

Society for Conservation Biology
Social Science Working Group

2006 Work Plan

June 9, 2006

SSWG: Strengthening conservation social science and its application to conservation practice
www.conbio.org/WorkingGroups/SSWG/

The Society for Conservation Biology's Social Science Working Group (SCB SSWG) is a global community of conservation professionals interested in the application of social science to the conservation of biological diversity. With 600 members in nearly 60 countries, the SSWG is home to a diverse array of social scientists (anthropologists, economists, human geographers, political scientists, psychologists, and sociologists), natural scientists, and conservation practitioners (governmental, nongovernmental, and private sector).

This document outlines the strategic direction of the SSWG and details the SSWG's planned activities for 2006.

Mission

The mission of the SSWG is to strengthen conservation social science and its application to conservation practice.

Vision

In five years, we envision:

- conservation social science fully integrated within the structure, activities, and membership of SCB;
- increased social science awareness and capacity among conservation scientists and practitioners;
- widespread recognition of the SSWG as the leading organization for integration of social science into the science and practice of biodiversity conservation.

Goals

The SSWG has three principal goals:

1. Advance the development and dissemination of social scientific knowledge relevant to the conservation of biological diversity.
2. Foster the use of social scientific knowledge to resolve conservation problems.
3. Develop and carry out organizational core functions efficiently and effectively.

2006 Committee Work Plans

The SSWG Board and its Committees coordinate SSWG efforts to achieve these three goals.

Goal 1. Advance the development and dissemination of social scientific knowledge relevant to the conservation of biological diversity.

Program Committee

Mission: To advance conservation social science knowledge, the SSWG Program Committee creates forums and mechanisms for information exchange and learning within SCB, with other professional societies, and within SCB journals. Program Committee activities currently focus on activities associated with the integration of social science knowledge and activities within SCB, including the SCB annual meeting and journal. The Program Committee is also working with other professional societies on potential collaborative efforts with SCB.

Members: Rich Wallace (chair), Andrew Millington, Murray Rudd, Christopher Vaughn

Activities

1. Expand Committee membership.

Rationale: A full Program Committee is necessary to carry out the full range of planned activities.

- A. Recruit at the SCB 2006 annual meeting
- B. Recruit specific individuals who belong to both SCB and other social science professional organizations, whose crossover work will have prepared them well for program committee responsibilities.
- C. Broad approach to SSWG members whose backgrounds would fit with the program committee's mandate.

2. Plan for SCB annual meetings.

- A. Consult with SCB Conference Committee re: role of social science (Spring 2006).
- B. Consult with 2007 SCB conference chair re: meeting themes and topics (Mar-July, 2006).
- C. Initiate dialogue with SCB 2008 conference chair re: meeting themes and topics (June 2006).
- D. Solicit session proposals (symposiums, workshops, organized discussions, short courses) for 2007 SCB annual meeting (Aug.-Sept., 2006).
- E. Review session proposals for 2007 SCB annual meeting (Nov.-Dec., 2006).
- F. Solicit paper proposals for 2007 SCB annual meeting (Nov.-Dec., 2006).

3. Plan for SCB sectional meetings.

- A. Reach out to Chairs of Sectional meetings (Spring 2006).
- B. Consult with Chairs re: meeting themes and topics (July 2006 @ annual meeting).
- C. Initiate specific activities for specific sectional meetings (Fall 2006).

4. Collaborate with other professional societies.

- A. Continue dialogue with social science organizations interested in collaborating with SCB, including but not limited to U.S. Society for Ecological Economics and Human Dimensions of Fish and Wildlife group (ongoing).

5. Enhance role of social science in *Conservation Biology*.
 - A. Work with Gary Meffe to measure historic social science contributions in *Conservation Biology* (Spring 2006).
 - B. Compile top 5-10 social science papers from *Conservation Biology* (Summer 2006).
 - C. Develop concepts for social science “special section” of *Conservation Biology* (Summer 2006).
 - D. Work with Blackwell and Meffe to request inclusion of *Conservation Biology* in ISI Social Science Citation Index (Fall 2006).

