



Strategic Plan: FY2013 – FY2016

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Conservation Coaches Network Strategic Plan: FY2013 – FY2016

Making the Case

In his latest book, *Blessed Unrest*, best-selling author Paul Hawken recognizes that a hopeful new movement is growing all over the world: millions of people are working to address the needs of their communities through local action. He goes on to say that this movement is best supported not by top-down decisions but by helping participants identify and apply “useful problem-solving tools” to forge meaningful approaches that are appropriate for their home places. This is at the heart of what the Conservation Coaches Network is all about. From grazing cooperatives in Kenya--to Northern Australia, where indigenous people are working to go back “on country”--to North America, where government land managers, foresters, NGOs and community members are building sustainable forest management programs and fire-safe communities together--Conservation Coaches support people in their adaptation of the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*.¹

The Open Standards (OS) is a powerful approach to decision-making, measuring and learning that is adaptable and responsive to diverse applications. It emerged from the applied work of conservation practitioners and has been refined and agreed upon by a coalition of conservation organizations. Taking a page out of the open source computer program movement, these conservation “standards” provide a free, common structure that conservation practitioners can use to manage their work and to learn from each other across organizational, geographic, cultural, temporal or spatial barriers. The proven value of the Open Standards to conservation project design and management is prompting widespread adoption and a need for support and training all over the world. (See Appendix A for more on this topic and Table 1 for some examples of where the Open Standards have been adopted.)

Table 1. Some examples of Open Standards use and adoption:

- Landscape and fire safe community planning by US Fire Learning Network;
- Core practice for the Pacific Islands Partnership Network;
- Incorporated in State Wildlife Action Planning by US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for species recovery;
- Part of core curriculum for managers in the US Bureau of Land Management and the China Department of Forestry;
- Endorsed by the Convention on Biological Diversity as one of the proposed methods for protected area planning and management;
- Taught in graduate schools in at least 12 universities and academic institutions (University of California/Davis, University of Maryland, Kunming University, University of Eberswalde, CATIE, etc.);
- Adopted by Palau, Chuuk, Kosrae and Pohnpei Conservation Societies;
- Actively used by Greening Australia, Bush Heritage Trust, Tasmanian Land Conservancy, Trust for Nature, Parks Victoria, Birdlife Australia - Australia, CONANP and Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan – Mexico, and many others;
- Recommended by the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance as one of the methods for designing and proposing “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation” (REDD) projects internationally;
- Recommended by the Australian federal government for development of Indigenous protected area management planning.

The CCNet evolved from The Nature Conservancy’s Efrogmson Coaches Network and was chartered in 2009 to help meet this need. Coaches not only teach practitioners and teams the basic principles of the Open Standards; they also help teams identify strategies, develop measures, explicitly articulate and capture their uncertainties, and encourage on-going assessment and continuity of effort. Coaches link

¹ In 2007 eleven major non-governmental conservation organizations adopted a general framework for conservation project management, known as the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* (the Open Standards).

practitioners with other support services and identify peer projects where project leaders can find additional review and support for similar challenges. Coaches also actively promote the Open Standards around the world. (See Appendix B for CCNet Core Practices.)

CCNet has developed a global reach since being chartered in 2009 by the World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Greening Australia and Foundations of Success. As of 2012, a network of nine formal CCNet Franchises supports more than 300 Coaches operating on five continents in 56 countries.

During the summer of 2011, we interviewed 32 senior managers. Here are some examples of what they said about CCNet. Additional results from these interviews can be found in Appendix C.

On conservation importance - *"...seeing great work coming out of the projects that [Coaches] have been doing... [The results are] "realistic, actionable strategies that can and are being applied in the real world."*

On quality control and rigor - *"...if a Coach was involved I had confidence that the most critical questions were being asked."*

On innovation - *"Every time we have something new to figure out, I turn to the Network [Coaches]."*

On knowledge transfer and connection - *"Foremost value is the connection to a larger community for access to lessons learned and best practices."*

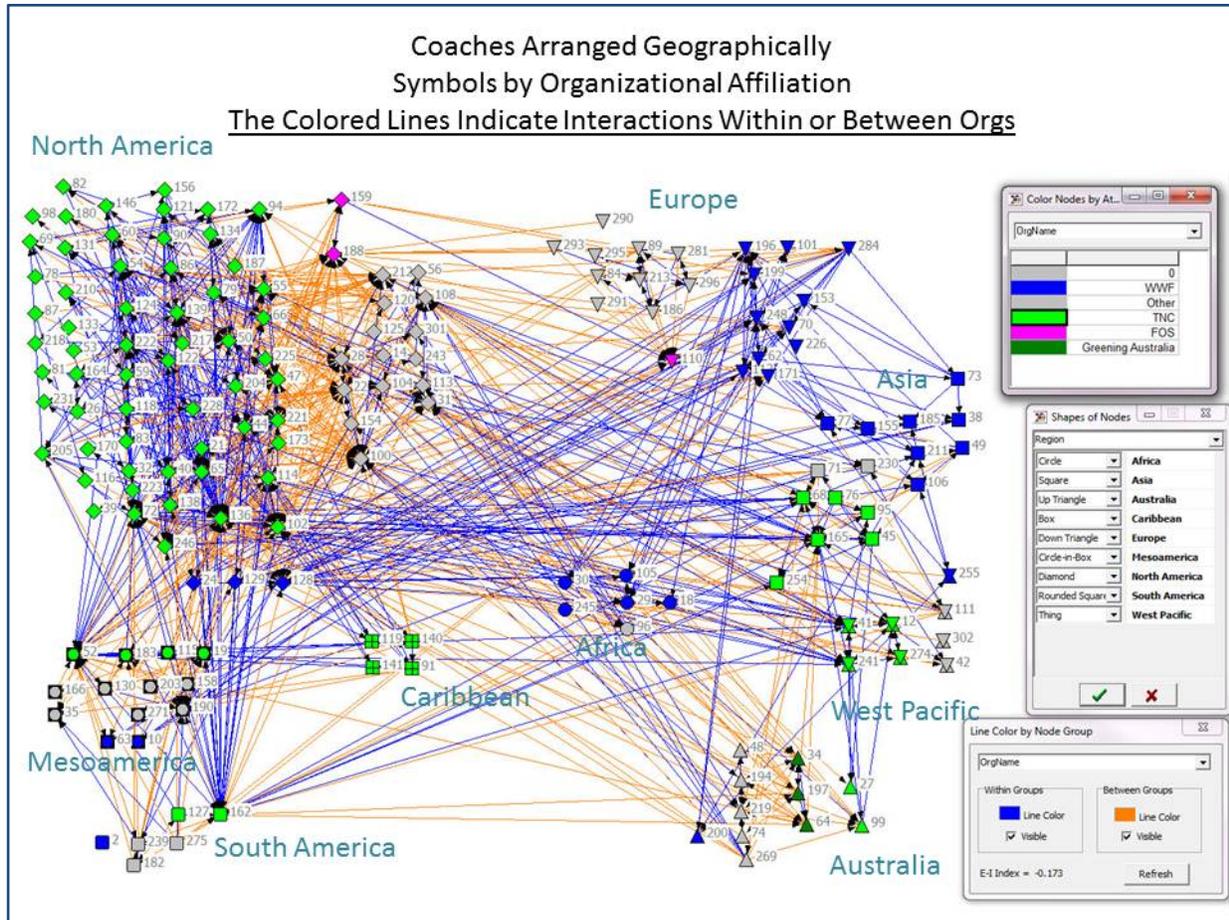
On process design and facilitation - *"Coaches were able to get the participants focused and to extract useful and understandable information."*

