



Natural and cultural attractions to increase locals' incomes and protect the environment, traditions

A fantastic view of Huangguoshu Waterfall in Anshun, Guizhou province, which is typical of the karst landform. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Scenic zone utilizes all-region tourism to alleviate poverty

By WANG JINHUI
wangjinhui@chinadaily.com.cn

Despite its magnificent waterfall landscape and untouched natural scenery, the Huangguoshu scenic zone in Anshun, Guizhou province, is facing a tough road ahead in its efforts to lift villagers out of poverty and achieve sustainable development, according to local officials.

"The key to poverty alleviation is forming a whole tourism industry chain and encouraging poor households to take part in the process," said Xu Qing, deputy director of the zone's political department.

"We should implement targeted measures to advance all-region tourism and endeavor to change every village into a scenic spot," Xu said.

All-region tourism is different to traditional tourism as it replaces the idea of scenic sites being independent from the surrounding area. Instead, an entire region becomes a tourist destination.

This model will boost infrastructure, investment, culture and the economy, increasing prosperity throughout the whole area, according to local officials.

Last year, the zone's tourism revenue reached 7.7 billion yuan (\$1.14 billion), up 50 percent year-on-year. The added value of the service industry accounted for 78.1 percent of the zone's gross domestic product. The zone plans to invest 30 million yuan per year in poverty alleviation.

Targeted strategies

Xu said that the burgeoning growth of the tourism industry has opened a window for villagers who still live below the poverty line.

By analyzing the advantages and resources of every village, the area will map out tailored plans for its 18 villages and 1,851 poor households. It will see which are suitable for certain strategies, such as promoting ethnic group cultures, opening farm stays and organic gardens, or developing sightseeing attractions.

To improve incomes and protect the local environment under the all-region tourism model, the zone first set its sights on organic farming.

One such demonstration area is the Daweng village in Baishui county, where oranges have helped numerous villagers to become prosperous and have attracted migrant workers to return to start their own businesses in their hometown.

Yang Lan, a local villager who oversees 1.32 hectares of orange trees, said she is satisfied with her life because she no longer needs to search for unstable work far from home. "Planting oranges has been the most important economic source for the household and I feel happy to stay with my family," she said.

Pan Yongmei, secretary of Daweng village's Party committee, said that in the past the village had no major sources of income and one third of the population had left to find work in urban areas. "Now they are willing to come back home to plant orange trees and open farm stays. Those oranges are not only fortune fruits, but also bring hope and encouragement for the future," Pan said.

Several years ago, a total of 880 people in a similar village lived by cutting firewood, mowing and lighting fires to cook. In 2007, Pan introduced 1,200 mandarin orange seeds to 10 households. They later earned 180,000 yuan in three years. In 2012, the total plantation area of mandarin oranges reached 23.31 hectares, with an average annual production of 7,500 kilograms per hectare and total revenue of 1.05 million yuan. Today, the total plantation area has expanded to 396 hectares.

In addition to oranges, the Huangguoshu scenic zone is also promoting the planting of peaches, cherries and plums, and is launching sustainable projects such as rocky desertification control, afforestation and road landscaping.

The zone has 3,330 hectares of forests, with 53 percent forest coverage, and 666 hectares of rocky desertification control greenery.

Muxiahe village in Longgong town has also benefited from poverty alleviation based on all-region tourism.

"The biggest problem concerning the development of our village is transport and infrastructure," said Lei Xingfa, secretary of Muxiahe village's Party committee, adding that the region has picturesque views and sufficient agricultural resources despite its rugged mountain roads and lack of modern facilities.

Recently, the village renovated 8,600-square-meters of landscape and initiated projects to build roads, improve sewage disposal and install village street lamps.

Last year, the region upgraded its local agricultural industries, including agricultural sightseeing. It founded a professional cooperative agency of farmers to participate in beautifying the village, boosting agriculture and the local economy.

Waterfall aims for recognition as UNESCO World Heritage site

By LI YOU
liy@chinadaily.com.cn

Huangguoshu Waterfall, located in the Huangguoshu-Tunpu landscape cluster in the city of Anshun in Guizhou province, is known as the greatest waterfall in China.

