



Conservation Coaches Network

Strengthening conservation strategies and practice through coaching

Welcome to *CCNet Stories* February 2023!

The stories in this newsletter show how CCNet coaches and the Conservation Standards are supporting conservation efforts across the globe. Enjoy!

Reflections



2022 CCNet Rally: Strengthening connections to our people and planet

Last year in October, 115 participants representing 28 different organizations and consultancies from 16 countries came together on the beautiful coast of Victoria, Canada, to learn, share, and celebrate our community. The theme for the CCNet Rally, *Strengthening Connections to Our People and Planet*, reflected our network's desire to reconnect and share our knowledge and experiences. In his welcome, CCNet Chair Michael Looker reminded us that, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, our planet is experiencing a dual crisis of unprecedented biodiversity loss and rapid climate change--and by bringing so many of together, our network encourages collaboration that is critically needed to address these issues.

While overlooking the beautiful ocean, our group was welcomed to the traditional territories of the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ nations by Lekwungen leader and Knowledge Keeper, Nəʔəmtənət (Florence Dick) as she played a heartbeat rhythm on the drum. In

addition to her welcome, Florence joined us during our field trip day, where she shared profound stories of injustice and also of resilience, wisdom, and hope to help build bridges across our cultures.

During three days, representatives of Indigenous government agencies and organizations, non-profit organizations, government agencies, networks, foundations, and academic and educational institutions attended a range of activities, including plenary events, skill-training workshops, sessions, and a “marketplace” that shared innovations, tools, and guidance materials. We also had plenty of networking opportunities, including a field trip to Uplands Park, where we enjoyed the outdoors while learning about the area’s natural and cultural relevance and about efforts to restore and protect this unique place. During our celebratory evening, we announced coaches who had been recently certified, winners of the Conservation Measures Partnership’s photo story awards, and recipients of the Brad Northrup Global Service Awards.

We are still finalizing our Rally evaluation, but we have already heard from a majority of participants that:

- Workshop content addressed topics that are relevant and important.
- There was a good balance of time spent in workshops versus time spent interacting/networking.
- The innovation and tools marketplace was creative and introduced attendees to at least two new tools, skills, and/or techniques that will improve their ability to apply and coach the Conservation Standards.
- They were able to build relationships and make new connections that they intend to build over the following year.

In a post-event survey colleagues also shared specific examples of how they are applying and passing on what they learned around the world.

The generous financial support we received from individuals and organizations enabled 40 individuals to attend the Rally from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, South Africa, and the United States.

We’d like to express our deep gratitude to all who were part of the a hard-working, enthusiastic volunteer planning team and all who contributed to CCNet Rally 2022 so that we could hone existing and new skills, share tools and knowledge, expand our horizons, and get inspired to advance conservation while we adapt to the world’s needs.

Visit the [2022 CCNet Rally website](#) to learn about session highlights and check out content shared throughout the event.

Photo (above): In October, CCNet members gathered on the beautiful coast of Victoria, Canada, for the 2022 CCNet Rally. Photo by Gustavo Gatti.



Life Lessons at the Rally

Story by [Sara Delheimer](#), CCNet newsletter editor

For over 10 years, I've volunteered to put together newsletters for CCNet. I do so from my home in Nashville, Tennessee, working closely with Cristina Lasch via email and Zoom. I finally got the chance to meet Cristina and other members of CCNet in person (whose outstanding work I've read so much about) at the Rally in October. It was such a cool experience! I woke up each morning and watched the sun rise from the little beach behind the hotel. I went to sessions all day long and then relaxed in the hot tub for hours each night before bed. That's my kind of conference! Even though I am not a conservation practitioner or coach (for my day job, I write and design reports and infographics to share the impacts of agricultural research projects), I was able to absorb interesting ideas and useful guidance that I can apply in my career and beyond. I was refreshed and inspired by all the thoughtful, dedicated practitioners and coaches who are proud of their successes, but always looking to improve their work. The Rally was a great reminder to continue to expand my skills and use them in new and impactful ways.

Another gem of wisdom came after I was honored with a Brad Northrup Global Service Award. When John called my name during the awards ceremony, I tried to disappear under the table. I dread being in the spotlight and I don't really know how to graciously accept compliments. I've always been happy to help with the CCNet newsletter, and because I enjoy learning about all the work that's being done, it often doesn't feel like "work" to me. And, as in all areas of my life, I'm aware of how I could be doing *more* or *better*. So, while speaking to others after the award ceremony, I downplayed my service. I didn't realize what a problem this was until a fellow attendee pointed it out. He noted that I was getting more and more self-deprecating every time I talked about my work for CCNet; he reminded me that, while this work may not feel like a lot to me, it does to someone without the same skill set or time. This observation prompted a lot of introspection, and I am grateful for the perspective shift. I shouldn't let my personal insecurities and perfectionism and imposter syndrome take the reins. This insight may not be one the Rally intended to share, but it is one that I will take and apply across my life. I hope all of the other attendees left the Rally feeling as challenged and inspired and motivated as I did.

