

Sharing World Heritage experience with China

Government officials from the Wulingyan Scenic World Heritage Area in the Hunan Province of China, visited the Wet Tropics Management Authority to discuss World Heritage management issues last month.



Cable car in the Hunan Province

Wet Tropics Management Authority Senior Project Officer Ellen Weber, and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority staff member John Baldwin met with the 15 Chinese officials in the Wet Tropics boardroom. Via an interpreter, they discussed topics such as Indigenous issues, managing tourism and issuing permits.

Wulingyan shares many similarities as the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Area was a refuge for many ancient species during the Quaternary glacial period and is renowned for its scenic beauty and many endangered plants and animals.

It was approved as a scenic and historic interest area by the State Council in 1988, and was placed under the authority of Wulingyan District Government which was created in the same year. The two World Heritage Areas even share a cable car system in common.

Ms Weber said that although the two World Heritage Areas share a lot in common – they are also very different.

“While we are striving to get people back on country, their district government has programs for moving people out of the World Heritage Area,” she said.

“Over population is a very real threat to the integrity of World Heritage values and highlights the need for an excellent national population policy,” Ms Weber added.

Wulingyan is described on the UNESCO website as *“a spectacular area stretching over more than 26,000 ha in China’s Hunan Province, the site is dominated by more than 3,000 narrow sandstone pillars and peaks, many over 200 m high. Between the peaks lie ravines and gorges with streams, pools and waterfalls, some 40 caves, and two large natural bridges. In addition to the striking beauty of the landscape, the*

region is also noted for the fact that it is home to a number of endangered plant and animal species.”

For more information about the Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest World Heritage Area visit - <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/640>.