Resources:

No additional resources required for 2006.

In the longer term, funding will be required to enable SSWG to initiate and implement meetings and other events that promote the understanding and application of social sciences in species and ecosystem conservation.

Education Committee

Mission: To advance conservation social science knowledge, the SSWG Education Committee creates forums and mechanisms for information exchange and learning among educators and researchers. Current activities focus on the development and dissemination of course syllabi and working papers.

Members: Bill Forbes (chair), Rinku Chowdhury, Altaf Hussain, Dyana LaRosa, Stephen Williams

Activities

1. Add 1-2 additional Committee members.

Rationale: A full Education Committee is necessary to carry out the full range of planned activities.

- A. Solicit members via personal communication with potentially interested colleagues (Bill, all Committee members)
- B. Solicit members through face-to-face dialogue at SCB and other professional venues (Bill, all Committee members)

2. Compile conservation social science syllabi. (Rinku)

Rationale: The limiting factor in some disciplines is a lack of good examples. We need to give educators an entry point into the literature.

- A. Request conservation psych syllabi from Britain Scott (Jan 2006).
- B. Review social science professional society websites for syllabi (Jan-Feb 2006).
- C. Compile representative lists of syllabi & identify gaps (March 2006)
- D. Obtain permissions to post representative syllabi, as necessary (March 2006)
- E. Develop standard meta-data for syllabi (e.g., instructor, school, contact info, etc.) (March 2006).

- F. Post syllabi on SSWG website (April 2006).
- G. Fill in gaps in syllabi inventory and post to website (May-June 2006).

3. Develop series of conservation social science working papers. (Stephen)

Rationale: Students, researchers, and practitioners need examples that illustrate the relationship between social science research and conservation practice, particularly “success stories.”

- A. Develop submission & review guidelines for working papers (Jan-March 2006).
- B. Solicit working papers from 2005 & 2006 symposium participants (April 2006).
- C. Solicit working papers from SCB paper presenters (June 2006).
- D. Review working papers (summer-fall 2006)
- E. Post working papers to the SCB website (Fall 2006).

4. Develop short courses in conservation social science. (Atlaf)

Rationale: Short courses are an important mechanism for student and researcher learning.

- A. Review participants’ experiences with short courses at SCB 2006 (July 2006 –annual meeting).
- B. Identify lessons for designing future short courses (August 2006)
- C. Identify priority topics for future short courses (August-Sept 2006)
- D. Solicit short courses for priority topics at SCB 2007 (in collaboration w/Program Committee) (Oct-Nov, 2006)

Resources:

No additional resources are required for 2006.

Goal 2. Foster the use of social scientific knowledge to help solve conservation problems.

Conservation committee

Mission

To help solve conservation problems, the SSWG Conservation Committee develops resource materials and conducts activities to build social science capacity among conservation practitioners. Current efforts focus on the compilation and dissemination of conservation social science tools.

Members: Diane Russell (chair), Nora Haenn, Michael Johnson, Jenny Springer, Derick Fay, Mark Calamia, Chuck Willer

Activities

1. Diversify Committee membership.

Rationale: A diverse Conservation Committee is necessary to carry out the full range of planned activities.

- A. Solicit new committee members by targeted email to SSWG discussion list (Diane)

- B. Solicit new committee members through face-to-face dialogue at SCB annual meeting (Diane, all attending committee members)

2. Compile social science tools.

Rationale: Numerous social science tools are seldom used because they are not available from a single easily-accessed source.

- A. Develop framework for cataloging tool (meta-data). (February-April 2006)
- B. Share framework w/colleagues for friendly review (April 2006)
- C. Refine framework (May 2006)
- D. Catalog tools identified at 2005 SCB workshop (May-June, 2006)
- E. Share DRAFT catalog at SCB 2006 (June 24-29, 2006)
- F. Populate catalog (July – November 2006)
- G. Launch online catalog (December 2006) (same as 3C, below)

3. Disseminate social science tools

Rationale: Wide dissemination of social science tools is critical to build capacity among conservation practitioners.

