

The ConsNet Portal 1.0

Systematic Conservation Planning Primer

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BIODIVERSITY AND BIOCULTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

SCP BLOG



Quiche Mayan community of Aldea Chuimucubal in Pico Zunil, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. Secondary alder (*Alnus acuminata*) forest is located above Aldea Chuimucubal. The community is surrounded by beet, cabbage, carrot, onion, and radish cropland. Involvement of stakeholders is crucial for the success of conservation planning in this region, which contains threatened cloud forests. © 2006 Taylor Sultan Quedensley.

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M3: Stakeholder Identification and Involvement

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Learning Objectives: This module describes the identification of stakeholders within the systematic conservation planning process and explains the complex relationships between stakeholder roles within this process. The module presents examples of negotiations with stakeholders in Baja California (Mexico), the California Channel Islands, Guyana, Madagascar, Namibia, the Philippines, and South Africa.

- Identification of stakeholders is the first stage in systematic conservation planning.
 - Stakeholders are all those who are directly and indirectly involved with a particular region that is the focus of conservation planning.
 - Stakeholders include: (a) all those people who have decision-making powers over a region; (b) those who will be affected by conservation plans for a region; (c) those with scientific or other types of expertise about the region; and (d) those who may commit resources for conservation plans and implementation. (This is not intended to be an exhaustive list).
 - Stakeholders include individuals, communities, industry, private and educational institutions and organizations, policy makers, and the highest competent authorities.
 - Both local and global stakeholders must be included in conservation planning. Stakeholders often help to identify more stakeholders that may have been overlooked.
 - Example of stakeholders are:
 - Indigenous peoples or councils of indigenous peoples;
 - Local farmers or pastoralists;
 - People with local ecological knowledge including ecologists and school teachers;
 - Government agencies responsible for managing natural resources such

- as water or forests (e.g., agencies responsible for Natural Resources Management (NRM));
- Local and global non-governmental agencies and organizations (NGOs), including conservation NGOs;
- Industries, such as mining and agricultural businesses.
- Not involving stakeholders can doom even the best-intentioned of conservation efforts.
 - Conservation through the use of forcible repression and denial of human rights is unethical.
 - Without local support, conservation plans are known to fail.

Example 3.1

Guyana

(Richardson and Funk 1999; Justus and Sarkar 2002)

Guyana is an important example of what can happen when stakeholders are not involved in conservation planning. Located between Venezuela and Suriname on South America's Atlantic coast, Guyana is characterized by diverse flora including mangroves on the low coastal plain, wet savannah, and rainforests in the middle of the country. In the 1990s, in order to protect the natural resources in these ecoregions, the government of Guyana decided to make a commitment to conservation and to initiate biodiversity conservation plans. The Guyanese government solicited the help of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the World Bank to construct a National Protected Areas System (NPAS) for the country. The Guyanese later discontinued the planned NPAS, not because of a lack of funds, but because of "unresolved issues about the tenure rights of Amerindian communities and other political issues" (Justus and Sarkar 2002, p. 431). After years of delays, the GEF withdrew the proposed funding.

- Important considerations must be taken into account for identifying and communicating with stakeholders.
 - It is important to be familiar with and to incorporate governance structures or arrangements to help properly identify and communicate with key stakeholders.
 - The land tenure and ownership consideration: There are times when one entity owns a particular piece of land and another entity has access to the land or tenure of the land. Both entities are stakeholders. For

example, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior, oversees federal lands in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A), which contains habitat for polar bears and federally-protected sea ducks. The BLM leases lands in the NPR-A for oil and natural gas exploration. The leaseholder controls the land but must restore the site when oil production ceases and pay a \$50,000 bond per site (National Research Council 2003, Haas 2005).

- Different stakeholders may use different languages and/or dialects; it becomes important to learn to speak these languages and/ or have translators.
 - Planners should respect intellectual property rights (Iwu 1996).
 - Conservation planners should also be aware of different codes of ethics that may be maintained by resource owners.
 - The **environmental nomenclature** may be different than familiar nomenclature.
 - **It is essential to listen, respect all views and build trust with stakeholders; involving all stakeholders will promote a sense of ownership of conservation plan outcomes.**
- The role of the stakeholders is to establish general goals that the conservation plan must satisfy. These goals are then met through the explicit criteria of the plan's implementation.
- Because of the vast array of stakeholders with varying interests and agendas, stakeholders may not always agree on general goals; thus, planners should ensure alignment and agreement of the priorities of action.
 - Financial costs tend to be on a local level but the effects of the conservation plan and goals are experienced on a global scale.
 - **It is important to ensure transparency of the conservation plan. Each step of the planning process must be clear and understandable to all stakeholders from the beginning to ensure long-term sustainability.**
 - In addition, the issues and agendas of each stakeholder need to be transparent to all other stakeholders.
 - When stakeholders meet, efforts should be made to record all conversations and meetings to ensure proper understanding. Tapes/transcripts should be sent to all absent stakeholders.
 - In some cases, stakeholders will try to deny the legitimacy of other stakeholders. Planners must prepare to deal with such disputes.
 - If conservation planners are living in a different location than that of the

proposed conservation region, they must establish local contacts that will help communicate conservation goals.

