



COMMUNITY CONSERVATION, Inc.

www.communityconservation.org

In order to promote global biodiversity and sustainable land use, Community Conservation Inc. catalyzes, facilitates and empowers local people to manage and conserve natural resources within the social, cultural and economic context of their communities.

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Developing Conservation Strategies for Tree Kangaroos in Papua New Guinea

Dr. Rob Horwich has recently returned from his first visit to Papua New Guinea working with the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Project (TKCP) whose efforts to save the tree kangaroos are meeting with success. CC's efforts will focus on community involvement and seeking appropriate laws to help protect clan landownership while protecting tree kangaroos and other natural resources.

Papua New Guinea, located just off the northern tip of Australia, has Australian flora and fauna. The rare tree kangaroos probably fill the ecological niche of a monkey. They weigh about thirty pounds—the size of a small dog—and eat leaves and fruit. They look like kangaroos, but they have large claws on their feet to help them climb around in the trees. Kangaroo populations have been hunted almost to extinction in some areas of the highland country of Papua New Guinea, which is inhabited by many different clans of people who speak many different languages.

The Tree Kangaroo Conservation Project, initiated by Dr. Lisa Dabek, the coordinator of Research and Conservation at Roger Williams Park Zoo in Rhode Island, has been studying this marsupial since 1996. The project has found that in areas where the kangaroos are not hunted they're doing well, but in areas where hunting occurs, their numbers are dwindling. Since tree kangaroos are an important resource for local people, sustainable use is critical. In recent years, landowners participating in the program found that when they stopped hunting in certain areas, the

populations of hunted species increased.

Since over 97% of Papua New Guinea lands are owned by clans, the actions of the local landowners are crucial to the survival of the tree kangaroo and other indigenous species. Thus, the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Project is focusing on encouraging local communities to set aside core areas where hunting is prohibited permanently. At the same time, CC is investigating laws that will help clan landowners to protect and manage their lands and natural resources. One idea is to give populations a rest from hunting in one area while allowing hunting in other areas.

teachers who will come back to reside and teach in the area.

There are a number of local people who really believe in the idea of conservation. In Teptep there is an area where they have hunted the tree kangaroo to extinction. The people have to go a long way before they can find places to hunt. They understand the idea of these preserved areas as "banks." The animals will come from the preserved areas and spill out into the areas where hunting is allowed.

The response of the people of Papua New Guinea to this idea has been encouraging. The Tree Kangaroo Conservation Project people approached a few clans with the proposal and then more clans approached them.

During this initial visit, Horwich contacted over a dozen non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and law offices, to help coordinate efforts to preserve the land. He studied the PNG environmental laws and found some hopeful signs. While appraising the idea of Wildlife Management Areas which is currently the most popular method in PNG, he also sees promise in less tried ideas such as conservation deeds—like private land easements - and local level government parks.

Horwich hopes that some combination of these laws may strengthen protection. Seeing the success of co-management elsewhere he hopes that a combination of these laws may encourage it in Papua New Guinea.



Traditional Hunter

Huon Tree Kangaroo

While overall conservation is the main goal, landowners have seen some benefits for participating in the program. While some money has been coming in because of the ongoing research in the area through preparing meals and guiding jobs, there has been an area-wide education program for students in local communities. In addition, the TKCP has been supporting the training of local area

Coalition to Protect Golden Langurs

Efforts to protect the habitat of golden langurs in Assam, India are moving forward. Dr. Horwich of CC called a meeting of five non-governmental organizations who are working to preserve the monkey and its habitat. The participants formed the Manas Biosphere Conservation Forum, which will make it possible for those involved in the project, Aaranyak, Green Forest Conservation, Green Heart Nature Club, Nature's Foster, and New Horizons, to coordinate their efforts. This will increase their influence on state government planning and bring an essential regional planning focus to the conservation efforts.

