



Hello, coaches and friends!

This newsletter might look a little different, but the purpose remains the same: sharing stories about the ways Conservation Coaches are using the Conservation Standards across the globe.

Our August issue includes stories from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mongolia, and Ukraine; a report from the European Coaches Rally; and updates from CMP/CCNet working groups. Enjoy!

The Conservation Standards in difficult times: developing management plans for Ukraine's protected areas

Ukraine's Carpathian Mountains hold some of the most valuable biodiversity hotspots in Europe such as ancient beech and spruce forests, mountain grasslands, rocky outcrops, and oligotrophic mires that shelter large carnivores, raptors and a wealth of endemic species. Many of the protected areas safeguarding them, however, have operated with outdated and ineffective management plans while dealing with a range of other management challenges.

Recently, the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) Ukraine team set out to change that. A group of internal FZS conservation coaches worked with external CCNet support and local conservation experts to guide administrators of 11 protected areas across the Carpathian Mountains as they created a new generation of management plans. The primary approach was the Conservation Standards, which provided a common language and structure for developing the new management plans. High-quality, modern management plans will enable protected area staff to more effectively manage Ukraine's protected areas and preserve unique biodiversity hotspots.

Step by step

Coaches guided each protected area through a structured planning process. Lasting roughly twelve months, the process began with a kick-off workshop and gathering data, which was used to develop a thorough description of the protected area.

The process continued with a situation analysis that involved the participation of various stakeholders and then the development of a ten-year plan, zoning, and a five-year action plan. The ten-year plan included a set of management strategies and a theory of change for each strategy. The main strategies across all protected areas were patrolling, ecosystem restoration, close-to-nature forestry, grassland management, environmental education, recreation, and administrative management. These were drawn together into a single overarching theory of change linking strategic actions to threat reduction, healthy ecosystems, ecosystem services, and human well-being.

The last stages of the process defined the means and resources for implementation and developed a monitoring plan. The monitoring plan for each protected area included three levels: monitoring the implementation of activities, monitoring the achievement of results and objectives, and monitoring the status of the focal values. The idea is that the results of monitoring should feed directly into analysis and practicing adaptive management, closing the loop.

This planning process was carried out by three main groups: 1) the coach team, who designed and steered the process, ensuring consistency and high-quality outputs, 2) the protected area administrations, who were the main content developers, and 3) a Management Planning Council—a group of stakeholders invited and engaged throughout to ensure good representativeness.

What we did differently

Several deliberate choices set this work apart from earlier planning efforts in the region:

- Shifting the focus from individual species protection to ecosystems
- Result-oriented planning, rather than long lists of disconnected activities
- Making explicit links between different protected areas actions
- Actively involving the protected area staff who will implement the plan
- Involves stakeholders
- Monitoring management effectiveness and practicing adaptive management

Challenging work in difficult times

None of this happened under easy conditions. The work was carried out against the backdrop of the war, amid ongoing reforms at the responsible Ministry and under constant time pressure. Much of the coaches' efforts went into working alongside protected area staff to foster their understanding and

acceptance of a new way of planning and their capacity to sustain it. Resistance gradually gave way to ownership as teams saw how the pieces fit together.

Looking to the future

Beyond the completed plans themselves, the change is visible in the field: priority natural values are now interpreted for staff and visitors on new display boards (like the ones at Skolivski Beskydy National Nature Park), and protected area teams describe planning that finally connects their day-to-day work to shared, measurable goals.

The FZS Ukraine team continues to support the protected area administrations as they set up their systems to optimally use the new management plans and build sufficient capacity to implement.

Applying the Conservation Standards in such difficult times has shown that rigorous, participatory, adaptive planning is not a luxury for stable conditions—it is precisely what helps protected area teams hold the line for nature when everything else is uncertain.

—Vasyl Mochan and Maria Halaiko (FZS Ukraine) and Vladimir Milushev (FOS Europe)

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Top: Verkhovynskyi National Park Ukraine—a true wilderness in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains. Bottom: In the foothills of Verkhovynskyi National Park, people celebrate the ancient Hutsul Christmas at Kryvorivnia village (left) and a man plays the flute (sopilka), a traditional Ukrainian musical instrument. Photos by FZS Ukraine.