- Conservation planners should know the conservation history. These are the historical efforts made in a region in the name of conservation. Knowing the conservation history allows the conservation planner to proceed in a manner that is appropriate.
 - If there is a consistent history of negative interaction with conservation planners or conservation efforts, then attempts must be made to reestablish a working relation with the stakeholders.
- Identifying and involving stakeholders can be a difficult and laborious process, but if done properly can help lessen threats and pressures from stakeholders (Margules and Sarkar 2007).

Example 3.2

San Salvador Island Marine Reserve in the Philippines

(White et al., 2002)

This example illustrates conservation planning in a region with different languages and the importance of understanding the conservation history and local governance structures. In response to declines in catch per unit effort in Philippine fisheries, many stakeholders became involved with marine conservation, including the Haribon Foundation (a NGO), the fishing industry, the national, provincial, and city/ municipal governments, and local law enforcement. The Local Government Code (1991) and the Fisheries Code (1998) devolved authority for the management of natural resources from the national to municipal governments. As a result, most marine protected areas in the Philippines are established by municipal or city government ordinances. The NIPAS Act (Republic Act 7586) covers protected areas that are national in scope but is inadequate for marine conservation because it has a terrestrial bias.

In 1974, the first marine protected area in the Philippines was established on Sumilon Island, Cebu. Longitudinal studies by the Silliman University Marine Laboratory showed that the creation of the Sumilon fish sanctuary improved the condition of the nearby coral reef and tripled fish abundance. This fueled interest in the establishment of marine protected areas throughout the Philippines. Catch per unit effort declined twenty-fold in San Salvador Island northeast of Manila from the 1960s to 1988. Fishing was the most common occupation of the Island's inhabitants, which included four linguistic groups: the Sambals, Ilocanos, Pangasinenses, and Visayans. The fishery and coral reef declines were attributed to destructive fishing practices introduced by the Visayans in the 1970s. To rectify this, the community established a development association funded by the Haribon foundation in 1989, which established a fish sanctuary and a marine reserve. The sanctuary improved fish density and coral cover. Its success was attributed to the support of the local government, which approved ordinances to protect the reserve.

Example 3.3

Sierra San Pedro Mártir National Park (SSPM), Mexico

(Bojórquez-Tapia et al. 2004)

SSPM is a National Park in Baja California, Mexico whose endemic species include small mammals, a trout, and mountain cypress. The wording of the 1947 presidential decree that declared the park's boundaries was ambiguous, which led to disputes between conservationists and local inhabitants. Bojórquez-Tapia et al. (2004) held three workshops in 2000 during which stakeholders evaluated redesigns for the park. The stakeholders included park administrators, conservations associated with local academic institutions, ranchers on communally owned lands (*ejidos*), and the staff of an astronomic observatory located in the park. Stakeholder objectives elicited during the workshops were the input for

the Analytic Hierarchy Process, a multiple criteria decision-making procedure (**M11: Multiple Criteria Analysis**). A redesign of the SSPM that excluded conifer stands of high commercial value from the park was preferred by the ranchers but opposed by conservationists on the grounds that it might hasten deforestation.

Example 3.4

Subtropical Thicket Ecosystem Planning (STEP)

(Pierce et al. 2005)

Conservation planning in South Africa's Western and Eastern Cape provinces, which include a global hotspot of plant endemism, illustrates the importance of transparency during stakeholder negotiations. One of the objectives of the STEP project (2000-2004), which was funded by the Global Environment Facility, was to make systematic conservation planning products accessible to local municipalities, officials of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and other end-users. To this end, STEP developed an online-handbook of the region's biodiversity features including 169 vegetation types, elephant habitat, and sand movement corridors (available from: <http://cpu.uwc.ac.za>). This handbook assisted officials from 30 local municipalities in fulfilling their legal obligations to protect listed ecosystems, as required under South Africa's Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004. The STEP handbook describes proposed conservation corridors and species' conservation statuses in addition to providing a conservation priority map of the Eastern Cape. Insights that emerged from stakeholder consultation included the fact that biodiversity conservation in the Eastern Cape was typically associated with wealthy elites and not regarded as a priority due to the region's high poverty and unemployment. In addition, consultation disclosed that other sectors, such as tourism, water management, and agriculture

benefit from biodiversity conservation in the Cape and that alliances should be formed between conservation planners and these groups.

