



HUALAPAI GOVERNMENTAL NEWS

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Across the Ocean and Through the Mountains to Grand Canyon Enshi We Go!

by April Tinhorn, TINHORN CONSULTING 07.12.14

The past three days of international travel to get to Grand Canyon Enshi played over in my head like an old black and white movie. 14.5 hours of flight time to Guangzhou, China, from Los Angeles, CA. Three hours on the plane to Enshi. Another three hours on the road meandering through the Hubei countryside of lakes, rivers, and mountains. As we bounced side to side on the sharp switchback-like twists and turns, I was reminded of the bumpy dirt road of Buck and Doe out to Grand Canyon West. Lush greenery, severe mountains, and a distant river framed the rapidly approaching Grand Canyon Enshi Visitor Center. At last, we were here.





Discovered in 2004, most of the canyon's development began six years ago as they have a welcome center, aerial tram, and a mountain lodge supported by a working infrastructure of paved roads, electricity, and running water. An amphitheater, multi-story employee dorms, and a helipad airport are in-progress. Most of their tourists come from Asia with the majority coming from South Korea.

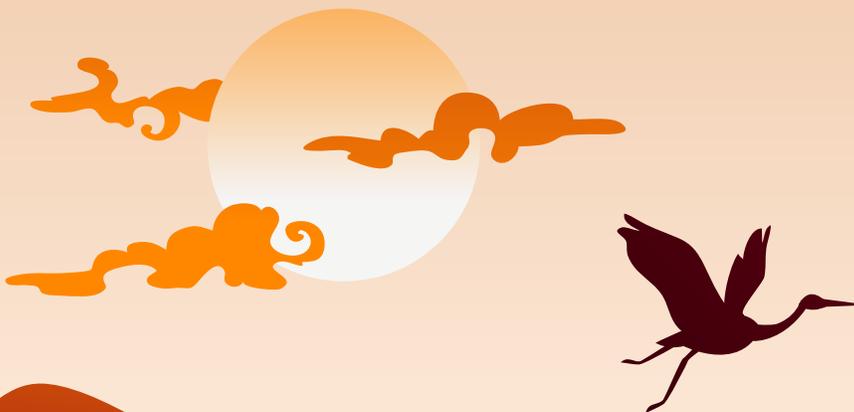




Grand Canyon Eshi is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise as there are ample opportunities to hike both the geofracture canyon and mountains, breathe the clean mountainous air, and enjoy the twin waterfalls, river, and cavern. The starting point is the Visitor Center, where one can go up the mountain via the air tram or go down the geofracture to the river. We chose the geofracture and began our journey by walking down 365 stone steps to see the two waterfalls and crystal clear river. As we passed the first waterfall, I thought of our Travertine Fall. I wondered what the waterfall meant to the Tujai? Just like at Grand Canyon West, we found a bride and a groom in the middle of taking wedding pictures at the bottom of the canyon.

We hiked out of the canyon and got on the air tram up the mountain where we would spend the night at their lodge. Little did we know that we would spend the next three hours hiking up and around the mountain to get to the lodge. After a good night's rest, we were told we would be hiking a different trail out of the mountains. We stopped at a lone pine tree hanging off the side of the sheer mountain wall. We were told it was the "Guest Greeting Pine" and found it ironic that a part of us, People of the Tall Pines, was already a part of their canyon. Loretta prayed and gave a tobacco offering. It was fitting that we hiked in cleansing rain past the mountains shaped like incense candles. The Tujai love to sing and during a particular strenuous part of the hike one of our hosts belted out a traditional call-and-answer song. Tujai, Chinese, and Hualapai came together naturally and sang the answering part. Before we knew it, our stone path was replaced by an outdoor escalator that took us partially down the mountainside to the vendors at the base of the mountain. Like the vendors at Guano Point, the Chinese vendors sold their cultural jewelry, souvenirs, and food.

Over lunch, I reflected on the past two days experiencing Grand Canyon Enshi. Although our canyons are on opposite sides of the globe, there are many similarities. Namely, both canyons are breathtaking eco-tourist attractions with unique cultures to share. It makes business sense to explore the marketing possibilities, but only time will tell.





Background

The Chinese officials have a great interest in cross promoting their Enshi Grand Canyon with Grand Canyon West for the expansion of global tourism markets. They invited a number of Hualapai delegates to visit their Enshi Grand Canyon in central China for this purpose. The invitation was discussed and accepted to explore this direct Chinese connection that could ultimately bring in more revenues to benefit the Hualapai Tribe. This trip required Hualapai representatives who could speak about tribal business and government, and share Hualapai cultural songs and dance. Valid passports and visas to China were needed immediately which didn't allow any time for a broader selection process. The selection consisted of GCRC Board Chairwoman: Camille Nighthorse, GCRC Board Vice-Chair: Carrie Imus, a former Tribal Chairwoman: Louise Benson, Cultural Resources Director: Loretta Jackson-Kelly, Media Liaison: April Tinhorn, Ambassador/Hualapai Singer: Todd Tapija, and Miss Teen Hualapai: Sonwai Bender-Jackson. This trip took place from June 8-19, 2014.

Next Steps

The Hualapai Tribal Council was given the trip update on June 30th. An invitation has been extended for the arrival of their Chinese delegates to visit Grand Canyon West and Peach Springs in September. The Peach Springs community will be invited to meet with them and share more Hualapai songs and dances.

For more information, please contact GCRC Board Chair - Camille Nighthorse at Camille.Nighthorse@GrandCanyonResort.com

For more photos and videos on the trip, please visit TINHORN CONSULTING's YouTube channel and Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/TinhornConsulting>.