

CC UPDATE

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COMMUNITY CONSERVATION, Inc.

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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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Golden Langur Conservation in India is Hopeful

The Golden Langur Conservation Project is showing major success for a number of reasons. CC Director Horwich recently returned from Assam, India with good news about efforts to protect this endangered leaf-eating monkey. The golden langur is a focal species because it lives only in the rainforests of western Assam and Bhutan. If the forest is protected it and many other species that depend on the forest will also be protected. The purpose of the Golden Langur Conservation Project, organized by Community Conservation, is to rebuild and preserve forests in the Manas Biosphere Reserve in western Assam between Bhutan and Bangladesh. This area is the main range of the golden langur.

In the past ten years, more than one third of the area has been deforested from illegal timber smuggling. This smuggling has occurred because government forestry officials have been unable to move freely in the forest due to activities of militant groups of the indigenous Bodo tribal people that have maintained control of forest areas and threatened forest officials. Recently the major militant group signed an accord with the Central Government of India and is negotiating the formation of a Bodo Territorial

council and area they will administer. The cessation of militant activity will allow forest officials to reestablish their forest protection.

Horwich attended a meeting of the project's Manas Biosphere Conservation Forum, a cooperative effort of five regional non-governmental organizations that CC has been working with on the project. The organizations, Aaranyak, Green Heart Nature Club, Nature's Foster, Green Forest Conservation and New Horizon, each work in a different part of the Biosphere. They work with the village people to rebuild the forests. They also census the monkeys to monitor the populations in their areas as a measure of the success of the program.



Horwich with Staff of Manas Tiger Reserve

The NGOs are signing up a number of villages under the Joint Forest Management law which took effect in Assam three years ago. Under this law if the villagers help plant forests, they can get benefits from the forest. The project is currently working with over 80 villages within the boundaries of the Reserve Forests or in buffer zones around the protected areas. Some villages have formed Forest Management Committees, have had their areas surveyed by forest staff and have begun planting trees or encouraging areas to regrow naturally.

Horwich, with members of Green Forest Conservation and the District Forest Officer, visited two villages within the Ripu Reserve Forest, one of which had a tree nursery that was started 4 years ago. The nursery has expanded by four fold and has been used in reforestation of a number of areas, some of which are now 15 feet tall. Experimental forest cash crops, such as pepper or ginger which need shade to grow, are

being tried within these plantations, giving the villagers added incentives to protect the forest.

Most importantly the government is moving to create an extended area of these western forest reserves as a wildlife sanctuary. Since they are not inhabited, it will not affect the livelihoods of any people but the area will be afforded more protection by the Forestry Department. This area is home for many large animals such as tigers, leopards, Indian bison and buffalo and a number of deer species. It is also an important corridor for elephants that have been threatened by major forest loss.

In other areas of the range of the golden langur, a weaving project has begun by New Horizon in the Manas Reserve Forest. Natures Foster is working with villagers to form self-help groups who work together with a cooperative bank account, making money available for loans to small businesses of group members. They have also created a model farm to show people how they can earn money from tree and grass crops without using slash and burn techniques. As a result of these efforts, people are finding better ways to sustain themselves and log smuggling has tapered off.

Deforestation of the Assam forests had become the tragedy of the commons, with land owned by everybody but cared for by nobody. With the villagers participating in managing and benefiting from the forests, things are retuning to some of the old ways which give the villages responsibility. This has been Community Conservation's philosophy since its founding—the importance of getting the community involved in managing their own resources. This concept works in Assam just as it works in other areas of the world and in CC's home, the Kickapoo Valley of Wisconsin.

Kickapoo Conversations Report

The result of the “Kickapoo Conversations” that were held in the Kickapoo watershed in Wisconsin is a report of how the area residents envision the future of their Kickapoo Valley. In a series of three meetings held simultaneously in 4 locations in the Kickapoo Valley, 225 residents came together to determine the direction of future land use planning. The meetings were coordinated by the Valley Stewardship Network (VSN), an organization which formed as a result of CC's work on watershed stewardship in the Kickapoo Valley in earlier years.

