

ENHANCING THE IMPACT OF CONSERVATION SCIENCE

The Society for Conservation Biology

Strategic Plan 2011-2015

The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) is a global community of professional conservation scientists and practitioners with thousands of members worldwide. The SCB's membership and the breadth of its activities have grown substantially since its founding in 1985. The establishment of an executive office in Washington, D.C. in 2001 and the 2007 creation of a policy office considerably increased SCB's organizational capacities. Since 2003, the establishment of sections has fostered the SCB's involvement with regional questions and has enhanced the recruitment and retention of members and the SCB's visibility around the world. Global and section-level meetings have attracted numerous young conservation professionals to SCB and fostered the initiation of new chapters in many countries. The journal *Conservation Biology* was founded in 1987. The subsequent launch of *Conservation* magazine in 2001 and the journal *Conservation Letters* in 2008, and the inclusion of *Pacific Conservation Biology* in our suite of journals, have expanded our set of multidisciplinary publications.

The SCB has developed this new strategic plan to create a common vision for the organization, focused on five strategic areas for the period 2011-2015, and on key objectives within each area. SCB's executive office, committees, sections, working groups, and chapters will now develop plans for implementation of programs and activities consistent with achieving our strategic objectives.

Reflecting current opportunities and constraints, this plan draws on SCB's past successes and challenges, particularly our work since 2003 on developing a global organization. Over the next five years this strategic plan and the corresponding implementation plans and activities will guide our work as a leading conservation science institution worldwide, with global and regional development of programs and services valuable to a diverse body of conservation scientists and practitioners. This will maximize our conservation impact while enhancing our financial stability and organizational growth.

The SCB's executive office will facilitate the implementation of this strategic plan through the coordinated work of our committees, sections, chapters, and working groups, leveraging the strengths of each of these organizational structures. The SCB will enact a fiscally responsible implementation approach, wherein expenditures will

require both identification and coordination of funding sources and clear implementation plans. These implementation plans will elucidate that initiative's objectives, incorporate an explicit link to the corresponding objective in this strategic plan, and specify the purpose and rationale for that initiative's expense.

Achieving the goals and objectives identified in this plan will strengthen the application of science to the practice of conservation, furthering the mission of our community of conservation professionals to advance the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity.

Board of Governors, Society for Conservation Biology
Approved September 29, 2010
Washington, D.C.

Vision

The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) envisions a world where people understand, value, and conserve the diversity of life on Earth. We envision SCB, a global community of conservation professionals, as a leading scientific voice for the study and conservation of Earth's biological diversity.

Mission

The Society for Conservation Biology advances the science and practice of conserving Earth's biological diversity.

Organizational Values

The Society for Conservation Biology holds these values:

1. There is intrinsic value in the natural diversity of organisms, the complexity of ecological systems, and the resilience created by evolutionary processes.
2. Human-caused extinctions and the destruction and loss of function of natural ecosystems are unacceptable.

3. Maintaining and restoring biological diversity are individual and collective responsibilities of humans.
4. Science is critical for understanding how the natural world operates and how human actions affect nature.
5. Collaboration among scientists, managers, and policy-makers is vital to incorporate high-quality science into policies and management decisions affecting biological diversity.

The five strategic foci for SCB's 2011-2015 Strategic Plan are:

- I. Advocate support for, and facilitate the creation and dissemination of conservation science
- II. Increase application of science to management and policy
- III. Strengthen SCB's sections
- IV. Serve the interests of members
- V. Build and maintain organizational capacity

Strategic Focus I. Advocate support for, and facilitate the creation and dissemination of conservation science

Statement of Goals

Identify and support the scientific research needed to understand and conserve biological diversity. Appraise scientific outputs and disseminate the highest quality science.

Rationale

For science to be effectively incorporated into the management and conservation of ecosystems at local, national, and global levels, it must be of high quality, well funded, and disseminated. SCB advocates for financial support of scientific research. SCB facilitates scientific research and its dissemination through our support of professional networking activities and educational opportunities. We disseminate high-quality science through our global and regional meetings and our peer-reviewed journals and other publications.

Objectives

1. Convene SCB members and other conservation professionals to share ideas and collaborate.

Activities:

- Convene global, regional, local, and topical meetings.
 - Fundraise to enable attendance at SCB meetings by conservation professionals from all countries.
 - Select locations of global meetings to maximize outreach to conservation professionals in all regions.
 - Hold joint meetings with other conservation-oriented professional societies.
 - Explore use of technology to promote remote access to meeting content.
2. Encourage funding institutions to sustain and increase their support for conservation science.
 3. Support the dissemination of high-quality conservation science through publications that meet the needs of students, researchers and practitioners.

Activities:

- Regularly review the roles, audiences, and performance of SCB's publications in achieving SCB's mission.
 - Adapt publications with respect to financing mechanisms, emerging areas of science and practice, global and regional topics, and alternative media for content delivery.
4. Facilitate development of scientific skills and knowledge for present and future conservation professionals.

Activities:

- Support initiatives to identify and train future conservation leaders.
- Support the development and implementation of educational strategies within sections, working groups, and chapters that address their needs for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education.
- Develop or facilitate workshops or short courses at SCB's global, regional, local, and topical meetings.
- Foster dialogue between sections, working groups, chapters, and funding institutions to encourage financial support for conservation education.
- Host and support content development for virtual delivery of education in conservation science.
- Develop mentoring and training programs, particularly those targeted to groups underrepresented in conservation science.

- Implement a conservation leadership program for members of SCB and for leaders in other sectors, such as business and policy.

