

Assessing Ecotourism from a Multi-stakeholder Perspective

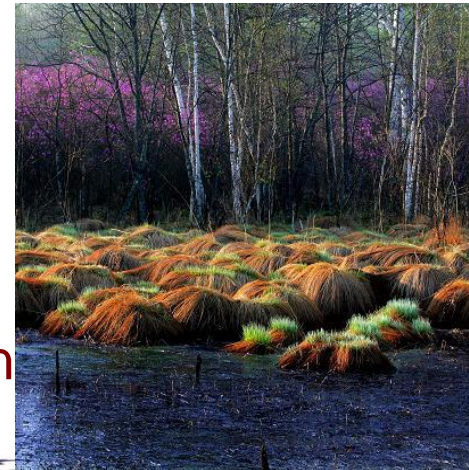
– Xingkai Lake National Nature Reserve, China

November 16, 2014

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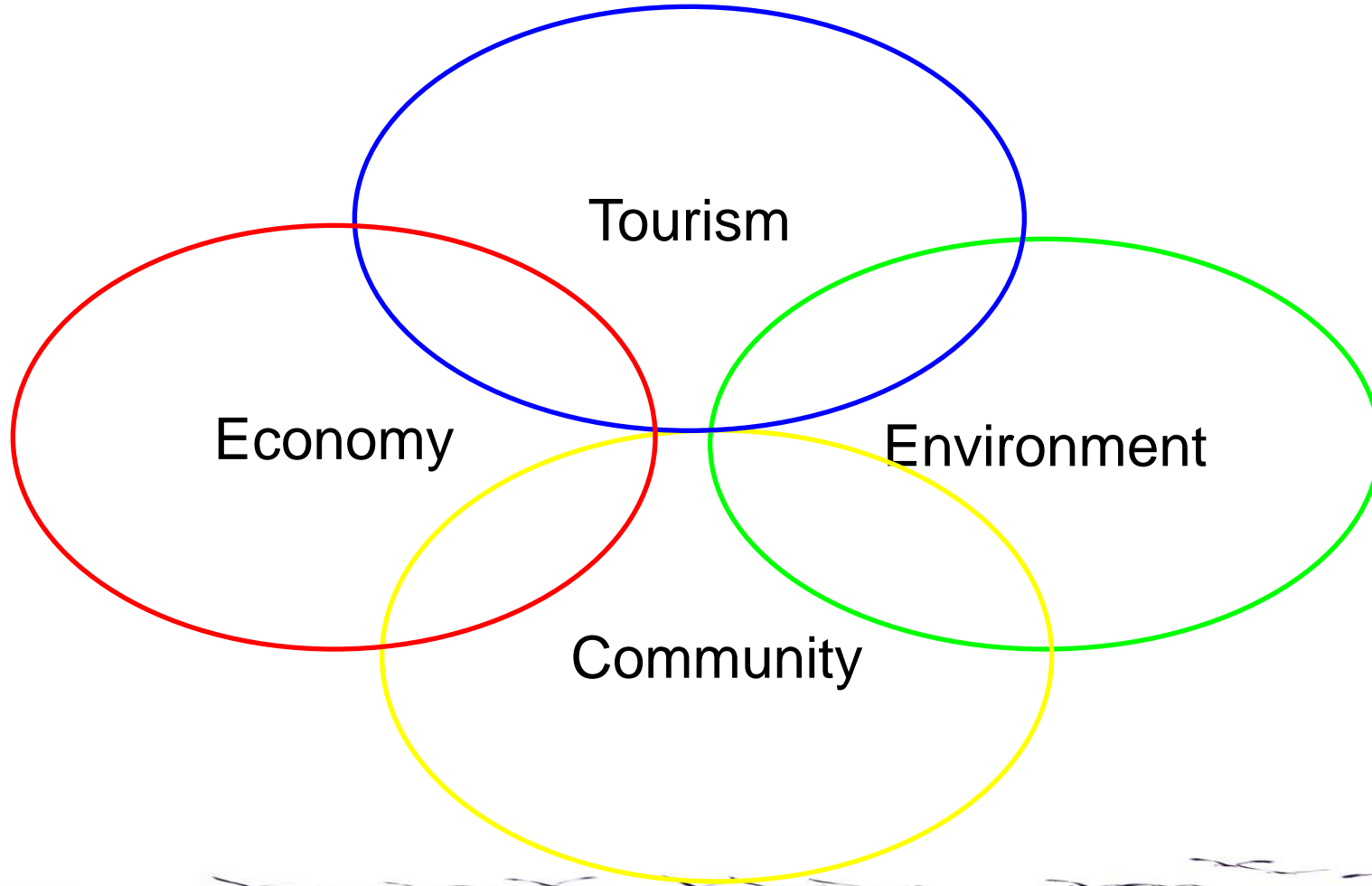
Ecotourism

