



# Conservation Coaches Network

Strengthening conservation strategies and practice through coaching

## Welcome to *CCNet Stories* June 2025!

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

### Feature Story



Photo (above): Participants after the coach training in Hustai National Park in Mongolia in May. Photo by Uuganbayar Ganbold.

#### **Clarity, Confidence, and Community: Coach Training in Mongolia**

**Story from [Narangerel Naranpurev](#) (Wildlife Conservation Society/CCNet Mongolia)**

In May 2025, a coach training was held at Hustai National Park, Mongolia, bringing together 21

participants from diverse backgrounds, including protected area specialists, staff from local and international conservation NGOs, and government representatives.

Notably, this was the first training led by Narangerel and Bolor, who currently serve as the CCNet Mongolia regional leaders. In addition, Munguntsetseg, a 2023 coach training alumna, led a helpful session that enabled participants to learn about the Miradi software. The involvement of past trainees now in leadership positions demonstrates one of CCNet's core principles: passing on knowledge and giving back to the community.

The training incorporated real case examples from Mongol Els, Bogd Khan Strictly Protected Area, and Khurkh Khuiten Nature Reserve, encouraging practical application and innovation. It was a completely new experience for all participants, especially as they came from diverse sectors such as sustainable finance, grant management, and land use planning. This diversity brought fresh perspectives and enriched the overall learning process.

The training was led by John Morrison (WWF/CCNet Global), Vladimir Milushuev (FOS-Europe), Narangerel Naranpurev (WCS/CCNet Mongolia), and Bolor Radnaabazar (ENSURE/CCNet Mongolia), with sessions also led by Munkhchuluun Basan and Javzansuren Norvanchig (WWF), and Munguntsetseg Dorjpalam (Onon-Balj NP).

**Read how the training changed participants' mindset and shaped their careers below!**



Photo (above): Coaches in Mongolia during the third day of the training—feeling proud, inspired, and connected.  
Photo by G.Uuganbayar, Hustai National Park.

**Tuvshinjargal Erdenechimeg (Bird Researcher and Protected Area Specialist at Khurkh Khuiten Nature Reserve):**

Participating in the Conservation Coaches Training this May has been one of the most meaningful professional experiences of my life. As someone deeply rooted in the wetlands of Mongolia, where



I work to protect endangered species like the White-naped Crane, this training gave me more than just tools; it gave me clarity, confidence, and community.

Before coming here, I had some idea of what coaching meant, but I hadn't realized how much it would challenge and grow me as a person. The course helped me develop a deeper understanding of how to support others—not by giving solutions, but by listening, asking thoughtful questions, and guiding people toward their own insights. I began to see coaching not as a role, but as a mindset.

One of the most powerful lessons I took away was the importance of holding space for others. In conservation, we often move so quickly, focused on the urgency of protecting species and habitats, that we sometimes forget to pause, reflect, and truly connect. This training reminded me that real change often begins not with action plans or strategies, but with honest, human conversations. This experience didn't just teach me how to become a better coach—it helped me become one. It reminded me that leadership doesn't always look like directing. Sometimes, it looks like stepping back and trusting in the power of others' voices and ideas.

This training has also reshaped how I think about my future career. As I prepare for my graduate studies in Park Tourism and Recreation Management, I now see coaching as a central part of how I want to work—not just in Mongolia, but in collaboration with communities and conservationists around the world. Whether it's guiding herder women in developing sustainable livelihoods or supporting protected area teams in action planning, I feel better prepared to walk alongside others on their journey.



Photo (above): Coaches in Mongolia during the third day of the training—feeling proud, inspired, and connected.  
Photo by G.Uuganbayar, Hustai National Park.

**Purevdulam Lkhagvasuren (Grants Manager at Mongolian Nature's Legacy Foundation):**

I loved every minute of it and learned so much. The best part was working in a group on a selected case study. This gave us an opportunity to practice what we have learned in class and hone our

newly gained skills. Having instructors with us was a huge advantage too since they often challenged us to think thoroughly, provided constructive feedback and corrected our mistakes. I am excited to put my newfound knowledge and skills to good use. Mongolian Nature's Legacy Foundation is going to make grants to various protected area (PA) administrations in Mongolia and our first grant is going to be on supporting PA administrations to develop their management plans. I think having this knowledge about conservation planning and the Conservation Standards is going to be a big help for me and my colleagues to effectively design our grants program and ensure high quality proposals that would benefit protected areas. My sincere gratitude to all the coaches who so very generously shared their time and knowledge with us.



