



Society for Conservation Biology · 20th Annual Meeting
Conservation Without Borders
San Jose, California, USA · 24-28 June, 2006

WORKSHOP

Saturday, JUNE 24

12:30-4:30

San Jose Convention Center, Meeting Room C

“Capacity-Building for SCB Chapters in the 21st Century”

Workshop Overview

In the 21st century, we face increasingly complex environmental problems that require interdisciplinary and “borderless” solutions. One way we can improve our understanding and address these problems is through stronger ties among conservation professionals, academics, students, and activists. SCB chapters, as local independent extensions of SCB, play a key role in building this conservation community. Some of their responsibilities and contributions include: continuing education for professionals; hosting of regional meetings; information and resource sharing among members; leads on jobs, funding, and project needs; interactions with other professional organizations; venues for public and political advocacy; and moral and social support. In addition, they often undertake local conservation projects such as environmental restoration and environmental education for schoolchildren and members of the broader public.

This workshop will include presentations on strategic planning, chapter formation, member retention, relationships between chapters across borders, balancing activism and science, environmental education, community outreach, and regional symposia. This pre-conference exchange of ideas among local chapter members and those interested in starting local chapters, advances SCB’s goal of enhancing chapter growth, improving inter-chapter communication, increasing support for chapters within the larger SCB community, and facilitating a network of chapters across the globe.

Workshop Outline

- 12:30 pm** **Welcome & Chapter Report**
Fiona Nagle, SCB Local Chapters Advisory Committee
- 12:45 pm** **Strategic Planning for SCB Chapters** (+ 5 minute discussion)
Alan Thornhill, SCB Executive Director
- 1:05 pm** **The Role of Chapters in SCB's Strategic Plan** (+ 5 minute discussion)
Thomas D. Sisk, SCB BOG Chapters Representative
- 1:25 pm** **A Chapter is Born!**
Carissa Wong, Toronto Chapter
- 1:40 pm** **Facing Challenges: First Steps of the NW Argentina Chapter**
Silvia Chalukian, Northwest Argentina Chapter
- 1:55 pm** **Membership Retention**
Kevin Crooks* & Rick Knight, Colorado State University Chapter
- 2:10 pm** **Discussion**
- 2:25 pm** **Break**
- 2:40 pm** **Balancing Science and Activism**
Gerald Niemi, Minnesota Chapter
- 2:55 pm** **Experiences with Environmental Education**
Alejandra Domic, Arely Palabral, & Carolina García*, SCB Bolivia Chapter
- 3:10 pm** **Holding a Regional Conservation Biology Conference**
Rodd Kelsey, Chapter at University of California, Davis
- 3:25 pm** **Maintaining Communications and Recognizing Quality Student Research**
Esther Stroh, Missouri Chapter
- 3:40 pm** **Building Support in the Conservation Community**
Matt Johnson, Allison Jones, Dave Mattson*, Colorado Plateau Chapter
- 3:55 pm** **Sister Chapters**
Ingrid Hogle, SCB Local Chapters Advisory Committee
- 4:10 pm** **Discussion**
- 4:30 pm** **End**

Workshop Abstracts

Welcome & Chapter Report

Fiona Nagle, Chair, SCB Local Chapters Advisory Committee
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This talk will present an overview of local chapters, their current activity status, and updates on resources, policies, and news of interest for chapters.

Strategic Planning for SCB Chapters

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The idea of strategic planning usually conjures dread and anxiety in everyone around the table. In fact, the planning process can catalyze new enthusiasm...if only you can get beyond the mental distress! As scientists we are uniquely qualified and intellectually well-positioned to deal with the process of creating and executing a plan. The process, when done right, is cyclic and thus analogous to the scientific process. It is, in fact, adaptive management. The process begins with answering the question, "What do we want to have happen?" From there, your vision of what you want the future to be guides the entire process. Then it's just the simple matter of articulating your values, mission, objectives, and goals, in ways that guide your leadership, inspire your members, inform your constituents, and motivate funders to lavish money on your organization. ;-)

Corporations create and sell products or services. Non-profits are often occupied with changing human behavior. These are two very different functions; but they both require focus and discipline. Corporations often spend vast amounts of time and money on the process of planning. Non-profits (and volunteer organizations) seldom have the resources to engage in such exercises. Yet it is no less important for these groups to have their purpose well defined, especially since their resources are more constrained than those of a corporation and even a small error in direction can have a significant impact on viability. In other words, it may be even more important for the non-profit to map out its future course if it is to prosper and fulfill its purpose.

I will present an overview of how the SCB process unfolded and provide some suggestions for how to complete a similar process for SCB chapters.