- Ecotourism: the complexity of the definition
 - Natural setting
 - Contribution to conservation
 - Community development
 - Environmental education
 - ...
- New relationships between people and environment
- An instigator of change
 - Changes in tourism experience
 - Changes in livelihood methods
 - Changes in resource allocation and utilization
 - Changes in management regimes
 - ...





Ecotourism





Ecotourism and protected area

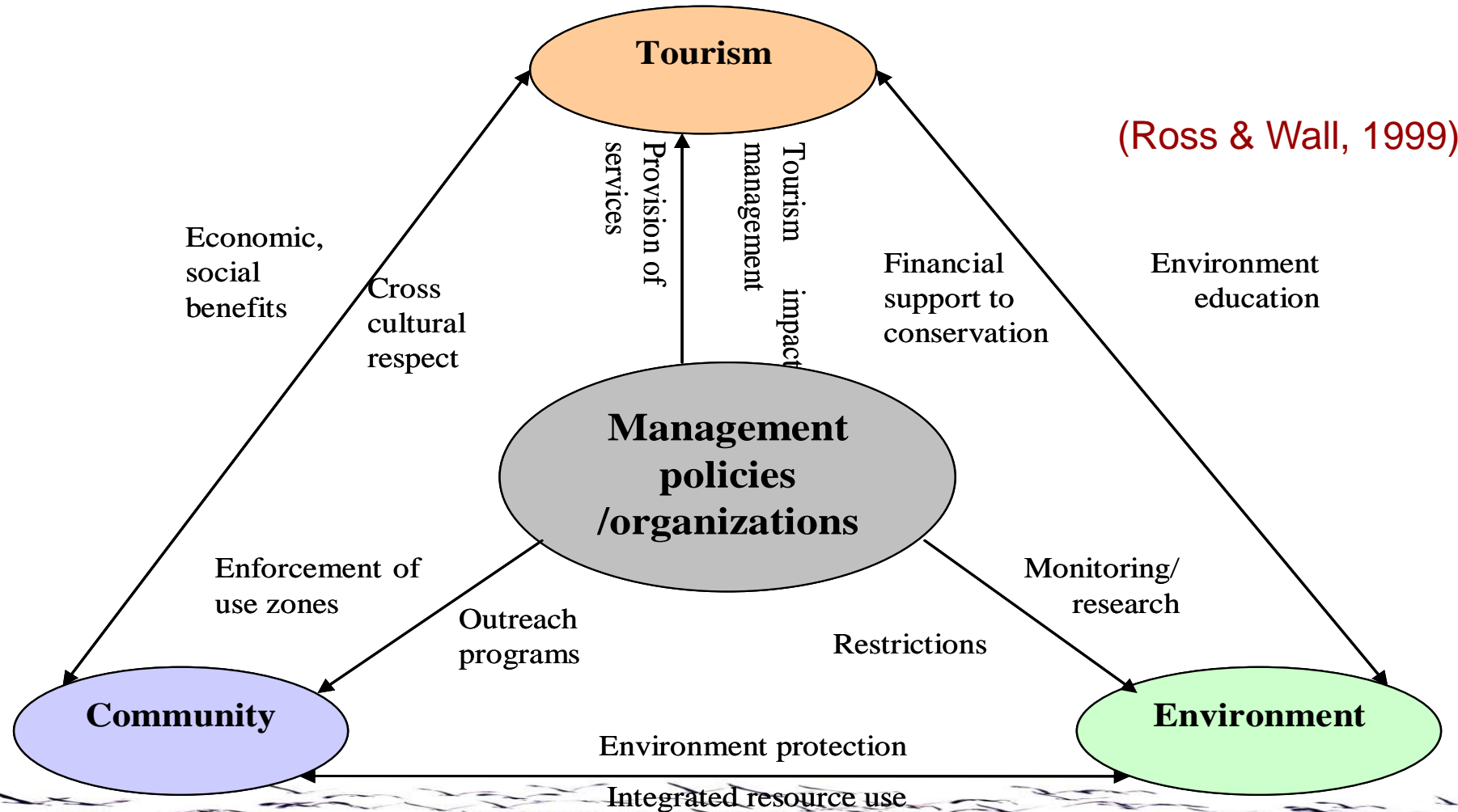


- Ecotourism can contribute to the sustainability of protected areas
 - Conservation and development
 - Wellbeing of local communities
 - Awareness of the value of environment and natural resources
- Ecotourism has been practiced in different forms in many countries, many at protected areas
- There is a call for ecotourism development in many nature reserves in China





Ecotourism assessment model





Parameters to assess ecotourism management



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Management Organizations | Core management agency and its character |
