

Exploring the Human Ecology Practical Area (HEPA) a practical model for living in harmony with nature in Northern Central Vietnam

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On behalf of Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI)
Human Ecology Practical Area (HEPA)

Outline

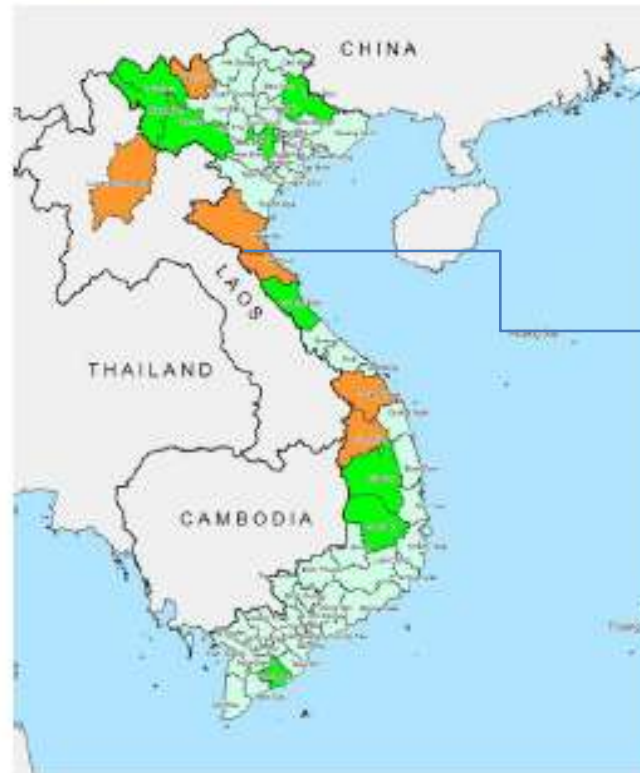
- Introduction to SPERI/HEPA, HEPA Farmers Field School (FFS)
- Focus areas
 - HEPA site
 - HEPA FFS ecological farming training program
 - Forest regeneration/conservation efforts
 - Biodiversity conservation activities (initial)

Introduction to SPERI

- Social Policy Ecology Research Institute
 - Mission: study/research and take actions with **disadvantaged EM communities** to **stimulate traditional belief towards nature**, enriching ethical principles in nurturing human/nature relationships
- Covers 5 key themes, 12 project sites in 3 countries in the Mekong region
- A member of IPSI since 2011

Map of project sites

Project locations

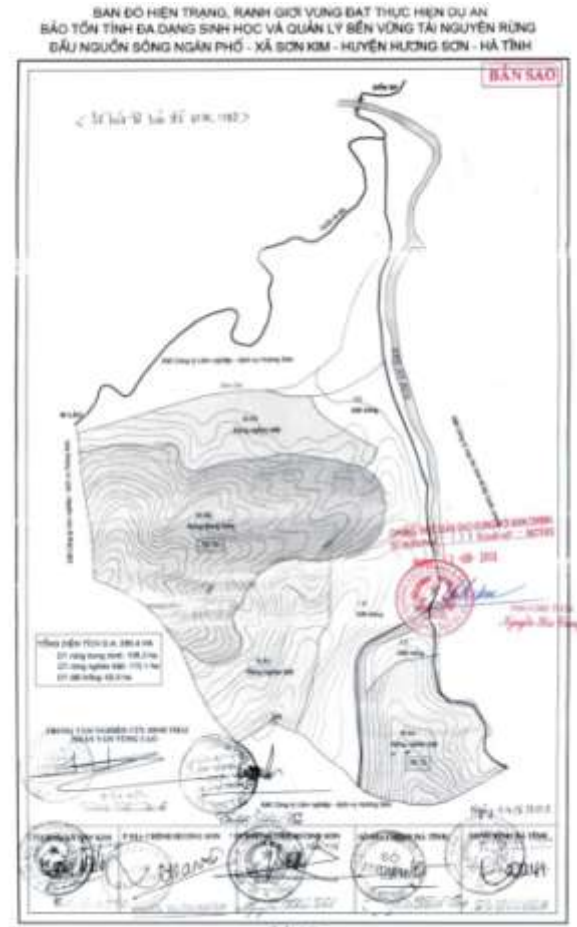


HEPA site

-  Current MECO-ECOTRA projects
-  Implemented MECO-ECOTRA projects

Introduction to HEPA

- HEPA: in full term -
**Human Ecology
Practical Area**
- Located in the border (13km) between Vietnam and Lao PDR in the remote northern central
- Born 2002: 285.4 ha;
- Now 2014: > 400 ha;