Photo (above): Celebrating the completion of the CCNet coach training at Hustai National Park, in Mongolia, March 2025. Photo by Suvd Boldbaatar (Human Centered Nature Conservation).

### **Tselmuun Khashmargad (Intern officer at the Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area):**

The Conservation Coaches Training was an unforgettable experience. More than just learning, it was about connecting with passionate people, sharing ideas, and deepening my commitment to protecting nature. Every conversation sparked reflection and inspiration.

Hustai National Park's stunning landscapes made the experience even more special. The fresh air and vast skies created moments of pure appreciation. Despite busy days of learning, there was plenty of warmth—shared meals, laughter, and the joy of secret friends added to the sense of camaraderie. Applying the Conservation Standards to real cases brought the methodology to life. It wasn't just theory—it became a tool for real change. But the most valuable part was the people. Working alongside dedicated individuals who share the same vision was empowering. This workshop didn't just improve my skills—it shaped my path forward. I leave feeling inspired, ready to take action and make a lasting impact.

## Coaches Around the World



Photo (above): Participants in the April 2025 Conservation Standards Training in Guam.

### **Micronesia Conservation Coaches Network Launched during Conservation Standards Training**

#### ***Story from TNC Micronesia/Polynesia Program***

In April, 25 dedicated conservation practitioners from across Micronesia attended a Conservation Standards Training in Guam. Part of The Nature Conservancy's support of the Micronesia Challenge 2030, the training marked a significant milestone in ongoing efforts to build the region's capacity for effective conservation.

The last Conservation Standards training in Micronesia was held over five years ago, and with high staff turnover in the region and new staff coming on board, the recent training was very much welcomed. The primary goal was to train and enhance the capacity of conservation practitioners to use the Conservation Standards. The workshop also focused on improving facilitation and coaching skills and measuring strategy effectiveness for adaptive management. In particular, discussions covered the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool version 4 (METT4) evaluation tool for protected areas and the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC) Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) tool for initial community engagement.

The training also marked the formal establishment of the Micronesia Conservation Coaches Network, with members pledging to uphold the values of excellence, collaboration, and innovation in conservation practices. The Micronesia Conservation Coaches Network aims to strengthen conservation actions and results by leveraging the expertise and dedication of its members; promoting a culture of cooperation, respect, and open exchange of ideas; and supporting the inclusion of multiple languages, culturally sensitive approaches, and ecologically distinct adaptations.

The April 2025 Conservation Standards training in Guam was funded by The Nature Conservancy through the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, Technical Assistance Program; the United Nations Development Programme's Global Fund for Coral Reefs; and other generous donors.

For more information, please contact [Elizabeth Terk](#) (Micronesia/Polynesia Program, The Nature Conservancy).





Photo (above): The San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance's Baja Peninsula rare plants project team out in the field. Photo by Cumbre Studio.

## Using Conservation Standards to Move Toward Results-Oriented Goals for Rare Plant Conservation in Baja

Story from [Nick Gengler](#), [Cassie Freund](#), and [Christa Horn](#) (San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance)

Several years ago, the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA) adopted the Conservation Standards for our conservation programs, introducing dozens of projects to the process. Since then, we have been systematically working with project teams to refine their situation models and theories of change. Recently, we have been focused on goals and objectives, which has led to several rewarding “aha” moments for our teams.

One example is SDZWA's Baja Peninsula rare plant project team, who needed help moving from an activity-based goal to a results-oriented goal. In coaching this team, we found ourselves working against two perceived barriers. The first was crafting biologically meaningful goals for over 100 plant species. We resolved this by grouping species by rarity level to prioritize conservation actions.

The second barrier presented a greater challenge, which will likely sound familiar to other coaches. The team was uncomfortable with uncertainty and the perceived responsibility for things outside of their control. We shared our experiences with other project teams who face the same challenges and provided reassurance that setting goals doesn't establish sole responsibility for bringing them to fruition.

Through the coaching process, the Baja rare plant team elucidated what they hoped to achieve: by surveying rare plants, the team could help gain protected status for these rare species, which could lead to land development restrictions. These latter steps in the theory of change rely heavily on government or partner action, and eventually, the Baja rare plant team became comfortable with the idea that, while their actions could influence management, they weren't responsible for controlling every intermediate result. Together, we celebrated the moment when they realized the value and utility of results-oriented

goals. Team members left the meeting feeling energized about their newly stated goals and excited to integrate what they'd learned.

We have been having similar success with other teams—while it has been challenging, adopting the Conservation Standards is bringing great results for our project teams and the SDZWA.



Photo (above): 180 participants from 36 countries and 60 organizations gathered in March at the CCNet & CMP Rally 2025 in Valdivia, Chile. Photo by Justin Grubb (CMP).