The local government is currently submitting a bid to UNESCO for the area's nomination as a World Natural and Cultural Heritage site.

Huangguoshu Waterfall is 77.8 meters high and 101 meters wide. It can be viewed from all angles, even from behind the waterfall itself.

The arching rainbow above the pool adds splendid colors to the pure waterscape.

The main body of the waterfall is 67 meters high and 83.3 meters wide. Surrounding the main waterfall are 18 smaller but beautiful waterfalls, including Luostan Waterfall, Silver-Chain Waterfall and Dishuitan Waterfall, making up the Huangguoshu Waterfalls Cluster, spanning more than 100 square kilometers.

It took 100,000 to 500,000 years for such awe-inspiring scenery to develop. It is typical of the karst landform, in which the waterfall is formed by the dissolution of soluble rocks.

Known as the Kingdom of Karst, the formation of the waterfall is characterized by underground drainage systems with sinkholes and caves.

During the erosion process of the rivers, the water constantly infiltrated and corroded the waterbed, resulting in the current majestic waterfall and the deep steep gorges.

Beyond its extraordinary natural scenery and unique landform characteristics, the scenery dis-



The key point of the application is the unique lifestyles of the Miao and Bouyei ethnic groups in the karst landform..."

Zhu Guiyun, deputy Party secretary of Anshun

77.8 meters

the height of Huangguoshu Waterfall



A woman wears traditional Han dress at Tunpu in Anshun. The area still preserves traditions and cultures dating back to 600 years ago such as ancestor worship.

to Xiong Kangning, a professor at Guizhou Normal University.

The Getu River landscape embodies the ancient communities built up by the Miao ethnic group under the natural conditions of special karst landforms.

Their traditions of living in caves, cave burial culture and rock climbing are the living encyclopedia of residents' interactive daily life with nature.

The Getu River has the largest-capacity caves in the world. Its precipitous canyons and caves showcase the characteristics of the karst landform.

"The Huangguoshu-Tunpu landscape cluster retained the integrated image of ancient Jianghuai culture, the cultures of the Miao and Bouyei ethnic groups, which is an outstanding creation of different streams of traditional human cultures in the karst area."

"It provides important evidence for the study of traditional cultures, ancient architecture and lifestyles in the area," Xiong said. In the 1990s, when the

Huangguoshu waterfall scenery area first applied for World Natural Heritage site status, the application was unsuccessful because the surrounding buildings and low forest coverage rate of Banbian Street disrupted the natural scenery.

At present, the local government has restarted the application plan after reconstructing Banbian Street and recovering the forest.

In July 2014, a special conference was held by the provincial government to discuss the application for Huangguoshu-Tunpu landscape's nomination as a World Natural and Cultural Heritage site.

After one month, the local government organized a working group to focus on the application. Thereafter, a comprehensive plan was formed with oversight from all levels of government.

"The key point of the application is the unique lifestyles of the Miao and Bouyei ethnic groups in the karst landform,

Tunbao culture and architecture, the Miao ethnic traditions of living in caves, as well as water conservation projects in Baotun village," said Zhu Guiyun, deputy Party secretary of Anshun city.

There are plenty of examples in karst regions showcasing the interactions of human and nature. Although human activities can result in rocky desertification under some extreme conditions, some regions have achieved balance through interaction and have evolved into unique cultural scenery, according to Paul Williams, professor at the department of geography and environmental science at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

As part of the next step of the application, the local government is establishing the scientific research and monitoring of the history and culture of the local ethnic groups' relationship with the karst environment.

Recently, they have organized domestic and foreign research organizations to carry out field studies in this area, striving to achieve nomination for a World Natural and Cultural Heritage site by 2020.

Adhering to the belief that our cultural and natural heritage is an irreplaceable source of inspiration, World Heritage is "our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations", according to UNESCO's definition. The Egyptian pyramids, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the baroque cathedrals of Latin America and the Great Wall of China, as well as other unique and diverse places, all make up the world's heritage, according to the organization.



Sunset falls over the mountainous area of the Dragon King's Palace scenic zone in Guizhou.