



Innovation and Learning from the Field

A Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society

Supported by the USAID/Global Conservation Program

GCP Learning

Implementation Plan

October 2007 – September 2008

Living Landscapes Program

Wildlife Conservation Society

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Implementation Plan FY 2008
October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2008

Total Level of Effort \$66,000

The importance of learning within GCP

The premise for the GCP learning initiative is embedded in USAID Biodiversity Team's commitment to encourage and support the development and sharing of better conservation practices, and builds directly on the work of the Biodiversity Support Program (BSP), the Global Bureau's predecessor. This is in accordance with GCP's mandate, which is to address gaps and build on lessons learned from BSP. Hence, WCS's initiative under the GCPII umbrella will ensure that USAID's commitment to learning finds synergy with ongoing initiatives among the multiple layers (field and central programs) within individual GCP institutions, as well as across institutions.

Focal areas for GCP learning

Learning activities supported by GCP II funds cluster within the following three strategic foci:

- Decision and management tools and methods
- Effective approaches to threats abatement
- System specific conservation challenges

Learning Topics in FY08

In this fiscal year two learning topics will be undertaken. Enterprise Works/VITA will lead the GCP partners in an effort to understand and document how and why GCP partners engage in economic development and livelihoods activities. The Wildlife Conservation Society will lead the GCP partners in a parallel effort to understand and document how GCP partners define the extent and configuration of the landscapes and seascapes within which they work, and how they prioritize where to target their conservation efforts within these large spaces.

Conjuring conservation spaces: threats-based approaches to defining the extent and configuration of landscapes and seascapes for biodiversity conservation

Why invest in Landscapes?

For well over 100 years, a major approach to wildlife conservation has been to set aside areas protected from overexploitation by people. These parks and reserves play a crucial role in saving the planet's plants and animals because it is in these areas alone that biodiversity conservation is the primary land-use objective. Unfortunately, strict protected areas have rarely been large enough to meet the ecological needs of wide-ranging or naturally scarce wildlife species. Of equal concern, protected area management typically infringes on the traditional resource use and access rights of local people, and further jeopardizes the already tenuous livelihood insecurity of the rural poor.

So how do we conserve wildlife species such as lions and elephants whose ecological requirements cause them to venture outside of protected areas? How do we conserve species that live in areas where economic development and not wildlife conservation is the primary goal? And how do we ensure that biodiversity conservation helps to support, rather than hinder, the livelihood and economic welfare of poor rural families?

From practical experience, we are learning that if we want to capture all the economic, ecological and intrinsic values of biodiversity we must think about natural resource management at a large enough spatial scale. Through this magnifying lens one can imagine a large heterogeneous landscape with at least three very different types of land uses: high biodiversity protected areas, production forests or grassland, and farm bush areas. Although no single area captures all values, if managed in concert, a well-planned landscape can generate the ecological, livelihood, and existence values of biodiversity simultaneously.

Through the Global Conservation Program's long-term investment in improving the practice of landscape-scale conservation, important lessons have emerged from the collective work of GCP partners in refining how we define and prioritize our investments within conservation landscapes and seascapes. The focus of this learning activity is to gather insights from GCP partners on what has been learned in the field of landscape-scale conservation in terms of planning, implementation, and success/challenges.

Collaboration that has occurred between GCP partners over the past 8 years has coincided with advancements by partners in their approach to landscape-scale conservation. One of the strongest legacies of GCP is the advancement of this principle; and the lessons from this work will be useful to share with a variety of conservation stakeholders, including investors, practitioners, governments, and local people.

Desired Change

Increased utilization of and support for landscape-scale biodiversity conservation and planning. This learning effort will focus on providing information to donors and investors on the importance of working at landscape-scale for effective biodiversity conservation and the need for increased investment to allow practitioners to scale-up their activities accordingly. This effort will also provide guidance to conservation practitioners on general principles of landscape-scale conservation and will direct them to reference materials from GCP partners on planning and implementing conservation at landscape-scale.

Target Audiences

Primarily, donors/investors/upper level NGO management; secondly, conservation practitioners; thirdly, government.

Communications channel

- Briefing paper that synthesizes rationale for and approaches to landscape scale conservation with accompanying case studies by each GCP partner. Case studies will highlight experience from GCP funded sites, but will also draw on additional insights gleaned by each partner organization.
- Special edition of Conservation Biology, Oryx or Animal Conservation on threats-based approaches to landscape scale conservation.
- CD/web page (depending on funding/ staff time) with case studies and cool maps.

Tasks

WCS will identify a project coordinator who will be responsible for working closely with GCP partner technical staff. Each GCP partner will be responsible for drafting their case studies according to the timeline. Technical leads for each GCP partner are:

Partner	Technical Lead	Other Staff
AWF	Adam Henson	Philip Muruthi
WWF	Colby Loucks	John Morrison Eric Swanson
TNC	TBD	
CI	Grace Wong	
WCS	Karl Didier	Eric Sanderson Samantha Strindberg David Wilkie Amanda Fine Janet Gibson Arlyne Johnson Andres Novaro Michale Glennon Roan McNab Robert Wallace Tom Clements Peter Coppolillo Emma Stokes Esteban Suarez

To focus the written products further, GCP partners are asked to address the following questions:

1. Why has your conservation organizations decided to work at a landscape scale?
2. What factors have driven your conservation organization to go beyond the borders of protected areas to embrace a larger landscape scale – what do you expect to achieve at this scale that could not be achieved at a PA scale?
3. What are the primary outcomes that you expect to generate from working at a landscape or seascape scale?
4. What decision support tools does your organization use to define the spatial extent and configuration of the landscape or seascape so that you are confident that you can generate the outcomes you desire from investments in that landscape?
5. How does your organization prioritize where to work within the landscape or seascape– more specifically, where do you work first given available funding and staffing, and why?
6. What resources can you as a GCP partner offer to provide guidance on how to do landscape-scale conservation, and where can they be acquired?
7. What are the challenges to planning and implementation at a landscape scale?

The WCS project coordinator will work with the technical leads of the other GCP partners to draft a standard framework for completing the case studies, and a timeline for generating draft and final products. The WCS project coordinator will draft an outline for a special section of a peer reviewed journal and negotiate with several editors (e.g., Gary Meffe of Conservation Biology and Martin Fisher of Oryx). Completion of a special section in a journal as part of this GCP learning activity is of course provisional on acceptance by a journal editor. The WCS project coordinator will draft an introductory chapter that reviews why the conservation community has expanded beyond protected areas to a landscape or seascape scale. GCP partner technical staff will then be asked to comment on the draft. Lastly, the WCS project coordinator will work with publication and web specialists to generate high-quality printed and internet products.