The Role of Chapters in SCB's Strategic Plan

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The Society's new Strategic Plan articulates a common vision for our global organization and identifies a set of goals whose realization will require that all facets of the SCB – Chapters, Regional Sections, and the Executive Office – work together in a coordinated manner, leveraging the strengths and opportunities of each to achieve our shared objectives. While the role of Chapters is not detailed in the Plan, the Board of Governors wishes to strengthen the role of Chapters in the Society, and to improve communication and coordination among Chapters, and between each chapter and the Executive Office. This workshop provides an opportunity to identify the expanded roles the Chapters might play in growing network of conservation professionals.

A Chapter is Born!

Carissa Wong, President and Founder, Toronto Chapter
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Local Chapters are affiliates of the parent Society that provide a critical link between the advancement of conservation science and its application in local practice. The purpose of this presentation is to give those interested in starting a chapter, as well as those participating in a new chapter, an overview of the challenges, an example of what works, and an outline of the rewards to you and your community of starting a chapter. Rather than describe the technicalities which are covered comprehensively in 'A Guide to Starting and Running a SCB Chapter' available on the SCB website, I will highlight the crucial elements to and successes in starting the Toronto Chapter. Our Chapter grew from the dedication of people who believe that effective and sustained conservation relies on collaborating within and across disciplines, identifying a niche, and simply doing whatever needs to be done. In two years, the Toronto Chapter held the region's first annual symposium devoted to conservation biology, developed a core membership of over 70 individuals, and increased its operating budget by 3.5 times. Work with the Chapter has led to career developments for several of its executives and volunteers, and in partnerships with key conservation organizations, the City of Toronto, and the University of Toronto.

Facing Challenges: First Steps of the NW Argentina Chapter

Silvia C. Chalukian, President, Northwestern Argentina Chapter.

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The initiative to form a regional chapter in the Northwest of Argentina responds to the necessity to generate greater interaction and coordination of efforts among professionals and students working in the region, and the international network embraced by the SCB.

We began meeting last year and have discussed the urgent need to DO something. Our chapter was created quite recently but today we have 29 members, 70% students. Our mission is to promote the conservation of biodiversity through the theory and practice of Conservation Biology in Northwest Argentina. We expect to help create the necessary forum for discussion and exchange of ideas in order to generate needed recommendations and actions to protect, maintain and restore biodiversity and to provide for its sustainable use. Our discussions take into consideration social, economic and ecological aspects at different geographical and jurisdictional scales. I will briefly present our main principles, objectives and future activities, and the major challenges we are facing, from lack of time or funds to mistrust among colleagues and getting the message to government and the public.

Membership Retention in the Student Chapters of SCB

Kevin Crooks* & Rick Knight, Faculty Advisors, Colorado State University Chapter

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Rick Knight, Department of Forest, Rangeland, and Watershed Stewardship, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80521 USA

The student chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) at Colorado State University (CSU) was founded in 1991 and remains as the longest continuously active SCB student chapter. We will review the history of our chapter and lessons learned over the past 15 years. We will discuss opportunities and challenges in maintaining membership and participation in SCB student chapters, compare our efforts to those of other successful student chapters such as The Wildlife Society, and provide recommendations for future efforts. We feel that SCB student chapters can allow students, staff, and faculty to come together and discuss and participate in activities that promote the conservation of our natural heritage. Representing the interests of our local communities and the international community of the Society for Conservation Biology, student chapters continue to demonstrate that a small group of people can serve as a powerful lever in the transition of a society that takes its environment seriously.

Discussion

Questions and answers regarding chapter start-up & member retention.
Discussion on capacity building and the role of chapters in SCB.

Balancing Science and Activism

Gerald J. Niemi, Vice-President, Minnesota Chapter
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Conservation biologists have a responsibility in society to share their expertise and engage in public debate on issues, especially on issues in which they have expertise. In an open democratic society, they also have the right as citizens to engage in any public debate and to express their opinion on those issues. Conflicts can arise when the scientist's credibility is questioned because their scientific findings are at odds with findings or opinions of another scientist, another individual, or another part of society. Normally, if a scientist is functioning entirely as an individual without affiliations (e.g., a university, government agency, or scientific society), then the conflicts can be minimal. However, if the individual is affiliated with an organization, then the conflicts can be magnified with long-lasting effects on the organization as a whole. I summarize some of my experiences on these conflicts as a research administrator and faculty member over the past 20 years on issues such as climate change, forest management, and aquaculture. Chapters of SCB need to be cognizant of the essential role they can play in public decision-making, but also aware of the tenuous balance between science and activism.