- A. Develop dissemination strategy (February-June 2006)
 - a. Consult ConserveOnline re: dissemination opportunities
 - b. Consult Earth Conservation Toolkit re: dissemination opportunities
 - c. Consult SCB executive office
- B. Develop dissemination mechanism (July-November 2006)
- C. Launch online catalog (December 2006) (same as 2G, above)

Resources:

No additional resources required for 2006.

Policy Committee

Mission: To help solve conservation problems, the SSWG Policy Committee develops resource materials -- scientific briefs, position statements, and other informational materials -- to aid conservation decision-makers inside and outside of government. Consistent with the SCB Policy on Policy, activities focus on two general policy arenas:

1. Policy interventions introducing scientific knowledge and methodology into conservation policy.
2. Policy interventions advocating specific conservation actions by governments or other major institutions.

Members: Jennifer Jones (chair), Dan Brockington, Barend Erasmus, Kristin Carden

Activities

1. Develop protocol for SSWG engagement on policy issues.

Rationale: A clear decision-making protocol is necessary to make decisions regarding SSWG policy activities that are efficient, equitable, and consistent with SCB Policy.

- A. Compile relevant materials from SCB and other professional societies (Jan-Feb 2006)
- B. Develop draft guidelines (March-June, 2006).
- C. Share draft guidelines with SSWG Board for review and comment (July 2006).
- D. Refine draft guidelines (July 2006).
- E. Share refined draft guidelines with SCB Executive Office and Policy Committee for review and comment (July 2006).
- F. Finalize SSWG protocol (August 2006).

2. Coordinate SSWG involvement with the SCB Policy Committee.

Rationale: SSWG social science expertise can contribute to SCB Policy Committee activities.

- A. Initiate dialogue with SCB Policy Committee (February 2006).
- B. Develop roster of SSWG policy expertise (coordinate w/Membership Committee) (March-July 2006).
- C. Participate in relevant SCB Policy Committee activities (ongoing).

3. Develop and disseminate resource materials consistent with SSWG policy protocol.

Rationale: Decision-makers will make more scientifically-sound conservation decisions when given additional social scientific knowledge.

- A. Review external policy proposals submitted to the SSWG for consideration (ongoing).
- B. Identify issues that merit development of SSWG resource materials (Aug-Oct 2006).
- C. Develop draft resource materials (Oct-Dec 2006; refinement and delivery in 2007).

Resources:

No additional resources required for 2006.

Goal 3. Develop and carry out SSWG core functions efficiently and effectively.

Communication Committee

Mission: To ensure that the SSWG functions effectively and efficiently, the Communications Committee coordinates SSWG general communication efforts. Current activities focus on the SSWG website, email discussion list, and updates to the SCB newsletter.

Members: Nejem Raheem (chair), Sheri Stephanson (web development), Nathalie Walker (discussion list moderator).

Activities

1. Propose communications strategy for SSWG (Nejem, Sheri, Mike)

Rationale: in order to function efficiently, the Communications Committee needs a clear strategy, with focus on specific tasks, objectives, and outcomes.

- A. Work with board members to assign specific tasks and task frequency

- B. Compose a one-year set of objectives. Objectives could include increasing number of outreach outlets, increasing awareness of SSWG via those outlets or via mailings/personal work at conferences, etc.
- C. Detail breakdown of responsibilities and periodicity of tasks w/in the committee

2. Expand committee membership (Nejem).

Rationale: A full Communication Committee is necessary to carry out the full range of planned activities.

