

ENHANCING THE IMPACT OF CONSERVATION SCIENCE

DRAFT

The Society for Conservation Biology's Strategic Plan

2006 – 2010



June 2, 2005

Introduction

The Society for Conservation Biology is a global community of professional conservation scientists and practitioners.

The Society has grown tremendously since it was established in 1986. Implementation of the goals identified at the 1999 board strategic planning retreat have led to remarkable success with three major strategic initiatives: the establishment of an Executive Office (EO) in Washington DC, the creation of a new journal focused upon conservation practitioners (*Conservation in Practice*), and the evolution into an international society.

Our recent efforts to internationalize the Society have greatly expanded our reach, while taxing our limited staff capacity. The Board's motivation in initiating this new strategic planning effort is to build on our recent success by seriously examining how we can maximize the Society's impact, create a common vision of the kind of international organization we want to be, revise our goals as necessary to reflect current opportunities and constraints, and identify the general objectives we need to pursue to reach our revised goals. The Board expects this Strategic Plan to provide the guidance necessary for the Executive Office, committees, and sections to develop the specific implementation plans (work plans) that address the activities required to achieve our goals and objectives.

The Society's 2006-2010 Strategic Plan is an outline for building the next generation of publications, programs, and services that will deliver added value to a growing and diverse body of conservation scientists and practitioners around the world. The plan provides strategic direction and high level parameters to guide the Society's work over the next five years. The Strategic Plan does this by identifying actions in a hierarchy moving from the overall mission to goals, objectives, and finally specific activities. The strategic context on which the plan was developed draws on the organization's past successes and challenges, particularly the result of its global expansion during the last five years. It also reflects the Society's understanding of the needs of existing members today, as well as its projections about future trends and needs in conservation science. The following goals and objectives are parameters that will guide programmatic development and build the capacity necessary to maximize the Society's impact while maintaining financial stability and organizational growth in the coming five years. Appendix 1 provides a description of the factors affecting the strategic planning effort such as strategic drivers and assumptions. Appendix 2 provides definitions for the terms used in this plan. Appendix 3 identifies the members of the SCB Strategic Planning Committee.

Mission, Vision, & Values

The integrity and effectiveness of every organization rests on its mission, vision for the future, and organizational values.

Mission: The mission of the Society is:

To advance the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity.

Vision: Our vision for the future takes a global perspective both in how we want the world to be and how we, as a Society, want to be. In these visions, we see:

A world where people understand, value, and conserve the diversity of life on Earth.

SCB as an effective, internationally respected organization of conservation professionals that is the leading voice for the study and conservation of Earth's biodiversity.

Organizational Values: The Society and its members share these common values.

1. The natural diversity of organisms, ecological complexity, and evolutionary processes have value and are necessary to support all species including our own;
2. Human-caused extinctions and the degradation, destruction, or loss of functionality of natural ecosystems are undesirable;
3. Maintaining and restoring biodiversity is the responsibility of all people and governments;
4. The sciences, especially conservation sciences, perform a critical role in understanding how the natural world operates and how human societies and actions can both positively and negatively affect the natural world; and
5. Science should inform policy and management decisions affecting biodiversity.

Goals and Objectives

The strategic direction laid out in this plan is based on four programmatic goals (Conservation Science, Conservation Management, Conservation Policy, and Conservation Education) and two organizational goals (Impact & Reputation and A Strong Organization). These goals are milestones for the success of this five-year plan and for the long-term success of the Society. They will focus the Society's efforts on improving the quantity and quality of conservation research and enhancing the use of that science in management, education, and policy. To accomplish this, the Society must improve its organizational effectiveness, financial strength, and impact. The accompanying objectives and recommended activities provide benchmarks and parameters that will guide the Society's strategic decision-making and activities through 2010. While recommended activities are described for objectives, we expect that these activities will be

prioritized and modified by the Board during the implementation phase. The initiation of new activities will be undertaken only when funding for those activities has been secured.

The Society's six goals are:

1. **Conservation Science.** The scientific research and knowledge needed to understand and conserve biodiversity is identified, funded, completed, disseminated, and applied to research, management, and policy.
2. **Conservation Management.** Conservation practitioners and managers are provided the scientific information and recommendations needed to conserve biological diversity at all scales.
3. **Conservation Policy.** The Society effectively informs and improves policy decisions by providing the highest quality scientific counsel, analysis, and recommendations to major international conventions, governments, organizations, and foundations to advance the conservation of biological diversity.
4. **Conservation Education.** Education, training, and capacity building programs are identified, strengthened, and developed, to inform the public, educate leaders, and support current and future generations of conservation scientists and practitioners.
5. **Impact and Reputation.** The Society is recognized as the world's leading authority in conservation science and its membership, publications, and conferences deliver high quality, integrated, and effective products.
6. **A Strong Organization.** The Society builds and maintains the organizational capacity necessary to operate our programs, provide products and services, and run an effective organization.

