

REPORT

1st Whitley Gold Award Winner Symposium:

'Conservation in the 21st Century – the view from the frontline'

30th June 2010

Royal Geographical Society, London.

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Executive Summary

The Whitley Gold Award winner symposium “Conservation in the 21st Century – the view from the frontline” was held at the Royal Geographical Society on 30th June, 2010. The aim: to strengthen the global network of Whitley Award winners through sharing success stories, challenges and identifying future directions for the support the Whitley Fund for Nature provides.

Wide ranging discussions enabled the identification of many common challenges and successes between Whitley Award winners (see www.whitleyaward.org for more on the Whitley Award). Key issues concerned the sustainable growth and infrastructure of the winner-established institutions resulting from the success achieved, often as a result of winning the Whitley Award. The overriding challenge identified was the distinct lack of support from funders around the world for centralised, structural development of NGO organisations due to restricted, short-term or insufficient funding. The reluctance of the donor community to fund institutional growth means maintaining the role of a researcher and conservationist is increasingly difficult as time is spent on administration and management duties. Potential solutions were identified using the wealth of experience within the group, including seeking business or corporate partners to provide unrestricted funding, training courses for Whitley winners to learn the most effective financial and HR skills, attracting interns with professional management experience, and by being discerning about accepting grants without overhead support. Obtaining a capable Operating Officer and other relevant qualified staff to undertake administrative roles can help project leaders maintain crucial involvement in field programmes. The winners agreed finding the right support in order to delegate such responsibilities as report and proposal writing, both of which are challenging and vital, is not as easy as it might seem. Agreement was reached that it should be a key aim of a small NGO or team to resolve support issues so that the Director - often originally the main fundraiser - does not become bogged down in logistic detail as the organisation grows and at the expense of the conservation mission (the bigger picture).

The progression from local to global conservation was discussed, highlighting the need for conservationists to be working at all levels. The increasing need for diversity in specialism outside the field of biology was also discussed, calling for more interdisciplinary scientists as well as more experts beyond the scientific sector such as lawyers, accountants, managers, communicators and policy makers to enter the conservation arena and work alongside trained biologists. Expertise in awareness raising through social media is particularly essential in order to influence a critical mass and ultimately decision-makers. A wide variety of innovative ideas were generated during a ‘sky’s the limit’ session in which the hypothetical scenario of receiving £10 million for conservation was considered. These ranged from the development of an iphone application which engages the public in reviewing sustainable restaurants to employing celebrities to champion the enforcement of existing legislation. Many of these were not particularly cost prohibitive and may be realistic methods of advancing conservation beyond the traditional approaches.

The conclusion from the symposium was that the WFN network is an extremely rich resource and there is much to be gained through the sharing of experiences. A future meeting between grantees, media and donors was seen as the most valuable way in which WFN could facilitate the continuation of such conversations and continue to build the WFN network of leading conservationists around the world.

Introduction and symposium aims

Georgina Domberger, WFN Director, provided a welcome and introduction to the symposium. The overall aim for the day was to provide a setting in which the network of Whitley Gold winners could be strengthened through sharing success stories and identifying future directions for the support the charity offers Whitley Award winners.

Participants

Name	Initials	Organisation	Country	Sessions present
Randall Arauz	RA	Pretoma	Costa Rica	All
Georgina Domberger	GD	WFN	U.K.	All
Tim Dye	TD	WFN	U.K.	All
Catherine Faulks	CF	WFN	U.K.	All
Annabel Lea	AL	WFN	U.K.	All
Patricia Majluf	PM	Cayetano Heredia University	Peru	All
Sarah Martin	SM	Imperial College	U.K.	All
Claudio Padua	CP	IPÊ	Brazil	All
Raman Sukumar	RS	Asian Nature Conservation Foundation	India	All
Suzana Padua	SP	IPÊ	Brazil	All
Alexander Peal	AP	Society for Conservation of Nature	Liberia	All
Cagan Sekercioglu	CS	Kuzeydoğa	Turkey	All
Amanda Vincent	AV	Project Seahorse	Asia	All
David Wallis	DW	WFN	U.K.	All
Edward Whitley	EW	WFN	U.K.	All
Lawrence Zikusoka	LZ	CTPH	Uganda	All
Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka	GKZ	CTPH	Uganda	All
Michael Marshall	MM	New Scientist	U.K.	(2)
Diana Van de Kamp	DVK	WildInvest	U.K.	(2-4)
Pam Beddard	PB	WFN	U.K.	(4-end)
George Duffield	GDuff	Blue Marine Foundation	U.K.	(4-end)
Dilys Roe	DR	IIED	U.K.	(4-end)

