

The Historical Evolution of China's Scenic Site System & Brief Introduction to the China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites

I. The Historical Evolution of China's Scenic Site System

System Construction of China's Scenic Site System

In May 1982, the ministries and departments of the State Council were reformed; the Ministry of Urban and Rural Construction and Environmental Conservation was founded. The City Appearance Garden and Forestry Bureau was set up to guide the management of city appearance and landscaping, the planning and environmental protection of ancient buildings and ancient architectural sites in cities and scenic spots.

In April 1988, the State Council, through institutional reformation, decided to abolish the Ministry of Urban and Rural Construction and Environmental Conservation, established the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of China, and set up the Division of Urban Construction, in charge of the planning and construction of national scenic spots. In March 2008, the State Council, through institutional reform, decided to set up the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, no longer retaining the Ministry of Construction; Division of Urban Construction was set up to be responsible for the examination, approval, supervision and administration of state-level scenic spots, to organize and audit the declaration of world natural heritages; and jointly with relevant departments such as cultural relics to examine and verify the declaration of world natural and cultural heritages.

In March 2018, the State Council reformed its institutions and made a decision to newly found the Ministry of Natural Resources. Management responsibilities for grasslands, natural reserves, scenic sites, natural heritages and geological park of several institutions (the former State Forestry Administration, the former Ministry of Agriculture, the former Ministry of Land and Resources, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the Ministry of Water Resources, the former State Oceanic Administration) were integrated. These responsibilities are currently all taken by the institution that founded as the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, which has the other title as National Park Service, administrated by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Establishment and Development of Scenic Sites in China

On November 8th, 1982, the State Council of the People's Republic of China

approved and announced the first batch of 44 state-level scenic spots. Since then, the State Council has been approved and announced eight batches of scenic spots at national level. At present, there are totally 244 state-level scenic spots in China. In addition, provincial governments have approved the establishment of a total of 737 provincial-level scenic spots, a total area of about 200,000 square kilometers. The distribution of these scenic spots covers almost all kinds of geographical areas in China, accounting for about 2% of the total land area of China.

Conservation situation of World Heritage Sites in China

China acceded to the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* on 12th December 1985 and was elected a member of the World Heritage Committee on 29th October 1999. China attaches great importance to application, protection and management of the world heritage. In 1987, the first six sites were included in the World Heritage list. Over the past 30 years, China's world heritage business has been growing, making remarkable achievement and gaining worldwide attention. Currently, China has 53 World Heritage sites, including 13 natural heritage sites, 4 cultural and natural heritage sites and 36 cultural heritage sites. Among the 53 World Heritage sites, 31 are distributed between state-level scenic spots and provincial-level scenic spots, including as many as 41 state-level scenic spots and 8 provincial-level scenic spots.

II. Introduction to the China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites

The China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites (CNPA) is an organization with legal personality in the industry of national parks and scenic sites, accepting the business guidance and management and supervision of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China. After the reform of the State Council, the responsibility for the management of scenic spots has been assigned to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, the competent business department of CNPA has not made corresponding changes. In current, China is carrying out the reform of decoupling associations and chambers of commerce from administrative organs. By then, all associations and chambers of commerce will be delinked from administrative organs and become social organizations with no departments in charge of business. They will be subject to business guidance from industry authorities and supervision by relevant departments. The Secretariat of the China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites is located in Beijing.

In 2002, as a national non-governmental organization (NGO), China Association

of National Parks and Scenic Sites was officially accepted as a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Our Mission

CNPA shall abide by the relevant national policies, laws and regulations, and play the role as a bridge link between the industry of national parks and scenic sites and the government. China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites shall follow the working policy of "scientific planning, unified management, strict protection, sustainable utilization", and serve for the healthy development of national parks and scenic sites and sustainable development strategy of the resources of national parks and scenic sites according to the requirements of national reform and opening up and economic development.

Our Functions

CNPA's main functions are providing services to, reacting to demands of and regulating actions of our members with regards to:

1. Organize the investigation and research on the overall situation and the major issues of the sector; join in the research and formulation work of the relating laws and policies; join in the formulation and implementation work on the industry standards and development planning.

2. Actively assist our members to develop international markets, contact relevant international organizations and institutions; carry out international exchange activities; provide consultations for foreign cooperation projects; guide, regulate and supervise foreign exchange activities of our members.

3. Promote public participation in daily work of national parks and scenic sites. Hold seminars, exhibition activities commissioned by the government or to meet needs of sector development.

4. Organize job training activities, provide consulting services, evaluate new projects and promote state of the art technology as appropriate; undertake monitoring and statistical documentation as required by the government.

