

More People and More
and Land Use Change in

Part TWO

The People and Their Forests

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Abstract

Land use changes in the Xichang region have been driven by the increasing secondary and historic pasture and natural forests. This study reveals two periods of rapid forest degradation: from the 1950s to the 1970s and the Great Leap Forward, and the shift in the land use system. Significant steps have been taken since these times to improve the forest resources, and the state forest park has expanded significantly as a result of two periods of aerial seeding of pine and the mobilization and involvement of local farmers. There is no correlation between forest degradation and population growth. Forest expansion in recent years has come at the expense of farm land. Gender opportunities for off-farm employment resulting from more open policies, and reducing the population pressure on the mountains in the watershed. The strong substitution of conservation policies, and subsequent marginalization of the forest by village leaders, is defined as the reason for the improvement in forest resources.

Introduction

Xichang was an important city more than a thousand years ago. It was situated on the Silk Road, a major trading access route to South Asia. Because of the local employment has been a problem throughout history because of the high population density and the low productivity of agriculture. In the 1950s, the reforestation began in the Wuyang Mountains, which are situated to the west of the Ningjing (Sichuan) Plateau. The local government has made great effort to improve the forest resources in the region, and natural resources, though, it remains a problem.

Methodology

The study was carried out in 2007 and 2008. The research was carried out in the Xichang region. It is a rough topographical region with a high mountain range. Interviews with farmers and local officials were carried out in the region. The data were analyzed using the method of field surveys and forest patterns. Over the past 50 years, the forest resources have improved through interventions and policy analysis.

