

Date: August 8, 2007
From: Karen Firestone
To: SCB-A board and conference organizing committee
Re: conference evaluation

Dear all:

Here's a very brief analysis of the evaluation forms we received from the recent 'Biodiversity Extinction Crisis' conference. We received 42 evaluation forms back (11.4% of the delegates). Nineteen (45.2%) of the respondents were SCB members; 22 (52.4%) weren't; and one (2.4%) didn't answer. The majority of respondents (24; 57.1%) heard about the conference from a colleague; however ten people (23.8%) got their information from a mailout and 5 (11.9%) heard of the conference through another website (Google search, EnviroInfo, ESA, ANCD). Two respondents (4.8%) got information from the conference website, and one (2.4%) didn't answer.

The response was overwhelmingly positive with most respondents reporting that the plenaries, symposia and concurrent sessions were either excellent or very good (see spreadsheet below). Additionally the overall conference academic level and format rated well as did the location, venue facilities, meeting room facilities, conference registration, food and beverage and venue staff.

Some comments on the plenaries:

'Great speakers'
'Very interesting and engaging'
'It was great, the constant switch between plenaries and concurrent sessions help keep us awake and focused'
'too many interesting things scheduled at the same time'
'probably a few too many'
'good range of variation in speaker backgrounds and themes'
'excellent'
'too long—needed four concurrent and shorter plenaries allowing time between talks for networking and academic mingling. Too busy.'
'outstanding generally—well chosen'
'need more opportunity for discussion with experts'
'they were an outstanding feature of the conference'
'thought provoking'

Some comments on reasons for attending this conference:

'meeting with people with similar research interests'
'learn more about management of biodiversity'
'networking'
'Learn latest on biodiversity conservation science'
'hear about good models of conservation in action'
'Pacific Islands related and conservation focused'
'regional relevance'
contributing to a symposium or give presentation
'scientific exchange'
'start of SCB Australasia section development'
'make contacts'
'appreciation of the extent of the crisis'
'seeing how ecology and conservation are linked'
'how to integrate science and policy; to be inspired'
'keep up to date with current research'

Other academic presentations at the next conference:

'Weeds research as a major threat to biodiversity'
'Focus on how conservation science can better engage with and influence policy and practice'
'Plant translocation studies'
'Examples of recovery actions and successful research management'
'More social/cultural and activist input; conservation biology is more than the science'
'more research/presentations on work that is relevant to the Pacific/Asian or developing countries'
'more representation of other Pacific Island countries'
'more on what governments need be doing'
'a few more policy/environment politics presentations'
'no more academic ones—a few more on applying the science and what has been learned in real life situations'
'flora presentations were seriously lacking'
'presentations that answer the subject—that is what to do, how to manage the extinction crisis'
'recent work re high biodiversity indicators (re 'community genetics') and relevance to conservation of areas of high potential for evolution/adaptability'
'the role of public service departments and the debate over the place of climate change on biodiversity conservation'
'a few more longer slots; some more women'
'discussion panels for major topics'
'more input from practitioners'

What additional exhibitors would you like to see:

'Australian universities'
'coop bookshop; NGO displays'
'equipment displays; radiotracking; clothes'
'bush regenerators; local government'
'more from CRCs'
'WWF'
'More government agencies, environment and natural resources'
'Eco and bio-engineering businesses'

Additional comments/suggestions:

'More focus on Pacific (other than Fiji and PNG)'
'Increase spread of presentations across academic-NGO-government'
'congratulations on a well-organised and stimulating inaugural conference'
'Keep balance of academic and non-academic presentations'
'Be more selective about who presents'
'Get more Aussies viewing Pacific talks'
'Have a facilitated discussion at the end of each symposium'
'Aboriginal involvement as part of management of some of the issues; presentations from indigenous communities'
'An annual gathering would be good'
'More time for questions; 15 minute talks'
'Fewer presentations, more discussion time'
'Synchronise concurrent sessions'
'Good program booklet with space for notes'
'the \$130 harbour cruise was a very poor decision. You need something to cater for students'
'Food excellent, staff very helpful'
'Good to have some break out sessions for discussion opportunities with plenary session presenters'
'Address the overarching issue of the human population explosion'
'Symposium papers didn't have enough 'meat'
'Poster session was excellent'
'Use those caterers again; food was great'
'Website was not as helpful as it could be'
'List of participants'

