



WCS

Biodiversity Conservation at the Landscape Scale

**A Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society
Supported by the USAID/Global Conservation Program**

Coordination Unit, New York, USA

Semi-Annual Report

October 2000 - March 2001

I. Summary of Activity Status and Progress

a. Introduction/Summary

The Biodiversity Conservation at the Landscape Scale (BCLS) Program is designed to develop and test an integrative, landscape-level approach to biological conservation across multiple sites. Accordingly, the program encompasses a diverse array of land-use categories and resource-use issues, in addition to a variety of approaches to site-based management. In order to facilitate and harmonize work among these sites and capture the synergistic benefits from diverse experiences, a New York-based Coordination Unit is charged with managing the BCLS Program. This unit guides the three field sites as the Landscape Approach to Conservation is developed and tested, assists in the design and development of sound monitoring programs at these sites, promotes cross-site learning, and ensures communication among the sites, WCS staff (central and field), USAID (Global Bureau and country missions), and the larger conservation community. In addition, the Coordination Unit assesses and promotes opportunities for application of our Landscape Approach to new sites, with complementary funding from USAID and/or other sources.

In the first half of FY 2001, the Coordination Unit accomplished most of its planned programmatic, technical, and administrative goals. During this reporting period, we further developed our Landscape Approach to Conservation and the Landscape Species Strategy. We successfully fulfilled all of our USAID reporting requirements and produced introductory communications materials for use within WCS, for distribution in the field, and for external US audiences. Bolstering our administrative capacities became an important objective as the Program grew and gained momentum. Finally, the Coordination Unit is now completely staffed, due to the hiring of an Administrative Assistant, a Social Scientist/Monitoring Specialist and a Quantitative Monitoring Specialist.

b. Highlights

- Produced the Proceedings of the Inaugural Annual Meeting (September 23 - October 3, 2000)
- Further developed the Landscape Species Approach to Conservation: refined strategic steps and process for threats assessments, developed and implemented Landscape Species selection criteria
- Provided technical assistance for a Conservation Threats Assessment Workshop for the Yasuni Core Site

- Initiated public information distribution via talks, round-table meetings and drafting of bulletin series
- Clarified reporting requirements; submitted Semi-Annual Reports 2000, Implementation Plans 2001 and R4 data to USAID
- Completed staffing by hiring an Administrative Assistant, a Social Scientist/Monitoring Specialist and a Quantitative Monitoring Specialist

c. Table of Activity Status

Activity Number	Activity Title	Status	Page Number
Obj. 1	Guide development and testing of the landscape approach		
1.1	Landscape Species Strategy Design	On-track	2
1.2	Threat Analyses	On-track	3
1.3	Cross-site Analyses	Delayed	3
1.4 (new)	Application of Landscape Approach to new sites	On-track	3
Obj. 2	Provide technical and monitoring assistance to field projects		
2.1	Project Design and Monitoring	On-track	4
2.1	Spatial Analyses	On-track	4
2.3	Wildlife Health Research	On-track	4
Obj. 3	Ensure coordination and communication services for the Program		
3.1	Coordination Unit Staffing	Completed	4
3.2	Project Consultation/Site Visits	On-track	4
3.3	Annual Meeting	On-track	5
3.4	Program Reporting	On-track	5
3.5	Informational Materials and Communications Packets	On-track	5

II. Detailed Description of Progress

a. Key program objectives for this reporting period (October 2000 – March 2001)

Our objectives for the first half of FY 2001 included: ensuring smooth and effective functioning of the Program; guiding elaboration of the Landscape Species Strategy (selecting landscape species for each of the core sites, developing threats analyses and a coherent program of monitoring for core sites, and identifying questions for cross-site analysis); providing technical expertise to field projects (including development of a wildlife health guide); producing the first written materials for external use; and identifying possible sites for future Program expansion.

b. Activity Description

OBJECTIVE 1: Guide development and testing of the Landscape Approach.

