

CC UPDATE

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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.

Taking Co-Management to a New Level Peace Corps and Community Co-Management in Belize

Community Conservation, Inc. is taking its co-management vision to a new level by showing others how to do the work of empowering communities that we have been doing for twenty years. By teaching the process to others, we can multiply the effect of our efforts. By shifting some of our energies from working directly with the communities to this more efficient strategy, we can effect major change in a region or in the world.

We are beginning this work in Belize, a country with strong support for the co-management vision of government and individuals working together to protect areas and resources. After his most recent visit to Belize in March, CC Director Dr. Robert Horwich reported that the communities are enthusiastic, but their abilities are lacking. They need information and training. They might need help managing a bank account or collecting fees. They need to know how to strengthen their own organization by creating a management plan, running group meetings and raising funds. They need to know how to lay out a park. In effect, they need mentors to train them, but also to point them to people who can help them learn these skills. This support coordinator is the role Horwich played in 1985 when he helped create the Community Baboon Sanctuary in Belize, a sanctuary for howler monkeys.

Enter the Peace Corps

Environmental Program Manager of the Peace Corps Matt Miller has formalized a program to help conservation-minded Peace Corps Volunteers to become support coordinators for communities in Belize. The volunteers will help communities work with the government to create and maintain protected areas. As the community groups develop, the Peace Corps Volunteers will be replaced by village project coordinators. But the volunteers themselves need knowledge about how to be effective in this support role. During this visit Horwich participated in a Peace Corps training, presenting the lessons CC has learned in its first twenty years of projects around the world. The trainees learned what has and has not worked in other communities.

Horwich also ran a session on evaluation of community co-management projects. The volunteers learned techniques they can use to check the progress of the projects they have been assigned to support. The evaluation uses twenty-six benchmarks such as: Does



Matt Miller training Peace Corps Volunteers

the project involve a protected area? Is there a group working to manage the area? Does the group have an operations plan? Does it have bylaws? The volunteers answered these questions about their projects to get a sense of how far along the project is.

These projects are usually concerned with developing parks and other protected land areas. An example is the organization working on Five Blues Lake National Park in central Belize which was the first to sign an agreement with the Forestry Department in Belize. They have been managing the park for ten years. They

have a lot of tenacity and interest, but they need a lot more training.

After the workshop, Horwich and Miller took a five-day tour of the community projects in Belize. They talked to fifteen communities and non-governmental organizations, and updated our knowledge of what is happening in the country.

Conservation Johnny Appleseeds

Robert Horwich, Matt Miller, the Peace Corps volunteers and Community Conservation workers are sowing seeds of inspiration that conservation can be done by communities. In showing how individuals have inspired or supported communities and how communities have made a difference in all these projects, we hope to help others realize their potential in stimulating change. The focus is to empower communities to take care of their environment. If we do enough of this, the whole world will be taken care of by the communities who live there. That's the dream.

Horwich hopes that by inspiring others to do what he does, the dream will be come reality.

From War to Conservation in El Salvador

Not long ago, there were few recorded occurrences of spider monkeys in all of El Salvador, where the forests and fauna have been severely disturbed by human interaction. Bombing during the civil war in the 1980's caused major damage to large forested areas. However, the land mines put in the forest to keep out insurgents also kept out loggers and poachers, ironically providing protection to the unbombed forest areas. These surviving forests became vital to the people as a place to hide from soldiers. The communities' bonding to their forests from this experience may yield positive results as Community Conservation, Inc begins to develop community involvement in forest management focused on the endangered spider monkey.



Proposed Biological Corridor (in black) and spider monkey populations (dots) MARN

The initial research phase of CC Associate Karenina Morales' spider monkey project located nine surviving monkey populations. Morales has chosen four potential protected areas with spider monkey populations for focus in the Jiquilisco Bay area in southeastern El Salvador. The project is now progressing on several other fronts: education, co-management conservation and community development.