'Email/internet access restricted to few hours/day'

'there was a major gap in terms of problems faced and how to tackle them between conservation issues in Australia/New Zealand and the Pacific Islands'

'be more selective; make this conference different to the others; bolder debate; SCB should be prestigious, provocative and unique; forward looking; action focussed; solutions based'

'student papers should be clearly identified; food presented in an eco-friendly manner'

'overwhelming number of presentations on large organisms and visible materials presents an extremely biased view of biological diversity and ecological processes that underpin conservation. These presentations were excellent but they allow decision makers to assume they have the correct and complete information when they do NOT. A more representative selection of issues is necessary if the Society is to have a genuine impact on the conservation of species and processes.'

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Many thanks,

Karen Firestone

	NUMBER of respondents						PERCENT of respondents					
	excellent	very good	good	fair	poor	total	excellent	very good	good	fair	poor	total
plenaries day 1	15	12	3			30	50.00%	40.00%	10.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
plenaries day 2	7	9	3	1		20	35.00%	45.00%	15.00%	5.00%	0.00%	100.00%
plenaries day 3	10	7				17	58.82%	41.18%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 1	5	6	8			19	26.32%	31.58%	42.11%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 2	4	8	1			13	30.77%	61.54%	7.69%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 3	2	6	2	1		11	18.18%	54.55%	18.18%	9.09%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 4	5	10	2			17	29.41%	58.82%	11.76%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 5	1	6	2			9	11.11%	66.67%	22.22%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 6	2	8	1	1		12	16.67%	66.67%	8.33%	8.33%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 7	2	9				11	18.18%	81.82%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 8	4	10	3			17	23.53%	58.82%	17.65%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 9	3	4	2			9	33.33%	44.44%	22.22%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 10	3	10	2			15	20.00%	66.67%	13.33%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 11	2	5	1			8	25.00%	62.50%	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 12	4	5	2			11	36.36%	45.45%	18.18%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 13	2	9	3	1		15	13.33%	60.00%	20.00%	6.67%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 14	1	7	6	1		15	6.67%	46.67%	40.00%	6.67%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 15	3	6	3			12	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 16	5	11	1			17	29.41%	64.71%	5.88%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 17	2	7	3			12	16.67%	58.33%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 18	4	11	2	2		19	21.05%	57.89%	10.53%	10.53%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 19	2	3				5	40.00%	60.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 20	4	9	3	2		18	22.22%	50.00%	16.67%	11.11%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 21	1	7				8	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
concurrent 22	4	6	4	1		15	26.67%	40.00%	26.67%	6.67%	0.00%	100.00%
symposium 1	5	10	4	1	1	21	23.81%	47.62%	19.05%	4.76%	4.76%	100.00%
symposium 2	9	7				16	56.25%	43.75%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
symposium 3	3	3				6	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
symposium 4	5	10		2		17	29.41%	58.82%	0.00%	11.76%	0.00%	100.00%
symposium 5	5	10	1	2		18	27.78%	55.56%	5.56%	11.11%	0.00%	100.00%
academic level	8	9	7	1		25	32.00%	36.00%	28.00%	4.00%	0.00%	100.00%
conference format	6	14	1	4		25	24.00%	56.00%	4.00%	16.00%	0.00%	100.00%
location/sydney	20	13	5	1		39	51.28%	33.33%	12.82%	2.56%	0.00%	100.00%
venue facilities	10	19	5	4	1	39	25.64%	48.72%	12.82%	10.26%	2.56%	100.00%
meeting room facilities	8	15	3	5	2	33	24.24%	45.45%	9.09%	15.15%	6.06%	100.00%
conference registration	16	13	8			37	43.24%	35.14%	21.62%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
food and beverage	20	16	1	1	1	39	51.28%	41.03%	2.56%	2.56%	2.56%	100.00%
venue staff	26	11	2	1		40	65.00%	27.50%	5.00%	2.50%	0.00%	100.00%