

Jiuzhai Valley and Northern Sichuan Tourism, Official Re-Opening

Although Jiuzhai Valley or Huanglong National Parks in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of northern Sichuan did not experience any significant damage as a result of the May 12th earthquake, the national government restricted access to organised tourism to most of the northern Sichuan region. During this time Jiuzhai Valley and Huanglong National Parks continued to welcome tourists that travelled independently.

On August 6th 2008, the Sichuan Provincial Tourism Bureau along with the Aba Prefecture government and the Jiuzhai Valley Administration officially re-opened the region to all tourists and travel agencies during a celebration of Tibetan and Qiang cultural performances at Jiuzhai Valley National Park.

According to a Xinhua (national news agency) report 568 of more than 4,000 tourist attractions in Sichuan Province were damaged by the earthquake, with economic losses totalling 27.84 billion Yuan (about 4 billion US dollars). Although Jiuzhai Valley and Huanglong National Parks were not included in this number, the parks themselves and especially the local people suffered dramatic economic losses through a lack of tourists.

Many thousands of people throughout the Aba and northern Sichuan region make the vast majority of their annual income between May and November from tourism related activities. 2008 tourist numbers have been down by a staggering 90%+ between May and August 10th on the same period in 2007.

Both of the UNESCO accredited National Parks used the downtime to improve products and services offered in the region to make the tourist's experience even more enjoyable. The lack of visitors now puts the present tourists in an enviable position. It is not likely that one will be able to visit these areas in the middle of the peak season ever again and have to share it with so few others.

For further and updates on tourism in the region see www.jiuzhai.com.

Jiuzhaigou Administrative Bureau.