



Condor Bioreserve Program (Northern Tropical Andes) Conservation Audit Report

Conservation Audit Conducted April 17-20, 2007
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During April 17-20th, 2007, independent team of peer-reviewers¹ conducted a Conservation Audit of TNC's Condor Bioserve Program to assist the Program Team with identifying and reflecting on positives to date as well as opportunities for improvement. Specifically, the Conservation Audit involved assessing the Program's adherence to TNC's Conservation Action Planning (CAP) process. This report is a written elaboration of a *Preliminary Findings, Recommendations, and Options* discussion session held with the Program Team on the last day of the Audit².

The key audiences of this review are (1) the Program/Project Team itself, including key partners (2) TNC Operating Unit, Regional and Senior Management (including the Board of Directors), and (3) the Conservation Audit Program [part of the Global Conservation Approach Team (GCAT)].

Though the Conservation Audit hopefully adds value to the conservation process in a multitude of ways, there are three specific impacts the Audit Team aspired to have, including:

1. Promoting Program improvement through a "quality assurance review" and discussion of the CAP Basic Practices for strong project management;
2. Generating credibility around the work and impacts of the Program; and
3. Serving as a learning vector: the Program learns from the Conservation Audit (Peer-Review) Team, the peer-reviewers learn from the Program, and the wider conservation community learns through the sharing of these Conservation Audit findings.

With specific regard to quality assurance and credibility, the essence of a Conservation Audit is answering the question: "Are the Program's self stated results credible?" To answer this question, the Audit assesses the extent to which the Program/Project is in adherence with TNC's standard Conservation Approach, which is the Conservation Action Planning (CAP) Process. The CAP Process presents ten critical steps that represent TNC's best practices for Conservation Project design, action, monitoring, and adaptive management. This report presents *Findings and Recommendations* for each CAP step.

Overview of Key Findings and Recommendations

Overall the Condor Program was viewed as being in fair alignment with TNC's Conservation Action Planning (CAP) process. Some application of the CAP Steps have been outstanding, but true, explicit adaptive management (i.e. iteration) has not yet happened. That said, the Project Team is well poised to do so.

The Project has a number of strengths, for which it should be commended. A portion of the **key notable achievements and innovations** include:

¹ The Peer-Review Team for the Condor Program Conservation Audit was: Jon Fisher, Data Manager, TNC – Global Conservation Approach Team; Cristina Lasch, Conservation Area Planning Coordinator, TNC – Mexico Program; James Leslie, Former WWF Peru employee, Yale University; Oscar Maldonado, Senior Conservation Scientist, TNC – Global Conservation Approach Team; Tim Reed, Conservation Audit Manager, TNC - Global Conservation Approach Team; Vinaya Swaminathan, Program Associate, Foundations of Success.

² This session was held April 20th, 2007. Our gratitude to all those who participated, especially our outside partners.

- The Program has extremely strong partner engagement and is a true joint effort (one of the best witnessed). The BRC Consortium represents a positive future vision and orientation.
- There is a strong relationship based on trust between the Project Team and other stakeholders (i.e. community groups, municipalities).
- There is excellent transition and continuity of project responsibilities across different project managers over time.
- The scope is well defined, geographically understood, and based upon ecological criteria.
- There is an outstanding variety of maps of the project area, showing the location of targets and other key elements.
- There is a good mix of coarse and fine filter targets (e.g. systems and species).
- The Program has learned from the experience of doing a detailed CAP and now understand how to be more efficient with the process and associated tools. This demonstrates adaptive management.
- The Program has developed some results chains, a recommended best practice.
- The Program has technically followed the Objectives/Strategy Step to a great extent, developing very SMART objectives and using the workbook and ConPro to the fullest extent to link strategies to threats and targets.
- The Program's Log Frame tool is an outstanding adaptation (e.g., to meet local needs, for USAID, etc.) and is used in conjunction with the CAP workbook.
- The Program is very measures focused (one of the best), having identified many potential indicators, as described in both the CAP workbook and in the Log Frame. The Audit Team was very impressed that the discussion on the first day focused on measures, which is a very rare occurrence.
- The Parks in Peril (PiP) Program has provided a fantastic workplan structure.
- Some actions taken by the Program have been high-leverage and have become self-sustaining (e.g. The Water Fund).
- The Program is focused on improvement and learning. For example, it has undergone many evaluations and also volunteered for this Conservation Audit. Through self-evaluation, the Project Team has become aware of its short-comings, including specific missing baselines, for example.
- There is a good set of PiP evaluations that record lessons learned and challenges faced.