| | Land and resources ownership structure |
| | Key stakeholders |
| | Management structure |
| | Sources of income |
| Management Policies/plans | Policies/plans on environment/resource conservation |
| | Policies/plans on ecotourism development |
| | Policies/plans on community use of resources |
| | Policies/plans of community participation in resource conservation |
| | Policies/plans on community participation in ecotourism |
| Management operation | Resource use monitoring (zoning) |
| | Environment quality monitoring |
| | Environmental education program for community and/or tourists |
| | Tourism monitoring |
| | Tourism service provision |



Research Objectives



- Assess ecotourism of Xingkai Lake NR through examining the relationship between tourism, community and environment
 - Current tourism development
 - Management structure and key management issues
 - Community participation in ecotourism
- Identify areas for improvement

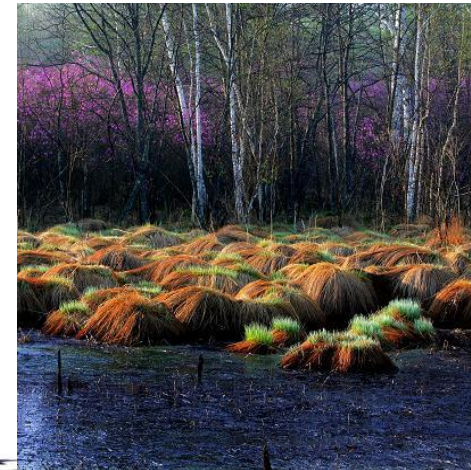
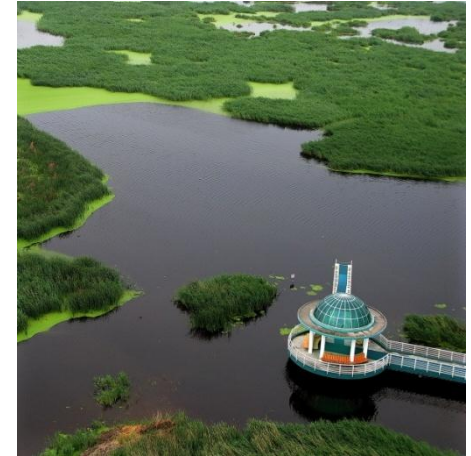