PROGRAMMATIC GOALS

I. CONSERVATION SCIENCE

Goal Statement

The scientific research and knowledge needed to understand and conserve biodiversity is identified, funded, completed, disseminated, and applied to research, management, and policy.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

The Society's members form a global community of natural and social scientists and practitioners who believe that the application of science to management and policy is an essential part of effective conservation. More information and greater understanding are necessary if we are to halt the loss of biodiversity and sustain the complex evolutionary and ecological processes of our world. The Society must ensure that the science needed to effectively manage biodiversity at the local, national, and global scales is conducted. Moreover the dissemination of its results must be clear, understandable, and widely available to conservation practitioners and policy decision-makers. By translating and providing scientific results to policy-makers the Society strategically converts scientific information into tangible, effective policy decisions, and management actions.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Prepare a Publications Strategy by 2006. The publications strategy should be based on a market analysis that identifies the needs and financial viability of the Society's family of publications including existing publications (*Conservation Biology* and *Conservation in Practice*), affiliated publications, and any new publications. No more than two new publications would be initiated during this strategic plan. The analysis and resulting strategy will:
 - a. Recommend a suite of publications that address the needs of international and regional researchers, resource managers, and policy-makers.
 - b. Identify readership and subscription trends in existing membership and target audiences.
 - c. Identify the need/demand (target audiences) for additional publications and the prospect of partnering/affiliating with others to meet these needs. Consider:
 - i. *Review of Conservation*, reviews of current conservation or scientific research that impacts policy or management.
 - ii. *Conservation Monographs*, a venue for longer articles on research.
 - iii. *Conservation Letters*, to rapidly disseminate research results.
 - iv. A dissemination publication to move research results into management.
 - v. A dissemination publication to move research results into policy.
 - vi. An outlet for species-specific research and/or regional research.
 - d. Evaluate the potential for existing and new publications to generate revenue, identify additional funding sources that may be required, and develop revenue and expense projections. Publications should as a minimum be self-sustaining. Define publications business model and relationships with publishers.
 - e. Validate the need, or lack thereof, for translating publications into other languages.
 - f. Determine the demand for electronic versus hard copy publications (e.g. *Conservation Letters*, *Conservation Monographs*, and *Review of Conservation*).
 - g. Further evaluate options for increasing the number of issues of *Conservation Biology* per year, reduce the publications turn around, and consider updating the journal's format and look.
2. Expand the Society's dissemination of research results.
 - a. Triple the number of visits to the website by 2008.

- b. Increase by ten-fold use of the expertise database by 2010.
 - c. Have held at least one annual global meeting in every geographic region by the end of 2010.
 - d. Have held a sectional meeting in every region by the end of 2010.
 - e. Disseminate the Society's research priorities and findings at selected, high visibility international and national scientific, policy, and management conferences, symposia, and meetings.
3. Identify and publish/post global research priorities periodically beginning in 2007.
 4. Increase communications and collaboration among researchers, managers, and policy-makers to ensure key policy and management institutions have the scientific information needed to accomplish shared conservation goals by 2008. Specifically work with IUCN, CBD (SBBSTA), FAO, WORLD BANK, UNEP, UNDP and national organization such as USAID, USFWS, USFS, USPS, DFID, ROYAL SOCIETY, and NAS. Coordinate with Management Objective 3a and Policy objective 5c.
 - a. Hold at least one management-oriented symposium at each annual meeting that brings the Society, government agencies, NGOs, and research organizations together to discuss research and management priorities.
 - b. Develop a research agenda linked to policy and conservation management priorities and disseminate to targeted international, national, and NGO bodies that affect conservation policies and management (e.g., Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and national government agencies).

II. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Goal Statement

Conservation practitioners and managers are provided the scientific information and recommendations needed to conserve biological diversity at all scales.