An analysis of projects registered in ConPro² found significant increases in the implementation of 9 of 10 steps of the core adaptive management process in coached vs. non-coached projects. This same analysis also found that projects had a 70-110% increase in measures, work planning, adaptation and learning steps when Coaches are involved. (See graphs in Appendix A). This proven value is leading to more demand for Conservation Coaches' services. By training new Coaches and providing on-going training and mentoring of existing Coaches, the Coaches Network has been working to fill this need. And by using the power of peer learning through a facilitated community of practice, CCNet enables Coaches to provide support to each other and fast-track learning by sharing best practices among themselves. The participants in the Coaches Network are interacting and benefitting from this vibrant community of practice.

A 2011 social network analysis aimed at evaluating structure, reach and the means by which information flows and spreads showed that the Coaches are actively connecting with each other across continents, countries and organizations. Among the 149 Coaches who completed the survey, there were more than 1600 different types of interactive relationships (mentor/mentee, advisor/advisee, etc.) described. One hundred twenty-three respondents reported having cross-organizational connections. Figure 1 is one of the graphic outputs of the analysis showing connections across geographies and organizations.

² This is TNC's conservation project database.

Figure 1. CCNet connectivity diagram indicating interactions among members of different regions and organizations (CCNet, 2011).



While the Network is growing and the Coaches are active, demand is greater than supply, and the increasing complexity of conservation projects also increases the need for advanced skills training for existing Coaches.

This strategic plan builds on the success of the Conservation Coaches Network and the Open Standards movement with a set of targeted strategies to increase the capacity, skills and reach of the Coaches and the Network to meet the needs of the conservation community in achieving greater conservation outcomes worldwide.

Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet) Mission and Outcomes

The **mission** of the Conservation Coaches Network is to *catalyze transformational conservation by empowering people to develop, implement, evaluate, adapt and share effective strategies that achieve tangible conservation results benefitting people and nature all over the world.*

CCNet seeks to improve the effectiveness of project teams working to protect NGO, government, and privately managed lands and waters worldwide. While ultimately our work will be evident in healthy and resilient ecosystems and in the well-being of human communities in the projects supported by Coaches, these goals lie beyond our direct sphere of influence. Therefore, the key intermediate outcome on which our efforts are focused is empowering conservation practitioners whose actions can achieve these ultimate outcomes.

To achieve these outcomes, CCNet aims to have an engaged cadre of Coaches (“Franchise”) on every continent supporting people who are working to protect the most important places and solve the most challenging issues for their regions. The CCNet vision is that these Franchises and Coaches continuously improve and adapt the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* framework in ways that are responsive to the cultures and communities in which they work and the unique conservation challenges they face. These Franchises and Coaches will be locally funded while being supported by a small Network Coordination Team focused on enhancing their skills and effectiveness and providing them with opportunities to share promising practices across the greater Network. In this way, every team that needs support will have access to a trained, connected Coach who will help them plan, manage, monitor and learn from their work, leading to meaningful conservation results all over the world.

Goals and Objectives

2020 Goal:

Empowered teams are achieving transformational conservation results in at least 1000 geographically diverse, high-quality projects around the world through successfully applying the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*. The Conservation Coaches who support these teams are actively spreading core skills, innovations and critical knowledge in real time across the world.

2016 Objectives:

Objective 1. Recruit and Retain Active, Well-Trained, Experienced Coaches across Multiple Institutions.

By 2016, CCNet has at least 250 engaged Coaches--representing a diversity of cultures, skills, institutions and regions around the world--who are actively supporting projects.

Objective 2. Enhance Coach Competency.

By 2016, at least 50% of all active Coaches in the Network are assessed as either “Coaches” or “Coach trainers” and are sufficiently confident and competent to support most of the core practices of the Open Standards.

Objective 3. Enhance Knowledge Sharing.

By 2016, every active Coach is connected to at least 5 other Coaches and contributes or uses content at least once a year, and over 20% of Coaches are ranked as “super connected.”

Objective 4. Maintain and Improve Tools and Materials.

By 2016, a representative and updated collection of widely used and well-regarded Open Standards training materials and resources is easily accessible to Coaches and other practitioners and available

online. By the same year, an expert and user-rated “marketplace” of useful and relevant tools for each of the OS steps and related practices is available online also.

Objective 5. Institutionalize and Strengthen the Network.

By 2016, the Network’s Partnership charter and strategic plan are fully implemented to ensure that CCNet is strong, functional and sustainable. This will be evident by:

- A coherent and inspiring plan;
- Strong and committed leadership, Partners, Franchises and Coaches;
- Sustainable core funding;
- Committed advocates empowered to influence decision-makers;
- A widely known and respected Network leadership, role and brand.