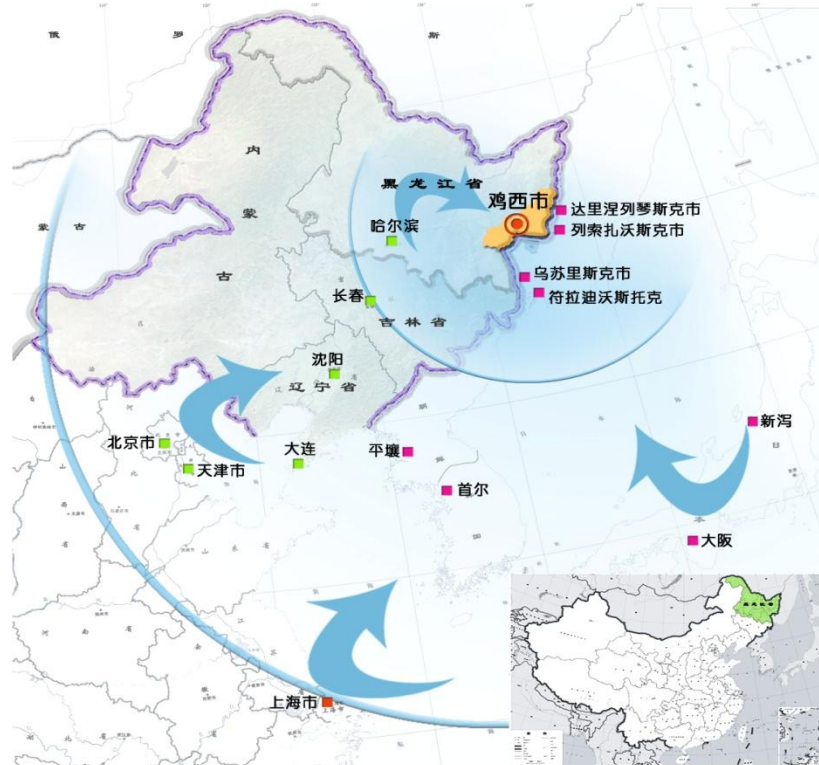
Research Methods



- Key informant interviews
 - Community members
 - Key officials at the provincial forestry department
 - Management officials of the NR
- Field observations from April 2010 to October 2010
- Review of related policies, regulations and development plans