Individual participant objectives

- Focusing on solutions to shared problems (AV).
- Discussing how conservationists can influence decision-making, as much time spent on this, often in vain (CS).
- Networking: *“getting together with this group of people is super”* (CP).
- Allowing members of the group to meet (both winners and Whitley members) and form friendships and associations that will help each other and provide more leverage in the international arena (RA).
- Discussing commonalities in approaches and how members can help each other (TD).
- Finding out more about the projects taking place (AL).
- Discussing strategies to understand how organisations can work more closely with bilateral agencies, foundations and corporations who have an interest in the linkages between people and wildlife (LZ).
- Discussing ways to collectively improve and advance a field of conservation without worrying about day-to-day management of the institution. *“We WFN winners are conservation entrepreneurs... but we face challenges with organisation and development”* (GKL).
- Forming strategic partnerships to move common visions forward with greater force (GKL).
- Discussing the social dimension of conservation: how best to achieve conservation in a manner consistent with equity and social justice (RS).
- Meeting other winners in order to unite for the improvement of conservation (AP).
- Finding out how others are dealing with global issues such as climate change and population growth and discuss intelligent approaches to dealing with them (PM).
- Learning from the winners (CF).
- Sharing experiences (SP).

Session 1 - what we've achieved and learned

Led by: **Suzana Padua** (Co-founder & President of IPÊ Brazil - Institute for Ecological Research)

Introduction

Suzana Padua led the session by introducing the story of IPÊ, highlighting key issues in the growth of the institution:

- **Searching for professionalism** has been key in developing the institution. This has included gaining skills in administration, finance management communications and marketing.
- **Attracting and investing in young researchers** is essential. Many interns and volunteers became involved and never left. Initial scholarships and working with 'big names' in the field are seen as incentives.
- **Encouraging the growth of these young researchers** has been critical to maintain the staff and has in fact become an empowering tool.
- **Researchers become teachers** in the training facility, and so practical knowledge gained in the field is passed on directly (constant improvement).
- **Maintaining core values while continuing NGO growth** can be a difficulty.
- **Businesses provide unrestricted funds** which may be invested in administration to ensure sustainability of the institution.
- Obtaining the first board members is a challenge. **Donors must visit the project sites** to fall in love and build long term financial relationships and trust.
- **The importance of strategic planning** for the institution

Institutional growth

Institutional growth is an important, but often neglected aspect of the development of conservation organisations. The process by which small projects evolve into organisations and arising issues were discussed.

"{All of us have at one stage faced the question} 'We can't keep on being a 'garage' NGO and need a more serious institution'" (RA).

1. Challenges

- **Lack of support for centralised, structural development**

There is a distinct lack of support for organisational building in conservation, with most conservationists doing too much work with too little support. How can conservationists convince the donor community that institutional costs are required for conservation, as it is in any other sector?

“One of the biggest challenges is the lack of support for centralised structural development” (AV).

Best practice questions regarding the development of infrastructure and methods for expanding field activities were also raised (LZ).

- **Maintaining roles as conservationists**

“I hardly walk the turtle beaches myself anymore.....I’m doing the other stuff” (RA).

“The ‘buzz’ comes from working with animals, people and being involved in decision-making situations... so the challenge is how to get others to help do the work so you can continue doing that” (AV).

- **Remote field locations**

The remoteness of field sites leads to difficulties with recruiting and retaining professionals while offering moderate salaries (CS).

- **Sustainability**

Many organisations are highly dependent on individuals, particularly their founders, and not necessarily self-sustainable: *“What would happen to the organisation if you were hit by a bus?”* (PM). This makes leader motivation and sustainability in growth crucial, as is succession planning.

- **Funding**

- **Restrictions**

Restricted funding agreements limit how funds can be used. Salary restrictions prevent new staff being hired and can prohibit the promotion of highly qualified

professionals who may then leave for higher paid alternatives elsewhere, taking expertise with them (RA). Overhead restrictions are also highly prohibitive (AV).

➤ Short-term

The length of funding is also a concern, particularly for those who do not have guaranteed personal salaries. Funding is often provided on a short-term basis, preventing longer-term organisational planning (RA).

A vote within the room indicated that approximately half of the winners have a guaranteed salary on a year to year basis. Not having a guaranteed salary is time consuming.

Donors do not always understand the need for sustained funding over time. In response to an application for more funding after a year: *“What?! You haven’t saved the turtles yet?”* (RA).