I would also like to thank Cristina for inviting me and helping with trip logistics and Florence for welcoming me to the land on behalf of the Lekwungen people. Many thanks to everyone who struck up conversation with me on walks, during meals, and in the

pools. Keep up the great work! I hope I can help share your stories for another 10 years. I appreciate your recognition of my efforts thus far.

Photo (above): Sara enjoys dinner in Victoria with fellow CCNet members.



A Double Dose of Insights

Story from [Marshall Birch](#), Nature United

As the Indigenous Community Engagement Coordinator with Nature United's Manitoba Program, my work is focused on supporting Indigenous communities to realize their goals related to natural resource and lands management. Planning is a big part of this work, including providing support using Health Country Planning. I knew I'd need more training before I felt comfortable leading a community through this process myself, which is why I found myself in Victoria.

It had been years since I'd last boarded a plane when I departed Winnipeg for balmy Victoria to take part in a double dose of Conservation Standards events: coach training and the CCNet Rally. Ushered up a winding road west of town, I was introduced to the venue and 20-some folks I'd be living and learning amongst for the next week. I'd previously taken virtual trainings in Conservation Standards and Healthy Country Planning (an adaptation aimed at supporting Indigenous-led planning), but this was a wholly different experience.

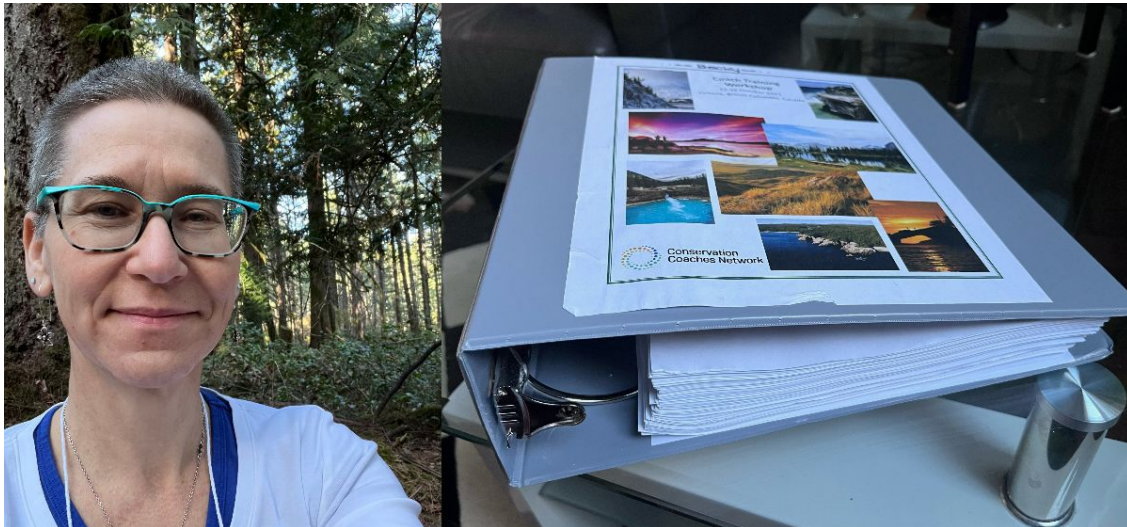
Over the coming days, our team learned about and tested out best practices in coaching the Conservation Standards, while meeting with likeminded professionals and learning from their experiences. Attendees representing government, NGOs, and private consultancies from just down the street to Vietnam gathered for discussions, activities, meals, hikes, and chuckles amidst the rustic setting. By the time we picked up our certificates, we'd all gained valuable insights. The unique role a coach plays in this process was highlighted to me – being able to guide without taking control and being flexible while

keeping the team on track. Knowing there are dedicated people and resources available to support coaches in this work is reassuring as we go forward to navigate the inevitable challenges and uncertainties.