The above positives represent only a summary of many other positive findings the Review Team had (and which can be found in the main body of the report), so the Team should be very proud of its accomplishments. That said, there are continuing opportunities for improvement. A number of recommendations were made by the Conservation Audit Team with the hope of driving the Program towards even stronger conservation work. The **principal “high-priority”**

recommendations of this Conservation Audit are provided below, along with an indication of appropriate audiences for each³.

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of Project Team going forward, perhaps in a Project Charter type document [P].
- Conduct a (rapid) reassessment of threats to ensure that all critical threats have been identified and prioritized [P]. During the reassessment, be sure to map the locations of sources of stress.
- Create and implement a monitoring-plan listing specific indicators, purpose, methodologies, responsibilities, etc. [P].
- Emphasize the implementation of Effectiveness measures – that is, Outcome and Impact measures – wherever possible [P, CMG].
- PiP Consolidation scorecards should serve as excellent record of high-level success and progress over time.
- Create a small set of simple materials that demonstrate results, both for internal management and for outreach [P, MRC].
- As a Team, perhaps even a workshop, conduct post-PiP scenario planning, identifying both best and worst case scenarios [P].
- In summary, use the ending of PiP to rapidly update key CAP Steps (e.g., targets, viability, threats, situation analysis – particularly including social factors) to better prepare for post-PiP strategy development, implementation, and success measurement [P].
- In addition, TNC needs to be clear about how the BRC “scope” fits into the future, including the 2015 Goal related to Major Habitat Types (MHTs) [OU, Regional Science, GCAT]. In pursuing the BRC scope, ensure that any “effective conservation” already achieved is maintained and that TNC’s role is clearly defined.

In short, the Project Team did a very good job of utilizing the historic CAP process and innovating on top of it (for example, the Log Frames focusing on indicators), but the Program now needs to refresh its understanding and assessment of threats (and targets) and explicitly iterate. This lack of “closing the loop” is not uncommon, and the Condor is well positioned now to remedy this, given the strength of their initial planning and the excellent, committed extended Team they have assembled.

One very important point of discussion, internal to TNC, is the relationship between projects like Condor and the 2015 Goal. It appears that the South America Region, as a result of its analyses of “Effective Conservation” in the MHTs in which it works, has determined that high-elevation grasslands are “over-represented” in Protected Areas. As a result, there appears to be a sentiment of moving on from this work. The Conservation Audit Team would be concerned that TNC’s incomplete understanding of Effective Conservation on the ground, within the scope of

³ The reference key for audience specific *Recommendations* is as follows: P: Program/Project Staff and Management; OU: Operating Unit Management; R: Regional Management; R SCI: Regional Science staff; XA: External Affairs; MRC: TNC’s International Marketing Resource Center; EXEC: TNC Senior Executive Management; TNC: TNC-wide learning; CMG/GCAT: Conservation Measures Group/Global Cons. Approach Team.

the Condor Program, doesn't support a complete withdrawal. Certainly the 2015 Goal guides us toward new places – but to suggest that Condor is fine because it is under Protected Area status would be to disregard our current inability to demonstrate viable biodiversity and adequately mitigated threats. This project serves as an important example of the challenge we face in using Habitat Assessment-scale information to denote progress toward our mission.

The Program Team and the various members of key partner organizations who participated are thanked for their voluntary participation in this Conservation Audit and for their preparation and assistance with logistics. While the recommendations made during this Conservation Audit are not formally binding (i.e. specifically accountable to the Conservation Audit Program), it is intended that the Program itself and the Operating Unit Program(s) and Region will review these ideas and act on those deemed most relevant and practical.

For further information about this, or other Conservation Audits, please contact Tim Reed, TNC's Conservation Audit Manager, at Treed@TNC.org. More can be found online at: http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/Conservation_Audit. Finally, project staff who are interested in anything related to TNC's Conservation Approach and Conservation Action Planning (CAP) methodology are strongly encouraged to utilize the extensive resources found at the Conservation Gateway: www.conservationgateway.org.

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

Named for the legendary bird of the Andes, Condor Bioreserve is a highly ambitious conservation project in Ecuador. The Bioreserve is a 5.4 million-acre mosaic of public protected areas, farms, ranches, and indigenous territories that encompass snow-capped volcanoes, cloud forests, páramos (high altitude grasslands), rain forests, and innumerable creeks, lagoons and rivers.

Located east of Quito in the Andean region, the Bioreserve includes seven protected areas: Sumaco Napo-Galeras National Park, Cotopaxi National Park, and Llanganates National Park, Cofan-Bermejo Reserve, Cayambe-Coca Reserve, Antisana Reserve and Pasochoa Wildlife Refuge, as well as several watershed protection areas and private reserves. It comprises the Cotopaxi, Antisana and Cayambe volcanoes and stretches into the Andean foothills and rain forests of the Amazon River Basin further east.