The meeting itself was postponed for several weeks because of political unrest in the region. A series of almost continuous bandhs by militant groups made travel impossible. (A bandh is an unofficial stoppage of daily travel activities by any of the many militant political groups. Bandhs are enforced by the threat of bodily harm and property damage to vehicles.) But during this time, Dr. Horwich met with each group individually. These 'mini-meetings' produced a clarification of the project's

current status and the prospective roles that each of the organizations will play. Then, when the bandhs were lifted and everyone could meet together, the group formed the Manas Biosphere Conservation Forum and plans were made for each organization's participation.



Horwich with Members of New Horizons Exploring Golden Langur Habitat near Bhutan

The golden langur has a very limited range, endemic only to the area of Assam in northeast India and Bhutan. One third of this area has been deforested in the last decade, seriously threatening the monkey's habitat. Each of the five organizations working with Community Conservation operates in a different area of the monkey's range, but together they form a continuum across the entire area. Though each group has its unique strengths, they are all working toward the same general goals, reforestation and community work, including education and awareness of conservation issues.

The Manas Biosphere Conservation Forum will coordinate the activities of the five organizations in public education, golden langur censusing, creation of a regional management plan for the NGO's and government agencies, developing proposals for GIS mapping of the Manas Biosphere Reserve and coordination with university and government personnel.

In the late 1990s, the governments of various Indian states developed a program to encourage community participation in Joint Forest

Management and reforestation. The NGO's involved in the golden langur project have already catalyzed many of the residents of Assam to participate in this forestry plan. Reforestation has begun, although the trees are still small, only about 10-15 feet high.

Another positive development—members of the NGO's have been developing more complete and accurate censuses of the animals in areas where no one has looked before, finding small islands of golden langur populations. This will give them a better idea of the exact size of the monkey population across its range.

Finally, these five organizations and Community Conservation are also working with individuals and students interested in the golden langurs. With this concentration of expertise and interest, there is renewed hope for recovery for this endangered species.

Kickapoo Conservation Conversations

More than 225 people across the Kickapoo watershed participated in the group-meeting segment of the Kickapoo Conversations project initiated by the Valley Stewardship Network, a local group that CC helped to form. The purpose of these meetings was to involve area residents in determining the direction of land use planning. The meetings were structured to help all participants express their views and to move toward a common vision for the future of the Kickapoo Valley. Organizers focused the discussion around seven topics: Agriculture, Community Facilities and Services, Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Housing, Natural Resources and Transportation. They asked the participants, "Within this topic, what would you like to preserve, create, or change?"

Area residents who attended the first meeting at four different

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sites in the Valley contributed hundreds of suggestions about the economic, environmental and social future of the Valley and prioritized their responses. Ideas included: improved communication throughout the Valley, shared skills and knowledge, development of regional and local markets and value-added products, land use policies, preservation of scenic views and productive agricultural land, and recreational trails.



Residents Set Future Priorities for Kickapoo Valley

The project facilitators then combined the statements from each site into a comprehensive draft vision statement of what the valley should look and feel like and how it should operate in the year 2020.

At the second meeting, the attendees formed working groups according to their individual interests and developed the “How” part of the vision—plans of action associated with each of the seven original topics. Many of these groups met throughout the month of March to expand their work into more detailed plans.

Finally, at the third meeting, participants began the work of aligning the formal vision statement with the action plans. Participants gave input into the form and function of the final report.

The completed Kickapoo Watershed Vision of the Year 2020 and its suggested action plans was published in report form in June. It will be presented to all valley units of government, public libraries and newspapers

and made available to watershed citizens. The report will provide a useful tool for citizens to use in developing future plans taking into consideration community concerns, trends, values and needs.

Exploring New Projects and Roles in Belize

In 1985, CC staff initiated the Community Baboon Sanctuary in Belize, which began a grassroots conservation movement throughout the country. The landscape of the environmental movement in Belize has been changing rapidly in recent years, and Community Conservation, Inc. is exploring new ways in which we can offer assistance to community-managed projects. In March, CC Board President Scott Bernstein attended the first workshop aimed at addressing local community empowerment issues for protected areas across the entire country of Belize. The two-day session was sponsored by the US Peace Corps, Belize Audubon Society and Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT). Participants included representatives from most protected areas in Belize, government officials from several agencies concerned with environmental management and protection, and representatives from several non-governmental groups working within Belize. In all, approximately 40 people attended the workshop, which was held at the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary.