## **A Global Gathering for Conservation in Valdivia**

### **Story from [Justin Grubb](#) (Conservation Measures Partnership)**

In the early part of March 2025, the small city of Valdivia, Chile, became a vibrant hub for conservation action. Nestled in the lush landscapes of southern Chile, Valdivia welcomed nearly 180 conservation leaders - who came together for a powerful purpose: to protect the planet.

This was the first-ever joint Rally of the Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet) and the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP). Over the course of five inspiring days, participants representing around 60 organizations from 36 countries engaged in 25 interactive sessions, including three energizing plenaries and a bustling innovations and tools “marketplace” featuring 18 booths that participants could visit and learn about each other's work.

The theme, “*Harnessing Synergies for Inclusive Conservation at Scale*,” set the tone for deep collaboration and innovative thinking. From breakout sessions on the Conservation Standards to workshops on Indigenous-led planning and protected area management, the Rally offered practical tools and meaningful dialogue.

Beyond the packed agenda, even greater impact came from the connections. Conservationists from different walks of life across the globe including biologists, community leaders, policy advisors, ecologists, Indigenous knowledge holders, nonprofit leaders, and many more - shared lessons, built new



partnerships, and strengthened the commitment to inclusive, impactful conservation. Hosting the Rally in Latin America was no coincidence. It was a celebration of the region's rich biodiversity and an acknowledgment of its growing leadership in global conservation efforts. Participants were able to explore wondrous landscapes of Valdivia, including its rivers, wetlands, and rugged mountain forests, connecting with the landscape and one another. Many conservationists marveled at the sea lions gathered just outside the conference hotel, and a few even caught a glimpse of the lunar eclipse in the early morning.

Events like the CCNet & CMP Rally are more than conferences - they are catalysts. Most of the program's content is offered by peers, for peers. After a week of collective learning and action, participants left Valdivia energized and equipped to make a bigger difference. Their work will ripple outward and help address some of the planet's most urgent environmental challenges. Participants walked away inspired and wondering, when can we do this again?

For more information visit the CCNet & CMP Rally 2025 website [here](#).



Photo (above, left): During a Healthy Country Planning training, participants visited a Ruka Mapuche—a traditional cultural house—where they listened to the wisdom and stories of local knowledge holders. Photo by Valentina Varón. Photo (above, right): Healthy Country Planning training participants at the Valdivian Coastal Reserve in March 2025. Photo by TNC Chile.

## Conservation Practitioners from 10 Countries Trained in Healthy Country Planning

**Story from [Valentina Varón](#) (independent consultant) and [Saras Kumar](#) (Conservation Management)**

In March 2025, 24 participants from 10 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Palau, Peru, and the United States) gathered in the Valdivian Coastal Reserve in Chile for a practitioner training on Healthy Country Planning (HCP), an adaptation of the Conservation Standards to an Indigenous context.

Hosted by The Nature Conservancy with trainers from Conservation Management, this immersive programme brought together conservation professionals to explore a holistic planning approach rooted in cultural and ecological knowledge. The training emphasized the fundamentals of Indigenous engagement, recognizing and valuing the living and continuing culture of First Nations peoples, including



their diverse languages, customs, traditions, knowledge, and systems. The central pillars of this work were identified as:

- **Community Values at the Core:** Conservation strategies must align with the values and priorities of local communities to ensure long-term impact.
- **Cosmovision as a Guiding Principle:** Acknowledging Indigenous worldviews is essential for effective and respectful planning.
- **Elders and Knowledge Holders at the Center:** Elders play a key role in guiding discussions, grounding the work in cultural and spiritual wisdom.

Participants highly appreciated the integration of fieldwork, case studies, and interactive exercises. One powerful reflection captured the spirit of the training: “When Indigenous Peoples and local communities have a strong voice, real choices, and the power to act, they are the best stewards of their lands and waters.”

For more information, contact [Saras Kumar](#).



Photo (above): The cover of the Strategic Planning Guidelines for BirdLife Partner Organisations document.

## **Adapting the Conservation Standards to Strengthen Strategic Planning Across the BirdLife Partnership**

**Story from [Eylul Dizdaroglu](#) and [Iain Dickson](#) (BirdLife International Impact and Learning Team)**

To support our partners on strategic planning and strengthen our conservation impact across BirdLife, we

launched a new *Guideline for Strategic Planning for BirdLife Partner Organisations*. This resource integrates the Conservation Standards into organisational-level strategic planning and is informed by practical experience across the Partnership.