Why birth of HEPA

- Extremely **heavy deforestation/illegal logging/wildlife hunting** occurred over the borders that causing **landslides**, great losses
 - => SPERI and local people, local government initiated a forest conservation movement to tackle issues
- HEPA established as a conservation site 2002 and integrated a FFS ecological training program in 2006 for education

Introduction to HEPA-FFS

- Farmers Field School (FFS): an important Functional Program within HEPA
- FFS training program **started 2006**
- FFS training dedicated to
 - ecological farming practices,
 - local knowledge to nature, traditional wisdom,
 - indigenous forest species conservation;

Introduction to HEPA-FFS

Teaching framework
combine traditional
wisdom and
Permaculture knowledge
for our **own-philosophy**:

1. **Local knowledge**
2. **Belief and ethics towards Nature**
3. **Pattern and principles of Nature-based design farming landscapes**

Student A	Student B
Making herbal and medicinal tea	same
Environmental awareness and consumption: processing detergent and body soap from natural materials	same
Processing of different local food products from Huong Son (fermented eggplant, jackfruit, taro)	Advanced diversity farm management (vegetable garden, ecological animal raising, design, planning, maintaining and developing eco-farm)
Techniques for harvesting and processing bamboo shoots according to Khmu local knowledge	Managing ecological animal systems (buffalo, chickens, pigs, geese)
Basic tailoring	Sowing methods according to local knowledge of Australian farmers
Natural dyeing	Designing energy-saving stoves
Technique for cotton cultivation	Technology for making and applying Biochar
Knitting techniques	Field training in forest volume measurement
Traditional weaving and dyeing	Water management and contour design on the farm (by swales, ditches, terrace fields, etc.)
Advanced tailoring	Seed saving methods
	Technique for making liquid fertilizer with micro-organisms
	English language (intermediate)

Introduction to HEPA-FFS



- Up now, facilitate the opportunities for 70 disadvantaged ethnic minority students from local communities in Vietnam, Lao PDR, Thailand
- Indigenous elders, farmers, applied scientists, volunteers are key teaching resources;
- Hands-on learning; farms-based, 2-4 years length;

Introduction to HEPA-FFS

HEPA-FFS courses and number of students

Long-courses

- Course (2006-2008) on eco-farming foundation: 29 students
- Course (2007-2009) on eco-farming foundation: 14 students
- Course K Lao1 (2010-2011) on eco-farming foundation: 7 students
- Course K Lao 2 (2012-2013) on eco-farming foundation: 7 students
- Course (2011-2012) on advanced eco-farming: 5 students
- Course (2012-2013) on advanced eco-farming: 7 students