Rationale: Rationale and Strategic Impact

The science needed to effectively manage biological diversity at the local, national, and global scales needs to be clear, understandable, and widely available to conservation practitioners, managers, and policy-makers. Informed managers make better decisions that, in turn, result in a better understanding and more effective conservation of biological diversity. Toward this end, the Society should play a greater role in translating scientific results to management, identifying or developing best management practices for key management actions; and providing responsive services to managers when they need science to inform their actions. By strategically converting scientific information into tangible, effective information that can be used for management actions, the Society will strengthen conservation practices on the ground.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Enhance the integration of research results into management decisions by 2010.
 - a. Include a section in *Conservation Biology* that addresses management or policy implications of research results by 2007.
 - b. As part of the Publications Strategy, consider the introduction of new journals such as *Conservation Reviews* a new journal to review current conservation or scientific research that impacts policy or management and *Applied Conservation Biology* a new journal to provide an outlet for original applied conservation biology research.
2. Improve communications and interactions between researchers and managers by 2009.
 - a. Hold an annual conservation summit that brings SCB, government agencies, NGOs, and research organizations together to discuss key management-oriented research needs by 2009.
 - b. Sponsor at least one management-oriented symposium at each annual meeting that focuses on identifying or addressing key management needs by 2006.
 - c. Provide the SCB Expertise Database to key biodiversity management organizations by 2006.
3. Develop and disseminate Best Management Practices for 3 topics by 2010. The Policy and Management Committee should identify topics and oversee completion of this objective.

III. CONSERVATION POLICY

Goal Statement

The Society effectively informs and improves policy decisions by providing the highest quality scientific counsel, analyses, and recommendations to major international conventions, governments, organizations, and foundations to advance the conservation of biological diversity.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Resolution of most conservation issues will benefit from scientific expertise and firm support from the Society. We should seek opportunities to apply science to global and national policies. Our mission and values require that the Society engage actively in policy to foster a scientific approach to conservation issues. To ensure good science informs and influences policy toward the conservation of the Earth's biodiversity, the values and expertise of the Society must be recognized and actively sought by the public, policymakers, and key conservation institutions as a result of our expertise on the most relevant national, regional, and international conservation issues. In the next five years, the Society will enhance its credibility and ability to advance the conservation of biological diversity and use of sound science in conservation-related decision-making and policy.

Objectives & Recommended Activities

1. Establish procedures for addressing policy issues by the Society and sections by 2006.
2. Seek funding for a Policy Coordinator in the Executive Office by 2007. This position will coordinate the Society's global and regional policy communications and interventions to ensure policy actions across the organization are consistent with the Society's overall policy priorities and guidelines. The Coordinator leads the development of a policy plan.
3. Produce and implement a plan for influencing priority policy issues by 2007-8. The plan should specify appropriate action and desired outcomes at both the global and regional levels.
 - a. Develop a toolkit for affecting policy at the global, regional, national, and local levels that ensures all policy actions support the Society's mission and Strategic Plan by 2007-8.
 - b. Develop global and regional processes for responding to requests or needs for advice on conservation policy issues, mobilizing members, drafting position statements, presentations to policy makers, and providing information to the media by 2007-8.
4. Improve the dissemination of policy-related research findings and position statements by 2009.
 - a. Identify the Society's priority policy issues in 2006.
 - b. Disseminate policy position statements to targeted international and national policy-making institutions beginning in 2006. Targeted organizations could be: IUCN, CBD (SBBSTA), FAO, WORLD BANK, UNEP, UNDP, and national organization such as USAID, USFWS, USFS, USPS, DFID, ROYAL SOCIETY, and NAS.
 - c. Conduct at least one policy workshop at each annual meeting and invite key policy-makers to the table beginning in 2007. The suggested workshop could be entitled "The 2010 biodiversity target: scientific, management, and policy challenges and new approaches."
5. Develop and build partnerships with targeted organizations to increase the use of science in policy decisions by 2008-9. For example: CBD, CITES, international forums (e.g. IUCN), multilateral and bilateral organizations (e.g., World Bank, USAID, DFID), and national agencies to incorporate scientific knowledge into the development of conservation policy. Coordinate partnership development for policy with other partnership efforts (see goal V; objective 4).
6. Coordinate, facilitate, and/or execute at least one Society-initiated project that focuses Society resources on providing a science-based solution a selected, high-priority policy or management need.

