



Innovation and Learning from the Field

A Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society

Supported by the USAID/Global Conservation Program

GCP Learning

Annual Report FY 2008

October 2007 - September 2008

Living Landscapes Program

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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

WCS Learning Topics in FY08

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

WCS coordinated GCP partner organizations (AWF, TNC, WCS, WWF) in the development of a series of articles for a special section of the journal *Oryx* – The International Journal of Conservation tentatively entitled “Applications of Landscape-Scale Conservation Planning by Conservation NGOs” to be published in either the October 2008 or the January 2009 issue of the journal *Oryx* (the “Landscape Special Section”). To this end, WCS collaborated closely with Martin Fisher of Flora and Fauna International (FFI), the Publisher and Editor of *Oryx*.

The objective of the Landscape Special Section is to provide readers with an overview, based on case-study examples, of how conservation NGOs have performed landscape-scale conservation planning, the challenges they've faced, and their successes and failures. The Landscape Special

Section will be comprised of an introductory paper and one paper from the partner organizations of USAID's Global Conservation Program (GCP) (i.e., AWF, TNC, WCS, WWF, CI) that chose to submit a paper.

We have mutually agreed that the objective for each GCP partner paper should be to describe how the organization's approach to landscapes/seascape scale conservation was applied at one or more case-study sites, and what they learned from doing so. The GCP partner papers focus on describing in detail the spatially explicit steps in landscape-scale planning (although it should briefly describe any other planning steps that were used, e.g. feature selection, goal setting, stakeholder assessment, threat assessment) and on an assessment using one or more case studies.

The introductory paper is being written last and by authors outside of the partner organizations, Robert Pressey and Madeleine Bottrill, both of whom have years of expertise in conservation planning. Although we will work with the authors to develop the content, we expect it will discuss the state-of-the-art of conservation planning with reference to the NGO papers, and how the work of NGOs has contributed. In addition to external review, all partner organizations will have an opportunity to review the introductory paper and provide comments.

WCS will not be responsible for the content of each GCP partner paper but will assist in obtaining and circulating drafts as well as coordinating the review process. To that end, all papers will be subjected to the usual rigorous peer review process, which means that WCS acknowledges that Oryx retains the right to decline unsuitable papers. In the pre-review process the Editor of Oryx (possibly with the help of a member of the Editorial Board, as required) will provide detailed feedback to authors with the aim of attempting to ensure that all papers entering the peer review process are of a high standard and are ready for review.

At this point, four papers from WCS, WWF, TNC, and AWF have been submitted, have proceeded through peer review, and are being revised accordingly. CI chose not to submit a paper. We expect that the issue will be published in the first or second quarterly issue of Oryx in 2009, although this depends on the speed with which final revisions are completed.

Building social resilience into marine protected area networks (TNC)

This learning activity was lead by TNC and WWF.

In the spring of 2008, Caleb McClennen, (WCS Marine Program), Irfan Yulianto(WCS Indonesia) and Patrick Christie, Pew Fellow at the University of Washington, participated in the final workshops of the Marine Learning Partnership(MLP) between WCS/WWF/TN/CI and funded by USAID. In Florida, Caleb McClennen, Stuart Campbell (WSC-Indonesia) and Janet Gibson (WCS-Belize) represented WCs at the final workshop for the MLP. The details of these workshops are provided below as extracted from the latest Marine Learning Partnership Report.

“Two workshops were conducted as part of the MPA Learning Partnership activities. The first workshop was held in Tagaytay, Philippines, May 19-21, 2008. The purpose of this workshop was to share the preliminary results of the field survey among the learning group members, partners and experts, as well as to discuss and critique the results.

The second workshop was held at the end of the International Coral Reef Symposium in Florida, USA, on July 12, 2008 to gather MPA practitioners from around the world to facilitate discussion on MPA networks addressing the priorities, challenges and next steps. The implementation and results of the two workshops is described below.

Tagaytay, Philippines Workshop

The Workshop on the Learning Partnership for Marine Protected Area Networks in the Coral Triangle was successfully conducted with 42 participants from the six study sites, representatives from the four NGOs, several donor agencies, other members of the MPA Learning Partnership from outside the Coral Triangle region, and invited experts.

The three main workshop objectives were: (1) to present a series of MPA network case studies from Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Palau; (2) to facilitate an improved understanding of the concept and principles behind MPA networks, from their planning and implementation to evaluation; and (3) to discuss some aspects of integrating science into management.

A key point that was made at the workshop were that MPAs are still in the beginning stages of implementation in the region and that while the need to scale up to networks is important and on everyone's mind, it is still premature to suggest that many, if any, MPA networks are functional. In addition, it was noted that successful networks depend on well managed MPAs with no-take zones. These are still being developed and moving towards better enforcement and compliance regimes but the process is often longer and more difficult than previously thought.

Florida Workshop

This workshop was arranged as a side-event at the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium (ICRS) in July 2008. The MPA Learning Partnership core group from TNC, WWF, CI, and WCS played an active role in the facilitation of the half-day workshop. The MPA Networks Learning Partnership Workshop was attended by 25 scientists and MPA network managers as well as a representative from USAID.

The two main objectives of the workshop were: (1) to gather interested MPA practitioners from around the world to discuss MPA networks and learn from one another, and; (2) to facilitate discussions on MPA networks and validate the needs, challenges and priorities identified during the Tagaytay workshop.

The survey results from the six MPA network study sites were discussed in depth, focusing on the themes of ecology, social/governance, and financial aspects in relation to the development of MPA networks in the Coral Triangle region. Several lessons were identified to have particular relevance for the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) and in providing a foundation for the CTI planning and design phases.

WWF, as lead institution, is reporting more fully on this learning activity.