Short-courses

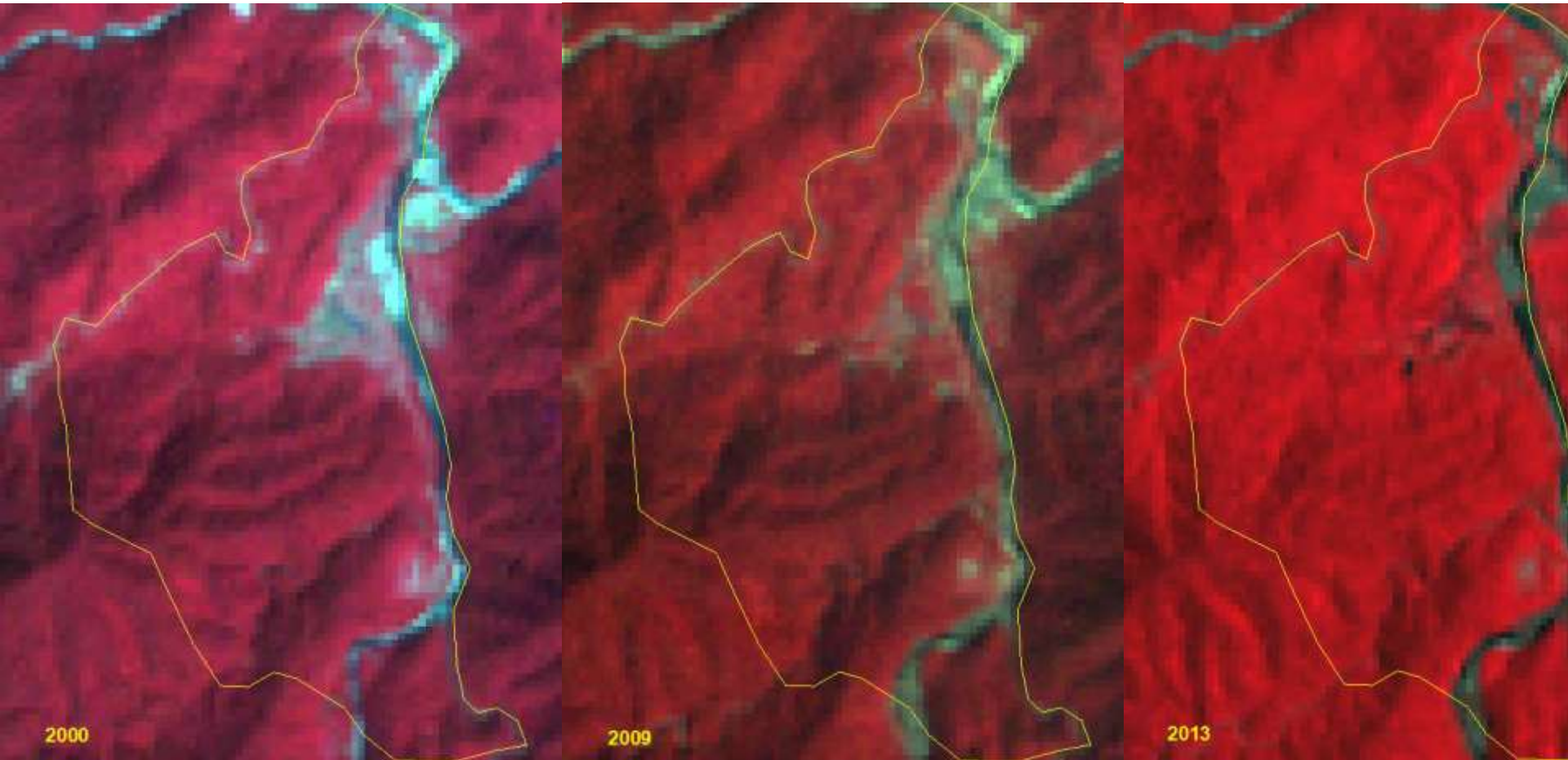
- Permaculture in 2007: 50 people (including farmers and students)
- Re-fresh course on permaculture in 2009 and 2010: 30