While the Conservation Standards are typically applied at the project level, this guideline adapts and elevates the approach to support organisations. The process is structured into three main phases: *Mapping the Operating Conditions*, *Writing the Strategic Plan*, and *Putting the Plan into Action*. We introduced additional components tailored for organisational planning, including a structured lessons learned exercise at the beginning, the development of an operational plan (covering financial and technical capacity planning), and an emphasis on integrating social and environmental safeguards and policies. To strengthen implementation, we also recommend a pre-mortem exercise before execution and promote continuous learning through “pause and reflect” practices—embedding adaptive management into the core of the strategy cycle.

With this guidance, we aim to help Partners develop clear, high-level strategies that align teams, foster shared direction across the BirdLife Partnership, and enhance organisational resilience.

This coaching effort is already being put into practice. The team is currently providing support through remote and in-person trainings. A recent workshop in Sierra Leone introduced the guidelines to several Partner organisations. Early feedback highlights the value of a structured approach and the opportunity for peer learning.

This work was funded by Fondation Hans Wilsdorf.

For more information, contact [Iain Dickson](#) and [Eylul Dizdaroglu](#)



Photo (above): Participants at the Closing the Cycle training shortly before the March 2025 CCNet Rally in Valdivia, Chile.  
Photo by Oscar Maldonado.



## Closing the Cycle: Coaching Steps 2-5 of the Conservation Standards

### Story from [Marcia Brown](#) (*Foundations of Success*)

The weekend before the CCNet Rally in March 2025, a group of 19 conservation professionals from Chile, Canada, Australia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, the USA, and Puerto Rico gathered at the Valdivian Coastal Reserve in Chile for a course on “Closing the Cycle.” The course focused on several topics related to the later steps in the Conservation Standards cycle, including social and environmental safeguards (Step 2); work planning, operational planning, and monitoring plans (Step 3); analyzing a team’s progress and adapting to increase their effectiveness (Step 4); and sharing internal team learning and learning with local communities (Step 5).

Over 2.5 short, but packed days, instructors gave presentations, and then participants facilitated exercises related to each topic, deepening their understanding of each topic, their ability to facilitate it, and their capacity to apply it to their own work. While learning a lot, we all had fun and loved interacting with this fabulous group of coaches and coaches-in-training — all very capable and wonderful conservation professionals!!

The course was organized and sponsored by Foundations of Success (FOS) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on behalf of CCNet and was led by a team of three coaches—Marcia Brown (FOS), Oscar Maldonado (Independent Consultant), and Daniela Lizano (TNC)—along with three coaches-in-training—Jim Goetz (Vermont Center for Ecostudies), Jenny Baca (Independent Consultant), and Tomás Saratscheff (Fondo Naturaleza Chile).

In evaluations of the training, many participants reflected positively on their experiences:

- "It was excellent, exceeding my expectations. Excellent instructors, experienced colleagues who shared their expertise...I was given space and encouraged to participate. Creating a Spanish-language discussion group was a great opportunity."
- "I really appreciate the work that has gone into designing this course - it is really needed and takes us closer to having complete guidance for these steps. The exercises could be refined but they were great as an early version and an improvement on all existing material."
- "Even though this was a lot of content and very packed days, this really was a great experience and I got so much out of it. I don't think many other courses I have taken could have gotten away with such long days without people melting down. The instructors were also amazing, and they maintained their positive, helpful attitudes even though they were doing even more work than any of us (spending additional time convening before/after the course time)."
- "I loved the methodological approach, which was more focused on practice. I learned a lot and took away several tools to implement the projects I coordinate in Ecuador. My greatest learnings were focused on identifying "pain in the chain," the cycle of adaptation, and learning."

For more information, contact [Marcia Brown](#).

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Photo (above): During an add-on workshop before the CCNet Rally in March 2025, participants receive training on The Nature Conservancy's updated Conservation by Design approach. Photo by Aparna Sridhar (TNC).

## Coaches Introduced to Updated Conservation by Design at the CCNet Rally

**Story from [Olivia Millard](#) (TNC)**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was one of the founding partners of both CCNet and the Conservation Measures Partnership (and before that, TNC was the originator of Conservation Action Planning and the Efroymson Coaches Network, from which the Conservation Standards and CCNet evolved). TNC has continued to evolve its own “flavor” of the Conservation Standards, called Conservation by Design, which has recently been significantly updated.