“How do we cultivate the [corporate] relationship to be sustainable long-term?” (LZ).

➤ Insufficient grants

Grants may be offered that are too small for the endeavour. This leaves researchers struggling to fill financial gaps (AV).

There is a lack of time for fund raising, yet full-time fundraisers are not effective (GKZ).

- **Need for cooperation**

Businesses grow to be competitive but conservationists have a joint goal and should not be competitive, we need to be developing solutions that can be easily replicated by other groups (GD).

There may be problems with competing projects even within an institution, creating internal competition, though this can be minimized by constant exchange of information on who needs the most and who is more capable of performing a better job according to the funder’s profile (SP).

- **Maintaining values**

Partnerships with the business world or government can be influential in leading projects in directions not consistent with organisational values (SP).

Funding may be offered for a worthy project, however it may not be the organisation's top priority (AV). Donors encourage applicants to 'jump through hoops' (GD).

Pretoma has decided not to accept money from petroleum companies, but does accept money from animal rights groups (RA). Project Seahorse disagrees with that position. Accepting money from PETA and animal rights organisations is also contentious as these organisations also have their own agendas that can conflict with science-based conservation. Accepting money from petroleum (or other resource extraction) companies that engage in best practices is acceptable as long as it comes with no strings attached and freedom to disseminate findings (AV).

- **"Voluntourists"**

Many 'volunteers' are a type of tourist (RA).

Problems in providing enough supervision and support for volunteers (LZ).

Volunteers generally gain more than the organisation (AV).

2. Potential solutions

- **General insights into dealing with challenges**

New challenges keep us inspired, such as providing a masters course through an NGO, and running an NGO as a business (SP). *"Nobody can refuse a reasonable request three times"*. Rework it, come at it from a different angle, tackle it in a creative, responsive, interactive fashion and it will work (AV).

- **Lack of support for centralised, structural development**

It may be beneficial to step aside and bring in a Chief Operating Officer (COO) to manage the administration (TD). IPÊ has a COO who earns more than any other person in the organisation (CP), CP added such people are very much worth the cost, but are hard to find (AV).

Suggestion for the establishment of a short (e.g. 3 week) organisational management/HR/business practices course, provided by WFN (AV), or as a collaboration among 2/3 organisations (RS). IPÊ already have such a course in place (SP).

Possibility of a mentoring scheme proposed for more experienced Whitley Award winners such as IPÊ to guide new Whitley Award winners (GD)

Potential for making use of gap year programmes for young people trained in administration and management (LZ). There is a likely pool of people who would seek to build up experience at an NGO in this way (TD).

Recommendations for facilities included starting modestly using native material to avoid high maintenance costs and budgeting for repairs. Expansion can always take place rapidly at a later date (AV). But another approach is to build for quality right away, to attract visitors and convince donors of the professionalism (SP).

Certain eco-tourism aspects such as established long-term conservation measures (e.g. protecting turtle eggs) may be run as a self-funded business branch, as funding institutes prefer new and innovative science rather than proven, established methodologies (RA). However, it was noted that businesses also lose money e.g. a poor year with few tourists (TD). Credibility may also deteriorate as an organisation becomes seen as a profit-making business rather than a conservation organisation (PM).

Recommendation included setting up a newer establishment, “*built for beauty*” to attract business guests to hold think tanks (SP). However problems associated with hotel management are likely to be prohibitive for most conservation groups to want to start on this track (GD).

- **Maintaining role as a conservationist**

Hold onto the key motivational aspects of the work: “*I started the Cocos island project, I don’t want anybody else to direct the field work.....it keeps me alive*” (RA)

- **Remote field locations**

Instead of placing people in locations, it is possible to work with and teach people who are already there (GKZ).

- **Sustainability**

The Gore-tex company model was advocated. This model ensures the company never reaches more than 200 employees by breaking off and forming a new company each time it reaches the threshold. It might be possible to replicate this model in conservation (CP).

- **Funding**

Grants specifically for institutional growth or unrestricted funds are ideal (RA) (Consensus with whole room)

Corporate partners are extremely important for institutional grants. Taking them to field stations and developing personal relationships is seen as the only way to ensure long term support and trust (SP).

“If you asked me a few years ago whether business and conservation were compatible I would have said never”. However a re-organised board with space for businessmen has enabled the majority of funds to come through business to IPÉ (CP).

Delegating to professional fundraisers does not work. Delegate every administration task possible except grant-writing and fundraising (AV)

If grants are too small for the proposed outputs, it is better not to accept the grant as it just leads to liabilities that tax other programme elements and cause enormous stress to the team (AV).