IV. CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Goal Statement

Education, training, and capacity building programs are identified, strengthened, and developed, to inform the public, educate leaders, and support current and future generations of conservation scientists and practitioners.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Education is at the core of the Society's mission. The Society has always recognized the importance of education to conservation: for inspiring future generations, creating a scientifically literate public, maintaining professional skills through advanced degrees and continuing education, and enriching both personal and professional lives through increased appreciation of nature. Goals in education overlap somewhat with our overall goal of disseminating conservation research (lifelong learning). The priority for this strategic plan is to focus on university-level and continuing education.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Develop an educational strategy in each section by 2008-9. Strategies should address that region's need for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education capacity in conservation science.
2. Develop and launch at least one sectional educational initiative by 2008-9 that addresses that region's need for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education capacity (e.g. the Austral and Neotropical American section's approach to evaluating needs based on conservation measures).
3. Create continuing education and professional development opportunities for conservation scientists and practitioners at annual meetings by 2006-7.
 - a. Develop and conduct annual meeting mini-courses or workshops on topics of key interest.
 - b. Encourage existing fellowship programs to include conservation science as part of their focus.
4. Develop and build partnerships with selected organizations to enhance educational opportunities. Coordinate partnership development for education with other partnership efforts (see goal V; objective 4).

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

V. IMPACT AND REPUTATION

Goal Statement

The Society is recognized as the world's leading authority in conservation science and its membership, publications, and conferences deliver high quality, integrated, and effective products.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

To be effective, the Society and its members must be recognized as important by key decision-makers, potential partners, and the public. At the most basic level, powerful constituencies, interest groups, and institutions should look to us as a source of sound information that will help them problem solve, in a way that serves our values. Effectiveness with important constituencies in part hinges on our ability to work well with the media and targeted constituencies. The extent to which the Society's programs, products, and services contribute in an integrated fashion to shared goals and objectives will be key to building visibility in the media, attracting new members, and enhancing the organization's programmatic effectiveness over the next five years.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Develop a strong identity, messaging, and promotional activities that will strengthen the Society's visibility and reputation by 2006. Develop the means to maintain and reinforce the Society's identity and messaging across global, regional, and local programs.
 - a. Clarify the Society's identity and develop a compelling message that reinforces our mission and represents the value of our products and services.
 - b. Develop and maintain an attractive suite of benefits that emphasizes member desires such as helping members have an impact, networking, communications, and collaboration in addition to publications value.
 - c. Create a consistent look for the Society's identity and transmit our message across the Society's entire product line and membership outreach efforts, including publications, conferences and meetings, the website, section and chapter materials, and external documents. Align *Conservation in Practice* and annual meeting advertisements with the Society's identity, message, mission, and goals.
 - d. Identify and establish a presence at high-profile venues to increase the Society's visibility with important constituencies, e.g. zoos, the IUCN, major publications, and international forums, most notably CBD (SBSTA), the World Conservation Congress, Parks Congress, etc.
 - e. Expand the Society's awards program to incorporate financial rewards that recognize outstanding achievement in conservation and to the Society by individuals, partners, organizations, and members. Strive to have the Society's awards be the most prestigious awards available in the field.

2. Strategically integrate section and chapter materials with the Society's core identity, central messaging, and outreach efforts by 2007.
 - a. Develop unique, but compatible, image and messaging for sections, without losing the core identity and culture of the Society internationally. By 2006, develop a consistent look and set of messages on all Society web pages, publications, promotional, and informational materials at the section, chapter, and international level.
 - b. Develop roles and responsibilities for SCB sections and chapters that guide their participation in policy, operations, and fundraising activities by 2007.
3. Broaden and strategically integrate the Society's publications, conferences, workshops, and meetings by 2009.
 - a. Determine the degree to which the Society's journals and other publications, including partner journals, need to be integrated and the extent to which they should be differentiated.
 - b. Diversify and standardize the annual meeting agenda by 2008 to:
 - i. Foster the integration of research, management, and policy,
 - ii. Integrate research among sections, and
 - iii. Highlight marine, freshwater, social sciences, and other key topical areas.
 - c. Develop a mechanism to integrate the content and timing of section meetings with international meetings to ensure that they are mutually supporting and not competing while still maintaining local section support.
 - d. Pro-actively market all annual and regional meetings.
 - e. Centralize planning for annual meetings to grow and capture value-added revenue from sponsorship, strengthen the Society's identity and outreach, improve the quality of conference presentations, and negotiate favorable terms with facilities that enhance networking and session transitions.
 - f. Delegate the selection of regional venues and annual meetings to the Society's Conference Committee and Executive Office, who in turn will work with regional sections and local partners to identify specific meetings sites. Within five years, the Executive Office will be responsible for selecting regions to host the annual meetings as well as specific sites for all annual meetings to leverage relationships with conference facilities, sponsors, and partner organizations.
4. Partner with selected organizations to improve the Society's impact and enhance our visibility by 2007.
 - a. Identify a list of priority partnerships that will serve to increase the Society's reputation and impact, by 2006.
 - b. Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the IUCN regarding the Society's collaboration with, and support to, IUCN programs by 2006.
 - c. Develop a process for overseeing and coordinating partnership development to ensure that all partnerships and partnership activities are mutually reinforcing and contribute without conflict to the Society's goals by 2006.

