

**JOINT ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEETING  
SINO-US CENTERS FOR SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**October 23 — November 2, 2001**

**October 23 — 30, Tucson, Arizona**

The Joint Organizing Committee (JOC) devoted most of its time while in Tucson working at the University of Arizona's (UA) Institute for the Study of Planet Earth (ISPE). The Committee's discussions on the content and scope of activities, the principals who would make the collaboration valuable, the means by which the Centers could most effectively succeed, the customers for Center products, and the priorities for new proposal development were invaluable in cementing bilateral confidence and trust.

Between working sessions, the JOC heard innovative ideas for Center activities from both supporters and potential collaborators. These visitors to the JOC sessions included Prabhu Dayal (co-chair, Environmental Technology Industry Cluster), Jim Christenson (Associate Dean, Agriculture, Agriculture Extension Administration, UA), Jonathan Overpeck (Director, ISPE), Gene Sander (Vice Provost, Agriculture, UA), Toni Betschart (Area Director, USDA/ARS), Nick Melcher (Regional Director, USGS), Stan Morain and Rick Watson (Earth Data Analysis Center, University of New Mexico), Xubin Zeng (Atmospheric Sciences, UA), Leonard Lane (USDA/ARS), Juan Valdes (Engineering, UA), Waite Osterkamp (USGS), and Bob Clark (Hydrology, UA).

The JOC toured the USDA/ARS Southwest Watershed Research Center (SWRC) and were given briefings on research underway related to the theme of the proposed Center. The Laboratory, under the leadership of Susan Moran, would welcome visiting scientists from China and elsewhere in the U.S. to collaborate on mutually beneficial studies, such as modeling sedimentation and erosion processes.

The USGS offices in Tucson briefed the JOC on the range of research it conducts in the southwestern region. The JOC was encouraged to consider these activities for joint investigation by visiting scientists through the new Centers.

The JOC visited the Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed, which is managed by SWRC's David Goodrich and Leonard Lane, was visited. David Goodrich (USDA) and staff demonstrated field measurement capabilities, rainfall simulation experiments, and laboratory facilities. It was from this visit and discussions of proper measurements, data availability, and the status of modeling erosion and sedimentation, that the idea to establish an International Watershed Research Network was born.

Hoshin Gupta, Bisher Imam and others of the NSF Science and Technology Center on Sustainability of Semi-Arid Hydrology and Riparian Areas (SAHRA) briefed the JOC on the extensive research and outreach activities conducted in the project under the direction of Soroosh Sorooshian at the UA. The SAHRA is a collaboration among private-sector groups and several universities and government agencies.

The JOC also had an opportunity to visit the Desert Museum, courtesy of the UA International Affairs office, and Tombstone, famous in the history of the U.S. western territories as the town too tough to die.

## **October 31, November 2, Washington, DC**

The National Science Foundation hosted a meeting at their headquarters in Balston, Virginia. Doug James and Bill Chang presented potential funding opportunities in the Hydrologic Science and International Divisions, respectively. The recommendation was for the JOC to focus on specific research topics rather than putting too much emphasis on a single large competitive grant submission. The International Division would be eager to see a comprehensive capacity building effort that spans all levels of education and professional exchange.

Most of the Joint Organizing Committee visited the USGS National Center in Reston on the afternoon of October 31. Dr. Verne Schneider and Anna Lennox of the USGS Office of International Hydrology welcomed the group. Presentations on USGS programs were provided by Dr. Pat Leahy, Chief, USGS International Programs; Dr. Dick Marzolf, Chief, Eastern Region Hydrologic Research; and Steve Blanchard, Acting Chief, Office of Information. Dr. Jack Medlin, Office of International Programs Liaison for Asia, was also present. After the presentation, most of this group visited John Gray's house, where cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were served as the Chinese visitors stuffed trick-or-treater's bags.

On the morning of November 1, members of the JOC visited the ARS George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, Maryland. Arlyne Meyers of the ARS Office of International Research Programs as well as representatives of the National Program Staff briefed them. Al Dedrick, Associate Deputy Administrator for Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems addressed the group using a presentation that outlined the structure and function of the National Programs and highlighted opportunities for interaction with China. Dick Amerman presented the National Program on Air Quality while Scott Christiansen filled in for Dr. Evert Byington in explaining the National Program on Pasture, Forage and Range.

Michael McGirr, Acting Director for the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services (CSREES) International Programs Office met with the delegation during lunch on November 1, 2001. Mike gave an overview of how the agency works with U.S. colleges and universities, especially land-grant institutions, to educate students, conduct research programs and carry out local extension programs. The discussion centered on this federal-state-county partnership and comparisons were made to agricultural systems in China. The U.S. approach has worked well in this country because of the close ties between research and extension, decentralized authority (states have considerable autonomy) and demand-driven programming at the local level. The majority of time was spent discussing the extension system and its role in creating positive change in rural areas. Unlike the Chinese agricultural extension system, which is focused almost entirely on increasing food production, the U.S. extension system takes a very broad approach that includes such areas as rural development, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, youth development, agricultural marketing, forestry and fisheries, etc. This holistic programming may be well suited for dealing with problems at the watershed level in China. The meeting concluded with a consensus that there was much to be gained on both sides from a close collaboration with U.S. universities and that effective extension programming should be an important component of the Sino-U.S. Centers development