5. Collect and publish the cultural and historic data of the national parks and scenic sites and undertake other public education.

6. Organize experts to evaluate and consult on resources protection, planning and construction, management of the national parks and scenic sites.

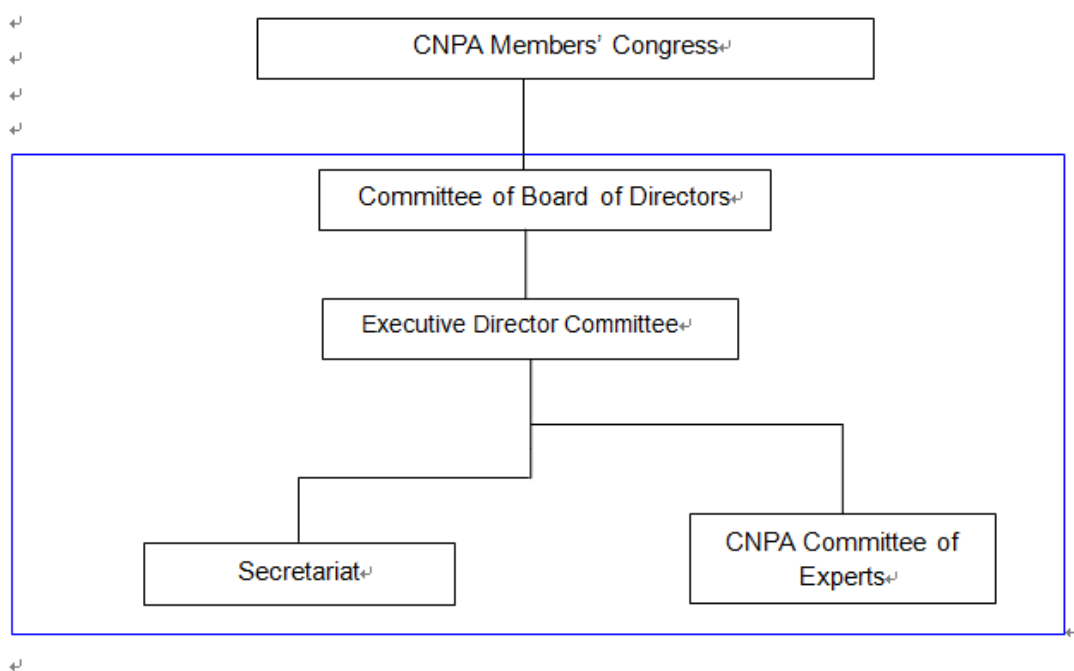
7. Help reflect our members' demands and suggestions to the government; and safeguard the legal rights and interests of our members.

8. Honor and award those units and individuals that make important contributions to the development of sector.

Our Membership

China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites now has over 450 units and individual members, including national and provincial scenic sites, relevant departments, organizations, institutions, academies and enterprises and so on. Many of China's famous World Heritage sites and national heritage sites are included in our membership.

Organization Structure



The Secretariat is the permanent office of the China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites. According to the association's provisions of the articles, the functions of Secretariat are to implement major decisions passed by the CNPA members Congress, and resolutions of Committee of Board of Directors and Executive Director Committee, and to deal with the daily work of the association.

Department of the Secretariat

- Executive Office
- Editorial Department
- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Department of Project Cooperation
- Department of Planning and Designing
- Information Center

- **New Media Center**
- **English Editorial Translation Center**
- **Secretariat of the Learning Alleviation Fund**
- **Department of Membership Service**

CNPA Committee of Experts is a branch of professional guidance, taking part in the investigation and research of industry major issues and policies and regulations and providing consultation, assessment and demonstration for protection of scenic resources, planning and construction, information construction, scientific management and cultural activities and so on. According to the needs of the industry development, China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites has established the Committee of Digital Technology Experts, Committee of Photography, Committee of Tourism Development, Committee of Experts for Management Consultation and Committee of Wisdom Scenic Sites Planning and Construction.

III. Application and Approval of Scenic Spots in China

Basic Procedure

Chinese scenic spots are divided into state-level scenic spots and provincial-level scenic spots. Among them, state-level scenic spots are those natural landscape and humanistic and cultural landscape, which reflect the important natural change process and the significant historical and cultural development process. These landscapes basically stay in the natural state or maintain the historical origin, and represent national scenery characteristics. The application for state-level scenic sites shall be submitted by provincial governments; competent departments of scenic sites shall be organized by the State Council for examination and verification, which shall be approved and officially announced by the State Council. Provincial-level scenic sites are scenic spots with regional representation. The application for provincial-level scenic sites shall be submitted by municipal (county) governments; competent departments of provincial governments shall organize and demonstrate, and provincial governments shall approve and make official announcement.