Strategic Focus II. Increase application of science to management and policy

Statement of Goals

Directly inform management and policy at local, national, regional, and global levels with the highest quality science. Routinely and openly evaluate the effectiveness of management actions.

Rationale

The SCB is a global community of natural and social scientists and practitioners who believe the application of science to management and policy is essential for effective conservation. Greater understanding of links among science, management, and policy and better exchange of knowledge are necessary to conserve biological diversity. Conservation practitioners and policy-makers must participate in identifying issues that require new research and clear translation and dissemination. A culture of sharing data and evaluation of management actions is necessary to build a common evidence base for future actions.

Objectives

1. Improve communication and collaboration among researchers, managers, and policy-makers at all levels.

Activities:

- Use SCB meetings as platforms for sectors such as business, labor, and community leaders to express their views on the science and practice of conservation.
- Form partnerships with other organizations, including professional societies; to convene meetings and publish journal articles and other media.
- Conservation managers, decision-makers, and scientists collaborate to critically evaluate conservation actions.

2. Reduce gaps between science and management and between science and policy by translating and disseminating scientific findings.

Activities:

- Convene conservation scientists, managers, and stakeholders to explore how management can be informed with high-quality science, and how scientists can learn from policy and management.

- Formulate and disseminate policy position statements that are based on objective, high-quality science.
- Identify processes to inform executive and legislative bodies and other decision-making institutions about science that is relevant to policy and management alternatives.
- Provide conservation scientists with training on how best to interact with media and attract and sustain positive media interest and coverage

Strategic Focus III. Strengthen SCB's sections

Statement of Goals

SCB will encourage and support growth and development of its sections

Rationale

The causes and consequences of losses of biological diversity, and the strategies and measures targeted at preventing continued biodiversity decline, are regional and local as well as global. Therefore, to best further the work of our Society, SCB needs to encourage its sections to act independently to inform regional policy, governance and management. Strong sections will also foster increases in the number of members, and facilitate their involvement in SCB activities.

Objectives

1. Develop effective working relationships between SCB's board of governors, staff, and sections to enhance the sections' growth and capacity.

Activities:

- Sections will develop 5-year strategic plans that reflect each section's contribution to SCB's 2011-2015 strategic plan and guide their yearly activities and budgets.
- Identify and implement financing mechanisms that enable sections to conduct their own programs.
- Coordinate and integrate the style and production of global-level and section-level communication materials, including websites, marketing, and conference materials.
- Ensure full responsibility of sections for regional policy issues, and coordinate work between SCB's policy committee, staff, and sections on policy initiatives that are relevant to conservation at both global and regional levels.

- Align committee structure between global-level and section-level boards.
2. Develop and implement regional mechanisms to raise the profile and increase the number of members of SCB and its sections and to foster exchange of knowledge.

Activities:

- Organize regional meetings focused on regional conservation issues.
- In each region, build partnerships with international agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and professional societies.
- Disseminate information about section activities.

Strategic Focus IV. Serve the interests of members

Statement of Goals

Identify, prioritize, and serve the needs and interests of current and potential SCB members.

Rationale

As a professional society, SCB can best serve civil society through a well-served and engaged membership. Such an organization provides fellowship and enables both emerging and established conservation professionals to further develop their professional skills and networks. A well-served, global community of professionals will collaborate, generate new ideas and strategies to achieve shared goals, support SCB's objectives and activities, and function as a credible, collective, authoritative voice on conservation issues that informs public policy and action.

Objectives

1. Characterize SCB's current and prospective membership and their motivations for joining and participating in SCB

Activities:

- Assess needs and interests of current and potential SCB members.
- Develop a plan to improve member retention.

2. Assess, prioritize, determine how to provide, and deliver benefits to members

Activities:

- Clearly communicate the benefits of SCB membership to target audiences.
- Provide well-functioning member services.

- Encourage active participation of members in SCB committees, sections, working groups, and chapters.

Strategic Focus V. Build and maintain organizational capacity

Statement of Goals

Assess and expand the organizational capacity necessary to implement and sustain the programmatic goals and objectives that advance our vision and mission.

Rationale

To achieve our programmatic goals, SCB must remain a viable organization. We must have clear direction, explicit identification of responsibilities and authority at all levels of the organization, professional and competent staff, an effective board of governors, engaged and dedicated members, and funding that fully supports programs, including an operating reserve.

Objectives

1. Align funding structures to achieve SCB's mission

Activities:

- Develop annual and longer-term budgets that are based on the strategic plan and linked to program goals and financial strategies.
- Integrate program reporting and financial reporting.
- Establish annual work plans, based on the strategic plan, that provide the board of governors, committees, staff, sections, working groups, and chapters with clear guidance on responsibility and authority for achieving program goals and objectives.

2. Secure sufficient revenue for SCB's business

Activities:

- Create a business plan that specifies how expertise, earned income, and donor income will be obtained and applied to achieve short-term, medium-term, and long-term program goals and objectives.
- Develop and implement a fundraising plan.

3. Align SCB's staffing, management and governance with its strategic goals and objectives

Activities:

- Explicitly align and coordinate governance, committee structure, and staffing within and among all levels of the organization to achieve program goals and objectives.
- Recruit and retain officers at all levels of the organization that have the skills necessary to maximize effectiveness.
- Create and maintain mechanisms to develop leadership ability and institutional memory at all levels of the organization.
- Minimize the environmental impact of all SCB activities as far as possible, including using offsetting and other approaches to reduce our carbon (ecological) footprint.
- Maintain transparency of our governance.