![Conservation Coaches Network — Strengthening conservation strategies and practice through coaching](logo)

Welcome to the new *CCNet Stories*!
April 2022

This is the first issue of the new and improved *CCNet Stories* newsletter, which shares how coaches are supporting projects and teams to make a difference worldwide, while using the Conservation Standards. *CCNet Stories* now comes out once per quarter. We also send out the *CCNet News* newsletter throughout the year with announcements, upcoming trainings, and resources. You can submit stories and news for upcoming newsletters at any time and we'll feature them in the next issue.

Submit stories or news

Reflections

Institutionalising the Conservation Standards in a South African Parastatal

CapeNature manages a statutory nature reserve network totaling approximately 830,800 hectares in the Western Cape province of South Africa. CapeNature recently adopted the Conservation Standards for protected areas after working with Dassenberg Coastal Catchment Partnership and volunteer CCNet coaches to pilot the process in a critical climate change corridor. Through our efforts, we learned some lessons that may help others who are interested in institutionalising the Conservation Standards:

1. Seek and articulate agency's "Why?"
2. Test organisational readiness and determine if the climate is suitable for testing and taking up new ideas and processes
3. Have a clear vision
4. Find an "on-ramp"
5. Use a pilot as an opportunity to demonstrate and capacitate others
6. Mandate/formalise the process as soon as there is buy-in
7. Invest in people--human resources--to develop capability and expertise
8. Invest in tools, software, and skills development
9. Expect resistance, seek to understand it, and develop a strategy to overcome it
10. Persevere!

So far, the greatest benefits of the Conservation Standards have been consistency, articulating protected area values and their condition, and identifying measures of success at the onset of planning. As the Conservation Standards become more entrenched in CapeNature's organisational design, we believe they will improve our reporting capability and enhance traceability between budget allocation, actions, and impacts.

The pilot effort was supported by the GEF-5 PA project.

Visit our website to learn more or contact Natalie Hayward with questions.

Photos (above, clockwise from top left): Intertidal zone monitoring in the Ganzekraal Conservation Area; the Dassenberg climate corridor, which contains highly-threatened and poorly-conserved lowland and coastal habitats; critically endangered *Disa barbata* orchid; post-fire monitoring. Photos by CapeNature.

2021 CCNet Accomplishments

During 2021, our world struggled through disruptions and challenges caused by the continued global COVID-19 health emergency, which in many places happened in conjunction with environmental and social emergencies. In spite of numerous challenges, CCNet coaches have kept busy, adapting, training others and supporting conservation projects around the world.

Working with our partners, some of our biggest accomplishments in 2021 include:

- Holding our first virtual Rally gathering with the theme "Adapting to a Changed World" and 221 participants from 41 countries
- Certification of 3 coaches from Australia, Canada/United Kingdom, and the United States
- Releasing Conservation Standards version 4.0 document in Mongolian (Spanish is in progress) and PowerPoint presentations in English and French, under CMP sponsorship
- Guidance and tools to support protected area management in Mongolian, Spanish and English (Chinese is in progress)
- Planning a smaller version of our in-person Rally for October 2022 in Victoria, Canada

Coaches: We currently have 708 active coaches, representing over 250 institutions and helping projects in 69 countries on all continents. Slightly over half of our coaches work with non-profit organizations, followed by 18% in independent consultancies and close to 17% in government agencies. We also have smaller percentages of participants from academic institutions, community-based and indigenous organizations and networks, foundations, and land trusts. Coaches interact on a global online forum in English, to exchange experiences, questions, resources, and opportunities related to the practice of conservation.

Regional Networks and Communities of Practice: We currently have nine active regional networks and two thematic communities of practice. One of the communities of practice focuses on teaching adaptive management in collaboration with academic institutions, and the other one focuses on supporting practitioners and conservation coaches working on Conservation Standards projects on Indigenous Lands and Waters. In 2021, practitioners in Africa, Australia, Europe, Latin America, North America, and Southeast Asia connected in their own language and cultural context, sharing updates and experiences regarding the practical application of the Conservation Standards, as well as complementary methods, approaches, and relevant information.

Read the full accomplishments report here.