- A. Solicit new committee members through targeted messages on the listserv (Nejem, Nathalie)
- B. Solicit new members through personal contacts (Nejem)
- C. Solicit new members through targeted messages in the SCB newsletter (Nejem)
- D. Solicit new members through targeted messages on the SCB website (Nejem, Sheri)
- E. Solicit new members through personal communications at SCB 2006 in person (Nejem)

3. Encourage interactive and widespread use of SSWG discussion list (Nejem, Nathalie).

Rationale: An interactive discussion list is necessary to create a sense of community within the SSWG.

- A. Seed discussion list dialogue (Jan-March 2006)
- B. Raise awareness of discussion list among nonmembers (Feb-June 2006).
- C. Prepare and distribute messages to inform membership of SSWG activities and opportunities. (ongoing)
- D. Disseminate news articles of interest (ongoing).
- E. Moderate submissions to the discussion list (ongoing).
- F. Address inquiries regarding discussion list membership (ongoing).

4. Develop and maintain informative and user-friendly SSWG website (Sheri).

Rationale: A viable website is critical to facilitate communication with SSWG members and nonmembers.

- A. Develop comprehensive yet user-friendly website design (Jan 2006).
- B. Post redesigned website (March 2006).
- C. Populate redesigned website with existing SSWG content (June 2006).
- D. Announce SSWG website launch (April 2006).
- E. Update website with new SSWG content (ongoing).
- F. Work with responsible board members to coordinate format of content such as toolkit, syllabi, student toolkit, etc.(ongoing)
- G. Assign specific update tasks to board members and new committee members (ongoing)

5. Provide updates to SCB quarterly newsletter (Nejem, but actively seeking a new member for this).

Rationale: Newsletter updates facilitate SSWG communication with the broader SCB membership.

- A. Review SSWG activities and identify topics that merit communication (Mar, June, Sept, & Dec, 2006)
- B. Solicit contributions on identified topics and others from SSWG Board (Mar, June, Sept, Dec, 2006)

- C. Compile, edit, and submit contributions to Newsletter editor (April, July, Oct 2006; Jan 2007)
- D. Post Newsletter updates to SSWG discussion list (April, July, Oct 2006; Jan 2007)
- E. Possibly create independent SSWG newsletter for posting via listserv and website

6. Develop and disseminate SSWG outreach materials (Nejem, responsible board members).

Rationale: Outreach is essential to raise awareness of and involvement in the SSWG.

- A. Update SSWG overview 2-pager (February 2006; ongoing).
- B. Coordinate outreach to other social science professional societies, in conjunction with Membership Committee and others (March 2006, ongoing)
- C. Distribute information re: SSWG activities/needs through relevant social science/interdisciplinary listserves and other communication outlets (coordinate with disciplinary chairs).

Resources:

At least one additional committee member is required for 2006.

Membership committee

Mission: To ensure that the SSWG functions effectively and efficiently, the Membership Committee coordinates general SSWG membership activities. Current efforts focus on membership growth and diversification, as well as the development of a directory for SSWG members and other conservation social scientists.

Members: Peter Wilshusen (chair), David Bray, Jan van der Ploeg,

Activities

1. Expand committee membership (Peter)

Rationale: A full Membership Committee is necessary to carry out the full range of planned activities.

- A. Targeted note to SSWG and other discussion lists
- B. Personal solicitation via individual networks (email/phone)
- C. Promotion and contacts made at seminars and conferences
- D. Information on website

2. Expand SSWG membership.

Rationale: Expanded membership will enhance both the SSWG's capacity to carry out activities and the reach of these activities.

- A. Obtain membership data from SCB Executive Office (January 2006).
- B. Analyze existing membership patterns for areas of strength and potential growth (Jan-Feb 2006).
- C. Target underrepresented areas w/broadcast messages and one-on-one contact (March-June, 2006).

D. Report quarterly on membership trends, issues, and outreach (in coordination with the Communications Committee) (March, June, September, December, 2006).