Shared plan for the Inner Bay of Fundy unites partners

The Inner Bay of Fundy is one of Canada’s most ecologically significant seascapes. Home to the world’s highest tides, expansive salt marshes, ancient horse mussel reefs, and countless other coastal, benthic, and pelagic species, it spans more than 700,000 hectares across New Brunswick and Nova Scotia within the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi’gmaq/Mi’kmaq and Wolastoqey First Nations.

The bay faces more than 20 significant pressures, from centuries of dyking to modern threats such as microplastic pollution and “ghost gear” (abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing equipment). Addressing these challenges requires coordinated action to conserve biodiversity while supporting the coastal communities, fisheries, and local livelihoods that depend on a healthy and resilient bay.

With financial support from the Government of Canada, Global Conservation Solutions (GCS) facilitated a multi-year conservation planning process using the Conservation Standards framework. More than 40 government, Indigenous, NGO, academic, and fishing industry partners came together to develop the first shared ecosystem health assessment and situation analysis for the bay, establish 17 ambitious conservation goals to improve that health, and prioritize a suite of actions and strategies that are now moving into implementation.

GCS is now supporting the design of the public-facing conservation plan, incorporating Indigenous language and artwork to reflect the voices and values of the peoples who have stewarded this region for millennia. Once complete, the plan will provide partners, funders, and the public with a shared roadmap for conservation, helping sustain collaboration and attract continued investment.

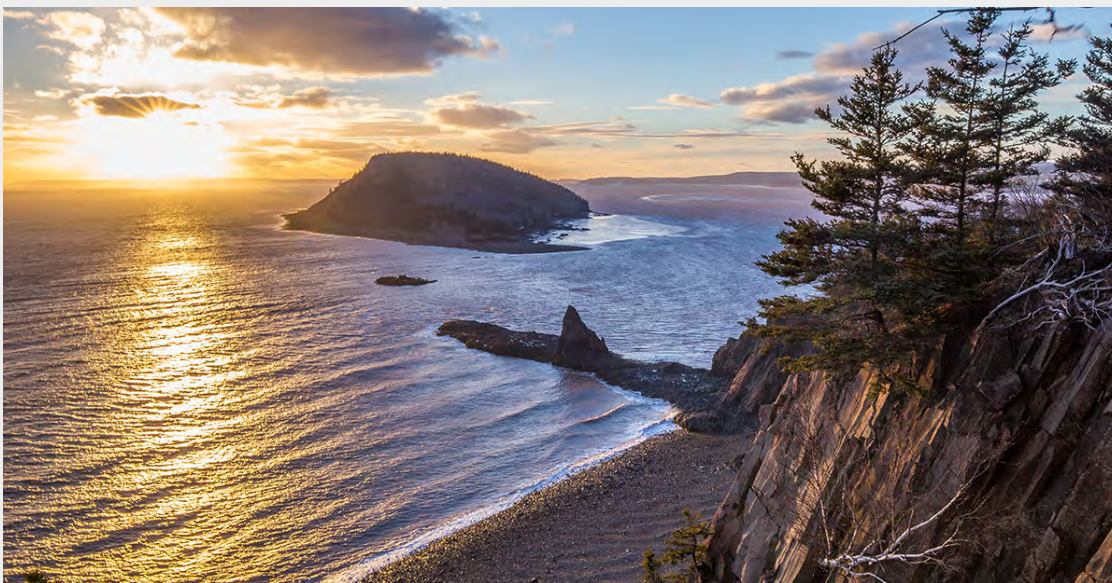
“Navigating complex conservation challenges involving teams of individuals with varied perspectives and knowledge requires key enabling tools and

approaches. GCS's considerable experience and honed facilitation skills promoted a shared understanding through structured, clear, and congenial exchange." – Karel Allard, Environment and Climate Change Canada

—Josh Noseworthy (GCS)

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Sunrise over the Inner Bay of Fundy. Photo by Garry Donaldson.