- d. Develop a consistent and centrally managed media communications plan to improve media access to Society expertise and positions. By 2006, identify the top 50 most influential media.
- e. Develop media communications, talking points, and other materials that ensure consistent messages are delivered to media (especially the top 50 media) by staff and members by 2006.
- f. Continually determine the viability of partnering with existing journals or launching new journals with regional content and readership.

VI. A STRONG ORGANIZATION

Goal Statement

The Society builds and maintains the organizational capacity necessary to operate our programs, provide products and services, and run an effective organization.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

To realize its programmatic goals, the Society must have adequate capacity and a strong infrastructure. This means an organization that has a clear sense of direction and purpose with solid and growing funding sources, an adequate operating reserve, committed and skilled staff, sound business practices, and an effective board of governors.

Objectives and Recommended Activities

1. Align staff, management, and governance with the Society's priority research, management, policy, and education goals by 2006.
 - a. Programmatic Capacity: Increase the capacity of the Executive Office to enhance the Society's ability to secure funds, inform policy, and build revenue-generating programs.
 - i. Add the following professional staff positions:
 1. Development Officer (2006)
 2. Policy Coordinator (2007)
 - ii. Obtain expertise in marketing through partnering, contracting, direct hire, or collateral duties by 2006 (concurrently with the hire of the development officer).
 - b. Management: Clarify management roles and responsibilities between the Board and Executive Director to increase the authority and responsibility of the Executive Office with respect to strategic implementation. Define reporting relationships between the Executive Director and editorial offices. Define roles and responsibilities for the Board of Governors, Board Committees, and Executive Office, including job descriptions, responsibility for committee service, development, and communications responsibilities.

- c. Governance: Realign the Board's Committees with priority goals and strategies in research, policy, management, and education. The board should ensure that these topical areas are addressed by its committee structure and responsibilities.
- 2. Develop and implement an integrated marketing plan by 2006 for all products and services. Special emphasis is to be placed on informing the publications strategy, expanding/diversifying revenue, and expanding/diversifying membership.
- 3. Expand and diversify the Society's sources of revenue and increase total annual revenue 27% by 2010.
 - a. Prepare and implement a development/fundraising plan by 2006-7.
 - b. Grow annual revenue by \$450,000 by 2010. Upon completion of the publications strategy and market assessment, the board should determine revenue targets for Conservation Biology, Conservation in Practice, membership, conferences, and grants. The board should also reassess whether or not to decouple membership from publications.
 - c. Diversify revenue from all programs (publications, conferences, and membership) to minimize risks from publications-related revenue drops by 2010.
 - d. Define publications business model and relationships with publishers.
 - e. Maintain an operating reserve of at least 50% of the 2005 annual operating budget through 2010.
- 4. Expand and diversify membership.
 - a. Diversify membership so that 50% of membership is from non-US countries and 20% of membership is students by 2009.
 - b. Identify a suite of membership benefits to specifically increase and diversify membership by 2007 (per Objective 1b, Impact & Reputation).
 - c. Each section develops a membership plan that identifies target audiences, provides recommended strategies for reaching those targets, and establishes attractive membership benefits by 2006.
- 5. Enhance the capacity and functioning of all sections by 2009.
 - a. Each section will develop a plan to fund regional capacity building, consistent with overall program goals of the Society, to identify areas where they believe the Society can help them raise needed funds.
 - b. The Executive Office will work with 3 sections per year to develop regional capacity funding plans.
 - c. The Executive Office, in conjunction with the sections, will develop and implement a central funding strategy with specific targets for building capacity in each region. Each section should generate sufficient revenue to grow regional membership by 20% per year, fund at least one regional meeting every 3 years, and increase member participation in other Society events.
- 6. Partner with selected organizations to leverage programmatic and administrative capacity. Coordinate partnership development to develop capacity with other partnership efforts (see goal V; objective 4).

- a. Identify partner organizations with shared mission to leverage capacity to accomplish the SCB mission.
 - b. Form partnerships with organizations to leverage capacity.
 - c. Develop a process for managing partnerships.
7. Initiate 2011-2015 Strategic Planning cycle in 2009.