- **Cooperation**

Cooperation is needed among projects within the same institution to prevent internal competition (SP).

- **Maintaining values**

Partnerships with governments, businesses and other NGOs must be very carefully developed without compromising values because of available funding (SP).

Project Seahorse will not accept grants if the project is not a top priority, having made that mistake too many times (AV).

- **“Voluntourists” (RA)**

It is best to treat volunteers as job applicants and select them as carefully as paid staff members. Too many may be crippling for an organisation. Volunteer application protocols can be shared (AV).

Money brought to communities from ‘voluntourists’ can be used to create ecotourism incentives for locals to practice conservation (e.g. not collecting turtle eggs) (RA).

Accepting ‘voluntourists’ may help with maintenance and upkeep (LZ). Rather than establishing a hotel, volunteers may stay in people’s homes in the community and bring direct benefits (RA).

Conclusion

AV commented that it is unlikely that anyone within the group worried about managing hundreds of thousands of dollars and turning away twenty applicants each week at the time of winning the award, concluding *“this is really an exciting leadership discussion...the problems are all due to our success”* (AV).

Sessions 2 & 3 - Reconciling approaches to conservation & The Community approach v. global approach

Winners: **Patricia Majluf and Randall Arauz**

Introduction

Global problems such as climate change and population growth reach far beyond individual capacity. Can we be effective in trying to address these huge issues? How can we affect global behaviour? (PM)

Example of a local success story

There are local success stories such as the change in attitude of the Peruvian government in directing the anchovy resource towards food for direct human consumption rather than for less efficient use as fish meal to feed and produce more traditionally palatable fish species, like salmon. However this does not change overall behaviour regarding larger issues such as climate change (PM).

Example of the progression from local to global action

Shark finning in Costa Rica was controlled through implementation of the regulation that sharks must be landed with fins attached, however, in response the finners simply moved on to El Salvador. Collaboration with conservation departments in El Salvador just caused the finners to move on to Guatemala, and so the need for regional, and ultimately global policy became apparent (RA). The case has since been taken to the UN and on to the tuna commissions with regulatory power, highlighting the need to harmonise policies in a global fashion when working with migratory species.

Beyond the biologist

The onion model trajectory of conservation scientists

To succeed, it will be vital for conservation activity to cover many layers of activity, in order to release many layers of pressure bearing down on species of conservation concern. Such layers include (inter alia) the study of a particular species, the study of the ecosystem affecting that species, the people exploiting

the resource, the communities from which those people come, the country level institutions on which they depend, global treaties, and ultimately overpopulation and human behaviour of altruism or greed. Change needs to be implemented at all levels (layers of the onion, see Figure 1.) for conservation to be successful (AV). There has been a tradition of biologists moving from the study of a particular species upwards, or outwards, through the onion. We need to be smarter and new conservationists need not relearn what we already know, that a multi-layer approach is needed:

“This is a mindset, not a skill set” (AV)

Rather than continuing the trend of biologists undertaking the same journey in conservation, there is a need for people with different skill sets, who can step directly into the different layers of the onion.