Situation Analysis

To evaluate the current situation upon which to build the work of CCNet going forward, teams of Coaches and board members undertook the following analysis over a seven-month period:

- Reviewed the history and intended purpose of the Network and documented progress on objectives set in CCNet’s last strategic plan (2009-2012);
- Evaluated literature on networking and best practices and conducted interviews with other network coordinators;
- Conducted surveys of TNC managers and had one-on-one conversations with all CCNet board members;
- Reviewed information compiled by the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) on the application and needs of their member organizations to effectively implement results based management;
- Conducted a strengths, challenges and opportunity analysis of CCNet;
- Evaluated some alternative structural ideas and investigated significantly different strategic directions and funding approaches.

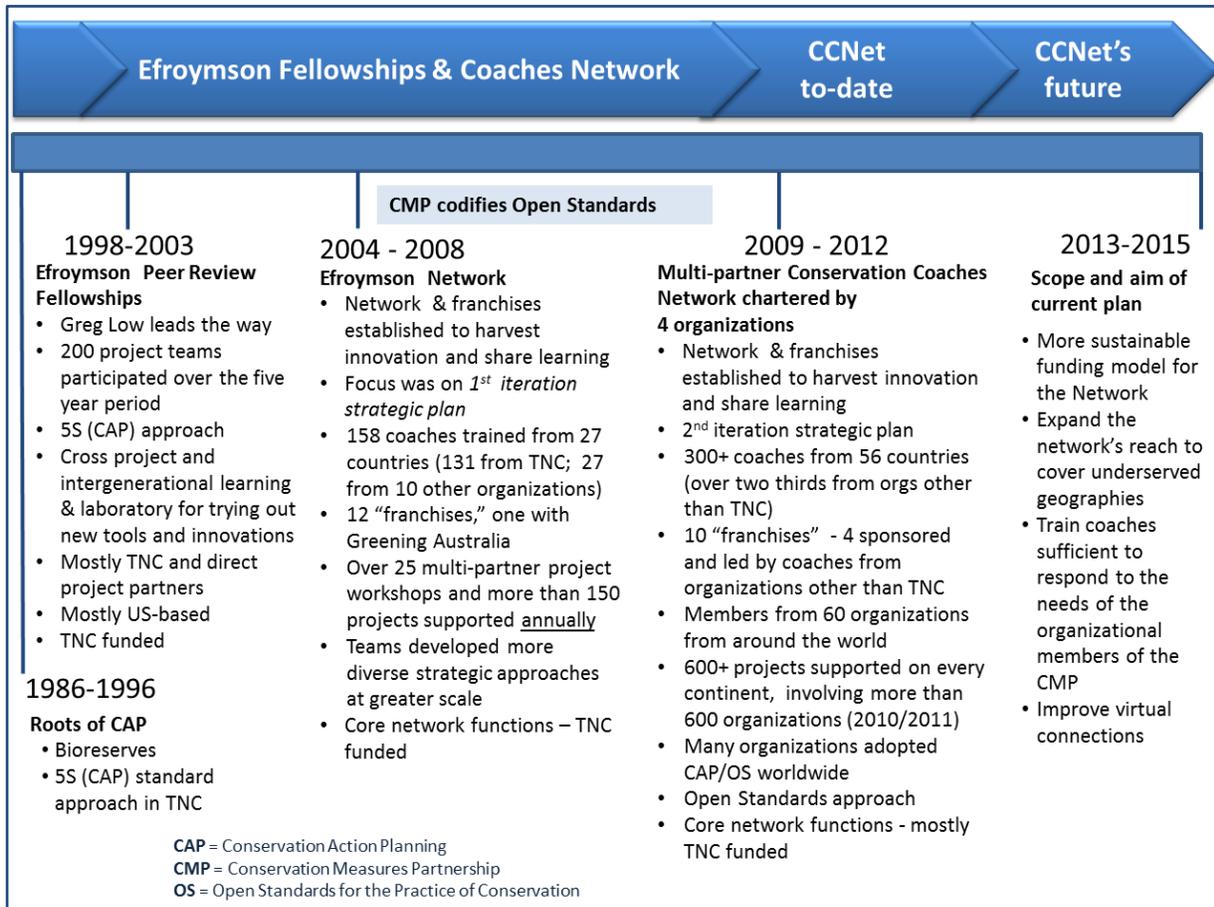
This analysis provided the information upon which the objectives, strategies and actions in the plan were built. White papers outlining these efforts are available, but below are some of the outputs of the situation analysis presented at a higher level of resolution. (See Table 2.)

CCNet History

CCNet grew out of an internal TNC effort to develop, spread and support the Conservancy’s Conservation by Design initiative. It started as a small, informal group of TNC practitioners in 2004 and evolved into a partnership with a more global reach in 2009 when WWF, The Nature Conservancy, Greening Australia and Foundations of Success determined that Coaches were needed in organizations beyond TNC, and the Coaches’ community of practice would benefit from a more collaborative partnership model. This is the third iteration of our strategic and business plans, and it is characterized by a transition process that will shape a more sustainable future for the CCNet.

As our historic context shows (see Figure 2 below), CCNet has been continuously evolving to respond well to needs and trends of the conservation community. An important driver in our current evolution (although not the only one) relates to finances. While funding for the work of the individual operating-unit Coaches and coordination of the Franchises comes directly from the sponsoring Partners, funding for central Network coordination, new Coach training, network-wide activities and materials has been primarily covered by TNC. Since the economic downturn of 2008, this CCNet financial support has been decreasing. While we lay out the activities needed to advance our mission, a key component of this strategic plan is establishing a more sustainable funding model for CCNet.