Those of us less interested in rest and recuperation opted to head straight to the CCNet Rally following our training. There were pros and cons to this. On one hand, I was able to hear about tangible examples of using the Conservation Standards and meet people involved, driving home the value of the process I'd just been trained on. On the other hand, sitting and talking for days can be surprisingly tiring, and I would have had more energy to engage actively had I not attended on the heels of the training. Nonetheless, it was great to take part and connect with a network of people leading inspiring work.

It's my hope that what I've learned through this deep dive into the Conservation Standards will help me better support communities planning for protection of their territories and that this will lead to better outcomes for people and the environment. I've since been exploring opportunities to expand my use of the Conservation Standards and identify what that could look like in my work, and it's great to know there's a network of practitioners I can tap into when I need extra support.

Photo (above): Marshall Birch poses with post-it notes during an interactive Rally session.



You Had Me at Big Binder!

Story from [Becky Raboy](#), Founder, Conservation Synthesis Consulting

This past October, I participated in my first Conservation Coaches Training and CCNet Rally, in Victoria, Canada. Both events were truly remarkable. The training was held at Earthspring Sanctuary, a beautiful location nestled in the woods. The remote location (we struggled to get Internet and cell reception) was perfect for focus. Classes took place in a rustic and intimate setting, a round, domed, cathedral-like room made of fir and cedar. On the first day, we were given binders four inches thick and brimming with content. Smiling, the trainers told us not to worry--we'd go through ALL OF IT over the next five days! The hours were intense; we started early and pushed into dinner. Sprinkled between informative presentations, hands-on exercises (many based on case studies shared by fellow participants) tested our new skills. As we took turns coaching small groups through different conservation scenarios, the trainers gave us patient and generous feedback. By the time we were done, the walls and windows were papered over with tons of colourful sticky notes and flip chart summaries. Throughout the week, we also shared our motivations for training, past work experiences, future plans, and approaches that worked (or didn't) as well as lots of stories about our kids, pets, hobbies, musical tastes, and travel

adventures.

Our trainers were absolutely brilliant. They were welcoming, gracious, and attentive to our needs, and extremely well-versed in the Conservation Standards and coaching. During this experience, I gained a deeper understanding of what a coach does, what they represent, and what they are able to bring to the table. I left the training truly inspired.

As we made our way from the calm of the sanctuary to the city for the Rally, I wasn't sure what to expect; all I could think of were biker rallies, which sounded exciting! At the opening dinner, my first thought was, "Wow, so many people!" There were people from all around the world and all types of practitioners. I was a little nervous as my social anxiety kicked in, but that soon all melted away. It was comforting knowing that everyone around me was a big enthusiast of the Conservation Standards. Everyone was friendly and approachable. During all of the sessions and activities, I was able to make connections with other practitioners and learn more about the history of CCNet, the regional networks, and communities of practice. I saw tremendous opportunity to engage and support the CCNet community. I also appreciated chatting during breaks and meals about work prospects, tips, and advice.

The Rally sessions encompassed a range of topics and were super informative and hands-on. Attendees were given opportunities to learn, practice, and discuss. I was really taken by the Healthy Country Planning sessions. Prior to the Rally, this concept was rather abstract to me, but I soon understood the deeper meaning of "on country" and the significance of adapting the Conservation Standards in this way. Another favourite activity was the Tools & Innovations Marketplace. There were so many useful tools presented by a range of conservation groups all in one cozy space. I also valued learning about the Lekwungen peoples of the region and visiting the Garry Oak and intertidal ecosystems. The meeting organizers did a great job organizing a comprehensive Rally. For me, the most challenging part of the Rally was deciding what to attend and how to find any time to rest!

My conservation practice and ability to coach others has been greatly strengthened by these two CCNet events. They will certainly help shape the next phase of my professional career as I continue establishing my own conservation consultancy. My coach's binder sits prominently in my office, as important to me as a framed diploma, and I'm already counting down the days to the next Rally.

Photo (above): Becky Raboy and her new conservation coach training notebook.



Mongolia Coaches Attend Rally

At the CCNet Rally, Mongolia was represented by two experts from the Altai-Sayan and Amur-Heilong ecoregion program branches of WWF-Mongolia and four experts from The Nature Conservancy. Here are some of their reflections:

"It was great to get to know, talk to, and meet so many colleagues face-to-face...I will teach my many Mongolian colleagues the new Miradi program."

-- *Ankhubayar Enkhbold (Ankhaa)*

"This experience was very helpful for my career and experience working with Protected Areas...We'll update some nature reserve and protected areas management plans this year."

-- *Ts. Munkhzul (Zula)*

"We learned a lot of interesting tools and approaches and shared great experiences...It was great that community-led conservation was one of the main topics..."

