

Biodiversity impact analysis in northwest Yunnan, southwest China

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Abstract.

This paper reports the main findings of a study on the factors threatening biodiversity in northwest Yunnan, a global biodiversity 'hotspot' in China and home to over five million people. The research was based on eight site-level case studies. The main driving forces of biodiversity loss are livelihood activities, including agricultural production, livestock grazing and the collection of fuel wood, construction timber and NTFPs. Behind these specific drivers are underlying factors including changes in demography, market conditions, resource tenure policies and development policies and projects. Some change in land cover has been due to specific trigger events, the most significant of which reflect national policy changes. At the site level, a range of biophysical and socio-cultural factors influence the specific outcomes that any particular factor may have. The paper suggests some specific redressive measures and general implications for research and policy.

Key words: Biodiversity impact assessment, China, Land cover change, Livelihoods, Policy impacts