This workshop was the first attempt in Belize to identify issues of concern in protected area management and identify ways that different organizations might collaborate to address solutions to these issues. Workshop activities focused on several goals including introducing participants to the many protected areas and organizations operating in Belize, developing concrete needs and solutions in a specified timeframe, and exploring how organizations might collaborate to their mutual benefit. In

addition to documenting the proceedings of the conference, Bernstein presented a draft survey to be delivered across Belize by Peace Corps volunteers, which would be the first attempt at gathering nationwide baseline demographic data and attitudes surrounding environmental protection. At the conclusion of the workshop, Associate Peace Corps Director, Matt Miller, presented resolutions that outlined a framework for continuing the process of cooperation between NGO's, the Government of Belize and community-based organizations.

Commonly raised concerns by the participant organizations throughout the workshop included addressing the needs of communities in fundraising, enforcement of protected area laws, further gathering of scientific data in the protected areas and training in a variety of subjects. Many of the needs raised at the conference are ones in which Community Conservation has direct experience in Belize, and the potential for assisting local community groups in developing their skills shows promise. Following the conference, Bernstein spent several weeks visiting new protected areas including the Gra-Gra Lagoon National Park, Freshwater Creek National Park and several others. He met with their managing organizations, discussing ways that CC might be able to offer assistance in developing the skills to effectively manage their natural resource areas.



Matt Miller of Peace Corps with Julian Lewis and Tim Flores of Friends of the Gra-Gra Lagoon National Park

International Wildlife Conservation Congress in Colombia

Invited by Carlos McClean, President of Ecolombia, CC Director Rob Horwich presented two lectures at the First Congreso Internacional de Conservacion de Vida Silvestre in Medellin, Colombia in March. The topics of Horwich's talks were Community Conservation with a Focus on the Black Howler in Belize and Translocation of Black Howler Monkeys to Establish a Viable Population in a Protected Area in Belize. The Congress was attended by about 400 participants, most from Colombia with representatives from the US, France, Costa Rica, Ecuador and El Salvador. Other topics presented at the Congress included condor reintroduction, wildlife rehabilitation, wildlife diseases, butterfly conservation and maintenance in zoos, funding conservation strategies, inte-

grated conservation strategies, ecology of Colombian wildlife, marketing rainforest products, and zoo education programs.

Following the formal conference about 80 participants made a field trip to Ecolombia's rehabilitation field station (El Centro de Rehabilitacion de Fauna Farallones) near La Pintada. The tour stopped in the village to view the small shops where residents make monkey toys and to see the Red Howler Festival that was stimulated by Ecolombia. At the Center, confiscated wildlife including endemic curassows and cotton topped tamarin monkeys were being held for captive breeding and reintroduction. Most of the cages were full of over 50 red howlers, which are part of Ecolombia's first reintroduction project. These confiscated howlers are being caged in social groups and conditioned to natural wild foods in preparation for eventual release into the adjacent area. Some

CC Books available for sale
A Belizean Rain Forest \$21
Primates of Northeast India \$25
Organic Dairy Farming \$8
Natural Resources of Orinoco Nicaragua \$10
Sea Turtle coloring book \$7
CBS Howlers (poster) \$12
Golden Langur (poster) \$12
Community Conservation video \$22
 All prices postpaid

small forest areas have been enclosed by electric fences as halfway cages before groups are liberated.

CC is currently advising Ecolombia on howler release techniques including site evaluation and development, introduction to wild foods, development of social groups, release protocols and post-release monitoring. Because of the large number of red howlers at the Center, Ecolombia's howler release program has the potential to be a model for reintroduction of captive howlers.



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