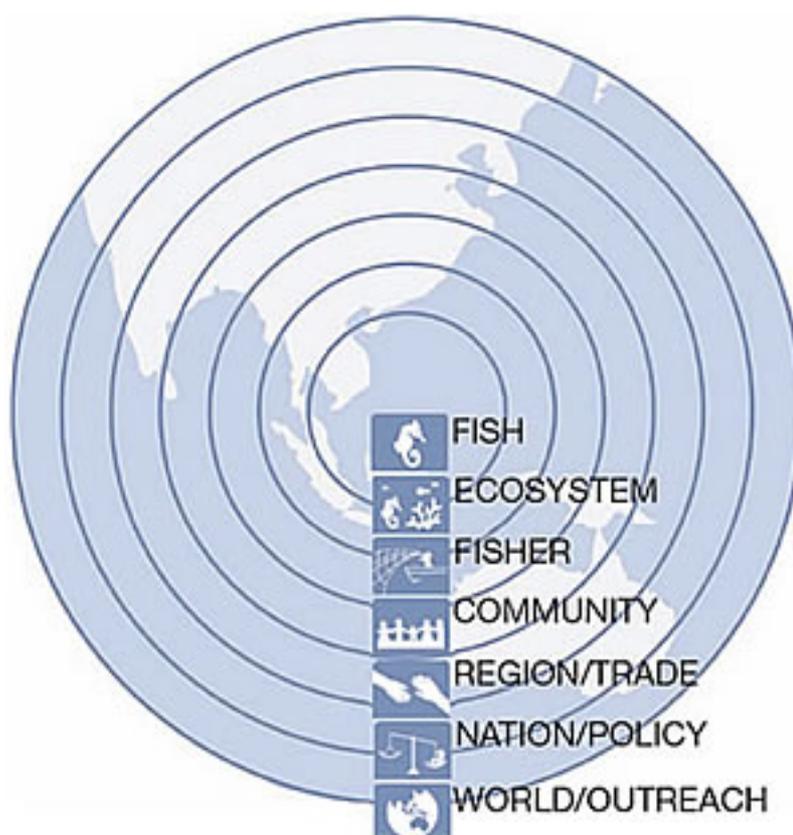


Figure 1.Project Seahorse - Concentric pressures bear down on individual animals, making an "onion world" in which each layer affects the others. Biological seahorse research is at the centre and we progress outward from there through marine populations, ecosystems, fishing communities, national and global trade issues, policy and public outreach (Amanda Vincent, Winner 1994).

- **There is still a perception that conservation is in the science domain (AV).** This was supported by the fact that the majority of the WFN winners were originally trained as biologists. Yet, conservation is really a matter of engaging diverse skills, especially those related to human behaviour.
- **There is a need to produce more interdisciplinary expertise.** This is already taking place within some universities (DVK). IPÊ recognise this and follow this approach in the development of their graduate training programs. (See Figure 2. IPÊ 's model for modern conservation practice)

Conservation Model



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Figure 2. IPÊ has an innovative, multi-disciplinary model of biodiversity conservation which aims to generate socioeconomic benefits through science, education and sustainable business (Claudio Padua, Winner 1999).

- **Collaborations are required beyond biological and social scientists** to business and policy specialists (PM). Business skills are potentially the most important new asset for conservation (AV)

Challenges

- Despite the need for conservation expertise to move beyond the field of biology, it was suggested that conservationists are self-selected due to the fact that people who are passionate about wildlife generally study biology (CS, SP, AP). It was stated that it is not a requirement for a Whitley Award winner, if proven to be an effective leader, to have a biology degree, as long as there is ecological expertise on the team (GD). A vote within the room confirmed that some of the Whitley Award winners do not have a biological grounding, and this was welcomed as it suggests a broadening of the sector and awareness, at least within WFN, that not only scientists can become effective conservation leaders.
- Experience with students from interdisciplinary undergraduate studies suggests the degrees are not yet developed well enough to compete with the specialised degrees. Interdisciplinary postgraduate studies are currently preferable (AV).
- Conservation cannot move completely beyond the scientific sector as academics give conservation credibility, and policy must be informed by good science (CS, RS). Nevertheless, the implementation and what happens on the ground should include other sectors (RS).

Education & awareness

- Within the sector there is often less success with education projects because conservation scientists themselves are not necessarily the best people to be delivering the message, and delegation to those with expertise may be more appropriate (AV).
- Methods may be borrowed from other sectors such as the public health sector (e.g. putting on a show and asking viewers what they thought following it) (GKZ).
- There are problems with measuring the success of educational outputs (AV). However, CTPH have recorded successes in changing attitudes towards hygiene and conservation. Outcomes (e.g. attitudinal or behavioural changes) must be measured rather than inputs (e.g. number of workshops held) (GKZ).

- Education needs to be local as well as global. Only “30% of papers [regarding Brazil] in good journals have an author or co-author who is Brazilian” (SP).
- Education should be theory and practice combined, e.g. the professional Conservation Masters programme run by IPÊ in Brazil (SP).
- The problem for journalists is that “nobody reads negative stories”. Time restrictions often prevent a conservation story being adequately covered or placed in a broader context; “churnalism”. Feature articles offer more room for complex stories, but are written less frequently (MM).
- Radical approaches can work if strategically placed e.g. exposure of Victoria Secrets’ use of non-recycled paper in their vast catalogue business changed consumption patterns dramatically (AV). It involved expensive advertising, but was very efficient (RA).

Legal issues

- There are problems with radical approaches, such as has been seen with dam proposals in Turkey. An NGO which named the Minister of Environment a ‘serial killer’ of the environment was recently sued (CS).
- There is a need for lawyers within conservation (RA).
- There is a need to have conservationists in parliament (GKZ). Law and business students should be targeted as these students become the next generation of politicians and judges (AV).