3. Develop online directory of conservation social scientists.

- A. Consult w/SCB Executive Office re: existing membership information and data collection systems (February 2006)
- B. Consult with other professional societies re: membership information and data collection systems (February-March, 2006)
- C. Develop framework and mechanism for data collection (March-June 2006).
- D. Launch online SSWG directory at SCB 2006 (June 2006).
- E. Invite non-SCB social scientists to join directory (July-December, 2006)

4. Engage membership

- A. Work w/SSWG Board and Committees to identify specific opportunities for membership to contribute to SSWG activities (February-June, 2006)
- B. Communicate opportunities for membership involvement (June-July 2006)
- C. Canvass SSWG to identify membership interests and needs (June 2006, SCB mtg)
- D. Work w/SSWG Board & Committees to integrate membership interests and needs into 2007 workplans (July-October, 2006)

Resources

Expand SSWG membership:

- SCB support to obtain membership data
- active input from SSWG board and current members to develop mailing list

Develop online directory:

- SCB support & links to current SCB directory.
- Funds to hire someone to build the directory. [??]
- Mechanism to maintain keep directory info current

Student Affairs Committee

Mission: To ensure that the SSWG functions effectively and efficiently, the Student Affairs Committee represents student interests and coordinates SSWG activities designed to meet student needs. Current activities focus on expanding and diversifying student membership, facilitating student participation in the 2006 annual meeting, and developing online resources for students.

Membership: Josh Drew (chair), Oliver Pergams, Jen Shaffer, Valerie Hickey, Sandra Znajda, Shawn Margles

Activities:

1. Expand committee membership.

Rationale: A full Student Affairs Committee is necessary to carry out the full range of planned activities.

- A. Identify potential members through personal contacts and broadcast messages (ongoing).
- B. Encourage SSWG members with university affiliation and/or student contact recruit potential members (ongoing).
- C. Encourage active participation in committee activities through projects like the multi-disciplinary toolkit and compellation of funding and employment opportunity sources (ongoing).

2. Expand and diversify student membership.

Rationale: Expanded membership will enhance both the SSWG's capacity to carry out activities and the reach of these activities.

- A. Characterize current student SSWG involvement and attitudes @ 2 pilot universities (January 2006)
- B. Characterize student membership of SSWG using SCB membership directory (February 2006).
- C. Encourage personal contacts to join SSWG (February 2006)
- D. Encourage SSWG student members to encourage their personal contacts to join SSWG (February 2006).
- E. Target underrepresented groups with broadcast messages and one-on-one communication (March-June 2006).

3. Facilitate student participation in 2006 SCB annual meeting.

Rationale: Expanded student participation in SCB 2006 will expand the reach of SSWG activities.

- A. Support SCB Planning Committee grant-writing efforts (February-June, 2006)
- B. Present SSWG graduate student tool kit and host graduate student mixer to facilitate collaboration and information sharing

4. Compile list of conservation social science employment opportunities

Rationale: Conservation-relevant social science positions are advertised in diverse hard-to-access places, so a compilation of conservation social science jobs represents a valuable service to job seekers.

- A. Forward relevant positions to the SSWG discussion list (ongoing).
- B. Post discussion list postings to SSWG website (SCB executive office) (ongoing).
- C. Record number of conservation social science positions listed on SSWG website (monthly; ongoing).

5. Compile list of conservation social science research funding sources.

Rationale: Conservation social science funding sources are often unfamiliar and hard to find, so a compilation of conservation social science funding sources represents a valuable service to researchers.

- A. Canvass SSWG Board for potential funding sources (February 2006).
- B. Develop standard format for compiling data (February 2006).
- C. Solicit potential funding sources from SSWG discussion list and other discussion lists (March-April 2006).

- D. Compile and format suggested sources (April-May 2006).
- E. Post funding sources on SSWG website (June 2006; SCB 2006 launch)
- F. Update and expand list of funding sources (July-December, 2006).

6. Develop toolkit for conservation social science graduate students.

Rationale: Often graduate students working in multi-disciplinary conservation contexts feel alienated within their department, and have difficulties finding peers to discuss on-going research. We want to provide a resource of materials, peers, and mentors who can give helpful ideas about conducting these kinds of synergistic research programs.