-- *Baljnyam Batjargal (Bali)*

Photo (above): Learning about restoration efforts at the Uplands Park in Victoria. Photo by Munkhzul Tserendorj, TNC-Mongolia.



Bringing Rally Lessons Back to Argentina

Story from Ana Beccar, The Nature Conservancy, Argentina

The CCNet Rally was an all-round enriching experience for me. I learned enormously by listening to the conservation challenges each participant brought from different points of the globe. I was once again surprised (and yet not totally so) that challenges share many of the underlying causes even though they display themselves in a vast spectrum of ecosystems, conservation targets, and cultures.

Another valuable takeaway was the emphasis on the need to apply a robust, flexible methodology without arguing or losing energy over details such as names, shapes, or tangential issues. There is not a one-size-fits-all methodology, but rather a common understanding of what is really important. Practitioners can apply one of the many methodologies available for conservation planning while allowing each team to customize and be creative. The “two-eyed seeing” shared by Canadian participants was a clear example of how to integrate knowledge from different lenses for better results and the benefit of all. Two-eyed seeing is an approach that has endless fields of application and is a visual resource that I will keep handy for project planning and life cycle.

As soon as I came back home, I shared different sketches, contents, and anecdotes from Victoria with my colleagues in Argentina. I am still digesting the incredible learnings from our time together and I hope to incorporate them in my present work and onwards. I want to thank my TNC sponsors for making it possible for me to attend the rally. ¡Gracias Cristina Lasch, David Patrick, and Fernando Veiga!

Photo (above): Ana with colleagues from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Spain at the CCNet Rally in Canada.

Coaches Around the World



Canada Coach Training

Story from [John Morrison](#), CCNet Global Coordinator

The week before the CCNet Coaches Rally in October 2022, a new coach training was held at the charming and rustic Earthspring Sanctuary Retreat Centre, a large nature sanctuary north of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The sanctuary is characterized by coastal Douglas-fir forests, streams, and open hilltops--a stunning Canadian landscape, although it was unusually dry during our stay.

Eighteen participants came from four continents (North America, South America, Europe, and Asia) though most were from Canada and the United States. Participants represented a range of institutions including The Nature Conservancy, the Denver Zoo, TRAFFIC, WWF, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Environmental Incentives, the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, the Puget Sound Partnership, Parks Canada, and Conservation Synthesis. A number of the new coaches were able to attend the Rally following the training.

The trainers were Anita Diederichsen (WWF Brazil), Sarah Cotter (Parks Canada in Victoria, BC), and John Morrison (WWF and CCNet in Maine, USA).

Photo (above): New coaches and trainers at the New Coach Training in Victoria, Canada.



Growing the Use of the Conservation Standards in New Zealand

Story from [Haojin Tan](#), The Nature Conservancy, Aotearoa NZ

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Aotearoa NZ (New Zealand) is on a mission to build capacity to use the Conservation Standards within the country. In the next three years, through its Conservation Leaders Programme, TNC Aotearoa NZ is working with partners to build a pool of CS practitioners and Coaches to help amplify outcomes and impacts from the good work that many are now doing in the country.

As part of the programme, a Conservation Standards training was held on the 14-18 November 2022 in Taupō, New Zealand, bringing together 30 individuals from government agencies, environmental organisations, and community-led initiatives. It was encouraging that most of the participants were from iwi (tribe) or hapu (clan) led initiatives. The training will empower them to carry out better planning for conservation and restoration of what they care about most, while also providing more means to participate in the wider natural resource management in their region. Overall, we received positive feedback about the workshop content and delivery. We also received invaluable feedback on opportunities for improvements. This is a critical part of the learning journey for the Conservation Leaders Programme, as we take lessons from each of the workshops and adapt and improve it further to suit Aotearoa NZ's context and applying it within Te Ao Māori/ Māori worldview. We look forward to sharing our learnings with CCNet colleagues.

As we continue to establish and grow the CCNet in Aotearoa NZ, we would like to invite existing practitioners of the Conservation Standards (or its equivalent) in NZ to join the network. Please get in touch if you are interested.

[Learn more here](#) or contact [Haojin Tan](#).

Photo (above): Participants at the Conservation Standards training workshop in Taupō, relieved to finish five days of training, but also eager to go back and apply their knowledge within their own projects. Photo by Roger Kingi.



CCNet Expands Pacific Island Network!