Figure 2. Overview of CCNet’s Historic Context



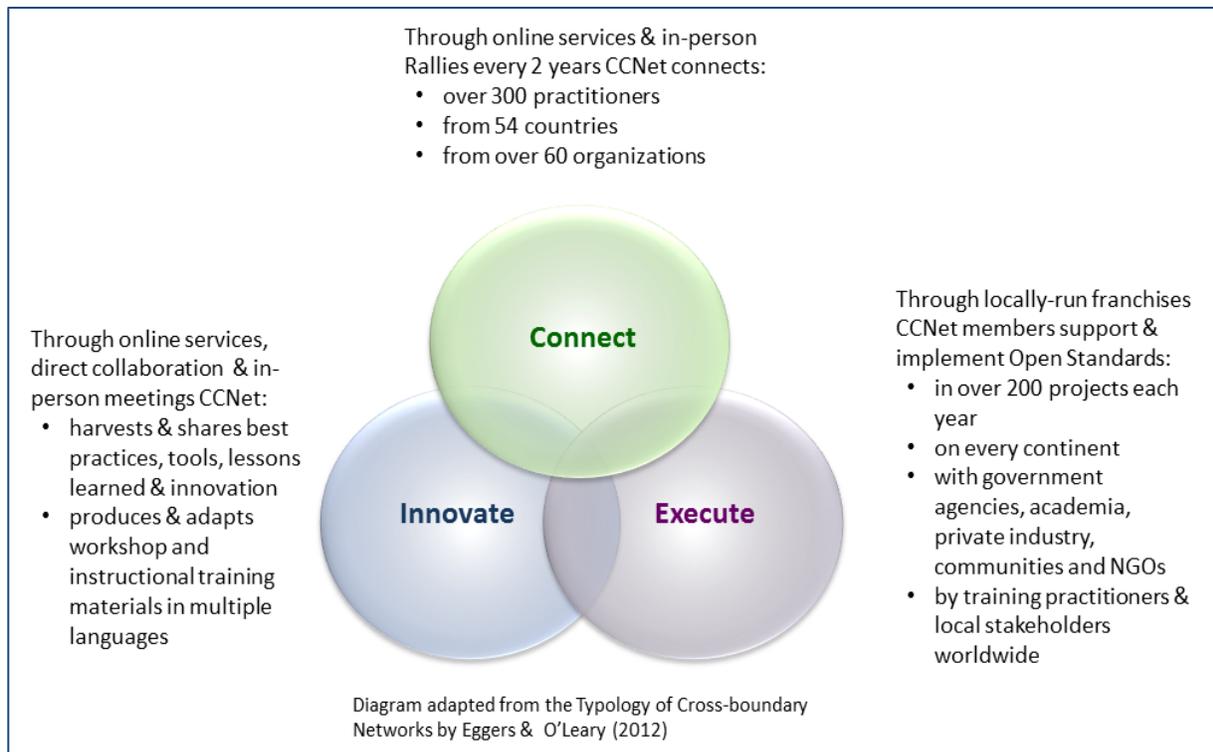
Literature on Networking and CCNet

Our planning teams also reviewed current literature on networks and cross-boundary collaboration and best practices. A report that provided some particularly valuable insights was, "XBC: Creating Public Value by Unleashing the Power of Cross-Boundary Collaboration." In this paper, William Eggers and John O'Leary write: "Cross-boundary Collaboration or 'XBC' is an approach to creating value from networks. These cross-boundary networks take a variety of forms, but share one underlying common theme: they all involve collaborating with those outside one's organization to create value." The authors identify three pillars of cross-boundary collaboration in networks:

- New relationships and shared value emerge when networks are able to connect disparate individuals and organizations and when they turn weak ties into strong ones;
- Networks can also add value when people bridge institutional, sectorial, geographic, cultural or educational boundaries to jointly work on latent issues or innovative enhancements to existing tools or processes;
- When networks foster improved collaboration, bringing together disparate agencies or people with complementary skills, this can lead to more efficient execution and better mission attainment.

The review also indicated that CCNet is indeed actively working in all three of these areas. Below we illustrate how CCNet has been effectively facilitating Cross-Boundary Collaboration, according to the three modalities that Eggers and O’Leary say characterize this type of collaboration in networks: to connect, to innovate and to execute.

Figure 3. How CCNet fosters Cross-Boundary Collaboration



Conservation Measures Partnership Analysis:

Our situation analysis also builds on a conceptual diagram created by the Conservation Measures Partnership revealing the high-level barriers to Results-Based management (RBM)³ and a suite of strategies to overcome these barriers (see Appendix D). The following factors were identified as conditions that limit the ability to do good RBM:

- Lack of examples of good RBM;
- Lack of best practice standards for RBM;
- Lack of expectation and demand for RBM in projects and organizations;
- Lack of training and coaching;
- Lack of cross-project learning mechanisms.

By limiting the ability of projects and organizations to carry out good RBM, these conditions pose a barrier to teams trying to achieve effective conservation around the world.

³ Results Based Management is a term that is often used interchangeably with “Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation.” It references the concept of an adaptive management framework for implementing conservation.

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities Analysis

CCNet’s ability to address these barriers can be summarized in the following table based on the findings of our planning teams:

Table 2. Planning Team Analysis of the Situation facing CCNet in 2012

Opportunities & positive trends	Challenges & negative trends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Coaches and activities of Coaches continues to grow • Demand for Coach services is increasing • Coach supported projects implement more steps of RBM framework • Networking activity between Coaches is vibrant, diverse and active • Regionally and locally hosted events are expanding • Number of organizations adopting the OS and engaging with Coaches and network is expanding • Coaches come from more countries and organizations • Network is expanding to new continents • Affiliation with CMP is expanding • Involvement of Partners and Franchise leaders in active leadership of network is growing • Some of the Franchise units are becoming really active and strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World economic crisis has greatly affected conservation funding and specifically resulted in significant cuts for operations funding in TNC and WWF and reductions of staff in many NGO’s • While number of Coaches overall is growing, number of Coaches in TNC is stable or shrinking in some regions • With cuts in staff in many NGOs, Coaches have less time to serve outside their immediate programs and to learn new skills • Loss of Franchise support in Latin America Region • Awareness of Network in some of the Partner organizations is not as strong or deep as it needs to be to ensure management support • Skills of existing Coaches vary greatly • Some existing Coaches need to update their skills to keep pace with changes in methods and challenges facing conservation organizations • Using the Open Standards, projects teams generally do well at basic design and implementation of landscape-scale projects, but they still struggle with design of complex non-place based projects and also with monitoring, evaluation and adaptation for many projects

Actors and stakeholders:

- CCNet’s main audience is current practitioners. These are people with various educational and cultural backgrounds who implement conservation projects within government agencies, academia, private industry, communities or NGOs. These individuals, especially the project managers (e.g. protected area managers, NGO technical managers) are absolutely key to successful implementation of RBM because they are responsible for day-to-day decisions and implementation of conservation plans and actions.
- In addition to individual Coaches, Franchises and Franchise leaders are essential actors and stakeholders. Franchises represent clusters of Coaches who focus their “service area” around a common theme or geographic region. Franchises are the key appendages of CCNet’s body that make work happen in real-life projects. Franchise leaders work cooperatively with the Coaches and the Franchise sponsor and conservation program directors whom they serve to identify the conservation planning needs within their geographic territories. On an annual basis, they review progress and develop plans of action to maintain progress and interact with the larger community as a whole.
- Partner organizations are also important stakeholders; at present, these are WWF, TNC, FOS, GA (the founding Partners).
- Funders, especially those interested in capacity-building and empowerment in conservation and sustainable development, are also important stakeholders for CCNet.

