

Discover Jilin — Home to the Changbai Mountains and Songhua River

Jilin: Restoring the Songhua River Basin

City plans to treat and prevent water pollution

By HAO NAN
haonan@chinadaily.com.cn

The Jilin city government is gearing up reclamation of the Songhua River Basin, a new highlight in its environmental protection efforts.

Work on sampling, monitoring and testing of the area's ecosystem has started, and more wastewater treatment and control facilities will be built, said local officials.

"Treatment and prevention of water pollution in some

important basins as well as protection of drinking water sources are future priorities in local government's work," said Wang Rulin, Party chief of Jilin province. "The aim is to improve the health and living conditions of millions of residents."

He also noted the provincial government is converting its environmental advantages into a competitive edge and moving forward along the path of "green and sustainable development."

Jilin city has led the province in energy conservation and emission reductions over the past two years.

Last year, some 51 projects were finished at a total cost surpassing 10 billion yuan (\$1.63 billion).

Most of the projects are clustered in four parts of the city, including the old industrial community of Hadawan, a new downtown in the southern area, a northern high-tech zone and a chemical industry park.

In addition, some 14 small towns with industries ranging from culture, folk customs and sightseeing will also be established based on their resources and geography.

With government financial aid, renewable energy such as solar and wind power, as well as biogas, will be promoted in these new towns.

And more policies will also be formulated to support the development of modern services like logistics and tourism.

Developing strategic emerging industries is an important way the city can build an energy-saving society, local officials said.

Its research into carbon fiber products is now at the forefront of the country. The city has the only high-tech zone in the field approved by the Ministry of



Workers tend a flowerbed in Jilin city. Environmental protection is a priority of local government work.

LIU BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Treatment and prevention of water pollution in some important basins as well as protection of drinking water sources are future priorities in local government's work."

WANG RULIN, PARTY CHIEF OF JILIN PROVINCE

The government will also focus on protecting (fertile) black soil and wetlands, treating soil erosion, setting up a new economic mode, improving the eco-civilization system and increasing social awareness."

BAYINCHAOLU, JILIN GOVERNOR



LIU CHUNYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Doves on the grassland at a local park.

Science and Technology, which provides high-quality materials for China's aerospace industry as well as vehicle and cable manufacturing.

Other emerging sectors including biomedicine, advanced manufacturing and the creative industry will also be boosted in the coming years.

Governor Bayinchaolu said Jilin continues to forge ahead in building "a beautiful province with blue skies and fresh air."

"The government will also focus on protecting (fertile) black soil and wetlands, treating soil erosion, setting up a new economic mode, improving the eco-civilization system and increasing social awareness," he added.



Jilin residents admire tulips at a local park.

LIU BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

River of life for bird lover Ren Jianguo

By LI FUSHENG
lifusheng@chinadaily.com.cn

As Ren Jianguo awakens every day, the Songhua River that runs through his home city of Jilin is still covered in early morning mist. Several mallards briskly paddle around the nearby cove.

Coming out of his cottage on Changbai Islet, the 54-year-old takes bird food from his bag — a mixture of corn, millet and wheat — and scatters it on the bank. He then affectionately watches as the ducks and other wild birds gather around to have a hearty breakfast.

A bird lover for almost two decades, Ren said the deep bond did not have a happy start.

Once an ironworker in Jilin, Ren lost his job in 1996. He then rented a pleasure boat to transport visitors to and from the Changbai Islet. About 200 meters from the riverbank, the small island covered with luxuriant plants is an ideal place to observe wild birds.

One day, Ren saw two young men chasing an injured wild duck. He ran after them in an attempt to stop them,

but it was too late — they had caught it and wrung its neck.

"It was so cruel and I thought I should do something," Ren said.

Since then, he has become the guardian of birds there, stopping people from hurting them or stealing their eggs.

It was no easy task, especially in the early days. Ren said some people broke the windows of his cottage at night while others even threatened in daylight to beat him up.

Even his wife began to complain, as the breadwinner took home less and less money as he spent more time taking care of birds.

Ren said it was the birds that decided him. "They remember you if you love them and treat them well."

He said he once took care of seven newly hatched magpies until they became fully fledged.

"I met them one day when I passed a bridge. When I whistled, they flew to me and landed on my shoulders and head," Ren recalled with a smile on his face.

Now he cares for around 100 sick or wounded birds every year. Among his current



Ren Jianguo feeding his friends — wild ducks on Changbai Islet.

HAN TAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

20
varieties

of wild ducks spend winter on Changbai Islet

patients are two eagles, one adult and another a fledgling.

Under his care, they are recovering rapidly. He said he is planning to release them in one or two days.

"Eagles have beautiful, sharp eyes," he said. "Too much captivity will ruin birds of prey," he noted, with a tinge of regret in his voice.

Ren admitted that days in his powerless cottage are sometimes boring. But he said it is comforting to see that people have changed their attitudes toward birds.

"They now come to observe



The Songhua River runs through Ren's home city.

LIU BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

birds and nobody hurts them anymore."

Many have joined his ranks. Ren said local people often send food for birds and some college students offer him help from time to time.

Due to their efforts, Ren

said the islet has become home to more and more migratory birds.

"Some 8,000 birds spend their winter here each year. And the varieties of wild ducks alone can reach as many as 20."

Tackling pollution at the right source

By ZHANG ZHAO
zhangzhao@chinadaily.com.cn

On a winter day along the banks of the Songhua River in Jilin city, the temperature can drop as low as -20 C, but it is still a paradise for wild ducks.

Local grassroots conservationist Ren Jianguo said that he has witnessed increasing numbers and species of wild ducks to come to Jilin in recent years due to government effort to improve the local ecological system.

According to a water pollution control blueprint for the Songhua River over the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-15), the city plans 10 major projects this year to reduce urban sewage and industrial pollution treatment, and all have started construction.

Another 10 projects for the next year are under preparation.

Ecological protection of the Songhua Lake region has attracted 100 million yuan (\$16.23 million) in investment, more than 82 million yuan of it planned for a wetland restoration project.

This year the city's environmental protection bureau began much more monitoring and management programs targeting 25 local heavy polluters that produced 2.5 million tons of solid waste in the first half of the year.

But now more than 2.1 mil-

lion tons have been reused as resources.

The government is promoting new building materials made of fine coal dust and slag — before just refuse and pollutants — to replace traditional clay bricks. Manufacturers of such materials can enjoy preferential tax policies.

To reduce source discharges and increase efficiency, the government now has a project to integrate different heating networks.

First Auto Works' operation in the city, Xinglong Heating Co and the new Snow Breweries plant have completed integration of their heat pipe networks. The project is expected to help reduce 39,000 tons of solid waste a year.

At the same time, the government has also initiated a series of campaigns to improve the environment in the countryside by focusing on protection of drinking water sources, treatment of residential solid waste and control of pollution from livestock.

Nearly 100 villages in 33 townships in the city are involved in the campaign this year.

Local authorities have poured 53.2 million yuan into building 95 garbage sorting centers, 25 compost sites and 34 warning signs while purchasing more than 500 garbage trucks and adding nearly 4,600 new garbage receptacles.