Example 3.5

Channel Islands Case Study (Airamé et al. 2003)

The California Channel Islands off the coast of southern California have experienced a continuous decline in marine resources such as kelp, fish, and other sea life. Although other sorts of efforts have been implemented, such as single species management, conservation area designation that calls for long-term ecological and economic viability may be more effective. This planning exercise was a collaboration between federal and state agencies, commercial and recreational fishermen, environmentalists, scientists, managers, advocates, and others from the community. These stakeholders discussed protecting the region's resources and increasing public awareness of the region's value. The objectives of the stakeholders were "to maximize ecological, economic, and cultural benefits, as well as [to] enhance educational and research opportunities" (Airamé et al. 2003, p. 170). The stakeholders arrived at these objectives by consensus; however, some withdrew from the deliberations due to conflicts with other stakeholders. Table 3.5 lists the stakeholders' goals.

Table 3.5

TABLE 1. Goals for marine reserves in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary established by the Marine Reserves Working Group.

Goal categories	Goals for marine reserves
Ecosystem biodiversity	To protect representative and unique marine habitats, ecological processes, and populations of interest in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
Sustainable fisheries	To achieve sustainable fisheries by integrating marine reserves into fisheries management
Economic variability	To maintain long-term socioeconomic viability while minimizing short-term socioeconomic losses to all users and dependent parties
Natural and cultural heritage	To maintain areas of visitor, spiritual, and recreational opportunities which include cultural and ecological features and their associated values
Education	To foster stewardship of the marine environment by providing educational opportunities to increase awareness and encourage responsible use of resources

Example 3.6

Communal Conservancies in Namibia
(Margules and Sarkar 2007)

The purpose of communal conservancies is to conserve wildlife in addition to using the wildlife sustainably. Before the communal conservancy plan is implemented, it must be deemed viable ecologically, socio-culturally, and economically. Next, a local management committee must be created to set rules for the conservancy plan. In Namibia, such conservancies called for the pooling of resources to protect local wildlife. Once this goal was established, the communal conservancies obtained legal rights of ownership over wildlife and also hunting and tourism rights. The first communal conservancy in Namibia was Nyea Nyea, which was established in 1998. Communal conservancies can be used as a supplement to conservation area networks.

Example 3.7

The "Nutcracker" Approach
(Lochner et al. 2003)

Lochner et al. describe the "two-pronged approach" involving stakeholder conservation

strategy development for the Cape Floristic Region in South Africa. They describe “top-down rigor married with bottom-up participation” as being the levers of a nutcracker that eventually “cracks” or addresses the “nut” or central problem. The “top lever” of the nutcracker is described as “scientific rigour, leadership and the focus of resources on priorities, so that the output of the process can feed into an implementable plan...target[ing] the institutions primarily responsible for managing biodiversity” The “bottom lever” of the nutcracker is “the participatory process needed to harness existing resources amongst the various institutions and communities . . . to ensure representative participation, involvement and exercise of political will by these groups”.

Key Principles:

1. Look ahead – develop a common vision for the future.
2. Managed debate – emphasize the desired outcome to avoid wasted time.
3. The "nutcracker" approach.
4. Groups not individuals – focus on groups that represent relevant sectors of the community.
5. Different levels of intensity of participation – the small skilled team, broader focus groups, public awareness, and media.
6. Implementer ownership.
7. Expectations and impatience – remind the stakeholders of a realistic implementation time and progress that is made.
8. Thorough preparation.
9. Downplay methodology – avoid using jargon.
10. Iterate and be adaptive – constantly re-plan and re-visit strategies and implementation.

Example 3.8

Participatory Planning in Madagascar
(Hannah et al. 1998)

Madagascar is a global biodiversity hotspot with 90 % species endemism for most taxa. Its

12 000 000 ha of forest are disappearing at a rate of 100 000 to 300 000 ha/ year. Deforestation is expected to accelerate in the near future because Madagascar's population, 70 % of which are classified as living in "extreme poverty" by the World Bank, will likely double in the next 25 years. Hannah et al. carried out a two-stage conservation planning program as part of a \$155 million GEF-funded conservation project. In the first stage, scientists held a workshop in Antananarivo, Madagascar from April 10-14, 1995 to determine priority areas for the conservation of birds, mammals, reptile, amphibians, and other taxa. In the second stage (May-August 1995), interviews and focus groups were conducted to elicit opinions about natural resource management from local stakeholders including farmers, ecotourism operators, and forest-product gatherers. Problems identified by regional focus groups were then discussed and prioritized at a national conference of government officials, scientists, and stakeholders. Interviews with local stakeholders helped identify threats to environmental conservation such as forest clearing for agriculture. In addition, the interviews suggested that unilateral efforts by the Madagascar Parks authority (ANGAP) would benefit from assistance from other agencies such as the Department of Waters and Forests (DEF). This finding reinforced conclusions arrived at by conservation scientists in the first stage, who determined that areas prioritized by ANGAP did not coincide with hotspots of endemism identified using a geo-referenced biological database.

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