Dr. Jerry Hammond, Director of the International Programs Division, welcomed the delegation and provided information packages about the NRCS. Ron Marlow, Director of the Conservation Engineering Division, welcomed the delegation on behalf of Pearl Reed, Chief of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Basic information was provided about how NRCS is organized, what the agency does, and that the agency works with private landowners to solve soil and water conservation problems throughout the United States. NRCS has

conservationists in nearly every county. Scientific principles and technological tools drive much of what the NRCS does in the field of soil and water conservation. Dr. Barbara Osgood, Special Assistant to the Chief, provided an overview of the Science and Technology organization of the NRCS, including its divisions (like the Conservation Engineering Division and Ecological Sciences Division), national centers and institutes, and cooperating scientists. Dr. Marc Safley, National Agro-ecologist of the Ecological Sciences Division, provided a brief overview of NRCS's erosion prediction technology, National Plant Materials Center and organization, as well as how the NRCS inculcates basic ecological principles into all of its field conservation program delivery mechanisms.

All members of the U.S. and Chinese Organizing Committees expressed great interest in the details of how the agency achieves its soil and water conservation goals on a nationwide basis. Jerry Bernard, National Geologist of the Conservation Engineering Division, moderated the meeting, thanked all for their full participation, and expressed interest and optimism for the future operation and results of the Joint Centers.

After the NRCS briefing, Dr. Floyd Horn, ARS administrator, and V.P. Li spoke about the importance of the work to be done by the Joint Centers, and a Letter of Intent to proceed with the opening of the Chinese Center in May of 2002 was signed. Following the signing ceremony, a reception was held for members of the committee and guests.

Dr.Horn closed the meeting by saying, Separately, our two nations could continue to make slow progress. Separately, we might even find a solution one day. But together, we can do much more to reach our mutual goals quicker. This is our hope for this partnership we are entering into today. Erosion is an international problem that demands an international effort. Today, we will begin our journey toward a solution for the benefit of all people.



Dr. Horn presents V.P. Li with a plaque commemorating the Visit of the Chinese Organizing Committee to the U. S.

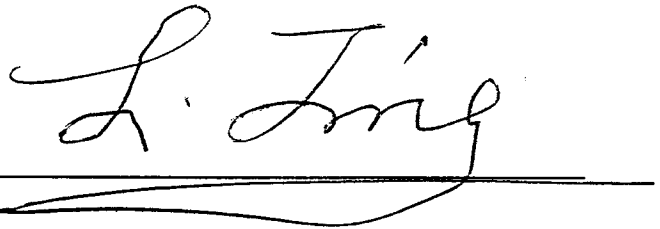
LETTER OF INTENT FOR THE CREATION OF SINO - U.S. CENTERS FOR SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Loss of soil has worldwide consequences for agriculture and landscape stability. Transport of eroded soil has important implications for climate and clean, renewable resources of water and air. Assured access to clean water and a healthy, safe environment requires an ethic of conservation and protection. The minimum scale in which these principles apply successfully is basin wide. These will be the concerns of the Sino-U.S. Centers for Soil and Water Conservation and Environmental Protection. The proposed locations for the joint centers are the Northwest Sci-Tech University of Agriculture and Forestry (NWSUAF), Yangling, Shaanxi Province, People's Republic of China and the University of Arizona, Tucson, United States. The Centers will conduct research, develop scientific tools and technologies, and introduce improved methods for agriculture designed to conserve soil and water resources and protect the environment through information exchange, education, and proactive extension services.

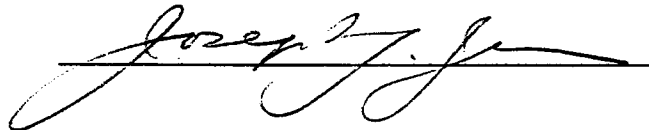
This Letter of Intent shall signify that the undersigned and their agencies or institutions intend to cooperate effectively and efficiently towards the opening, on May 21, 2002, of the Sino - U.S. Centers for Soil and Water Conservation and Environmental Protection serving the Loess Plateau and Yellow River Basin Regions of China and relevant regions of the United States.

Signed,

Li Jing, Executive Vice President,  
Northwest Sci-Tech University of Agriculture  
and Forestry



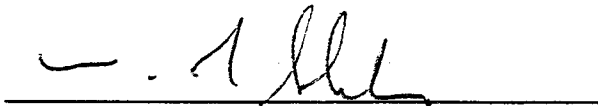
Joseph Jen, Undersecretary, United States  
Department of Agriculture,  
Research, Economics and Education



Richard C. Powell,  
Vice President for Research,  
The University of Arizona



Verne Schneider, Chief,  
International Water Resources Branch,  
United States Geological Survey



Floyd Horn, Administrator,  
USDA, Agricultural Research Service



Colien Hefferan, Administrator, USDA,  
Cooperative State Research, Education and  
Extension Service