Implementation

While this Strategic Plan outlines the broad steps that the Society will take over the next five years, it does not fully complete our planning efforts. Two key additional efforts need to be undertaken and completed. The first is to prepare a publications strategy and the second is to complete the appropriate “implementation” plans for key topical areas.

The publications strategy is needed in order to make informed decisions in the publications arena. Publications are among the most important activities undertaken by the Society. There are a large number of critical questions that could not be answered by this Strategic Plan that must be answered in order for the Society to fully utilize publications to disseminate research, generate revenue, and enhance our reputation and impact. The impact of the Society’s publications cuts across all of our strategic goals. Consequently, this strategy should be prepared by a broadly based, ad hoc group to ensure that the Society obtains the maximum benefit from these activities. A publications strategy should be prepared by 2006 and it should be based on a market analysis. It may also be appropriate for the Publications or Research Committee to take the Publications Strategy and develop a more detailed implementation plan.

Implementation plans are needed to translate the Strategic Plan into concrete activities that the Society can undertake. Specifically, implementation plans should be developed for the following areas:

1. Marketing Plan for the Society’s Products & Services (prepared by Executive Office, with a contractor)
2. Membership Development Plan (prepared by Membership Committee)
3. Media Relations and Management Plan (prepared by Executive Office)
4. Global and Regional Conference Plan (prepared by Conference Committee)
5. Development and Fundraising Plan (prepared by Executive Office)
6. Implementation Monitoring Plan to track progress in implementing the Strategic Plan (prepared by Executive Office)
7. Executive Office Operational Plan (Business Plan) including revenue and expense targets for programs, a staffing timeline, and structural costs that will guide decision-making and implementation of the Strategic Plan. (prepared by Executive Office)

Communications

Effective communication of the new Strategic Plan will be a key implementation task. The Strategic Plan will need to be distributed to Board members, staff, and key individuals. Communication with the Society's members will need to articulate key components of the plan, how this plan is linked to past strategic initiatives of the Society, and what members can expect in the years ahead. In addition, aspects of the plan should be communicated to partners and funding agencies to help ensure goals and objectives are met. Finally, ongoing communication about our progress will need to be disseminated within the Society and to our partners and funding agencies.

Monitoring and Evaluating Success

The Society will develop an implementation monitoring plan. This plan will identify key milestones and benchmarks for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving goals and objectives. The monitoring plan will also identify who is responsible for assessing the progress and reporting progress to the Board.

Key items:

- Annual review of progress toward goals, objectives, and activities presented to the Board at its annual March meeting.
- Executive Director has overall responsibility for coordinating the tracking and implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- The next strategic planning cycle to develop the "2011-2015 Strategic Plan" should begin in 2009, unless changing conditions necessitate an earlier revision. Key thresholds for initiating revision would include factors such a revenue decline of 20% or greater, major controversy, or failure of any of the goals included in this plan.

Society for Conservation Biology

Strategic Plan: 2006-2010

Appendix 1: Strategic Context

The Society's strategic plan for 2006-2010 should be evaluated in light of existing realities and projected trends – factors that may impact the Society's work over the next five years. These factors form the strategic context in which the Society will pursue the goals, objectives, and recommended activities outlined in this plan. They include:

- Strategic Drivers: external trends and events that may directly affect the Society's products and services and, consequently, influence programmatic expansion and operational stability.
- Organizational Strengths & Weaknesses: internal capabilities that may either constrain or promote programmatic growth and operations;
- Strategic Assumptions: perceptions or beliefs the Society holds that will shape strategy and decision-making; and
- Financial Data and Projections: costs of maintaining and expanding programmatic activities.

We have attempted to consider how these factors might influence the Society's work, demand for its products and services, and the field of conservation science as a whole.

Strategic Drivers

The Society is poised to become a nexus – a catalyst even – to provide unprecedented access to cutting-edge conservation science information and best practices worldwide; to rigorously advance the field of conservation science and set standards for professional development; to deliver science to the public policy arena and improve the effect of policy decisions on the protection of biodiversity around the globe. The challenge for the Society is to understand what opportunities and constraints it faces, to seize opportunities that will promote growth and effectiveness, and to remove obstacles that stand in the way of achieving its goals and objectives.

Trends Affecting the Field of Conservation Biology

- The global economy, regional market trends, economic policies and partnerships (e.g. NAFTA and the European Union), will have both positive and negative impacts on funding, governmental support, and public awareness of conservation issues (or threats and solutions). We anticipate increased demand for greater scientific advocacy.
- As the number of organizations working to influence public policy grows, there will be a need for an effective and focused voice to advocate science.
- Conservation scientists and practitioners are a diverse and geographically distributed community who benefit from exchanging information and networking with colleagues and experts.
- Unforeseen world events, such as large-scale terrorism or natural catastrophes like the December 26, 2004 tsunami, will impact conservation of biodiversity, both directly

through their environmental consequences and resulting economic loss, and indirectly through changes in charitable giving trends.