Experiences with Environmental Education Programs for Children in Public Schools - La Paz, Bolivia

Alejandra Domic, Arely Palabral & Carolina García*, SCB Bolivia Chapter
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The Bolivian Education Reform law introduced environmental education into all public education programs in Bolivia beginning in 1994. This law was implemented to apply to all subjects within the education program. It was enacted with the purposes of stimulating love and respect for nature, and developing social consciousness in support of sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity. Since 2002, the Bolivian Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology has been implementing several workshops in different public schools in the city of La Paz with the aim of strengthening the environmental component of their curriculums. Workshop results varied with the children and teachers' level of interest regarding the natural environment, and their capacity to assimilate and integrate the ecological concepts into their daily lives. The success of the programs was linked to the way in which children and teachers interact with nature, their previous knowledge, and the teachers' capacity to reinforce the concepts taught. Through our experiences we learned that capacity building for environmental

education must be especially directed towards the teachers, who lack knowledge of basic concepts related to ecology and conservation biology. We conclude that the long-term success of environmental education programs in Bolivia will depend on the environmental education of teachers and the availability of methodological tools that will allow teachers to efficiently implement these environmental educational programs in the classroom.

Holding a Regional Conservation Biology Conference

Rodd Kelsey, President, SCB Chapter at University of California, Davis
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One important contribution of SCB chapters is the organization of local/regional meetings or symposia. These meetings allow conservation biologists from academia, government agencies, non-profits, and/or the private sector in a specific region to make contact and exchange ideas. These meetings may also become central forums of scientific exchange for conservation biologists unable to attend the International SCB meeting in a given year. Furthermore, Chapter organized meetings can also be fundraising events for the Chapter and, as a result, increase their ability to extend or improve other Chapter activities.

There are many challenges associated with developing and hosting a Symposium. This presentation will draw on the experience Chapters that have organized meetings in the past to highlight many of the practical aspects faced when developing a Symposium, including: identifying the meeting objectives, cost and budgeting, organizing committees, sessions and workshops, and fundraising for the event.

Maintaining Communications and Recognizing Quality Student Research

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The Missouri Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology (MOSCB) was established in 1998 with 85 charter members; we have 250 current members. Our chapter goal is to facilitate cooperation and establish a communications network among individuals in the state of Missouri who are involved or interested in issues relating to conservation biology. Our membership and board strive to support this goal through various activities. Since October 1998, we have published our newsletter, *The Glade*, twice annually. In spite of printing and mailing costs, it is much appreciated by our membership and remains a chapter priority. For the past four years, we have sponsored a student poster contest at the annual Missouri Natural Resources conference, awarding the winner with a one-year membership to SCB. These two activities, out of all our endeavors, have served best to increase and maintain the visibility of MOSCB within the natural resources community; they are what we are best known for. I will discuss the details of how we implement these two activities, including the successes and pitfalls we have had with each.

Building Support in the Conservation Community

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The newly reformulated and recharged Colorado Plateau Chapter (CPC) of the Society for Conservation Biology is emerging as an active voice in promoting integrated and effective research in the service of conservation in our region. The purpose of the Chapter is to provide a means of linking the region's widely dispersed scientific community, and others interested in the study and conservation of the Colorado Plateau's living resources. We value truly participatory and democratic policy making processes that are based on sound science. The functions of the chapter include networking, communications, and organizing...which collectively serve to link individuals working on pressing issues, often in isolation, so that their work can be better coordinated and more effective in influencing policy and management in our region and nation-wide.

There are many factors to which we attribute our chapter's success. For example, at our annual meetings or chapter-hosted conferences, instead of the customary parade of biological papers, we stress lively, thought-provoking discussions that follow each presentation. For example, at our 2004 Chapter meeting in Lee's Ferry, much of the meeting focused not on biology but on the societal context in which we practice conservation biology. We also make sure that at all of our meetings and conferences, music, locally grown and organic foods, and even dance, are an important part of our gatherings. This provides the essential energy that makes our gatherings, and the communications and further collaboration that results from them, even more effective. We also focus on results-oriented projects, such as developing white papers and orchestrating "Work Groups" which deliver an important product. A Work Group is an alternative to a standing subcommittee. We see it as an effective way to develop products that further the mission and goals of the CPC. For example, Work Groups may produce a letter to an elected official, or comments on an EIS. We are also very interested in becoming more involved with cooperative research and networking efforts with other SCB chapters in the West, which we trust will make us an even more effective and successful chapter in the near future.

Sister Chapters

Ingrid Hogle, Sister Chapter Coordinator, Chapter at UC Davis; Special Projects, SCB
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Several SCB Chapters have set up formal “sister chapter” relationships in which they strive to collaborate on shared projects. In these 15 minutes, participating sister chapters will be asked to describe what they, as sister chapters, have done, including Davis – Bolivia, Berkeley – East Africa, and any other sister chapters present at the presentation. Chapters are encouraged to bring in “show and tell” items. (Davis and Bolivia chapters will bring in examples of the endangered species posters exchanged between Spanish-speaking 5th grade students in Davis and Vacaville, California and La Paz, Bolivia as one example of a successful sister chapter project.) We will segue into our final discussion with a facilitated discussion of how to enhance sister chapter relationships.

Final Discussion

Discussion regarding the balance between science and activism.
Questions & answers regarding chapter activities presented.

Final wrap-up What is one thing you will take back to your chapter from this workshop?