

The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal (Suzhou Section): Ecological and Cultural Values and Their Conservation

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Abstract

As an outstanding water project in the history of China, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal has had lasting impact on the urban development and environment of the regions along the waterway. For these regions, it is absolutely important to pay attention to the history and culture, ecological environment, and conservation of the Canal in their future urban and rural development, as well as their efforts to conserve the cultural heritage. This paper goes through the historical evolution of the Suzhou section of the Grand Canal, analyses its cultural context, evaluates its current situation of conservation construction and attempts to reflect on the historical value of the Suzhou section of the Grand Canal from the perspectives of economy, culture, ecology, and sustainable development. We believe that the Suzhou section of the Grand Canal still faces severe challenges on water environment management in riparian landscape construction and heritage protection. It is urgent to find out how to conserve the Grand Canal to make it more sustainable in the long-run at a variety of aspects, including culture, economy, and environment. We think that all relevant parties should come together for a comprehensive plan to conserve the cultural heritage and to protect the natural environment of the Canal, and that the development of cultural industry should go hand by hand with the restoration and protection of a healthy ecosystem of the Grand Canal. Our goal is to establish a green low-carbon sustainable culture-tourism industry of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal eco-economic zone.

Key Words

The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, Ecological management, Cultural heritage, Conservation planning