



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on January 11, 2024

Chinese Billionaire Lands on List of Top 100 U.S. Landowners

A Chinese communist billionaire who admires [mass-murderer Mao Zedong](#) has joined the Top 100 landowners in the United States.

Of course, Tianqiao Chen didn't buy almost 200,000 acres of pristine America in his own name, or that of the Chinese Communist Party of which he is a dutiful member. Rather, he acquired it in the name of his investment company.

The news raises the obvious concern that an enemy of the United States is vacuuming large tracts of American land, for who knows what purpose. That concern inspired the Senate to pass a bill in July that curtailed such purchases.



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BREAKING NEWS. Shanda Interactive founder Tienqiao Chen joins the Land Report 100 sponsored by Peoples Company with 198,000 acres of Oregon timberland. [@landreport](#) [@PeoplesCompany](#) <https://t.co/39N3DccljQ>

— Eric O'Keefe (@TheEricOKeefe) [January 8, 2024](#)

Chen the Land Baron

The Land Report put Chen at No. 82 on the list of Top 100 landowners just days ago, and explained that the Chinese Red “has been staring us straight in the face for almost a decade.”

But apparently he's been hiding in plain sight.

Using a front company called Whitefish Cascade Forest Resources, he bought almost 200,000 acres of timberland in Oregon for \$84 million, or \$430 an acre. But alas, the real owner is Chen's Shanda Asset Management LLC, the magazine reported, citing Oregon tax records.

“The Shanda name has long been associated with Chen,” [Land Report continued](#):

In 1999, the Shanghai native founded Shanda Interactive Entertainment, a pioneer in China's online gaming business. In 2004, Chen took Shanda Interactive public on the Nasdaq. Thanks to the successful IPO of SNDA, Shanda Interactive became the largest video game company in the world's second-largest online market (after the US). According to the Shanda Group website, the company has had three subsidiaries listed on the Nasdaq and a fourth on the Kosdaq. In 2012, Chen took SNDA private. He also relocated his corporate headquarters from China to Singapore and established Shanda World as his primary vehicle for investments, including real estate.



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But Chen owns more than the massive 312.5-mile tract in Oregon.

Shanda — meaning Chen — also owns [Bull Springs Skyline Forest](#), a 33,000-acre tract of Ponderosa Pine the company has listed for \$95 million, or \$2,800 an acre. “A successful sale at anywhere near the current price of the 51-square-mile listing would recoup Chen’s entire expenditure for all 300 square miles of the Crown Pacific timberlands,” *Land Report* concluded.

Chen also owns 500,000 acres in Ontario, Canada.

And land isn’t the Asian tycoon’s only interest, the [magazine continued](#):

He has also purchased several landmark US properties. In 2018, he and his wife paid \$39 million for the Vanderbilt Mansion on East 69th Street in Manhattan. Three years later, the Seeley Mudd Estate in the Los Angeles suburb of San Marino sold for \$25 million to unnamed buyers who were later identified as Tianqiao and Chrissy Chen.

Built in 1934, the American Colonial-style mansion had served as the official residence of the presidents of the University of Southern California (USC) for more than four decades. From the Seeley Mudd Estate, the Chens have convenient access to the Tianqiao and Chrissy Chen Institute for Neuroscience at Caltech. They funded the institute with a \$115 million charitable donation that included the construction of a three-story, 150,000-square-foot facility on the Caltech campus that was dedicated in 2021

[Chen joined](#) the Communist Party in 2007, and is [still identified](#) as a member by a Chinese financial website. The state-run [Beijing Review reported](#) that Chen is a disciple of [Mao](#) — who by some estimates murdered 65 million people — and “admires him very much.”

America Not for Sale

In June, [NPR reported](#), Chinese owned nearly 400,000 acres, which doesn’t include Chen’s vast holdings.

“Chinese firms and investors own just over 383,934 acres in the U.S., less than the state of Rhode Island, and far less than how much Canada, Netherlands, Italy, the U.K. and Germany, in that order, each own,” the taxpayer-subsidized radio network revealed:

China is No. 18 on the list of foreign investors. But China’s rise — coupled with its geopolitical heft and its strategic goals that are sometimes at odds with Washington’s — has raised questions over who owns this land and how much control the Chinese government has over the ownership.

The Chinese ownership “is highly concentrated,” with more than 80 percent of the 400,000 acres that [NPR reported](#) — again, an underestimate of Chinese-owned land — held by Smithfield Foods and billionaire [Sun Guangxin](#) through two front companies, Brazos Highland Properties LP and Harvest Texas LLC:

Sun used the companies to buy more than 100,000 acres in Texas for a wind farm. But the project was ultimately halted by a state law designed to prevent foreigners from accessing the Texas grid.



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Understandably, Chinese ownership of American land concerned federal lawmakers and inspired the U.S. Senate to vote 91-7 to restrict such purchases.

The law, introduced by Montana Democrat [Jon Tester](#), [would prohibit](#) the sale of land to citizens of China, of course, and Iran, North Korea, and Russia.

“This is a critical step toward making sure we aren’t handing over valuable American assets to foreign entities who want to replace us as the world’s leading military and economic power,” [Tester said](#) when the Senate debated the bill.

Said the GOP’s [John Cornyn](#), “It’s no exaggeration to say that we’ve helped build their economy into a near-peer status, helped them finance a military that threatens us and our allies in the Indo-Pacific.”

The bill awaits action in the U.S. House.

Last year, a Chinese food company [bought 300 acres](#) 20 minutes away from [Grand Forks Air Force Base](#) in North Dakota.

H/T: [Daily Caller](#)



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