Education

Morales tutored local wardens on natural history and forest ecology to reinforce and integrate their informal knowledge. They have been trained in taking tree phenology data and have been given materials such as field guides, medicines and equipment to begin conservation research on the spider monkey.

The education with the wardens was two-way. They were the ones who taught Karenina how to see the monkeys in the forest. Utilizing the knowledge and skills of residents is an important strength of community conservation.

Morales has given talks to schoolchildren of the focus area on conservation of the forests and wildlife with a special focus on the protection of the spider monkeys. A drawing contest called "The Spider Monkeys and the Forest" was held in Chaguantique where all children in the school were invited to participate in a creative drawing program. Nine hundred copies of a booklet written by Morales about spider monkeys including their biology, ecology, behavior and conservation were distributed to schoolchildren in areas where spider monkeys occur.

Morales has recruited two other students, Norma Argueta and Mariana Rivera, who studied spider monkey ecology for their senior theses at the University of El Salvador.

Co-management Conservation

El Salvador is participating with other Central American nations to develop a natural corridor the length of C.A. The El Salvador Ministry of Natural Resources (MARN), as part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor Plan, has proposed protecting a corridor along its borders. MARN has proposed various co-management systems. CC has encouraged MARN to utilize community co-management and has offered assistance. Morales will help communities in the Jiquilisco Bay area in developing a community co-management system within the proposed corridor.

MARN has adopted the spider monkey as the flagship species for the protected lands and the Jiquilisco Bay area as their model project. Morales has been given a national award for her conservation work.

Community Development

Each of the four areas in Jiquilisco Bay has a community with working

ADESCOs, community development groups. The Nancuchina-me ADESCO has been protecting the forest and collaborating in various research studies including those of primates, birds and reptiles. Morales and MARN staff met with them to learn about their work and how to help them.

The ADESCO in Normandía developed a program of “improved cookstoves” which resulted in the inhabitants cooking with less wood. Compared to their traditional hornilla cookstoves, the new stoves use only a quarter of the amount of wood! Additionally, inhabitants of Nancuchiname and Normandía have begun including fast growing and medicinal tree species in their gardens. All of these efforts have notably reduced the pressure on the forests.

From Dismal to Hopeful

The prospects for survival of the spider monkeys and their forest communities are improving with the involvement of their human neighbors as allies. The residents’ loyalty to their forests was highlighted when the funds that paid the wardens’ salaries ran out. They continued to do their jobs, without pay, in spite of their poverty. Such dedication is the heart of community conservation.



Community Conservation in Papua New Guinea



Samandingke and Horwich at Yawan

CC Director, Dr. Rob Horwich, recently made his second trip to the Huon Peninsula in Papua New Guinea under the auspices of the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Project coordinated by Dr. Lisa Dabek of the Roger Williams Park Zoo. He spent two weeks visiting villages in the YUS (the eastern area bordered by the Yupno, Urawa, Som Rivers) working with Danny Samandingke, the In-Country Education Coordinator of the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Project (TKCP) and a recently graduated schoolteacher of TepTep village. The main purpose of the trip was to introduce Horwich to the local landowners and to continue to gather information on laws of Papua New Guinea.

However, the trip yielded extra benefits. The trip introduced Samandingke to a number of conservation groups who pledged their help and set the stage for landowner workshops and a law book to be written for landowners. An updated map was created of the lands pledged by 26 clans, including 5 new clans, for a total of over 100,000 acres pledged by indigenous clans of the YUS area.

On the north coast in Madang Horwich met with the director, John Chitoa, and other members of Bismarck Ramu Group (BRG) which works in community empowerment. Dabek, Horwich, others from the TKCP and a BRG member then visited Tokain village which had recently signed a “conservation deed,” an innovative legal mechanism that BRG has introduced to some Madang area villages. Dabek, Horwich and Chitoa then initiated the process leading to a BRG program of workshops for the YUS communities. Horwich also met with Ed Mayer and Sue Brown of the Nature Conservancy (TNC) to learn about another innovative local level government legal mechanism that TNC had been trying in the Almami Conservation Area in the Adelbert Mountains.