Influencing politicians

- Politicians follow rather than lead, so the focus should centre on the critical mass. Need to mobilise more social media such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and Avaaz petitions which can be very powerful tools (AV). The effects may vary among nations with smaller impacts in less democratic societies (CS).
- Taking local and national politicians to scientific study sites can have a major impact (CS).

- Recommended book 'The tipping point', Malcolm Gladwell, 2000, describing influences on human behaviour and how sociological changes take place (AV).

Global trends

Monitoring global trends

Q: Is an IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) required as a parallel to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)? (MM)

It is important to bring countries together for rigorous discussions and may be an excellent process for collating knowledge; however, the IPCC is not a policy prescriptive organisation (RS). The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment provides a similar service and the IUCN has been adequately assessing trends already. It is felt the overall message produced by an IPBES would not be very different even though there may be some new details (CS).

Dangers of increased focus on global issues

- Climate change may be used as a fall-back cause for all ecological problems, enabling governments to devolve responsibility by blaming others, even if their own policies are not environmentally based (CS). An example was provided from the Philippines where it was assumed rising sea levels were causing the island to flood, although the actual cause turned out to be poor use of ground water affecting the water table.
- Smaller projects where real changes could be achieved may be neglected as more funding is dedicated to larger, global issues such as climate change (AV).

Session 4 – The sky’s the limit: what would we like to do?

Winner: **Amanda Vincent**

Introduction

Conservationists are often hindered by a lack of innovative new approaches and have a tendency to do more of the same e.g. the obsession with MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) as the only solution for the ocean. The failures of creativity in conservation science can be due to lack of imagination, or resources, so the session asked the participants to remove resource constraints and be as innovative as possible. Actual possibilities with actors, methods, timelines and an actual sum of money (£10 million) were discussed in order to avoid a vague approach.

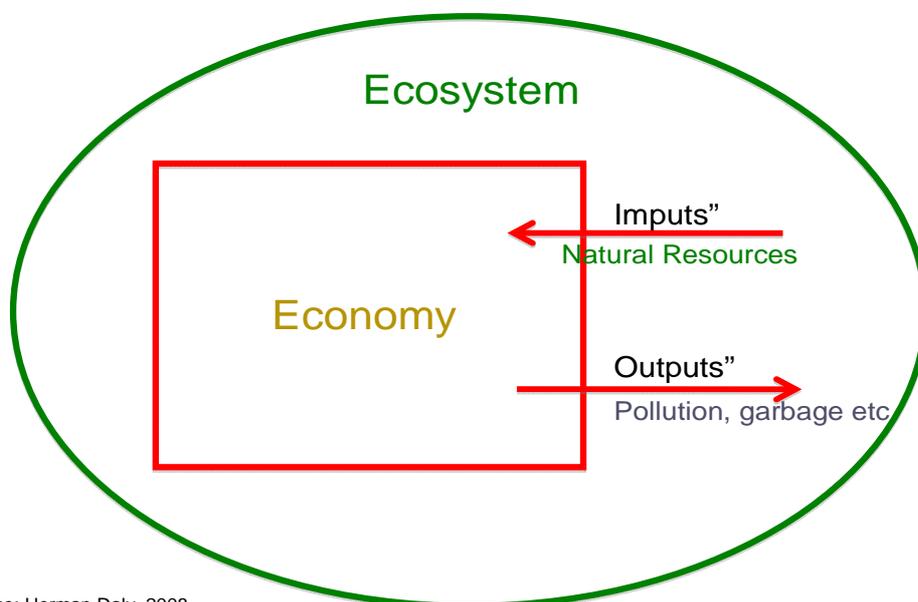
Ideas for spending £10 million:

Idea 1 Pay for enforcement of existing regulations (AV)

Idea 2 ‘Buy’ politicians. Not bribery! Enroll them. Introduce them to the work by taking them to sites and letting them connect with the habitats and organisms rather than providing data summaries e.g. let them release a bird themselves (CS).

[This was thought to be a plausible suggestion, as it was noted there are ex-leaders who are available to bring publicity to events such as Blair and Clinton (TD). Anyone high profile might be able to play this role, such as a celebrity (AV)].

Idea 3 Create a network of protected area in the Amazon in which people are paid not to deforest by investors. Money should be used to set up the companies to organise this. IPÊ are now getting involved in creating new business that will internalize some of the externalities of the economy. One way is to do it through the use of REDD mechanisms to avoid deforestation to reduce the use of "inputs" and consequently reduce the "outputs" of carbon to the atmosphere. (See Figure 3. Diagram of the externalities of the economy, Herman Daly economist “A tale from the world bank”) (CP).