Trends Affecting Professional Societies

- There will be continued interest in professional development opportunities, advancement, and representation of the profession as a whole. Growing competition among membership organizations will fuel selectivity.
- The trend in declining subscription rates to scientific journals could reduce the Society's subscription current total revenue by as much as 4-5% annually.
- Technological changes, including greater access to scientific information and research electronically, and increased use of the Web to access such resources, may place downward pressure on traditional subscriptions (e.g. consortia access on-line) and hard copy publications. Open access could have a much larger impact on the revenue from peer-reviewed journals, in particular, that contain articles written from publicly funded research projects.
- Growing competition for funds and university budgetary constraints will fuel demand for new sources of research funding.
- The last five years have witnessed a downward trend in charitable giving in the United States. While giving is slowly on the upswing (excluding significant charitable contributions for the victims of September 11, 2001 or the tsunami), the U.S. economy will drive trends in public, major donor, and foundation giving. This is particularly significant for an expanding global organization where philanthropic values and history lag behind those of the United States in some regions where outlying programs look to U.S. contributions to sustain their work.

Information Needs of Conservation Scientists and Practitioners

- The urgency of saving biodiversity will drive the need for high-integrity scientific information and expertise, cutting edge research, and emerging best practices.
- Diverse needs for scientific data and best practices across geographic regions will increase demand for new publications and venues in which to publish, present, and disseminate a broader spectrum of scientific information and research.
- As more and more information becomes readily available through resources such as the internet, interest will grow in finding selected venues for information that are highly reputable, and maintain high standards of academic integrity and scientific rigor.
- There is a growing need for translating science into best practices.

Demand for Society Products & Services

In 2004, the Society's institutional assessment indicated, among those members interviewed, growing interest in the Society expanding its role to:

- Ensure science is being incorporated into policy and decision-making internationally, nationally, and locally;

- Create new, more diverse vehicles for publishing a variety of work being done outside North America;
- Enhance the visibility and representation of conservation science and research worldwide;
- Provide better access to qualified information, better means for exchanging information, venues for meeting and learning from leading experts in the field, and opportunities collaborating on projects; and
- Secure more funding for academic programs and research; and creating more opportunities for professional development.

Selected findings from the Society's 2004 membership survey tell us the following about specific needs and interests across the 1,614 members who replied (195 of the Society's membership):

- 65% of members, down from 82% in 2000, cite *Conservation Biology* as a very important reason for membership. 29% cite *Conservation in Practice* as a very important reason.
- Less than 10% cite other SCB publications as a very important reason for membership.
- 82% of members state that staying informed in the conservation field is a very important reason for membership.
- 40% feel that the annual meeting is a very important or somewhat important reason for membership.
- 80% think SCB should play a stronger advocacy role in national, regional and global policy.
- 87% feel that promoting and strengthen the discipline of conservation biology is very important.
- 59% think producing a magazine for conservation practitioners is very important.
- 64% think maintaining a web site is very important. 90% of members think the Society should definitely or probably increase visibility and use of the expertise database.
- 65% think sponsoring research projects on policy, legal, and regulatory matters is very important.
- 88% think publishing *Conservation Biology* is very important.
- 95% think the Society should definitely or probably increase international membership and involvement.

The Society's challenge will be to meet an increasingly diverse set of needs in ways that deliver value to an increasingly diverse and distributed, audience, without diluting the organization's focus, allocation of funding, or ability to deliver high quality products and services. The risk lies in over-diversification that diminishes the Society's reputation and recognition, decreases effectiveness, or exceeds sustainable capacity.

Organizational Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths

- The Society has laid a foundation for organizational growth: it has built a solid reputation among members and supporters in North America; and it is becoming more widely recognized outside North America where the Society particularly wants to grow.
- The Society's implementation of a global structure during the last five years has led to a more diverse, international membership and has also created the need to serve a wider set of interests and local needs in the international conservation science community.
- Following five years of organizational growth, the Society is, by and large, a programmatically and financially sound organization.

