibition Photography Contest and a painting contest themed Protecting Our Homeland: The Charm of Nujiang for primary school students were held, which have greatly attracted public attention and enhanced their conservation awareness.

These efforts enhanced the close integration between education and protection and expanded the popularity and influence of the natural heritage.

In 2012, with the support of the communities in Hong Kong, the first nature school in the Chinese mainland, Gaoligong Mountains Nature School, was established to actively carry out nature education activities and provide the public with opportunities to learn about world heritage sites and enjoy close experiences with nature.

Through implementing various publicity and presentation measures, knowledge of world heritage is constantly increasing amongst the population from the outside world. This has contributed to enhancing the brand image of the Three Parallel Rivers World Heritage Site and played a positive role in promoting heritage conservation and development.



Photo 15. Hall of the planning of Three Parallel Rivers, Diqing Prefecture



Photo 16 .Ecological Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage



Photo 17 .Biodiversity science popularization corridor



Photo 18. Biodiversity Theme Painting Review



Photo 19. Biodiversity Conservation Theme Activity

3.6 Transmission of Ethnic Culture

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is an important component of China's excellent traditional culture, a vivid testament to the perpetual transmission of Chinese civilization, and an important foundation for connecting national bonds and maintaining national unity.

The Three Parallel Rivers area is home to 14 ethnic groups in China, accounting for 56% of Yunnan's 25 ethnic groups and 25% of China's 55 ethnic groups. It hosts a concentrated exhibition of ethnic customs in China, a diverse cultural gene pool that integrates cultural diversity, and harmonious coexistence among ethnic groups, nature and human cultures.

In August 2021, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued *Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. With the support of national policies and efforts from parties and partners, traditional crafts, ethnic cultural festivals, sculpture painting, music dance, and other ethnic cultures in the region have been well protected and transmitted through certifying intangible cultural heritage, cultivating transmitters, organizing special traditional cultural festivals, and operating cultural training centers.

By establishing ecological conservation areas for the traditional ethnic cultures, we have endeavored to explore to the fullest extent the elite ethnic traditional cultures closely related to biodiversity conservation, such as Naxi Dongba culture and Tibetan culture of sacred sites. This has pioneered the "Yunnan model", where ethnic culture promotes nature conservation, and nature conservation reciprocally facilitates the transmission of ethnic culture. It has also taken the lead in China in carrying out pilot projects for access to genetic resources and related traditional knowledge and benefit-sharing, providing references for the establishment of a national system for access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing (ABS).

With the advancements in information technology, digital means have also played an

important role in conserving ethnic culture. Through projects such as the Digital Three Parallel Rivers” and “The Nu ethnic people’s music digital protection project,” the goal of better preserving and more broadly disseminating traditional culture through modern technological means has been achieved.



Photo 20 Nixi black pottery training



Photo 21: Nu ethnic dance training

In the past 20 years, outstanding achievements have been made in the Three Parallel Rivers region in the protection and transmission of ethnic cultures. Many nearly cultural traditions close to extinction have been saved, restored and enhanced, the community's cultural identity has been strengthened, and ethnic culture has become an important force driving local economic development.

4. The potential for other important restorations, alterations, and/or new constructions within the heritage site and its buffer zone

None

5. Public availability of the state of conservation report

The contracting party agrees that this report can be publicly accessed in the World Heritage Centre's State of Conservation Report information system (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>).

6. Annex

Annex 1. An Outline of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Three Parallel Rivers World Natural Heritage

Annex 2. Post-assessment Report on the Impact of the Dulongjiang 35kV Power Transmission Line Network Project on the Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas World Natural Heritage Site (bound separately)

Annex 3. Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas Conservation Management Plan (Draft) (bound separately)

Annex 1:

An Outline of the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the Three Parallel Rivers Yunnan Nature Reserves, China

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1.4.4 Relevant planning documents and reports

1.4.5 Main technical standards

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1.7.2 Technical Roadmap

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2.6.5 Promoting the system of river (lake) chiefs and forest rangers

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2.6.7 Environmental Inspection and Restoration

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3.2.6 Master Plan of Key Projects for the Important Ecosystems and Restoration of Yunnan Province

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