- A. Identify programs that have multi-disciplinary research (March-April 2006).
- B. Identify sources of funding (March-April 2006).
- C. Identify potential publication outlets (March-April 2006).
- D. Identify/conduct/participate in short courses (March-April 2006).
- E. Post successfully funded grants to serve as templates/idea generators (March-April 2006).
- F. Present mock up website at June meeting (June 2006).

Resources:

No additional resources required for 2006.

Nominations committee

Mission: To ensure that the SSWG functions effectively and efficiently, the Nominations Committee coordinates SSWG activities associated with SSWG and SCB elections. Current activities focus on identifying candidates for the SSWG Board.

Members: Katrina Brandon (chair)

Activities

1. Expand committee membership.

Rationale: A full Nominations Committee is necessary to carry out the full range of planned activities.

- A. Personal solicitation by email/phone (June-July)
- B. Promotion and contacts at SCB 2006 (June)
- C. Information on website (ongoing)

2. Develop selection criteria for SSWG candidates

Rationale: Clear selection criteria are necessary to ensure that election candidates are chosen efficiently and equitably from among nominees.

- A. Collect selection criteria from other SCB Nominations Committees (July 2006).
- B. Draft selection criteria (August 2006).
- C. Share criteria with SSWG Board for review (September 2006).
- D. Refine criteria and share w/Board for final approval (October 2006).

3. Manage 2006 SSWG Board elections.

Rationale: Efficient and equitable Board elections are critical to SSWG effectiveness.

- A. Call for nominations for open seats in 2006 Board elections (March 2006).
- B. Select candidates for election (April 2006).
- C. Coordinate election w/SCB executive office (May 2006).
- D. Run SSWG (May 15-June 15, 2006)
- E. Announce election results (late June, 2006)

4. Coordinate SSWG input into SCB BoG and Section BoG elections.

Rationale: SSWG can help to strengthen the social sciences within SCB by fostering consideration of candidates interested in the social dimensions of conservation for official positions.

- A. Identify seats open during upcoming election cycles (consult w/SCB exec office) (May, 2006).
- B. Solicit potential social science candidates for these seats (June-July, 2006).
- C. Forward names of interested individuals to relevant Nominations Committees (September 2006).

Resources:

No additional resources are necessary for 2006.

Audit Committee

Mission: To ensure that the SSWG functions effectively and efficiently, the Audit Committee coordinates internal oversight of SSWG accounting and financial reporting processes and audits the SSWG's financial statements. Current activities focus on reviewing the SSWG's 2005 financial statements and donor reports, as well as developing an outline for a 2006 SSWG annual report.

Members: Carol Saunders (chair), Amara Brook

Activities

1. Add 1-2 additional committee members.

Rationale: A full Audit Committee is necessary to carry out the full range of planned activities.

- A. Solicit members via personal communications with potentially interested colleagues
- B. Solicit members through face-to-face dialog at SCB conference

2. Review 2005 SSWG financial statements.

Rationale: To ensure proper allocation of SSWG resources and to instill confidence in the SSWG Board, it is necessary to have an independent review of SSWG financial statements.

- A. Review status report to the Christensen Fund (February 2006).
- B. Review 2005 SSWG financial statement (February 2006).
- C. Report outcome of review to SSWG Board (February 2006).

3. Develop format for SSWG annual reports.

Rationale: Annual reports are a critical way to track progress, raise awareness, and maintain historical records.

- A. Review format of annual reports at other organizations (June 2006)
- B. Draft outline for SSWG annual report (July 2006).
- C. Share draft outline with SSWG Board for review and comment (July 2006).
- D. Refine outline and share w/SSWG Board for final approval (August 2006).

Resources:

No additional resources are required for 2006.

This workplan was developed by the SSWG Board. If you have questions, please contact the relevant SSWG Board member.

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