Story from [Annalea Fink](#), The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i

The Pacific Island Network, spanning Micronesia and Polynesia, held its first Conservation Coaches Training in December 2022 at Hawai'i's Camp Moku'ē'ia on O'ahu's North Shore. Four trainers led 21 participants through the Conservation Standards training while having an exceptional amount of fun and creating lasting connections. Participants included TNC staff as well as nonprofit and government partners from the islands of Hawai'i, Maui, O'ahu, and Kauai and from Palau and Pohnpei. Participant case studies on management of paku'iku'i (achilles tang fish) in West Hawai'i, ridge-to-reef conservation in Palau, and native watershed forest conservation on Kaua'i provided great learning opportunities. The participants now know how to coach a group through the entire Conservation Standards process, including the situation analysis and results chains. Highlights from the training included "secret friends" doing nice things for each other, bonfire stories where participants shared about the coaches in their lives, and a field trip to Ka'ena Point to see the magnificent Laysan albatross.

The training was a great opportunity for the Pacific Islands Network to enjoy camaraderie, celebrate togetherness, progress on their plans, and create bonds that will be cultivated for years to come. For more information, contact [Emily Fielding](#).

This training was funded by CCNet. The trainers were Emily Fielding (TNC-Maui), Chad Wiggins (TNC-Hawai'i Island & Palmyra), John Morrison (WWF, Maine), Rob Sutter (Enduring Conservation Outcomes, Georgia).

Photo (above): Participants and trainers at the Pacific Islands Network Conservation Coaches Training in O'ahu, Hawai'i, USA. Photo by TNC.



Over 100 students in first cohort of self-paced CS Intro Course

Story from [Felix Cybulla](#)

Late last year, I was asked by Conservation Careers, an online platform that bundles job offers and training opportunities for conservationists, to create a [compelling online course on conservation project management](#). Given their network and reach (129,000 followers on LinkedIn), I saw a unique opportunity to promote the Conservation Standards and potentially expose thousands of conservationists to what I consider the best-in-class approach to conservation.

Intended for practitioners as well as students, the self-paced course provides a solid introduction to the entire cycle of the Conservation Standards, without any prior knowledge required. All of the presentations in the course are composed of animated content, high-resolution images, drone and video footage, and an embedded facecam to create an engaging and immersive feeling for the viewer. The course is live and can be found [here](#).

Although I anticipated high interest, we were blown away by the amount of sign-ups we received. In total, 104 students from over 25 countries made up the first cohort, and the feedback we received exceeded our expectations.

If you want to know more, you can reach out to [Felix Cybulla](#).

Photo (above): Screenshot from the course.



Improving Conservation Enterprises Effectiveness Through Targeted “Coaching” Impact Labs

Since 2014, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Biodiversity Division has hosted a [collaborative learning group on conservation enterprises](#) to capture and share global lessons for this common conservation strategy. The learning group developed a generalized theory of change and a shared learning agenda to guide cross-activity networking and co-learning on approaches to supporting community-level enterprises as a conservation strategy.

In 2021, USAID—with support from its Measuring Impact II activity—initiated the “Conservation Enterprises Impact Lab” to facilitate conversations with six USAID missions and their implementing partners teams around the theory of change for supporting conservation enterprises. Impact Labs aim to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and abilities of participating teams to improve the effectiveness of their conservation enterprise approaches.

In 2022, USAID and Measuring Impact II facilitated a second Impact Lab. Seven additional implementing partner teams from around the world shared their experiences supporting enterprises. Beginning in June, the Impact Lab facilitators used Conservation Standards principles to coach the teams to develop their theories of change and monitoring, evaluation, and learning frameworks and identify lessons learned. Each team produced a [poster](#) illustrating their activity’s theory of change for supporting conservation enterprises. Participants report that they have since used the posters for a variety of purposes, including having discussions with stakeholders, introducing new team members to the activity, and informing annual work planning and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. In August, the teams reconvened for a [final group session](#) to share their theories of change. As part of this session, they shared the specific tools they are using to measure key outcomes. One participant noted they “liked being able to consciously reflect on the theory of change, first internally and then with other programs.” Another participant appreciated “the coaching opportunity to think through strengths and [areas for] improvement of what we are doing.”

To learn more, contact [Megan Hill](#).

Photo (above): Female seaweed farmers associated with the USAID Mikajy project separating seaweed to be sold to the NatureAlgae Society in d'Ambohitalalana, district d'Antalaha, Region SAVE, Madagascar.

Photo by Fanja Randrenalijaona/USAID Mikajy.

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Contact CCNet Global:

[John Morrison](#) (CCNet Global Coordinator)

[Cristina Lasch](#) (CCNet Technical Coordinator)

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