Niche:

In the past years CCNet has demonstrated its value as an effective vehicle for supporting and delivering training to Coaches, providing materials to Coaches and practitioners, connecting Coaches and practitioners and contributing to innovations and methodological and tool updates in Results Based Management (RBM). CCNet is in close coordination with the Conservation Measures Partnership, whose core work has been to advance Results-Based Management by promoting and maintaining the Open Standards. As illustrated in the diagram developed by CMP in Appendix D, CCNet's efforts contribute to:

- Addressing the need for examples of RBM to obtaining greater commitment and support for RBM;
- Establishing best practice standards;
- Ensuring capacity for training and coaching, and also to cross-project learning.

To our knowledge, there is no other entity addressing these needs in the form that CCNet does or with a global collaborative approach.

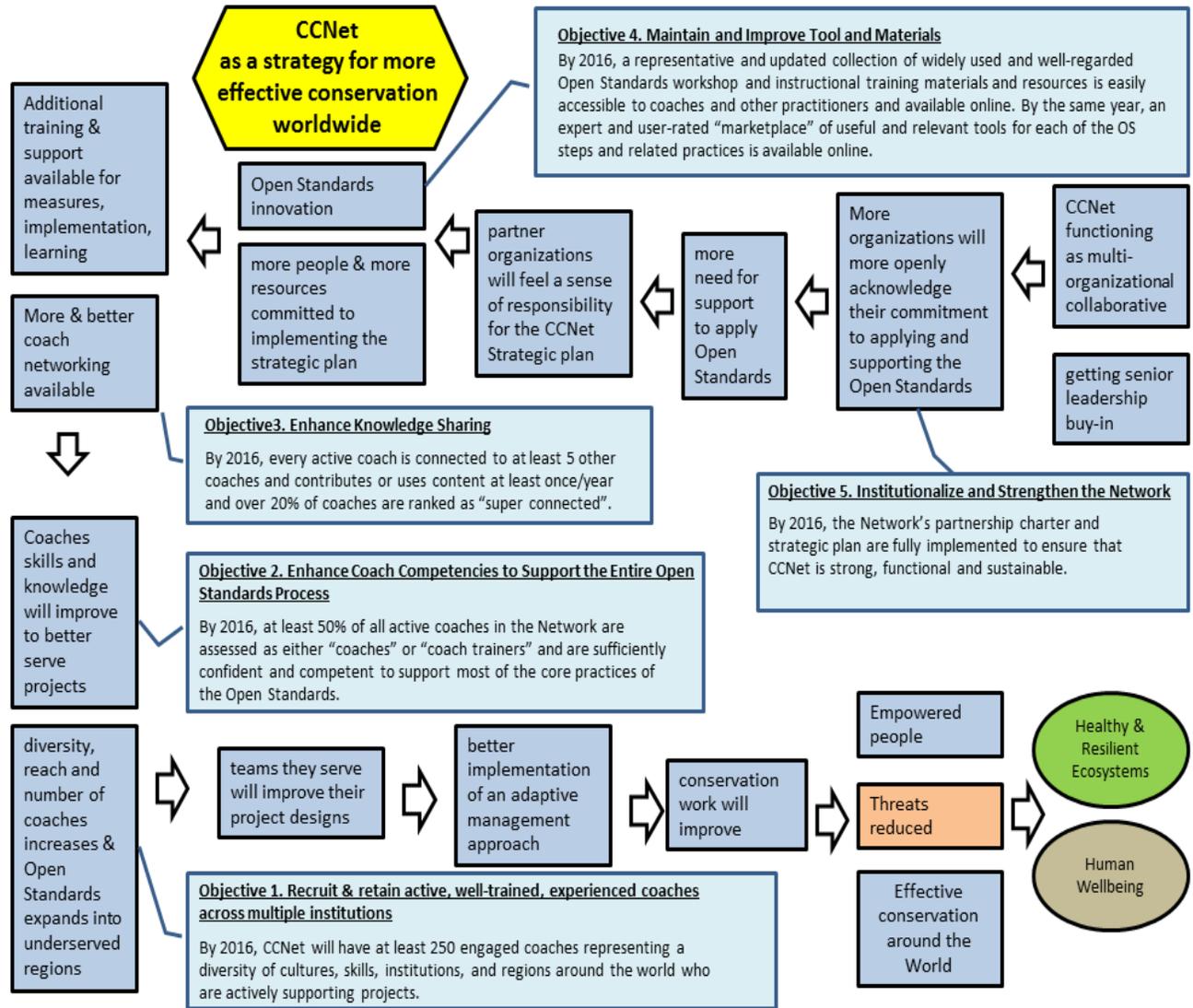
Theory of Change:

Our alliance expects to contribute to effective conservation results worldwide by: building the skills of the Coaches; ensuring service to members of the Conservation Measures Partnership who want to have trained Coaches; and expanding, operating and supporting a strong, functional, diverse and sustainable Conservation Coaches Network. Our "hypothesis" about how this will work in its simplest form is as follows:

- By institutionalizing and strengthening the Network to function as a multi-organizational collaborative, we will increase buy-in and support from Partner organizations to the work and implementation of the strategic plan of CCNet.
- As a result, Partner organizations and other organizations will commit more people and more resources to training new Coaches and supporting existing Coaches and other aspects of the Network's strategic plan and more members of CMP will actualize their commitment to applying and supporting the Open Standards.
- This will lead to more new Coaches being trained and more teams gaining access to a Coach to help them effectively implement the Open Standards.
- By enhancing Coach competency, the skills and knowledge of Coaches will improve to better serve projects that need help.
- By enhancing knowledge sharing, active Coaches will increase and improve connectedness. This will result in their sharing the best content more frequently, sharing new ideas and adaptations more regularly and helping each other across organizational and geographic boundaries with greater frequency.
- By establishing a user-rated "marketplace" of relevant tools for each of the OS steps and related practices online--while offering an updated collection of well-regarded Open Standards workshop and instructional materials and resources online--we will contribute to innovations and increase training and support for the full OS cycle and improve the quality of the Coaches' outreach to project teams.
- By recruiting and retaining at least 250 active, well-trained, experienced Coaches representing a diversity of cultures, skills, institutions and regions around the world--the diversity, reach and number of Coaches will increase, and by 2016 Open Standards will expand into underserved regions and at least 1000 projects will be served.
- As a result of these actions, at least 1000 teams representing the projects of most importance to members of the CMP will have strong results based management plans in place, which will lead to better implementation of an adaptive management approach and improvements in conservation work.

- Our efforts will empower project teams and people worldwide to implement work that will contribute to threat reduction and more effective conservation, and the evidence of these results will be found in healthy and resilient ecosystems and human well-being in projects around the world.

Figure 4. Overview of strategy logic



2016 Objectives and Strategic Direction:

To advance our mission while establishing a more sustainable multi-Partner Network, we have decided to focus on the following objectives during the next five years. While the CCNet Coordination Team and board oversee the implementation of the strategic plan, the efforts of active Conservation Coaches around the world provide the underpinning for our collective results.

Objective 1. Recruit and Retain Active, Well-Trained, Experienced Coaches across Multiple Institutions.

By 2016, CCNet has at least 250 engaged Coaches⁴--representing a diversity of cultures, skills, institutions and regions around the world—who are actively supporting projects⁵.

To ensure that projects around the world have access to competent coaching support, we will work on two fronts. On the one hand, we will bring in Coaches from under-represented cultures, regions, organizations and skill sets through new Coach-training events; and on the other hand, we will nurture existing active Coaches to encourage their growth and engagement. We will also produce materials to support local training for new Coaches and will maintain interactive services to “find a Coach.” These activities will be done in close coordination with CCNet member organizations, Franchises, Coaches and CMP members.

Objective 2. Enhance Coach Competency.

By 2016, at least 50% of all active Coaches in the Network are assessed as either “Coaches” or “Coach trainers” and are sufficiently confident and competent to support most of the core practices of the Open Standards.

To maintain a professional community of practice, members will fill out a *Coach skills assessment tool* every 2 years. This will clarify designations while providing us with information that we can use for targeted professional development in coordination with Franchise leaders and Partner organizations. Training events will include Network Rallies every 2 years, regional and/or topical events, virtual training and other online training tools to address priorities as identified in the assessments. In addition, we will develop a formal mentoring program to strengthen the skills of Coaches while fostering connections across Franchises and organizations.

Objective 3. Enhance Knowledge Sharing.

By 2016, every active Coach is connected to at least 5 other Coaches and contributes or uses content at least once a year, and over 20% of Coaches are ranked as “super connected.”

To enhance knowledge sharing, innovation and connections, we will develop appropriate ways of harvesting and sharing existing best practices, lessons learned and innovations. We will also establish a system that allows Coaches, practitioners and Partner organizations to identify, rate and prioritize knowledge-sharing needs on a continuous basis. Other activities include establishing and maintaining a searchable, easy-to-use, attractive Web presence--preferably in partnership with the CMP Web site--and an accessible online interaction tool. While we expect to facilitate knowledge sharing through our Rallies, regional events, personal exchanges, fellowships, mentorships, working groups and a “buddy system,” we will also identify training opportunities (especially virtual ones) in collaboration with Partners. Lastly, we will continue conducting “social network mapping” to guide investments in knowledge sharing and identify key highly connected Coaches.

Objective 4. Maintain and Improve Tools and Materials.

By 2016, a representative and updated collection of widely used and well-regarded Open Standards training materials and resources is easily accessible to Coaches and other practitioners and available

⁴ “engaged” defined by completed Coaches training; attended rally or other on-going training opportunities; participating in virtual networking or other peer exchanges for sharing and learning and acknowledging their role as a “Coach” in their annual objectives.

⁵ “actively supporting projects” defined as coaching at least one team to develop or revise their conservation plans and/or supporting implementation as needed and desired by a project team and/or helping to train others.

online. By the same year, an expert and user-rated “marketplace” of useful and relevant tools for each of the OS steps and related practices is available online also.⁶

We will collect and review all existing Partner Results-Based Management workshop materials and training tools and update them according to the Open Standards language and to post them on the Web site. In addition we will concentrate tools that are being used by Coaches and practitioners to support each of the Open Standards steps and will establish an online rating system for experts and users. This includes a session at the CCNet Rally to harvest innovations and tools used by Coaches for different steps. We will facilitate access to online training resources, such as the Open Standards self-paced tutorial, and will seek opportunities to open courses offered by Partners (e.g. WWF’s Open Standards online course) to CCNet members. To support connectivity for innovation, we will evaluate existing social networking platforms to establish and maintain a networking site that allows Coaches to self-organize around tools and topics that address their needs. This objective depends making the CCNet Web site easy to navigate and capable of hosting a marketplace of updated resources, including user-rating features.

Objective 5. Institutionalize and Strengthen the Network.

By 2016, the Network’s Partnership charter and strategic plan are fully implemented to ensure that CCNet is strong, functional and sustainable. This will be evident by:

- A coherent and inspiring plan;
- Strong and committed leadership, Partners, Franchises and Coaches;
- Sustainable core funding;
- Committed advocates empowered to influence decision-makers;
- A widely known and respected Network leadership, role and brand.