Due to the vastly different habitats it encompasses, Condor Bioreserve harbors a wide variety of faunal species. Some mammal species such as the spectacled bear and Andean tapir, which are more highly threatened in other parts of South America, are quite common in Condor Bioreserve. Other species of interest include:

- Six different cat species: jaguar, cougar, ocelot, margay, little spotted cat and jaguarondi.
- Two species of odd-toed ungulates: mountain tapir and common tapir
- The endangered Neotropical otter
- More than 760 bird species, including Andean condor, the mountain gull and the grey-breasted mountain-toucan
- Nineteen poisonous frog species considered at high risk of extinction.

From the mountains to lowlands, plant diversity is also impressive. In the high-altitude zones, the most common flora are pajonales (a type of grass), ferns and mosses that absorb water from the atmosphere and filter it toward creeks and rivers that travel down both slopes of the Andes. In the middle- and low-altitude zones, forests are formed by trees such as pumamaqui, quishuar, cedars, and oaks, and include several epiphyte species including ferns, orchids and bromeliads.

Beyond its tremendous biodiversity, the Conservancy targets this region because it provides freshwater for more than 1.5 million people living in and around city of Quito, Ecuador's capital. Unfortunately, biodiversity health and ecological integrity of this key region has been adversely affected by unsustainable agriculture and cattle ranching practices, infrastructure projects, illegal hunting and inappropriate logging exploitation.

The Conservancy has a unique opportunity to work in this region with well-established local partners that include non-governmental organizations, indigenous groups and governmental agencies. The Conservancy has been working in the region for more than eight years through several projects financed by international organizations and U.S. agencies for conserving biodiversity and promoting the sustainable use of the natural resources.

The Conservancy has been working with local partners and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Condor Bioreserve since 1997 in several projects:

Strengthening protected areas: The Conservancy and its partners are implementing a vigilance and monitoring program by community park guards in Cayambe-Coca Reserve, Antisana Reserve, Cofán-Bermejo Reserve, Cotopaxi National Park and Llanganates National Park. Projects supported include basic facilities maintenance, developing work plans, vigilance training, and providing equipment, such as radios and bicycles, for the park guards. The Conservancy is also helping develop country-wide mechanisms for financing the entire protected areas system of Ecuador.

Working with landowners: Within the Condor Bioserve there are privately owned lands whose owners can be strong conservation allies through sustainable agricultural practices and land protection. The Conservancy and partner Fundación Antisana are managing more than 2,000 acres in privately owned lands between the Antisana and Cayambe Coca reserves through developing conservation-friendly agricultural projects. The idea is to create a conservation corridor between these two protected areas. Furthermore, the Conservancy and Fundación Antisana are working with several ranchers to implement better cattle-grazing practices and conservation of freshwater resources.

Supporting indigenous people: The Cofán, a local indigenous community, the Conservancy and Fundación Antisana have been working in the Andean foothills of the Condor Bioserve to protect 37,000 acres of natural habitats through the development of the area's first-ever forest management plan. This plan, named "plan de vida" (plan of life), includes the development of sustainable agriculture practices. Recently, the Global Conservation Fund awarded roughly \$500,000 to the Conservancy, Conservation International and Fundación para la Supervivencia del Pueblo Cofán de Ecuador (Cofán Survival Fund of Ecuador) to strengthen the management of Cofán territory in Cayambe Coca and Cofán Bermejo reserves. Through these funds, the Cofán will be able to self-manage the territory and conserve their traditional culture that supports the conservation of and respect for the rainforest.

A Conservation Audit of the Condor Bioserve Program

During April 17-20th, 2007 a Conservation Audit of the Northern Tropical Andes' Condor Bioserve Program was conducted by an independent team of peer-reviewers¹ to provide the Program Team a period of reflection on its thinking to date and opportunities for improvement.

This report is the output of the Conservation Audit. It is a written elaboration of a *Preliminary Findings and Recommendations & Options* discussion session held with the Program Team during the last day of the Audit.²

The key audiences of this review are (1) the Program Team itself, including key partners (2) Operating Unit, Regional and Senior Management (including the Board of Directors); and (3) the Conservation Audit Program (Part of the Global Conservation Approach Team (GCAT) – a body whose mission is to help TNC adopt, implement, and continually improve our Conservation Approach methodology and tools).