Forest conservation activities

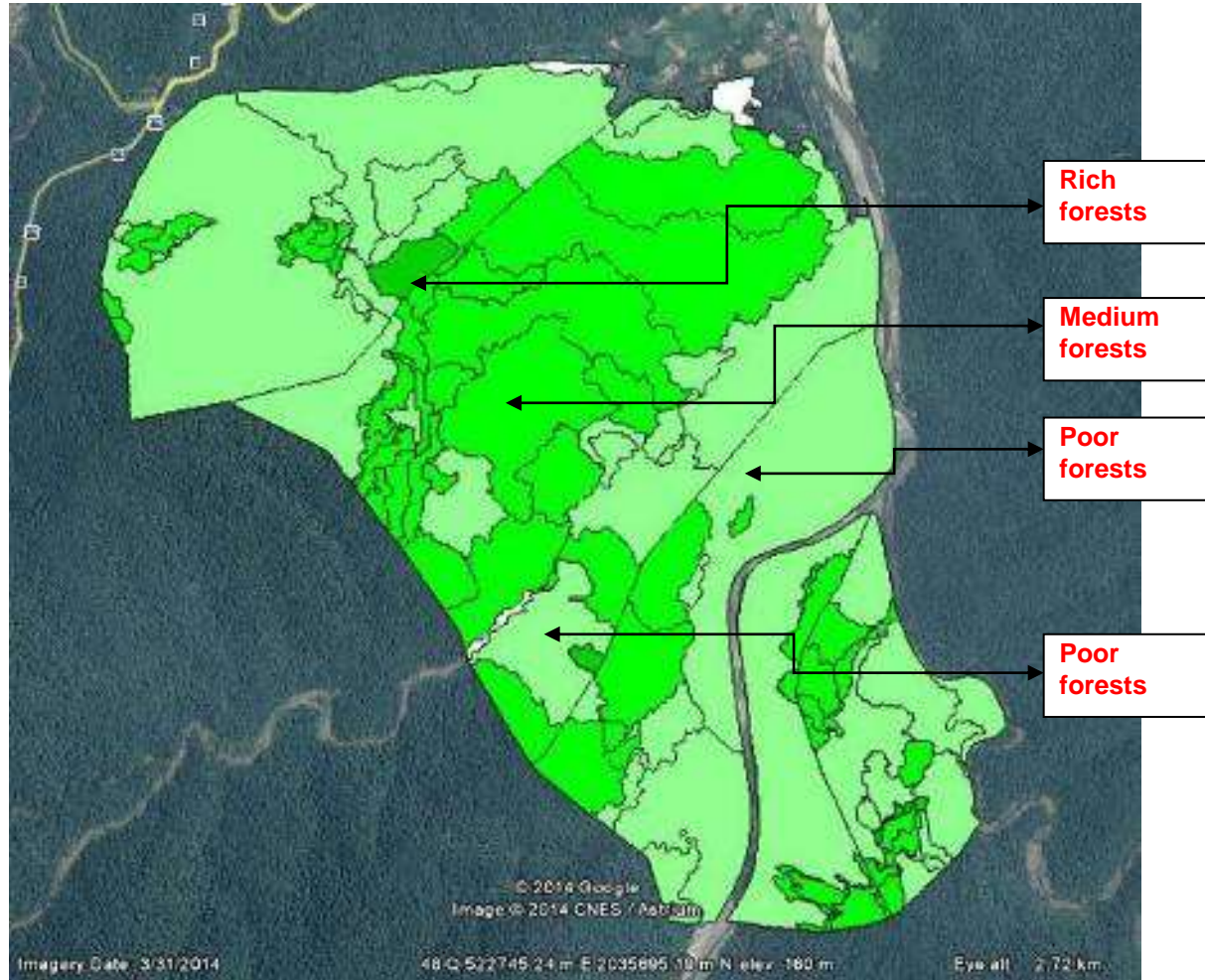
- Forest patrolling activities as part of the learning:
 - 2 times/a week; > 50 times/a year;
 - About 120 people joined/a year;
 - Learn ritual ceremonies to worship Forest Spirits and use this as to promote conservation “cutting the forests would affect the Spirits i.e. causing sickness or deaths”
 - Cooperation with local communities, local government, and Border Army

Forest conservation activities

- Key findings (data from January 2010 to now)
 - Found > 500 traps;
 - Found 6 illegal loggers into HEPA forests;
 - Report to Border Army of 4 cases bringing guns into HEPA for illegal hunting;
- Since 2000, forest quality improved (see NDVI)
- Results from 2012 forests resources assessment)



Forest conservation activities



Biodiversity activities

- Tree nursery of local species:
 - Early stage of development
 - To be better developed for 2015
- Documentation of high-valued local forest timber/forest fruit species:
 - Early stage of development and data gathering
 - To be further consolidation for 2015
- Photos of birds: ongoing.





Thanks very much for your attention and we are very much willing to learn from any inputs.