To bring CCNet into the future as a strong, functional and sustainable cross-boundary collaboration network, we will work on multiple fronts. By working with CMP to strengthen our ties and strategic alignment between CCNet and CMP, we expect to leverage assets and improve collaboration. To ensure a functional and responsive board, we will clarify expectations and assess board performance while setting up a committee to evaluate, recommend and invite new board members and network supporters. In this way, we will strive for a healthy combination of *wealth, wisdom and work*. We will also continue to proactively seek Partner validation for our strategic direction and input in decision-making. Because Franchises are the limbs that connect us to those who practice results-based conservation, we will ensure that all existing and new Franchises are organized and supported to succeed. Our outreach efforts will include a communications plan to share results, success stories and key messages to build awareness and support for the Network. We recognize that monitoring and measures efforts need to be maintained and expanded. While much of the work that supports our mission is done by volunteers, experience shows that successful networks need dedicated coordination. We will ensure that an adequately staffed and funded Network Coordination Team is in place to provide leadership, facilitate board governance, oversee the implementation of the strategic plan and ensure continuity in core activities such as training, Web presence, Coach connectivity and administration.

⁶ CCNet as an entity does not maintain software tools, but it does provide forums for sharing materials, innovations, tools, best practice for coaching and facilitation around different variants and other aspects of the practice of Open Standards. While, CCNet will adhere to the OS in all centrally maintained materials and funded training, CCNet members support all versions of OS practice. CCNet recognizes different variants of OS are valid and valued by different communities of practice within the Network and will work to sponsor and enable communities of practice to self-organize around these variants.

Capacity

Structure and Function

CCNet aims to have an engaged cadre of Coaches (“Franchises”) on every continent supporting people who are working to protect the most important places and solve the most challenging conservation and sustainable resource issues for their regions. The Network vision is that these Franchises and Coaches continuously improve and adapt the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* framework in ways that are responsive to the cultures and communities in which they work and the unique conservation challenges they face. These Franchises and Coaches will be locally funded while being supported by a small Network Coordination Team. That team’s focus is on enhancing the skills and effectiveness of the Coaches and providing them with opportunities to share promising practices and lessons learned in real time across the greater Network. In this way, every team that needs support will have access to a trained Coach who will help them plan, manage, monitor and learn from their work, leading to meaningful conservation results all over the world. As of 2012, a network of nine formal CCNet Franchises supports more than 300 Coaches operating on five continents in 60 countries. Here are the specific types and functions of the members that make up the Network:

Coaches

As of 2012, the network supports more than 300 Coaches operating on five continents in 60 countries. The core focus of the Network is to recruit, train, support, inspire and develop Coaches to help teams succeed in conservation projects. The Coaches use simple, powerful decision-making tools consistent with the Open Standards to develop focused and measurable action plans for specific sites and projects. There are different levels and areas of expertise within the Coaches’ community. The Network is undertaking a more formal classification and certification of Coaches with input from the Franchise leaders and Coaches.

Franchises

Currently there are ten CCNet Franchises in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Central US, Eastern US, Rocky Mountains and Pacific Northwest US, Sierra Nevada and California, US and the WWF network. Franchises are groups of Coaches who share a geographic area or other specialized interest and work together on a regular basis to assess needs, set priorities and support planning. Groups that wish to join the Network as a new Franchise should contact the Network Coordinator to discuss the core requirements and develop a Franchise Agreement, if appropriate. The proposed Franchise would be reviewed and approved by the Network Board. Active Franchises will have decision-making rights in the Network.

Partner Organizations

This Network was founded by four organizations:

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC);
- Greening Australia (GA);
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF);
- Foundations of Success (FoS).

Network Partners are organizations, agencies, and institutions that are committed to:

- Implementing CAP/Open Standards within their organization;
- Sponsoring a Franchise or multiple Franchise units;
- Working jointly with other Partners to implement and periodically update the CCNet strategy;
- Treating improvements and new practices in CAP/Open Standards as “open source.”

As described below under Network functions, Partners will provide active leadership and support to strengthen and expand the Network. Together with the Franchise leaders, Partners will provide the governance and support structure to the Network. It is expected that the Network will include Franchises and Coaches from organizations that may not choose to be active Partners.

The Network is open to like-minded organizations from around the world.

Network Coordination Team

The Network Coordination Team (NCT) is composed of paid staff with significant programmatic responsibilities for Network activities. NCT members will most likely work for one or more of the Partner organizations.

Network Board

The Network Board will include all Franchise leaders (or their designated representatives) and one representative of each Partner organization (each Partner representative will have a designated alternate). The board chair works together with board members to provide timely and efficient input and direction to the Network Coordination Team staff.

Network Functions

Together, the Network members need to actively fulfill at least nine essential functions:

1. New Franchise identification, recruitment and start-up
2. Coach identification and training
3. Coach placement and deployment
4. Technical support and innovation
5. Knowledge sharing
6. Marketing, communications, and advocacy
7. Funding and fundraising
8. Network governance and strategic planning
9. Monitoring and evaluation.

A list of the names, roles and responsibilities of the Network Coordination Team and Board members can be found in Appendix D.

Funding

In the three years since CCNet was chartered, one Partner provided most of the funding for its core operations. When The Nature Conservancy announced in 2012 that it needed to reduce its level of support, it became necessary to develop a more diverse, multi-institutional CCNet funding model. Although this change in funding source presents a challenge, the reliance on one Partner for funding was never a realistic model for sustaining our work. CCNet is designed as a collaborative network—with peers working together to contribute to its success—and we need to make this collaborative structure the basis of our funding model. Our strategic plan defines a set of actions to ensure that by 2016, the Network’s funding will be “strong, functional and sustainable.”

In late 2012, the Network’s board and the Network Coordination Team began taking action to expand the funding base to ensure support for FY2013 core operations and programs. We have been successful in securing cash funding and in-kind commitments equal to \$241,000. In the process, we received cash commitments from all four CCNet Partners, and two Franchise operating units, and donations from all four Partners of staff time to the Network Coordination Team. These resources plus projected user fees for workshops and the Network Rally will ensure adequate support for this transition year (July 2012-June 2013) and move us toward our goal of diversification.