¹The Peer-Review Team for the Condor Program Conservation Audit was: Jon Fisher, Data Manager, TNC – Global Conservation Approach Team; Cristina Lasch, Conservation Area Planning Coordinator, TNC – Mexico Program; James Leslie, Former WWF Peru employee, Yale University; Oscar Maldonado, Senior Conservation Scientist, TNC – Global Conservation Approach Team; Tim Reed, Conservation Audit Manager, TNC - Global Conservation Approach Team; Vinaya Swaminathan, Program Associate, Foundations of Success.

² This session was held April 20th, 2007. Thanks to all those who participated, especially our multiple partners.

Conservation Audits - Background

TNC's work with measures of success has been ongoing for more than a decade; at the project-level, measures are an explicit component of the Conservation Action Planning (CAP) process. Specifically each project should strive to report on three measures: (1) The status of focal biodiversity, (2) The status of critical threats, and (3) The effectiveness of our actions.

Conservation Audits, assessments of the credibility of these measures, were first piloted in The Nature Conservancy in 2001. TNC formalized the Conservation Audit Program in mid-FY04 under the auspices of the Conservation Measures Group (CMG), now part of the GCAT.

A conservation audit is a *peer-review* of the processes (inputs, actions, outputs) and, where applicable, the results (outcomes/impacts) of a Conservation Project, regardless of scale.

The purpose of TNC's Conservation Audit Program is three-fold:

- To improve conservation at both the project level and Conservancy-wide through a process of "quality assurance / quality control" (i.e., ensuring adherence to TNC's Conservation Approach – the Conservation Action Planning (CAP) process)
- To reinforce the credibility (internal and external) and accountability of our conservation work by objectively reviewing project teams' plans, activities, and measures of success
- To facilitate learning across the Conservancy, and throughout the conservation community, by identifying and sharing those best-practices, successes – and failures – which advance the conservation process.

An assessment of this type necessarily compares the project being reviewed to a set of standards or best-practices that have been pre-established. For TNC, these standards are represented by the Conservation Approach specified in Conservation by Design and, more specifically, the Conservation Action Planning (CAP) Process (formerly known as the 5-S Framework). The CAP Process includes a series of 10 steps and associated practices for developing, implementing, and measuring the effectiveness of conservation strategies, and to adapt and learn over time. *The assumption is that projects that utilize a robust CAP approach are more likely to achieve conservation success over time and, importantly, will be able to demonstrate it too.* In short, a TNC Conservation Audit focuses on:

- The Project/Program's overarching goals and design,
- The Development of Strategies and Measures,
- The Implementation of Strategies and Measures; and
- Adaptive Management (i.e., analysis, learning, adapting, and sharing lessons learned).

Purpose of this Review

The purpose of this Conservation Audit was to undertake a constructively critical assessment of the Program to:

- Give the Program Team a chance to reflect on project activities to date with a group of objective outsiders; this includes discussing key issues and potential solutions to them
- Allow the Program Team to learn about other potential approaches for their work, as well as share best-practices that they have developed locally

- Allow the Program Team to build confidence in its assumptions and reasoning
- Build credibility in the minds of senior management and donors and confirm that their investment are worthwhile by specifically reviewing and assessing *planned* measures of success in place on this Project
- Allow the peer-review Audit Team to 1) hone their Conservation Audit methodology; and 2) take lessons learned from this Program out to other Programs in the future
- Overall, improve the process of conservation across the Conservancy and other organizations

This said, it needs to be emphasized that this Conservation Audit is in no way or form a financial audit of the Program/Project nor is it a review of personnel; any discussion of management and/or operational structure occurred only to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure (i.e., “enabling environment”) is in place to allow the Project to achieve its conservation goals.

Target Audiences for Review

1. The Project Team, including key partners
2. Operating Unit and Regional Management (including Conservation/Science Directors)
3. Other Conservancy programs that could learn from the Program’s experience
4. TNC’s Conservation Audit Program and the Conservation Measures Partnership³

Review Methodology

The Condor Bioserve Conservation Audit was conducted during April 17-20th , 2007 by a Review Team made up of six (6) peers, two of whom were non-TNC staff.

The Conservation Audit consisted of four primary activities:

1. Relevant document review (including various Parks in Peril (PiP) Program reports)
2. Group meetings / discussions with Project staff (following the 10 Step CAP checklist)
3. Discussions with key partners
4. Example site visits to gain a perspective about the context of the work

The last day “*Preliminary Findings and Recommendations & Options*” session was held over a three-hour period on April 20th, 2007. This session, presented by the Conservation Audit Team to the Program Team, including many partners, interspersed with discussions around these points, was, in part, designed to allow the Program Team to correct any misinterpretations early and/or suggest further data collection where necessary [Red Text in the tables represents corrections made as a result of this session]. This report is a more detailed written elaboration of the bulleted tables (pasted into each of the ten CAP chapters which follow) which served as the basis for that discussion.