Peatlands and forests in Chile move toward strategic management with the Conservation Standards

WCS Chile is supporting the protected areas in the Chiloé Peatlands Network — Aucar Peatlands Nature Sanctuary, Púlpito Peatlands Nature Sanctuary, and Punta Lapa Peatlands Nature Sanctuary—in developing management plans. The approach is based on a central premise: well-managed native forests and peatlands have a greater capacity to adapt to climate change and maintain fundamental ecological functions, such as water regulation, carbon storage, and biodiversity conservation. Using the Conservation Standards has allowed for the organization, guidance, and prioritization of the actions necessary to achieve the conservation objectives that motivated their official protection.

The planning process includes identifying and prioritizing protected areas and their main threats, establishing objectives and goals, and defining actions that will guide the management of these areas over the next five years. Involving close collaboration with landowners and public and private stakeholders, the participatory planning process incorporates diverse perspectives and promotes concrete collaborative actions for conservation.

This work is part of the Resilient Patagonian Sea Program, a regional initiative driven by the Forum for the Conservation of the Patagonian Sea and Areas of Influence, with support from the Betty & Gordon Moore Foundation. The program aims to strengthen the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Southern Cone and the communities that depend on them.

—Mariana Thienel (WCS Chile)

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During a workshop at the Aucar Peatlands Nature Sanctuary, participants identify collaborative and synergistic conservation actions that strengthen the management of protected areas within the Chiloé Peatlands Network. Photo by WCS Chile.

Regional learning in Mongolia builds a stronger Conservation Coach community

In May 2026, Mongolia hosted the country's second Regional Conservation Coach Training and Experience Sharing Event. Organized by CCNet Mongolia in collaboration with CCNet Global and CCNet China, the event brought together conservation practitioners and coaches and demonstrated how coaching, peer learning, and international collaboration can strengthen the application of the Conservation Standards in diverse conservation contexts.

Rather than learning through lectures alone, the Conservation Coach Training participants worked together on real conservation challenges using the Conservation Standards. Case studies from the Flyway level, protected areas in Mongolia, and conservation projects in China allowed participants to apply conceptual models, theories of change, results chains, and adaptive

management in practical situations. Using real examples encouraged participants to compare different conservation contexts, challenge assumptions, and learn from one another's experiences.

One of the strengths of the training was the diversity of perspectives. The training was led by John Morrison from CCNet Global, with co-coaches Narangerel Naranpurev (CCNet Mongolia), Bolor Radnaabazar (CCNet Mongolia), and Yong Mei Luo (CCNet China). The 25 participants represented different countries and organizations, including The Nature Conservancy Mongolia and China, Wildlife Science and Conservation Center, International Crane Foundation China, WWF China, the Mongolian Nature's Legacy Foundation, and other conservation partners. Participants had varying conservation priorities, yet they shared many of the same challenges—engaging stakeholders, improving baseline information, translating strategies into effective action, and measuring conservation impact. Working through these issues together reinforced that the Conservation Standards provide a common language and practical framework that can be adapted to different ecological, cultural, and institutional settings.

Regional collaboration continued after the training with a Conservation Coach Experience Sharing Event hosted by CCNet Mongolia. Coaches from Mongolia, China, and Europe presented how they are applying the Conservation Standards and coaching experience in their own regions.

- CCNet China shared about integrating the Conservation Standards into protected area management and explained how the CCNet China network supports coaches and practitioners.
- CCNet Europe introduced examples of using the Conservation Standards to develop protected area outdoor recreation plans.
- CCNet Mongolia shared about supporting the revision of protected area management plans and management planning guidelines using the Conservation Standards to strengthen adaptive management and participatory planning.

Going beyond technical tools, participants explored how coaching builds confidence, encourages collaboration, and helps conservation teams develop their own solutions rather than relying on external experts. Many participants noted that learning directly from coaches working in different countries provided valuable insights that cannot be gained from manuals or online resources alone.

By connecting coaches across regions, sharing practical experiences, and learning from real conservation challenges, the training and exchange strengthened professional relationships and created new opportunities for future collaboration. As conservation challenges become increasingly complex, investing in conservation coaches and building strong international networks will continue to play an important role in improving conservation planning, adaptive management, and lasting conservation outcomes.