In March 2025, TNC hosted a one-day add-on workshop at the CCNet Rally to introduce interested coaches to the updated Conservation by Design. One team of trainers--Dave Patrick, Josh Goldstein, Maite Montalvao, Marisol Mata, and Olivia Millard from the Conservation by Design team--introduced the methodology and its modules. Each module includes a tailored package of materials that helps a conservation team work through a specific step or aspect of conservation planning in a time-bound, efficient manner. Another team of trainers--Natalie Holland and Aparna Sridhar from TNC's global Policy Strategy & Measures team--discussed how Conservation by Design and the Conservation Standards can be used to develop policy strategies. Presentations were followed by a World Café in which participants could explore various modules and take a deeper dive into policy planning.

Approximately 50 people attended from at least 15 countries, including Brazil, Argentina, Chile, UK, Ecuador, USA, Mexico, Mozambique, Mongolia, China, South Africa, Canada, Tanzania, and Colombia. Some participants were TNC staff, but most were from other NGO's, academia, the private sector, and government. The training was well-received, and one person even said it was their favorite session of the Rally!

Learn more by visiting the [Conservation by Design website](#) and its [YouTube channel](#). For more information, or if you would like to use one of the Modules and need a copy of its Mural, contact [conservationbydesign@tnc.org](mailto:conservationbydesign@tnc.org).



# Conservation Standards 5.0 Out Now!



Photo (above): Rally participants play Bingo to explore new content in the Conservation Standards version 5.0. Photo by Caroline Stem (FoS).

## Behind the Scenes: The Making of CS 5.0

### Story from [Caroline Stem](#) (*Foundations of Success*)

We are excited to share that the [Conservation Standards 5.0](#) are now available! We hope you will find this version rich with new insights and learning. It took a lot of collaboration and thinking to bring this version to life and create the sleek final product. At least 88 people across 33 institutions were highly active contributors to the making of CS 5.0 over the past 1.5 years. For the first 6+ months of the process, 11 people from the Conservation Standards community led thematic groups to critically review and propose updates related to those themes. This involved multiple meetings at all hours of the day and night to make sure we were getting thorough, diverse input. We used lots of collaboration tools, such as Miro boards and Google Docs, to facilitate input and reach agreement. Then, thematic groups reviewed and commented on each other's proposed edits. From there, some intensive (and consultative) copy editing and harmonizing made the document more manageable. Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) members reviewed this version and provided feedback. The final technical version incorporated that feedback and went off to a professional service for its beautiful layout and design. CMP generously funded this design, which gives the CS a professional look commensurate with its rich technical content.

What is new and improved:

- Greater detail on Steps 3-5
- Additional emphasis on evidence across all steps

- Changes to and clarifications of terminology to better communicate key concepts
- Recognition of spatial dimensions relevant to various steps
- Recognition of the importance of scale to achieve greater impact
- Additional principles on equitable conservation
- Update of climate change considerations
- Refined explanation for considering and incorporating human wellbeing
- Emphasis on how behavior change and behavioral insights inform conservation actions
- Clarification of the relationship between the Conservation Standards and other decision-support frameworks
- Initial linkage with tools and techniques from the Market Systems Development community

[You can access Conservation Standards 5.0 here](#)—we hope you enjoy it!

We'd love your support in sharing this exciting news with your networks. Feel free to repost our [LinkedIn announcement](#).

If you have questions or comments, you can reach out to [Caroline Stem](#) or [cmpinfo@conservationmeasures.org](mailto:cmpinfo@conservationmeasures.org).

## CCNet 2024 Annual Report

While we continue doing great work throughout this year, we are also reflecting on our accomplishments during the previous year. The full 2024 CCNet Annual Report is now available here. Below are a few highlights:

- CCNet trained **64 new conservation coaches** at three in-person events, which helped increase capacities to support projects in Angola, Cameroon, Croatia, Germany, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, São Tomé & Príncipe, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, The Netherlands, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United States of America, United Kingdom, and Zambia. As of December 2024, CCNet includes **967 active coaches** who represent over **300 institutions** and support projects and communities in **73 countries** on all continents.
- We welcomed **4 certified coaches** from Portugal, Senegal, South Africa and the United States, bringing our total number of certified coaches to 30.
- We continue to make updates to the CCNet website, listserv, and this newsletter to ensure information and stories are being shared widely and effectively.
- A full financial update is available in the Annual Report. Of note, in 2024, the **Brad Northrup Endowment Fund raised US\$60,500** through the generous support of several private donors, bringing our endowment total to US\$198,580.

See more accomplishments and network updates in the 2024 CCNet Annual Report [here](#).

## Share Your Stories

*CCNet Stories* comes out approximately once per quarter. You can submit stories for upcoming newsletters at any time and we'll feature them in the next issue.

To share job openings, upcoming trainings, and other announcements, please use the CCNet [listserv](#).



**Submit stories**

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