Activity 1.1. Landscape Species Strategy Design

On track

Coordination Unit staff, in consultation with BCLS field staff, continue to elaborate the Landscape Species Strategy. We have developed a clear conceptual framework, are defining targets and terms, and bringing coherence to the implementation of the strategy at the three core field sites. Implementation Plans for the field sites were developed using the Landscape Species Strategy, and opportunities for

comparative analysis are arising due to use of a common strategy. Descriptive papers on the Landscape Species Strategy are in preparation, with one currently in peer review (see Appendix A). WCS staff outside the BCLS program have participated in the development of the strategy, and are enthusiastically considering furthering its use in Latin America, Africa, Asia, North America, and the Marine realm.

Activity 1.2. Threats Analyses

On track

The development of a framework for analyzing threats within Landscape Conservation Areas (LCAs) was discussed extensively at the first BCLS Annual Meeting (September 23 - October 3, 2000). In January 2001, the Landscape Ecologist and Social Scientist/Monitoring Specialist participated in the Conservation Threats Assessment workshop for the Yasuni LCA in Ecuador, in which new elements (threats mapping, information uncertainty) were introduced. Coordination Unit staff identified the benefit of developing an "Index of Faunal Integrity" – a tool for rapid, cost-effective assessment of the conservation status of wildlife within a landscape – which will be pursued in the next reporting period.

Activity 1.3. Cross-site Analyses

On-track/delayed

Following preliminary identification of cross-cutting issues during the first Annual Meeting (see previous Semi-Annual report), Coordination Unit staff have: (1) met with staff of Foundations of Success to conduct a preliminary assessment of the feasibility of establishing a community-based wildlife conservation "learning portfolio" that would include BCLS field sites and other WCS long-term conservation sites globally; and (2) participated in discussion of the establishment of a new thematic program at WCS to deal with wildmeat/hunting issues. Each of these processes should assist in the development of comparative cross-site analyses of these conservation issues. However, due to the volume of start-up work and insufficient contacts with Foundations of Success, we have revised our objective for this year to defining questions and initiating analytical designs (rather than completing all designs by end of the year).

Activity 1.4 Application of Landscape Approach to new sites. (new addition)

On track

The Landscape Approach is being extended to additional WCS long-term project sites via several mechanisms. First, WCS work within the USAID/Afr CARPE program was newly contracted as an Associate Cooperative Agreement Award under the Global LWA (AOT-A-00-00-00243-00). Second, Coordination staff are working closely with WCS Regional Directors to identify opportunities within our own program for application of the Landscape Approach. Meetings were held in January, February and March to pursue the possibility of including WCS projects in the Adirondack Mountains (NY) and the Greater Yellowstone area (MT and WY) as core Landscape sites. Both look promising. Finally, staff helped to formulate 4 concept papers for consideration by the Global Bureau – although these were not accepted for funding.

OBJECTIVE 2: Provide technical and monitoring assistance to field projects.

Activity 2.1 Project Design and Monitoring

On track

Monitoring assessment and design are largely scheduled for the second half of the year. To date, Coordination Unit staff has gathered information on monitoring activities currently taking place at core field sites, and has begun to develop a background monitoring strategy concept paper.

Activity 2.2 Spatial Analyses

On track

Base maps for each of the core sites have now been developed (see previous Semi-Annual report). Preliminary information has been added concerning habitat classifications, landscape species distribution, and human activities (the latter for 2 of 3 sites). Spatial analysis of landscape species requirements and distribution is in process, and will be ready for presentation in the latter half of FY 2001.