The initial level of interest and support for our FY2013 fundraising has been encouraging but not sufficiently diverse to sustain our program needs. Longer term, we have put in place a work plan to: 1) secure three years of funding and/or funding commitments for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2016 for core CCNet activities through a combination of Partner and Franchise commitments and at least four committed foundation and/or private donors, and 2) to put in place a concept for shared fundraising to support future funding of core operations as well as support individual Partner and Franchise activities. We believe our steady growth in CCNet Partners, Franchises, operation unit Coaches and project partners provide a strong foundation from which to engage and expand the sources of operating and program funding. The current estimate of our core operating budget is US\$750,000 over three years for the Network Coordination Team, part-time technical support, travel, overhead and minimal support for trainings and meetings. This core funding would be supplemented by additional specific grants and in-kind support from a variety of sources for specific events (like the CCNet Rally), exchanges, targeted training, workshops, meetings or other activities. We estimate a budget of \$75,000 for a non-Rally year and \$100,000 for a Rally year. (See Table 4 below for details of estimates annual uses and sources of funds over the next three years.)

Table 4: Representative Annual Expense Budget for Network Coordination: FY2014 – FY2016

Core Expenses:	Purpose	Amount
Personnel and Fringe:	Overall Network coordinator Technical coordinator	\$195,000
Communications	Phone, WebEx, newsletter, Web space	\$12,000
Travel		\$25,000
Supplies and Equipment		\$10,000
Occupancy		\$12,000
Total Core Budget		\$245,000

Other Programmatic expenses:	Comments	Amount
Sponsored workshops	E.g. Coach training workshops, working groups, sponsored Franchise events 5-20 K/each	\$50,000/year

New Franchise support		\$30,000/year
Fellowship support	E.g. Coach/fellows to help new geographies, develop new guidance, conduct select trainings, etc.	\$15,000/year
Travel support	For Coach exchanges or participation in key events	\$10,000/year
Rally (total hard costs)		\$100,000/every 2 years
Total Program Activities Budget:		
Non-Rally Year		\$105,000
Rally Year		\$205,000
Total Budget		\$350,000 - \$450,000

Table 5. Representative Annual Sources Budget for Network Coordination: FY2014 - FY2015

Current CCNet Partners Contributions to Core Expense	TNC, WWF, AUS, FOS	150,000
New Partner Contributions		50,000
Fees For Service	Franchises and other unit's Contributions	30,000
	Sponsored workshops & other workshop fees	10,000
	Registration fees for Conservation Coaches Rally (Rally year only)	75,000
Philanthropy & Grants (depending upon whether it is a Rally year)		110,000 – 135,000
Total Sources		\$350,000 - 450,000

We have developed aggressive but realistic fundraising plans in our FY 2016 Network objectives. In addition to continuing and expanding direct contributions from Network Partners and operating units, we will establish joint fundraising projects with Partners and Franchises. The NCT and board chair will work with Partners to identify and solicit donors to support their organizational agenda and contribute to Network-wide new Coach training, our Network Rally and other needs as defined by the Strategic Plan. We are already working closely with the Conservation Measures Partnership on joint fundraising. Currently, one joint CMP/CCNet proposal has been drafted, and others should be developed through joint planning. We will also investigate appropriate US, Australia and European government funding sources that may support central training and networking functions that engage core government agencies in application of the Open Standards. And we will explore the feasibility of new sources of income such as “fee for services” provided by the Network (e.g. Web-based training) and payment for Network “certification”--especially for consultants and other Coaches who are aligned with the Network and charge for their own direct services.

To ensure accountability for strategy results, we have assigned responsibility for coordinating implementation to a member of our Network Coordination Team. Work has already begun on a plan to form a “CCNet Funding Team” to provide support. They are reviewing the list of donors and partners who have given to past Network activity as well as identifying new prospects.

Our fundraising will also be supported by targeted outreach strategies to build awareness and support for the Network. This includes the development of a communication plan and materials of CCNet results, success stories and key messages. We will identify and target key influencers and “champions” and have a specific engagement strategy in place when we do so. This will be backed up by Web and other systems and information sources to support easy access to information about the Network.

Closing Thoughts

In the next decade, we must demonstrate that conservation is no luxury; it is essential to the well-being of people and their natural environment. To be successful we must accelerate the pace and scale of our efforts, and networks will be a crucial force for this change. A paper by Scarce, Kasper and McLeod and funded by the Packard Foundation made this key point: “Today’s social and environmental problems increasingly cross conventional issue and geographic boundaries, and making systemic progress on these complex problems will require us to connect and coordinate our efforts across traditional borders, sectors and organizations.” Our goal with this strategic plan is to provide a blueprint that CCNet can follow to meet these challenges of complexity, pace and scale.

Through the great work of our partners, Franchise leaders and Coaches, we have created a sound platform upon which we can build. Since CCNet was chartered in 2009, the number of Coaches has almost doubled and the number of organizations and countries from which these Coaches come has more than tripled. We have added new Franchises in Africa and Europe and two additional Franchises in Latin America are in the process of being chartered. During the past year, Coaches and field staff conducted more than 135 workshops working with over 130 organizations to influence the quality of conservation strategies at some 250 projects. This year, we successfully responded to a reduction of revenue from our largest traditional source with diversified and expanded support from our members.

This strategic plan provides a road map to move us forward and substantially strengthen the impact of our work. Two key themes in this plan will influence our success in the coming years. First, we are reaffirming the ambitious goals and objectives set in our last strategic plan: training and support of Coaches, harnessing the Network for continuous improvement and enhancing knowledge sharing. We will recommit ourselves to these goals and explicitly address current challenges, including connecting and improving the skills of our expanding Network and harvesting and sharing innovative techniques, tools and methods to meet the demands of large-scale, people-focused conservation. Second, we are deepening our commitment to the Network’s institutional strength. We have ambitious goals for building a more sustainable funding strategy, strengthening and diversifying our Partnerships and Franchises, and expanding outreach and communication to build support.

Ultimately, the value of the work of the Coaches Network can best be understood in the words of Naomi Hobson as she describes working with CCNet Coaches on her indigenous people’s lands in northern Australia:

“...we were stuck on how to think through a way forward. We had many passionate people who all want to see things happen but without a way to think clearer, capture all the ideas and work through a logical framework to understand what we should do, why and when. With the support of coaches we were able to proceed with complete confidence in a thorough planning process that engaged all of our clan members; our cultural elders, our hunters, and even our young teenage boys and girls. We are now filled with confidence that our objectives and strategies will deliver the healthy cultural and biodiversity outcomes we desire. And that we will be working on our country looking after all the things that are important to us and managing cultural and environmental threats that we now have and those to come.”

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