IV. Current Situation of Conservation, Management, Planning and Construction of Scenic Sites in China

System of Laws and Regulations

Currently, China has formulated a series of relatively complete laws and regulations on scenic sites, including the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Urban-Rural Planning*, the *Regulation on Scenic Sites*, and regulations on local scenic

spots.

In the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Urban-Rural Planning*, Article 32 of the *Law on Urban-Rural Planning* stipulates: "Planning, constructing and managing of scenic sites should obey relevant laws, administrative regulations and regulations of the State Council", thus the legal status of scenic sites were certified.

Regulation on Scenic Sites has clearly stipulated the nature, establishment, planning, conservation, utilization and management of scenic sites, as well as legal liability, etc. The policy of "scientific planning, unified management, strict conservation and sustainable utilization" was proposed. Most provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government) have also formulated corresponding local laws and regulations, forming a relatively complete system of management laws and regulations for scenic spots.

Administration Organization

After the completion of the reform of government organizations, China will form new administration mechanism which includes the state, provinces (both autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government), prefecture-level cities, counties (districts) and scenic sites. At the national level, the National Forestry and grassland Administration (National Park Service) is managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources is the competent authority for scenic sites. It sets up the Division for the Management of Protected Areas, which is responsible for coordinating the related work of scenic spots throughout the country. At the provincial level, the Forestry Bureau, managed by the Provincial Department of Natural Resources, is responsible for arranging the related affairs of the scenic spots in provinces. At municipal and county levels, the municipal and county forestry bureaus are responsible for the management of the scenic spots within the jurisdiction, respectively. Each scenic site shall be administered by the administrative organ of the scenic spot set up by local government at or above the county level.

Planning Guidance

The planning of scenic spots in China is divided into general planning and detailed planning.

Regulation on Scenic Sites stipulates that scenic spots shall finish general planning within 2 years from the date of establishment. The planning period of the master plan is generally 20 years. The overall planning of scenic spots should be formulated in accordance with the relevant national planning norms, and reflect the

requirements of harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature, coordinated regional development and comprehensive economic and social progress. The general planning should adhere to principles of giving priority to protection and following the principles of development and service. Also, it shall highlight natural characteristics, cultural connotations and local characteristics of scenic spots.

Detailed planning of scenic spots shall conform to the requirements of the overall planning of scenic spots, and shall in accordance with the relevant planning norms of the state; they determine specific locations, layout and scale of construction projects such as infrastructure, tourism facilities and cultural facilities in scenic spots. Also, detailed planning should certify construction land scope and planning and design conditions, to better guide and control development and construction activities in scenic sites and ensure the sustainable development of scenic spots.

The general planning of state-level scenic sites shall be undertaken by urban and rural planning units with Grade A qualification. The detailed planning of state-level scenic spots shall be undertaken by the units have both the qualification of urban and rural planning establishment units above Grade B and the specific qualification of landscape architecture engineering design at the same time.

VI. Establishment and Development of China National Park System

In 1994, the Green Book "Situation and Prospect of Chinese Scenic Sites" issued by the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of China clearly pointed out that "China's scenic spots are correspond to international national parks, and have their own characteristics." The English name of China's state-level scenic sites is "National Park of China".

On May 18th, 2015, the "Views of the Development and Reform Commission on the Key Work of Deepening the Reform of the Economic Structure in 2015" approved by the State Council puts forward the "National Park System Pilot Project" in nine provinces. Up to now, China has set up 10 national parks. In order to speed up the construction of the national park system, China has drawn lessons from international beneficial practices on the basis of summing up the pilot experiences and China's situations. In September 2017, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the *General Plan for the Establishment of the National Park System*, to certify aspects including overall requirements, scientific definition, institutional construction, establishment of fund guarantee system, improvement of natural ecosystem conservation system, construction of coordinated

community development system and implementation of security system, etc. It proposed that by 2020, China will have basically completed the pilot project for the establishment of the national park system, a unified management system at different levels, and a preliminary overall layout of the national park. This marks the initial completion of the top-level design of China's national park system, and the construction of the national park has entered a substantial stage.

V. Epilogue

Through a brief introduction to the current situation of China's scenic sites industry based on the background of the continuous promotion of China's national park system construction and the deepening of institutional reform, in order to play a better role as a bridge link of our association and promote the transformation and development of the scenic spots industry and international exchanges and cooperation, CNPA hopes to discuss key problems in the system construction of scenic spots and national parks, and promote international cooperation, so as to think deeply about the transformation and development of China's scenic spots in the future.