The report was published in June 2003 by the Valley Stewardship Network as an inspirational tool for land comprehensive planning efforts. One of the more useful sections includes a step-by-step guide to developing a comprehensive plan for area townships and villages. The state of Wisconsin has mandated that all village administrative units must have a comprehensive land use plan by 2010 if they are to have any town ordinances. Therefore many communities in the Kickapoo Valley are beginning the planning process.

The second section of the report contains the participant's vision for the future of 2020. It shows how the ideas were developed and how action plans were created for bringing some of the ideas to fruition. Some ideas generated in the conversations include creating an area radio station which is now in the early stages of formation, establishing a dark sky preserve around Wildcat Mountain State Park in the north of the valley, and creating an agriculture steering committee to focus on area agriculture issues.

VSN members gave presentations of the report to all 48 units of government in the watershed. While formally giving copies of the report to the township and village Boards, the volunteers also gave information on how to use the report in their land use planning efforts. Copies have also been distributed to local area libraries, schools and government agencies in the valley. Part of the report can be viewed on VSN's website: www.kickapooovsn.org.

Spider Monkey Conservation in El Salvador

CC has been encouraging one of the first primate studies in El Salvador in recent years. El Salvador, with the highest rate of deforestation in Central America, has lost many of its larger animals. It was thought that there were only a few remnant populations of spider monkeys left in the country. CC has been working with Karenina Morales, a recent graduate of the University of El Salvador, to survey the country in search of any remnant populations of their last primate species. Ms Morales, the first primatologist in her country has been encouraging other students in primatology. Working with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MARN), Ms Morales has to date located 9 spider monkey populations in Nancuchiname, La Normandia, Chaguantique, El Tercio, Cerro El Mono, Monte Christo, Conchagua, Volcan de San Salvador, El Impossible, and Olomega Lagoon. Most of the populations are in the southeast part of the country. With support from the Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation and Primate Conservation, Inc she has been able to document these remnant populations and will be doing more detailed censusing of them.



Spider monkey by Stephen Nash

Most importantly she will begin to work with villages adjacent to four of these populations within Jiquilisco Bay on the southeast Pacific coast of El Salvador to

encourage the protection of this locally rare species of primate and their forest habitat. Working with the Ministry of natural resources who is interested in the concept of community co-management of their protected areas, Ms Morales will try to help these communities within the Jiquilisco Bay watershed to form co-management groups to protect these remnant forests and their spider monkeys. The communities near La Normandia, Chaguantique and El Tercio already have cooperatives which have been protecting their forests. Nancuchiname has other community groups which Morales hopes to encourage to conserve the monkeys. MARN has selected the Jiquilisco Bay as a focus for their corridor protective system which will eventually encircle the country at its exterior borders.

CC Associate, Dr. Clara Jones



Clara Jones, a CC Associate since 1997, has had a 30 year odyssey with howler monkeys which has helped CC Director, Rob Horwich who has been busy with conservation efforts to get some research results published. A researcher since 1973, most of her research has focused on Central American howler monkey sexual selection and reproductive competition, which influence behavior and social organization.

She began as a graduate student in Psychology at Cornell doing field studies on mantled howlers at Barro Colorado Island Panama in 1973, influenced by the similarities between howlers and humans. From the early 1980's until the early 1990's she studied the howlers for their own sake but with a comparative approach as a result of courses in animal behavior, behavioral ecology, and sociobiology. These interests led to her current work devoted to understanding the general patterns and principles of behavior and social organization influenced by her friendship with the late Jasper Loftus-Hills.

Her association with CC came out of curiosity to study a howler species with a social organization different than the multimale-multifemale structures of the mantled howler, *A. palliata*. All other howler species demonstrate a primarily polygynous (single male) social organization, though a variable proportion of social groups may include more than one male. Her work with CC has led to a series of collaborative publications with Horwich and CC Associate Robin Brockett, founder of the Wildlife Care Center in Belize on the less known black howler which was the focus of CC's first community conservation project. Jones has also conducted research with Jesse Young, manager of the CBS, on hunting attitudes and beliefs of Creoles at the CBS.

Community Baboon Sanctuary Establishes International Connection

The Community Baboon Sanctuary (CBS) in Belize is the oldest project catalyzed by CC staff. Established in 1985, it has gone through a number of changes in its 19-year history. Two years ago the CBS management was taken over by the Woman's Conservation Group (WCG), composed of women representatives of all of the participating villages. The WCG, under the leadership of Jesse Young, has been very successful in rejuvenating CBS. A year ago they completed a sanctuary restaurant and this year they completed an education center.