Leaving Madang, the TKCP reassembled in Lae to see Danny Samandingke’s graduation from Balob’s Teachers College in Lae. Danny’s education is part of the TKCP program to train locals who return to their village to teach. Following his graduation, Samandingke and Horwich visited villages of Isan, Teptep, West Kokop, and Yawan. The area is so mountainous that the only feasible way to get from village to village is to fly in small planes that land on airstrips on the mountain ridges. Villages in PNG have been so isolated that the country has developed over 800 separate languages. PNG has the highest concentration of languages in the world. A pidgin English, Tok Pisin, has developed as the common language. Within a short while, Samandingke and Horwich worked out an effective way of working together with the village landowners. At Isan they met with the YUS Elementary Education Coordinator, Haring Qoreka, as well as landowners from Bonkiman village. At Kokop they met with landowners of Keweng 1 village including a Ward Councilor. Their presentations were well received. The almost immediate feedback was that five new clans pledged lands during their village trip: West Kokop, Kotet, Mup, Worin and Sindamon. When Samandingke and Horwich developed an updated landowner pledge map, it included 10 new pledges in the past year, bringing the total to 26 clans whose pledged lands almost completed a contiguous area creating a semicircular area of protected lands.

A highlight of the trip was during their visit to the last village, Yawan, where Dono Ongate, the Ward Councilor, and his wife Annie hosted them. This final visit



turned out to be a “sing sing” extravaganza. Groups in brightly colored traditional dress welcomed the two. Once seated they were treated to a conservation play showing the lighting of a traditional fire and then hunters invading traditional lands to be driven out by the landowners. Horwich and Samandingke then spoke about the reason for the visit and ideas of conservation for the YUS area. Later they met with six clans from the Yawan and Kotet area that pledged their lands toward

the conservation of the tree kangaroos.

The final leg to the trip was to Port Moresby where Horwich introduced Samandingke to many of the conservationists and NGOs that he had met on his first trip. The most valuable resources were the promises of help from Conservation International, Environmental Law Centre, and Centre for Environmental Law and Community Rights.

Census of Golden Langurs in Koila Moila, Assam

As part of CC's Golden Langur Conservation Project, 5 NGO's have formed the Manas Biosphere Conservation Forum: Aaranyak of Guwahati, Natures Foster of Bongaigaon, New Horizons of Koila Moila, Green Heart Nature Club of Kokrajhar and Green Forest Conservation of Kachugaon. One goal of the project is for each NGO to census their area on a long-term basis. To this end, Drs. Jihosuo Biswas and Dilip Chetry, formerly of the Indo-US Primate Project, held a training session in the Koila Moila area of Assam in late February. Koila Moila has had extensive deforestation, settlements and has been a site for disturbances by militant groups in the past.

As a result of the workshop, a 10-person team from New Horizons censused 6 sites near Koila Moila within the Aie Valley Division. Participants were divided into groups and used a modified line transect and direct count method during 6AM to 1PM for one day each in the 6 sites. Within these 6 sites they located a total of 25 troops of golden langurs that included 327 animals within a 20 square kilometer area. These troops included 55 adult males, 134 adult females and 138 juveniles and infants. This population with 42% juveniles and infants gives real hope for the species in this area which has suffered extensive deforestation and has been a site of disturbances by militant groups in the past.

This first survey for the project was the first one done by New Horizons, a relatively new NGO that formed a few years ago. In addition to the monkeys, the participants saw an endangered hispid hare, a herd of elephants, hornbills, deer, a dead giant squirrel, and signs of wild boar and gaur (Indian bison). New Horizons also has tree nursery plantations for reforestation and has created a weaving factory for local Bodo tribal women.

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