区位分析图



鸡西市在中国东北及东北亚区域位置图

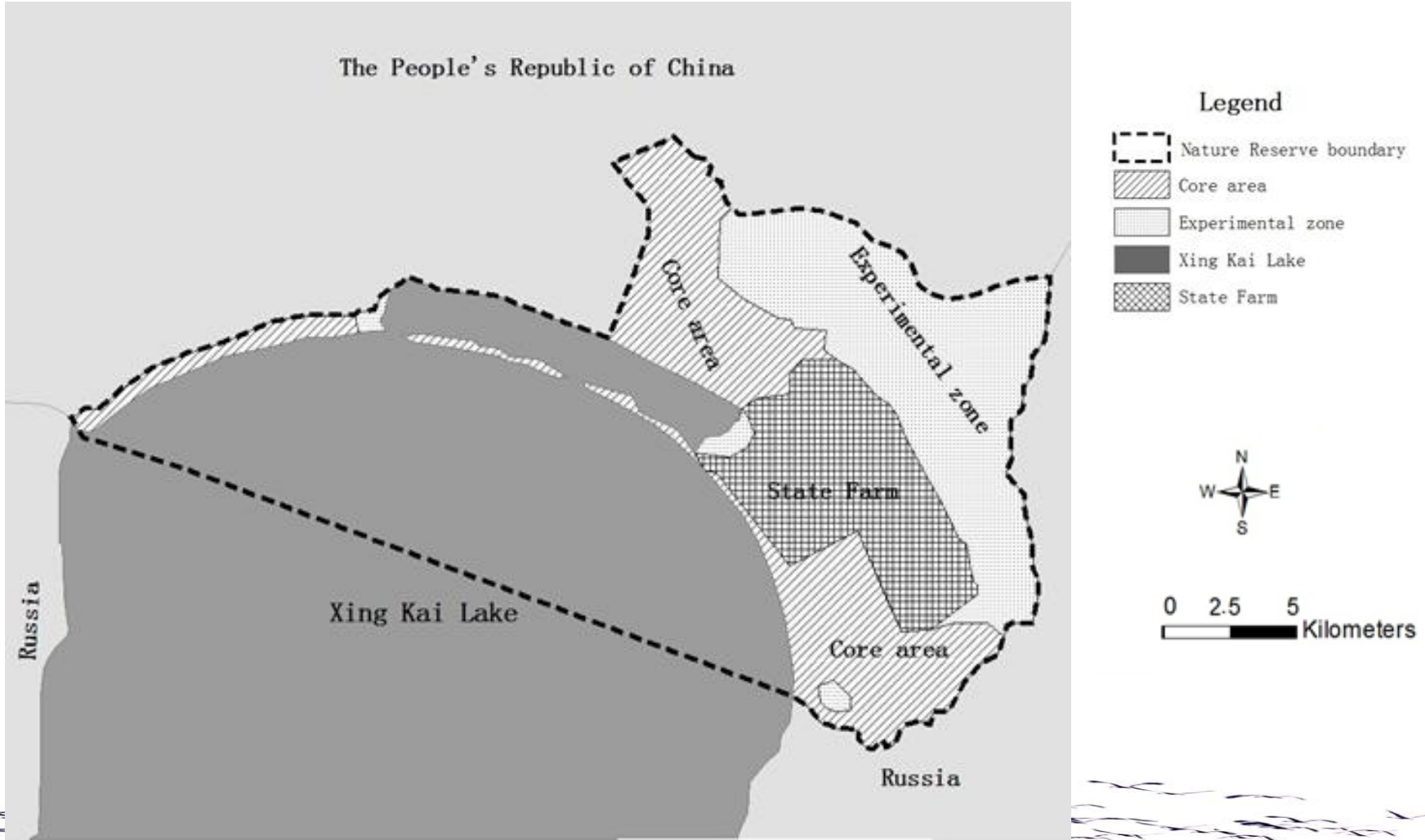


鸡西市在黑龙江省的位置

鸡西市行政区划图



Xingkai Lake National Nature Reserve

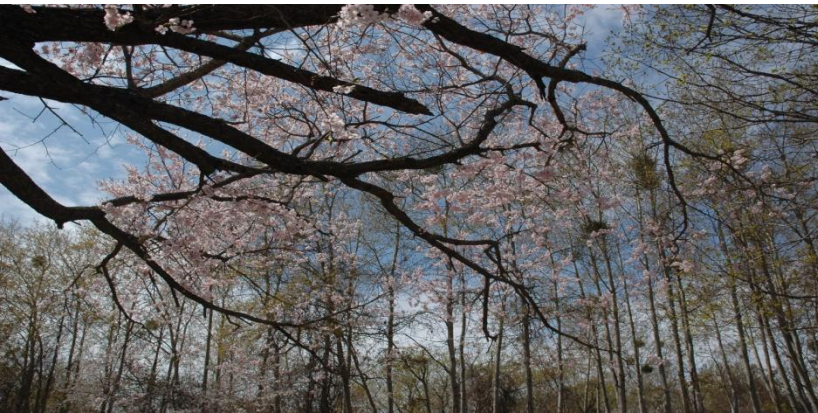




Xingkai Lake National Nature Reserve



- Year of importance
 - 1986, established
 - 1994, became a National Nature Reserve
 - 1997, join the North East Asian Crane Site Network.
 - 2002, designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance





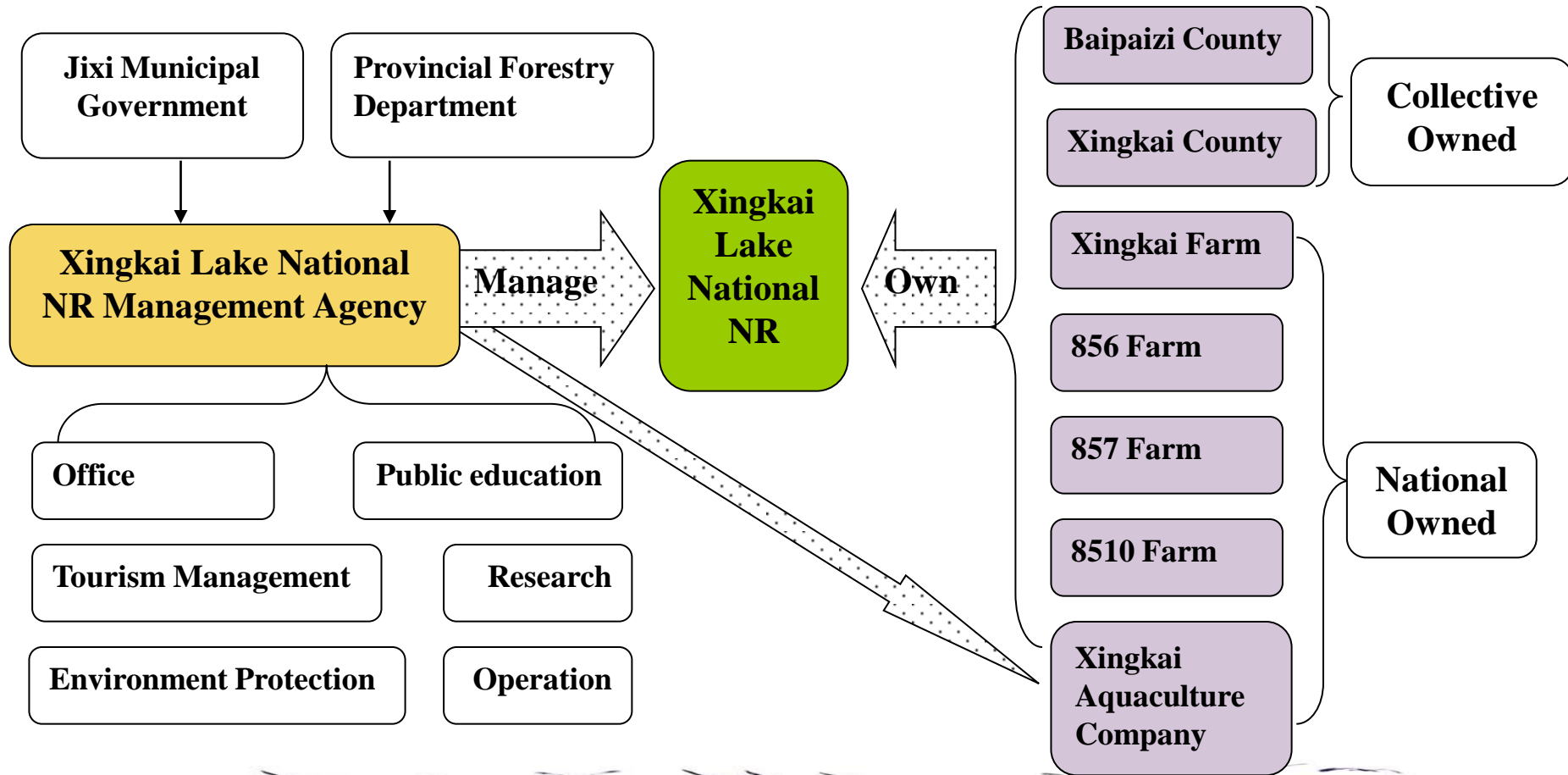
Current Tourism Development



- Tourism developed around Xingkai Lake NR in recent years
 - In 2009, the total number of visitors to all tourism spots in Xingkai Lake area reached 930,000
 - The total tourism income was RMB 2.3 billion.
 - Strong seasonality
 - Within province clientele
- Major attractions and activities
 - Beach and water activities at the Big Xingkai Lake
 - Wetland exploration at Small Xingkai Lake
 - Bird and flower watching
 - Xinkailiu historical site



The Management Structure





Major Management Issues

- Lack of funding for preservation
- Tensions between preservation and development
- Multi-management authorities
 - The provincial forestry department
 - The management agency
 - The local government
- Ambiguity in landownership
 - Land and water area within the NR owned by different parties
- Alternative livelihood methods for the local fishing community





The Local Fishing Community



- Xingkai Lake Aquaculture Company
 - Established in 1951
 - 522 employees
 - An annual catch of 1200 tons
 - Small Xingkai Lake as the major working area of the Company
 - Since 2003, under the administration of the management office of Xingkai Lake NR