Participants from CCNet China and CCNet Mongolia at the Regional Conservation Coach Training. Photo by Munkchimeg Buyandelger (NUM).

European Coaches Rally provides space for professional development and community building

In April 2026, CCNet Europe held our regional Coaches Rally in Roses, Catalonia. The event brought together 38 coaches from 15 countries to share stories and experiences about using the Conservation Standards while connecting with new and old friends. We were so fortunate to spend three days together in a beautiful location on the beach at Roses, minutes away from the Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park, which we got to visit on Sunday morning.

Throughout the Rally, we heard a wide variety of inspiring stories from our coaches, including how teams are using the Conservation Standards in protected area management in Ukraine and how a summer school programme in South-Eastern Europe is upskilling the next generation of coaches. Coaches also shared outputs and insights from multiple Conservation Measures Partnership initiatives and working groups, including work on collaborative learning, policy engagement, and how to incorporate behaviour change into theories of change.

We also discussed the importance of ways to facilitate mentoring within the network and practised creative formats for peer support, hoping to maintain this energy and enthusiasm virtually.

The international potluck and playlist was a highlight of the weekend. To celebrate the diversity of our network, participants shared a variety of dishes

and drinks alongside a playlist of songs from everyone's places of home. It was a packed weekend full of informative sessions and a vital reminder of how important regional in-person events are for fostering community, reconnecting coaches, and activating new activities across our network.

—Montserrat Suarez and Elysia Davies (CCNet Europe)

CONTACT MONTSERRAT



Participants at the European Coaches Rally in Roses, Catalonia. Photo by Beatriu Tenas.

Coaches support participants from 14 countries during multi-team workshop in Catalonia

For the first time since 2019, CCNet Europe held a multi-team workshop. The workshop was hosted by the Government of Catalonia's Department of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition, which has invested significantly over the last few years in introducing adaptive management to its local protected areas. It was a timely opportunity to invite international teams to the region to jointly learn and exchange knowledge regarding the Conservation Standards.

As a multi-level learning event, the five-day workshop brought together diverse expertise from 31 participants and nine coaches representing 19 organisations in 14 countries spanning the Mediterranean, North Africa, and Central Europe. Participants worked in four dedicated teams to apply the different steps in the Conservation Standards to their own projects and advance their planning efforts. The teams focused on different wetlands conservation projects in the Lower Loukkos Wetland Complex in Morocco, the Vjosa Delta in Albania, the

Studenichishko Swamp in North Macedonia, and the local Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park.

Each team was guided by a coach and a coach-in-training, who were supported by two coach-trainers. Working together as a team of coaches over this week and supporting real teams provided a valuable opportunity to jointly improve their coaching skills alongside peers.

We are excited that we pulled off this workshop, as it involves significant effort to organise. We are grateful to everyone from CCNet Europe who contributed, the fantastic coaches team, and the two trainers, Xavier Escuté and Catherine Payne. This training was generously funded by the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

—*Montserrat Suarez (CCNet Europe)*

[CONTACT MONTSERRAT](#)



*Participants work together to explore different steps of the Conservation Standards.
Photo by Xavier Escuté.*

Successful coach training in Brazil

In August, a Portuguese-language Conservation Coach Training brought together 28 conservation professionals from diverse organizations and territories across Brazil and Argentina for an intensive week of learning, exchange, and capacity building in the Guaricica Nature Reserve.

Participants strengthened their coaching, facilitation, and adaptive management skills through a highly interactive program, while also building lasting professional connections across the region. The enthusiasm, collaboration, and commitment demonstrated throughout the week reinforced the growing strength of the Latin American conservation community and the

importance of investing in people as a pathway to achieving lasting conservation impact. Participants left the training better equipped and inspired and energized to support teams, projects, and organizations in achieving meaningful conservation impact.