Coaches Around the World

Ecosystem Health Scorecard for Diverse Area of New Zealand

The Top of the South Island is the most environmentally diverse area of New Zealand. Kotahitanga mō te Taiao (meaning "Collective Action for Our Nature") is an alliance formed by the majority of iwi (Māori tribes) in the region, all six local governments, and the New Zealand Department of Conservation. To help inform and support its conservation and restoration strategies, the Alliance developed measures of ecosystem health for all terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. Designed to be understandable and relevant to local communities and capture the best available science, these measures:

- Show the health of the region's varied ecosystems
- Provide information to decision-makers and stakeholders
- Define "success" for the Alliance strategies
- Help prioritise and focus strategies on key factors
- Engage communities and stakeholders in monitoring health

As a volunteer coach, Greg Low helped the Alliance working group develop these measuring using an approach based on the Conservation Standards. Overall, the current health of the Top of the South's ecosystems varies widely with good ratings typically in higher elevation and steep upland areas and poor ratings mostly in lowlands and valley floors. By

Ranking Threats to Improve Conservation Planning: An Example from the Gediz Delta, Turkey

Mediterranean wetlands are among the most threatened natural areas. Effective conservation planning needs to provide clear, systematic identification of threats to find sustainable conservation strategies. In a recent case study, Tour du Valat evaluated current threats in the Gediz Delta in Turkey using a multi-method approach, which could serve as a model to improve conservation planning in other sites worldwide. This approach included a comprehensive literature review and stakeholder interviews to identify existing threats; intensive fieldwork to survey the Delta; coding and ranking threats using the Conservation Standards; and mapping the most vulnerable areas of the Delta. The most commonly observed threats in the field were pollution and agriculture and aquaculture activities. According to the threat ranking, the most important threats are climate change and residential and commercial development. The habitats that are most at risk are agricultural grassland habitats. Results also indicated a need to extend conservation actions to the inner part of the Delta.

This work was conducted by Dilara Arslan and Lisa Ernoul (Tour du Valat), Kerim Çiçek (Aegean University) and Ömer Döndüren (Izmir Municipality).

Read the full article here or contact Lisa Ernoul to learn more.

implementing scaled-up strategies over time, the Alliance seeks to improve ecosystem health and "change the colours on the scorecards" from red to yellow to green. To do so, the Alliance will complete full Conservation Action Planning with the support of The Nature Conservancy. Read more on the CCNet website.

The detailed ecosystem health report is available **here.** Contact **Greg Low** with questions.

Photo (above left): Ecosystem Health Scorecard; map of region. TNC photos.

Photo (above right): Dilara Arslan and the Karşıyaka municipality Vice President. Photo courtesy of Tour du Valat.

Conservation Standards Applied to Strategic Plan for World Heritage Site in Guatemala

The colonial city of Antigua, Guatemala, was declared a national monument in 1944 and a World Heritage Site in 1979. When the National Council for the Protection of Antigua Guatemala (CNPAG) identified the need for an updated strategic plan for 2022 to 2026, this was seen as an opportunity to apply the Conservation Standards.

The CNPAG appointed the Institutional Planning Chief to coordinate the planning process. Throughout 2021, sixteen technicians from the institution met in 88 virtual sessions (176 hours total) to carry out planning the process and learn how to use the Conservation Standards and Miradi.

As a facilitator of the process, I first updated myself in the Conservation Standards and Miradi with the support (*ad honorem*) of CCNet coach Estuardo

Optimizing and Promoting the Conservation Standards for Nature Reserves in China

After completing the integration and optimization of whole national protected areas, the next step for China's nature reserves is to improve the effectiveness of management and protection, which requires scientific methods and tools. That's why TNC China and the Academy of Inventory and Planning (AIP) National Forestry and Grassland Administration began promoting the Conservation Standards in China and adapting them to local contexts. In late 2021, TNC and AIP held two events. An initial meeting introduced the Conservation Standards to about 20 people in the AIP. A second workshop examined real cases in order to provide further training and deeper understanding. Both TNC and AIP agreed that the Conservation Standard's adaptive management concept is very suitable for China's protected areas. Over the next two years, we will work together to develop localized operating manuals and

Secaira. I also adapted the methodological presentations according to the characteristics of our site. The following conservation targets were selected by the planning team: residential architecture from 18th and 19th centuries; monumental architecture from 17th and18th centuries; Renaissance urban layout; movable property (documentary, archaeological, sculptural and pictorial); non-tangible local cultural heritage; and natural and scenic landscape. The viability analysis was the most challenging part of the process. This is the first iteration of an updated strategic plan for 2022 to 2026, and its socialization is still pending, but the CNPAG board has ordered follow up on the completion of the plan.