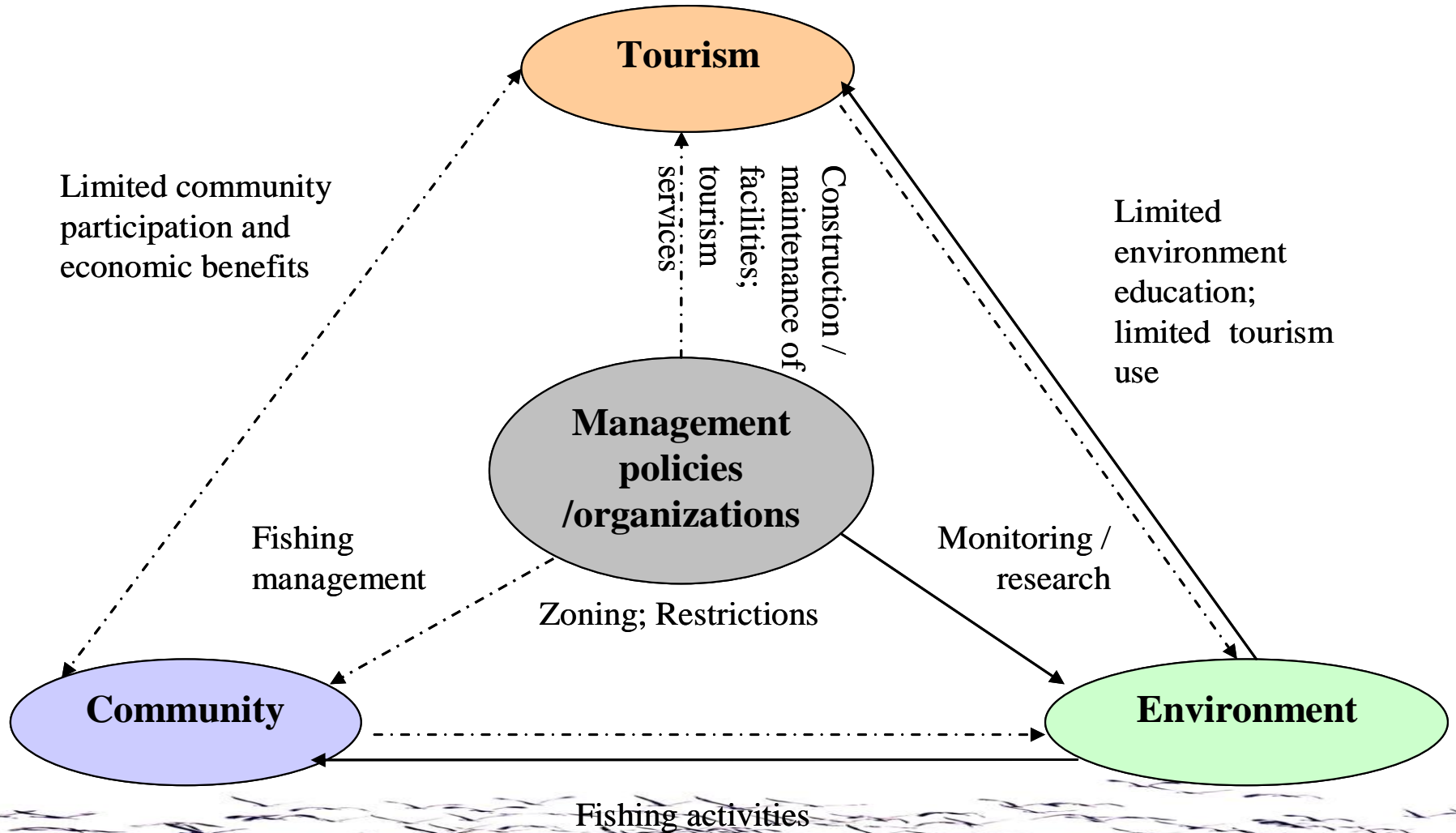
The Local Fishing Community



- Livelihood methods
 - Fishing as the primary livelihood methods
 - Small amount of agriculture and weaving activities
 - Support from national low-income supplements
- The depletion of fishing resource caused by over fishing
 - Income from fishing activities is not sufficient to sustain the livelihood of its employees.
- Attitude toward ecotourism and participation
 - Positive attitude toward ecotourism
 - Not know how to get involved
 - Hope the government or the management agency could help them to benefit from ecotourism