Activity 2.3 Wildlife Health Guidelines for Biodiversity/Environmental Programs

On track

In October 2000, the Field Veterinary program of WCS formally engaged the services of Dr. Felicia Nutter to undertake writing health guidelines for USAID and WCS field use. Dr. Nutter has produced an outline of five components to be included: (1) a briefing statement on the known and potential health issues relevant to such projects; (2) guidelines to ensure wildlife, livestock, and human health for use in project development, implementation, monitoring and assessment; (3) recommendations for collecting the data needed to determine the potential for and the extent of health problems; (4) recommended strategies for integrating efforts in conservation, development and wildlife health; and (5) information resource guide for project planners, implementers, and evaluators. A first draft of the guidelines will be submitted by Nutter to WCS in mid June, will be reviewed and edited by WCS veterinary staff, and then will be referred to outside experts for further fine-tuning.

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure coordination and communication services for the Program.

Activity 3.1 Coordination Unit Staffing

Completed

During the first half of FY 2001, an Administrative Assistant, a Social Science/Monitoring Specialist and a Quantitative Monitoring Specialist were hired. These three new members of the Program provide vital administrative and technical support to each of the field sites as well as to the Coordination Unit.

Activity 3.2 Project Consultation/Site Visits

On track

In addition to regular and punctual consultation among Coordination Unit and field staff, NY-based WCS staff, and external colleagues, the BCLS Landscape Ecologist and Social Science/Monitoring Specialist traveled to Ecuador to work with Yasuní LCA staff to revise the project's workplan and timetable. This has allowed the Yasuní program to weather changes in on-site personnel and needs for restructuring the project design. The program is now on far stronger footing, with more realistic expectations established (see current Yasuní Implementation Plan and Semi-Annual Report). Finally, we are in the process of planning a workshop for further external

input on the WCS Landscape Species Strategy, designed to focus on definition of appropriate wildlife population targets for effective conservation. This will be held next fiscal year.

Activity 3.3 Annual Meetings

On track

The first Annual Meeting was reported on in the last semi-annual report. In the meantime, we have produced a written Proceedings of the Inaugural Meeting and distributed copies to each of the field sites (see Appendix B). Discussion on meeting topics continues to take place on a frequent basis via email. The Second Annual Meeting will take place in July, 2001 in Congo.

Activity 3.4 Program Reporting

On Track

The Coordination Unit assisted each of the three field sites in meeting USAID reporting requirements, including FY 2001 Implementation Plans, FY 2001 Performance Monitoring Plans and Data Indicators, and Semi-Annual Reports. Coordination Unit staff coordinated and advised field staff so that appropriate deadlines and guidelines were followed (once these were clarified in October 2000), and assisted with editing, proofreading and formatting.

Activity 3.5 Informational Materials and Communications Packets

On track

The Coordination Unit further developed a suite of informational materials about the Program for distribution to field sites, USAID Missions and the greater conservation and donor arena. First and foremost, a communications strategy was developed for the Program that includes PowerPoint Presentations, a Bulletin series and a Program Website. Content for the first 5 Bulletin issues was written (see Appendix C. for DRAFT COPY of first bulletin), and two additional PowerPoint Presentations were developed focusing on: (a) a comprehensive description of the Landscape Approach and Landscape Species Strategy; and (b) Landscape Species Selection (in addition to introductory ones earlier created). Presentations were given at two 'round-table' meetings, one for a group of current and potential donors and a second for members of the Press. At least two newspaper articles are expected to result in the next 12 months. Finally, two "advertorials" were produced for the New York Times, placed on the Op-Ed pages of the newspaper, describing the WCS Landscape Approach to site-based conservation (see Appendix D). One more is anticipated in the next half of the year.

III. Success Stories and Appendices

Appendices

- A. Sanderson, Eric W. et al. A conceptual model for conservation planning based on landscape species requirements. Landscape and Urban Planning. In press.
- B. Living Landscapes Program. Inaugural Annual Meeting Proceedings. September 23 – October 3, 2000.
- C. Living Landscapes Program Bulletin. Issue 1. Draft. (Sent under separate cover).
- D. New York Times. Living Landscapes Program Advertorial Series.