Source: Herman Daly, 2008
(New Scientist v. 200; issue 2678)

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Figure 3. Diagram showing the relationship of the economy to the environment – inputs are taken from the ecosystem and outputs enter the ecosystem. The diagram shows that economic growth is constrained by the environment.

Idea 4 Instead of opposing all ideas and plans, offer innovative alternatives, e.g. suggest bridges, tunnels or re-directing routes rather than building a road in an area for biodiversity rather than just saying ‘no’ (RS).

Idea 5 Global online conservation themed viral game with huge cash prize to develop ideas (CF).

Idea 6 Develop new iphone applications to engage the public, e.g. involving consumers in a sustainable restaurant guide and review facility (CF).

Idea 7 Strengthen management by scaling up what is already in place (GKZ).

Idea 8 Couple ecosystem models with value chains in order to investigate hypothetical management scenarios more fully (PM).

Idea 9 Increase the support of good eco-labelling schemes, e.g. MSC. Improve the process of certification and update it to include new organisms (AV).

Idea 10 Implement improved sustainability of resource utilising activities through payments for conservation e.g. paying people not to deforest or fish or to reduce the size of palm oil farms (AP).

Idea 11 Develop a green publicity and marketing agency to offer subsidised PR for small scale projects, e.g. assistance with writing an article for BBC wildlife magazine (PB).

Idea 12 Boost earned income through business development (LZ).

Idea 13 Influence international policy through more efficient lobbying (RA).

Idea 14 Strengthen legal support to ensure government implements its own laws: 'ecojustice' (AV).

Idea 15 Equip fishers with cell phones (with camera and GPS facilities which fulfil requirements for legal evidence) and a central hotline to aid reporting of illegal activities (AV).

Idea 16 Provide micro-finance focussing on women's enterprises in fishing communities (AV).

Idea 17 Develop a certification system for marine (and other) products used in traditional Chinese medicine (AV).

Idea 18 Corporate alignment of NGOs to build capacity in business skills (DVK).

Idea 19 Develop NGO's sustainability as a business, the model used for WFN (EW).

Idea 20 'Swatching' conservation to align with the resources – once Rolex and other premier brands met with great success as they were the best and most expensive. Swatch created a functional, less exclusive brand and also met with great success. Conservation needs to follow the Swatch model and not Rolex (EW).

Idea 21 Establishing website to sell conservation generated products in international markets (TD).

Idea 22 Invest in land/resource rights mechanisms (CP, DR).

- Idea 23** Establish a global philanthropy forum (PM).
- Idea 24** Communicate biodiversity more effectively to the public (DR).
- Idea 25** Obtain matching funds! (GKZ).
- Idea 25** Invest in birth control to tackle overpopulation (DW).
- Idea 26** Sex education but also critically general education, particularly for women, for areas of high birth rate.
- Idea 27** Re-align consumer incentives by marketing sustainable food items e.g., small fish as high priced 'super foods' due to their higher nutritional content than large, less sustainable fish (SM).
- Idea 28** Games based on Farmville (Facebook game), but for managing a rainforest involving payments (SM).
- Idea 29** Biodiversity as a business; mirror carbon market.
- Idea 30** Lobby governments to reduce the air force by one fighter jet and donate the savings to conservation (RS).
- Idea 31** Increase market for value added products from responsible fisheries (SM).
- Idea 32** Increase means for communication between grass roots conservationists.
- Idea 33** Develop professional bodies (i.e. legal) for issues in conservation (AV).
- Idea 34** Aeroplane and funds to offset carbon footprint (GKZ).
- Idea 35** Conservation themed Hollywood blockbusters like 'Avatar' (GKZ).
- Idea 36** Invest in communication skills for environmentalists to change attitudes from negative to positive (from burden to seduction) (SP).

Session 4 continued - How do we make this happen?

Winner: **Cagan Sekercioglu**

How WFN can help

This session discussed the practicalities of what WFN could do for the network of winners.

Publicity

- Winners were not aware that Princess Anne visits Whitley Award winners where possible when she visits a country, providing welcome publicity.

Website

- Creation of an interactive website section that can be updated by winners to keep donors informed (GD, GKZ, SP)
- Online forum for inter-winner communication (DW).
- Financial facilities for WFN grantees such as a 'donate now' button for each project. This may help organisations access online sources of funding which may be difficult to establish in other countries for political reasons (CS). It was raised that this already exists via 'Wildlife Direct' and therefore would be replication for WFN, and would also remove WFN's important monitoring role which gives donors confidence (GD). It was raised virtually nobody will donate any significant sum that way, by clicking on a button (GDuff)
- Advice regarding successful online marketing (LZ)

[However, the point was made that the value of the website to the winners in contrast to the excessive costs of keeping it updated might not be worthwhile].