Weaknesses

- The Society is well regarded among existing members and supporters in North America. Although its reputation is growing, it has yet to develop widespread recognition and demand for its products and services outside North America.
- Existing sources of revenue for the Society's publications are not sufficient to sustain new programs and services.
- The Society lacks alternative sources of funding to support program growth, or cushion a shortfall in existing revenue sources.
- In the past, the Society was unsuccessful in obtaining funding to develop and implement a policy program despite growing support from membership.
- Demand and diverse needs for new products, programs, and services have already begun to tax the Society's existing staff and resources.

Strategic Assumptions

The Society holds a number of tenants regarding the role it should serve for the conservation science community.

1. The Society believes that disseminating conservation science research results widely and to a variety of audiences (researchers, land managers, policymakers, and the public) creates a better-informed public resulting in better public decisions and better protection for biodiversity. The dissemination of information improves the quality of research, enhances professional development, and increases the impact of conservation science on policy and land management.
2. The Society would like to expand the membership of conservation professionals throughout the world because we feel that a larger membership is more effective at communicating, expanding professional development opportunities, maintaining the society's financial viability, and accomplishing our mission.

3. By being directly and visibly involved in policy recommendations, the Society believes that resulting policies will be more informed and better benefit both human society and the Earth's biodiversity.
4. Biodiversity loss is seldom caused by private or government actions that directly seek to destroy species. Instead, the loss of biodiversity is usually a by-product of actions intended to accomplish a public good or to generate economic growth or return. The Society feels that by articulating the true impacts of biodiversity loss, society can better understand the pros and cons of proposed actions and will then choose to give greater consideration to the value of biodiversity conservation relative to other outcomes.
5. A financially strong society is critical to pursue new activities that further our goals, maintain effective programs, expand member benefits, and increase the society's impact.
6. Striving for the financial independence of all Society programs is beneficial because it allows us to explore new programs and focus resources on other high value programs that may require long-term subsidies. Marginally independent programs should strive to be financial contributors for the same reason.
7. The Society will have to be selective in what new programs or activities it undertakes. Its products, programs, and services must demonstrate a high degree of value to remain competitive in a crowded market and they will have to be highly leveraged in order to expand with limited resources.

Society for Conservation Biology

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Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

Some of the terms below are used slightly differently in other contexts and by other organizations. The Society's strategic plan will identify actions in a hierarchy moving from the overall Mission to Goals, Objectives, and finally Recommended Activities.

Strategic Plan. An outline of what an organization should do, why it should do it, and how it should do it within the near future to achieve its mission.

Strategic Planning. A disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.

Mission Statement. A statement of organizational purpose; its reason for being.

Values Statement. A description of the code of behavior to which an organization adheres or aspires. Outlines the beliefs and closely held tenets of an organization. They serve as timeless guiding principles for those most closely associated with the organization.

Vision Statement. A description of how the world will look or be different if the organization is successful in realizing its mission.

Organizational Vision. A description of what an organization will look like if it succeeds in implementing its goals and objectives and its full potential. Articulates the ideal, preferred future of the organization

Goal. A long-term organizational target or direction of development toward an overall mission. It states what the organization wants to accomplish or become over the next several years. Goals provide the basis for decisions about the nature, scope, and relative priorities of all projects and activities. Everything the organization does should help it move toward attainment of one or more goals.

Objective. A specific, measurable, time-bounded target that must be met in order to attain a goal.

Activity. A means by which the organization intends to accomplish an objective in the short term. Activities are generally found more frequently in Action/Operational/Implementation plans rather than in strategic plans.

Action Plan (or Operational Plan or Implementation Plan). Outlines how to implement objectives in the short term. An operational plan takes a strategic goal and its related objectives from the strategic plan and identifies specific action steps, timelines, budgets, and personnel needed to accomplish them and review or monitor process.

Evaluation. A process by which progress towards attaining specific objectives is measured.

Performance Measure. A means of objectively assessing the results of activities. A well written objective makes its performance measure obvious.

**Society for Conservation Biology
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Appendix 3: The Strategic Planning Committee

Luigi Boitani; President, European Section
Autumn-Lynn Harrison; SCB Staff
David Johns; Treasurer of the Society
Devra Kleiman; BOG-Botanical/Zoological Gardens Representative
Loyal Mehrhoff, Committee Chair; Past BOG-Government Agency Representative
Reed Noss; Past President of the Society
John Robinson; President-Elect of the Society
Jon Paul Rodriguez; President, Austral and Neotropical America Section
Kathryn Saterson; Secretary of the Society
Alan Thornhill; Executive Director of the Society
Deborah Jensen (ex-officio); President of the Society

All Strategic Planning documents are on file in the SCB Executive Offices.