This training was organized by CCNet Latin America in partnership with Conserve Brasil, WWF-Brasil, and TNC Brasil. The training was made possible through the support of CCNet, TNC, Conserve Brasil, SPVS, and the FLR Implementation Hub (a partnership between IUCN, WRI, and WWF with funding from the International Climate Initiative).

—Gustavo Gatti (Conserve Brasil)

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Participants at the Conservation Coach Training in Brazil in August.

Building Conservation Standards Awareness and Community at North American Congress for Conservation and Restoration

In July, the Society for Conservation Biology and the Society for Ecological Restoration brought together conservation professionals, students, and educators in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the first joint North American Congress for Conservation and Restoration. CMP and CCNet had a strong presence and highlighted the exciting resources available to the Conservation Standards community:

- Jim Goetz (Vermont Center for Ecostudies), Matthew Jurjonas (Auburn University), and Jaclyn Lucas (Foundations of Success) led a one-day

Conservation Standards course, providing hands-on opportunities to develop situation models and theories of change.

- CCNet's Conservation Standards in Academia working group (CoStA) led a symposium that highlighted the innovative formats, materials, and case studies used at universities to train current and future conservation professionals in the Conservation Standards. The symposium featured courses from Virginia Tech (Heather Eves), Auburn University (Matthew Jurjonas), and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Nathan Schulfer and Arlyne Johnson) and provided perspectives from administrators and professors. Jaclyn Lucas shared a segment on Miradi software, which is made free to university professors teaching the Conservation Standards.
- Varsha Suresh (Foundations of Success) presented a speed talk about incorporating behavior change in conservation planning and shared the recently launched website of resources. (Read more about this work in the articles below).
- Throughout the week, participants stopped by the Conservation Standards and Miradi booth to ask questions and engage—the booth was a fantastic place to meet the amazing people that make the Conservation Standards community so strong.

The conference was a great reminder of the successes of the Conservation Standards community, the collaborations we need to continue to foster, and the importance of sharing the innovative work going on in adaptive management.

—Jaclyn Lucas (FOS)

CONTACT JACLYN



Presenters of the symposium on teaching the Conservation Standards in higher education at the NACCR conference. Photo by Varsha Suresh (FOS).

Applying behavior change theory to the Conservation Standards

Foundations of Success and Rare are working to integrate behavior change theory into the Conservation Standards. Recent accomplishments include:

- Launching a [website](#) that provides guidance on behavior change frameworks and levers, when and how to apply them, and practical examples.
- Collaborating with global conservation teams to develop [12 new case studies](#) that show behavior change approaches in different contexts and highlight the conditions under which specific levers are most effective.
- Leading three well-attended [public webinars](#), each including an introduction to our work and presentations from the case study organizations.

This work is supported by a CMP–Moore Foundation grant.

—Varsha Suresh (FOS)

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Update from the CMP/CCNet Guidance Committee

The CMP-CCNet Guidance Committee was created in 2014 to help conservation practitioners find the most appropriate Conservation Standards guidance to meet their needs. The Committee:

- Upon request, reviews guidance that is designed to help conservation practitioners implement the Conservation Standards
- Posts guidance with a rating and a description on the Conservation Standards Resource Library
- Provides feedback to authors in cases when guidance could be improved

The Committee recently reviewed and gave an “Excellent” (4 out of 4 stars) rating to a website that provides guidance and resources for [applying behavior change in the Conservation Standards](#).

In addition to vetting guidance to be posted on the Resources page, the Committee is also willing to review materials that are not publicly available. For example, we recently provided comments on a CMP member organization’s internal Conservation Standards training materials.

In 2024-25 the Committee conducted a [guidance gap analysis](#), and we recently developed a [work plan to fill critical gaps](#). One gap we would like to fill is related to the analysis of interested parties (formerly called stakeholder analysis). While TNC, WWF, and others have developed guidance on this topic, the Committee believes that the Conservation Standards community would benefit from a short piece that describes when to identify and engage interested parties and provides links to existing resources and tools.

Please contact Marcia if you:

- Have guidance you would like the Committee to review
- Have comments on the gap analysis or work plan
- Would like to help fill one of the gaps

—*Marcia Brown (FOS)*

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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.

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