Contact María Elena Molina Soto to learn more. María Elena is a member of CCNet and professor in the Postgraduate Department of Architecture at the University of San Carlos de Guatemala.
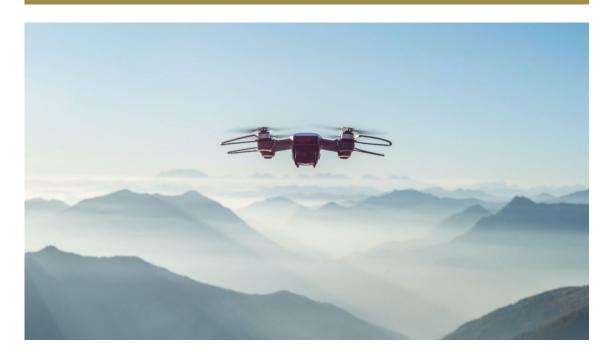
Photo (top left): Presentation of the 2022-2026 Institutional Strategic Plan (Plan Estrategico Institucional) to the CNPAG Board. Photos by CNPAG.

corresponding courses and tools to help improve the effectiveness of protected area planning and management in China.

Contact Yongmei Luo to learn more.

Photo (top right): TNC and AIP members actively engage in discussion about the Conservation Standards. Photo by Jin Tong / TNC.

Opinion Article

Tech Might Be Conservation's Greatest Asset

The Juniper Initiative

The last decade has seen the technology landscape change massively thanks to low production costs, rapid prototyping, high computational power, and widespread access to the Internet. Breakneck advances in technology have drastically altered agriculture, mining, medicine, and other major industries, but have not been commonplace in conservation efforts. Why? These services haven't been available primarily due to cost, training availability, or even knowledge that the technology exists. Thankfully, efforts are currently underway to conjoin the two fields of technology and conservation.

In partnership with WILDLABS, Colorado State University surveyed 248 conservation tech users and developers across 37 countries. Respondents reported that the technologies with the highest untapped potentials for conservation are machine learning and computer vision, eDNA and genomics, and networked sensors. Results indicated that competition for limited funding, duplication of efforts, and inadequate capacity building are the biggest challenges facing conservation technology development and use. On the other hand, key opportunities for growth are increasing collaboration and information sharing, improving the interoperability of tools, and enhancing capacity for data analyses at scale.

Conservation technologies, such as devices, software platforms, computing resources, algorithms, and biotechnology, can enhance our ability to collect, analyze and share data on wildlife species and ecosystems, helping us understand and identify drivers of extinction and degradation. Technology can also support conservation action on the ground by detecting and fighting illegal activities, mitigating threats to biodiversity, and restoring habitats at unprecedented scales and help us monitor the efficacy and efficiency of conservation actions at a global scale.

However, tech is not a silver bullet. Further steps must still be taken, such as shaping conservation policy on both local and global scales, providing the funding and resources needed to monitor outcomes and adjust projects to achieve goals, and open-source sharing so successes can be replicated and expanded on by others.

The reality is that we will most likely not see advances in conservation without advances in conservation technology. Advancing and adopting technology has an unprecedented opportunity to enhance our capacity to conserve biodiversity, contend with climate change, and meet our sustainability goals. While this great potential is still sorely underutilized, this conservationist remains hopeful for the future.

Visit our website to learn more. Contact Janae Malpas with questions.

Photo (above): Drone flying over mountain range. Photo by Alessio Soggetti on Unsplash.

[John Morrison](#) (CCNet Global Coordinator)
[Cristina Lasch](#) (CCNet Technical Coordinator)

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