They have now joined in a partnership with the Stockton College in Pomona, New Jersey. This partnership began when Patrick Hossay, a professor at the college, visited the Sanctuary this year with a group of students working on a development project in the local area. Although they were there to work with the local schools, he and his students were so impressed with the CBS projects, they lent a hand on some of the construction in the new education center. The students that worked with Hossay on the first trip designed a new website for the CBS at www.howlermonkeys.org. Visitors to this site can contribute to the CBS by becoming members or 'adopting' a monkey. CC has offered to be a repository for the funds, making all donations tax deductible in the US. A few weeks after this initial visit, Hossay, whose research is in environmental and conservation politics, returned to the CBS while researching community conservation efforts in Central America. This visit forged a new and promising alliance between Dr. Hossay and the CBS.

Future projects are equally exciting. Hossay's students are now working on an on-line field guide for the CBS site. And, in the summer of 2004, Hossay will lead two teams to the CBS to work with local community members. The first team will arrive in May to refurbish the CBS museum, designing and installing a series of new displays and generally restoring the building. A second team in August will help design and run an environmental education program for local community children. These groups will also help build camping facilities at the CBS. Since these trips are integrated with a course on sustainable development, students will prepare for these projects throughout the spring term. In addition, with the help of CC, Hossay is considering a program to involve his students in helping to census the howlers for the CBS. In the future, Hossay is hoping to expand these projects to other community conservation efforts in Belize and elsewhere. Dr Hossay can be reached at patrick.hossay@stockton.edu.

Benchmarking Seminar

CC board members recently participated in an organizational development seminar utilizing a benchmarking process to identify aspects of the organization that need attention. The benchmarking technique, developed by the Institute for Conservation Leadership of Takoma Park, Maryland, helps the participants compare their organization to a hypothetical, ideally functioning organization in a number of critical areas. These

include vision and planning, program, fundraising, budgeting and accounting, board, staff, volunteers and public communication

CC board members identified the priority concerns as strategic and annual planning and leadership and volunteer development. A strategic planning process was initiated to address these areas. Board members renewed their commitment to the vision and organization of Community Conservation.

Lisa Goodman of River Alliance of Wisconsin, a network of grassroots conservation organizations in Wisconsin, facilitated the workshop. CC's sister organization, Valley Stewardship Network, also attended the workshop that was hosted by CC board member Mark Taylor at his retreat center, Round River Institute.

Forest Primate Connections

Hoolock gibbons in Assam, India are benefiting from an idea generated in the Community Baboon Sanctuary in Belize. In 1987 when a new road was coming into the village of Bermudian Landing, villagers working with the CBS, fearing that some of the howlers living in the village would be hit by cars when crossing the road, erected a rope bridge to facilitate the troop's crossing. On one side of the road they planted a "living fence post", a 15 foot tall tree branch that could root and grow. This they connected with a rope ladder above the road to a tree on the other side. Initially the howlers would not use the bridge but after a year the whole troop began crossing the road on this rope bridge. The adult male took the most time in acclimating to the bridge and sometimes he would cross the road on the ground while the rest of the troop crossed by the bridge.



This idea was modified for gibbons in Borajan Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam, India. Jayanta Das, a researcher studying the local endangered hoolock gibbon, constructed more rigid bamboo bridges which these apes used almost immediately to

cross forest gaps. Das and his team of conservationists tried two types of support, a long bamboo supported by another bamboo in a T configuration and another bamboo supported by 2 bamboos in an X configuration. While both served the gibbons, the X support seems more successful and will be used henceforth. Interestingly, the hoolock gibbons use the T bridges by bipedally walking across it like a tight rope circus acrobat. But they more comfortably use their typical brachiating swinging locomotion on the X bridges which allow them to brachiate along the full bridge span, which may range from 7 to 21 meters. In addition to the gibbons 2 of the other 4 diurnal primate species in the sanctuary have used the bridges as well (capped langurs and Assamese macaques). The gibbons and the other primates used these bridges much sooner than the howlers, crossing forest gaps on them after only a few weeks.

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