Ecotourism Assessment





Assessment of Ecotourism Management



| | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Management Organizations | Core management agency and its character | The Reserve Management Agency Government agency |
| | Land and resources ownership structure | Land and resource separately owned by seven parties (Figure 3) |
| | Key stakeholders | The Management Agency Provincial Forestry Department Municipal Governments Governments at County and Village level Xingkai Lake Aquaculture Company and its employees |
| | Management structure | As shown in Figure 3 |
| | Sources of income | Funding allocated from Jixi Municipal Government |



Assessment of Ecotourism Management



| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Management Policies/plans | Policies/plans on environment/resource conservation | <i>Management Regulations of the Reserve</i> <i>Working Policies of the Management Agency of the Reserve</i> <i>Plan for the Reserve (including zoning plan)</i> |
| | Policies/plans on community use of resource | <i>Fishing Regulations of the Reserve</i> |
| | Policies/plans on ecotourism development | No |
| | Policies/plans of community participation in resource conservation | No |
| | Policies/plans on community participation in ecotourism | No |



Assessment of Ecotourism Management



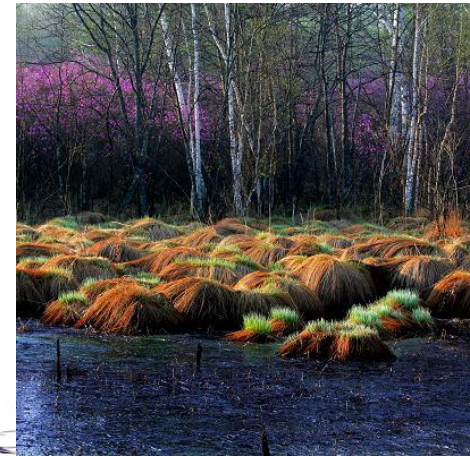
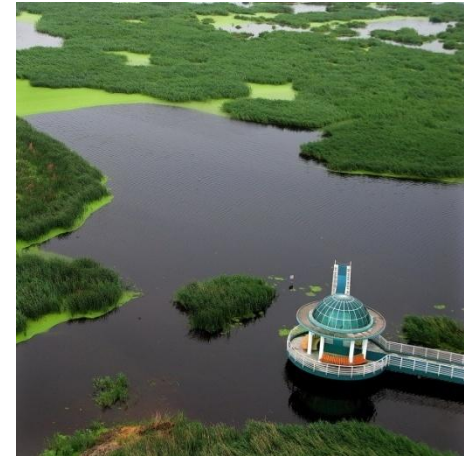
| | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Management operation | Resource use monitoring | Zoning plan is monitored regularly |
| | Environment quality monitoring | Regular monitoring and reporting |
| | Environmental education program for community and/or tourists | is constructed and operated as the tool for environmental education |
| | Tourism monitoring | Monitoring of tourist number for paid area, including museum and boating service |
| | Tourism service provision | Limited, including museum and boating services in small . Most catering and accommodation are provided outside the Reserve. |



Conclusion



- Xingkai Lake National NR has the potential to provide quality ecotourism experience
- The multi-stakeholder management style and the ambiguity of landownership within the NR provide structural difficulties for the management and operation of ecotourism
- The local fishing community urgently needs livelihood alternatives
- Current relationships between people, resources and tourism have yet to provide the mutual benefits necessary for successful ecotourism





Conclusion – Community



- Participation in ecotourism could provide an alternative livelihood opportunity for the local fishing community
- Positive attitude toward ecotourism and interests in participation are identified among community members
- The current community involvement is low mainly due to the lack of participation mechanism
- Management programs and government policies should be developed to facilitate community participation in ecotourism
 - Support necessary labors for ecotourism
 - Replace fishing activities as the major livelihood method for the local community
 - Develop positive synergetic relationship between tourism, environment, community



Thank You!