Networking with other conservationists

- Facilitating links between UK academics and grantees would broaden grantees' access to other sources of funds such as UK Darwin funding (CS)

- Establishing contact with similar organisations to promote collaborations e.g. the Wildlife Conservation Network (GKZ)

Newsletter

- The concept of a WFN winner newsletter was discussed, however it was concluded that researchers and donors alike do not generally have the time to read them (AV, GD), supporting the case for moving newsletter updates to an online/ email system.

Business networking

- The provision of business advice and business development networking (CS).

Winner gatherings

- The idea of holding winner gatherings was put forward, using the example of the Pew Fellowship in Marine Conservation in which all fellows are brought together for five days a year. The inclusion of a fairly open agenda and a fieldtrip were seen as key to the gatherings, which resulted in building a strong community (AV).
- Different opinions regarding the structure were expressed ranging from advocating a predominantly unstructured approach (AV) to focussing on particular themes such as how to build an NGO, project proposals etc. (RS).

Further funding for winner collaborations

- Strengthening collaboration by enabling previous winners to unite and write proposals for funds to work together on projects (AV). It was noted several winners have already successfully written proposals to WFN for Continuation Funding in this way, and WFN could encourage this.

Book

- The need for good aesthetically-based communication was expressed with the proposal of putting together a coffee table book entitled “Edward’s Army” to maintain enthusiasm among donors (SP). The environmental sustainability of this idea was questioned, with the suggestion that any book should be electronic (LZ), as well as the amount of impact and influence that would be gained in an area where so many books are published (AV).

Organisational practice documentation

- The provision of documents such as methods of good practice in running an organisation or accounting skills was suggested, created by winners and collated by WFN (TD). The time expenditure of this exercise was questioned (AV).

Facilitating access to other funding sources

- Advice on applying for further grants (CS).

[Immediate advice was provided, highlighting the website www.COS.com advertising calls for grant applications. It is called the Community of Science but serves all manner of funding needs, and can deliver weekly grant options. The Foundation Centre website was also recommended for their free grant writing courses, budgeting advice, and guidance on grant sourcing <http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted> (AV) It was agreed information on other grant options could be added to the WFN website].

Gatherings with donors and media

- The question regarding how donors to the conservation sector set their priorities was raised as they often fund project ideas which are not seen as worthwhile by the research community (e.g. alternative livelihoods projects which have not shown previous successes). This may be due to the lack of opportunities for donors to understand rigorous conservation opportunities (AV). The Whitley Awards do this exceptionally well – acting as the link between donors who want to give, and conservationists who will get results. The idea of bringing researchers, donors and the media together as part of a WFN activity to share knowledge and brainstorm about specific projects would increase this understanding.
- Personal contact, such as that which WFN offers, increases the chances of funding as few donors donate to those they have not met (GDuff). There is much potential to build on this further e.g. inviting donors on a research vessel or cruise to a wildlife rich area such as the Galapagos and get them in donation bidding wars while brainstorming about specific projects.

Final session – conclusions and next steps

Summary

Session 1

Many commonalities were identified, particularly concern regarding the sustainability of institutions. Shared challenges were identified and potential solutions were discussed in a rich exchange of ideas.

Sessions 2 & 3

The progression from local to global conservation was discussed, highlighting the need for conservationists to work at all levels and across disciplines. More ambition is needed. Conservation requires social scientists, anthropologists, lawyers, communicators, accountants, managers and policy makers (inter alia) as well as the traditional biologists.

Session 4

Innovative ideas form the basis of interesting grant applications, and many of the ideas generated through this 'sky's the limit' session were not overly cost prohibitive and may be realistic methods of advancing conservation.

Conclusions

The WFN network is an extremely rich resource and there is much to be learned from each other. A future meeting between grantees, media and donors is seen as one of the most valuable ways in which WFN could facilitate the continuation of such conversations and continue to build the Whitley Award winner network.

Expression of thanks

AV, winner of the first Whitley Award in 1994, concluded by thanking everyone at WFN. Particular thanks were given for the global perspective taken by WFN.

"There are no particularly charismatic species in our wetland projects in Turkey.... so we could have become bankrupt by now if it hadn't been for the Whitley Fund for Nature helping promote the importance of what we do" (CS).