

**The Politics and Ethics of Going Green in China:  
Pollution Control in Benxi City and Wetland Preservation in the  
Sanjiang Plain**

*Acronyms, Foreign Words, and Timetable*

**Acronyms**

ADB	Asian Development Bank
EPB	Environmental Protection Bureau
EPNRC	Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee
NPC	National People's Congress
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Agency
NWCAP	National Wetland Conservation Action Plan
OECD	Japan's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund
PLA	People's Liberation Army
RMB	<i>Renminbi</i> (Chinese currency)
SEPA	State Environmental Protection Administration
SEPC	Environmental Protection Commission of the State Council
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program

**Foreign Words**

<i>beidahuang</i>	Great Northern Wilderness
<i>huang</i>	wastelands
<i>huanjing qian</i>	green funds
<i>kai huang</i>	opening the wastelands
<i>ren tai duo</i>	too many people
<i>zhibian</i>	settle the border regions

**Timeline of Relevant Policies, Laws, and Regulations**

**Benxi**

1987 The Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law—China's first national air pollution law—is adopted. The law establishes the responsibilities of emitters and government agencies in dealing with air pollution and air quality.

- 1989 Benxi Seven-Year Environmental Pollution Control Program approved by the State Council. The Program aims to bring Benxi's air quality up to national standards in seven years.
- 1989 Benxi environmental hotline established.
- 1989 Benxi designated "National Heavily Polluted Recovery City." The state's supervision of air pollution control in Benxi allows local government to apply the pollution levy system more strictly. Benxi becomes a model pollution recovery city.
- 1994 Benxi Agenda 21 Administrative Center established to support a sustainable development strategy, according to the UN's Agenda 21 program on development and the environment.
- 1996 State Council establishes emission standards for the country. Industrial enterprises that do not meet the standards by the end of 2000 are to be shut down.
- 1997 Benxi is among the 16 cities or provinces chosen by the central government to pilot China's Agenda 21, which aims to promote sustainable development.
- 2000 Benxi Mining Bureau introduces a policy that entitles any worker diagnosed with silicosis – a lung disease caused by exposure to silica dust- to life-long welfare and free medical service.
- 2001 Benxi's tenth Five-Year Plan (2001-2005) includes programs for reduction of key industrial air pollutants, vehicular emissions and other sources of pollution.
- 2002 Beijing adopts a new Five-Year Plan for environmental protection in China and doubles the funds spent for pollution control during the previous five-year period.

### **Sanjiang Wetlands**

- 1992 China signs the [International Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#). Sanjiang and Honghe are listed as "Wetlands of International Importance" under the Convention.
- 1993 China joins the international [Convention on Biological Diversity](#).
- 1994 Sanjiang Nature Reserve established at the county level.
- 1995 National Wetland Coordinating Committee established to prepare a National Wetland Conservation Action Plan.
- 1998 In September, after severe flooding in several areas, including Sanjiang, the State Council develops a framework for ecological conservation that includes wetland restoration and protection.
- 1998 In December the Heilongjiang provincial government decides to stop the policy of developing the wetland area for agriculture. The government decrees that Sanjiang wetlands should be protected, and acknowledges the importance of wetlands for the prevention of floods.
- 1999 Heilongjiang Land Reclamation Bureau announces that no more farmland should be opened in Sanjiang. 180,000 hectares of farmland are to be restored to wetland in 3 years.
- 2000 Sanjiang named one of China's national-level nature reserves. The Reserve is to report directly to the central government.

2003 Heilongjiang passes the Wetland Protection Regulation and becomes the first Chinese province with local wetland legislation. This law defines 1) the responsibilities of various administrative units in protecting wetlands, 2) legal and illegal activities in the wetlands and measures of punishment for illegal activities and 3) the procedure of establishing a wetland reserve.