³ The Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) is a consortium of NGOs (including AWF, CI, RARE, TNC, WCS, and WWF, among others) committed to improving the practice of conservation. The partnership serves as an active catalyst for promoting innovation in planning, monitoring, and evaluation within the conservation community. Two key products of the CMP have been the development of Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (a generic version of TNC’s CAP process), and the ongoing development of a universal Conservation Audit methodology.

Report Structure

This report structure follows the core framework and structure of the Conservation Audit itself: the Conservation Action Planning (CAP) Process. Project performance with respect to each of the ten (10) steps of the CAP process is presented in a consistent format. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction about the CAP Step, as well as a listing of the general questions raised and assessed for the Step.

A brief set of notes specific to this section of the CAP Process are then listed, including some of the key recommendations made by the Conservation Audit Team. These notes aim to provide color and detail to the bulleted *Findings and Recommendations* presented in table format, just as they were delivered on the last day of the Conservation Audit during an open discussion between the Peer-Review Team and the Program Team.

The majority of the *Findings*, both positive – termed Notable Achievements/Innovations – and negative – termed Opportunities for Improvement – are listed in table format. These findings lead to *Recommendations & Options* for improvement going forward. The latter are also presented in bulleted and tabular form, just as they were presented to the Program Team, and are addressed to various specific audiences (See table below).

The reference key for audience specific *Recommendations* is as follows:

[P]	Program/Project Staff and Management
[OU]	Operating Unit Management
[R]	Regional Management
[R SCI]	Regional Science staff
[XA]	External Affairs
[MRC]	TNC's International Marketing Resource Center
[EXEC]	TNC Senior Executive Management
[TNC]	TNC-wide learning
[CMG / GCAT]	Conservation Measures Group / Global Cons. Approach Team

Unless otherwise clarified, the term Program refers to TNC's Condor Bioserve Program, which includes the extensive collaborative group which has formed since the Program began.

In the upper right corner of each Chapter's CAP Step Table, the reader will see a set of numbers. Though eventually TNC's Conservation Audit Protocol will utilize a more systematic approach to assessing adherence to these Steps, our current method is to merely discuss the quality of adherence and mark the "rating" that most resonated with the "Peer-Review" Team. These are not grades and they are not used to compare one project to another. Rather each Project team should use these "scores" to guide improvement over time. The "Self-Assessment Tool" utilized to derive these scores is found in the Appendix. It should be noted in this case, that often multiple rating numbers are highlighted, thus often capturing the Review Team's concern about the difference, at times, between application of the given Step in the "letter of the law" versus the "spirit of the law"; that is to say, while the Step might have been completely in a very detailed way, it might not have served the purpose intended by helping inform subsequent Steps.

For further information about this, or other Conservation Audits, please contact Tim Reed, TNC's Conservation Audit Manager, at Treed@TNC.org. Further information can be found online at: http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/Conservation_Audit.

A. PROJECT DEFINITION

Defining the project scope, the ultimate goal, and the team that will plan and implement the project is the important starting point for any conservation project.

1. Identifying the People Involved in the Project

This step asks you to identify your most valuable resource – the people who will be involved in designing and implementing your project. The three basic practices associated with identifying the people involved in the project include: (1) Selecting the core project team, (2) Identifying other team members, including “core” partners and advisors, as well as “extended” team-members; and (3) Identifying a coach/facilitator (as necessary to help apply the approach).

Specific questions that this step answers include:

“Who will design your project?”

“Who will be responsible for ensuring the plan goes forward?”

“Who can give you advice?”

“Who will help you through this process?”

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

The Project Team has developed effective relationships between the Team Leader (TNC) and the partners. The Conservation Audit Team recognized that rarely has it seen such a high level of partner engagement as it has in this project; this was evident from the excellent partner turnout during the Conservation Audit itself. Furthermore, the partners are not restricted to participating in only implementation but instead appear to actively engage in project planning, visioning, and monitoring and evaluation.

The strength of the relationships within the Project Team extends to the quality of engagement with local stakeholders. Many of the partners appear to play a strategic role in the project because of their capacity to connect with local resource users. The Fundacion Antisana and Fundacion Sobrevivencia Cofan are just two examples of local partners who appear to reflect the interests and needs of the local populations.

With respect to project coordination and leadership, the Project Team has appeared to effectively maintain continuity of both action and strategy even while transitioning between different Team Coordinators within TNC. Again, as an example, the original project manager participated actively all week (and collaborated easily with current management), even though she is now responsible for other TNC activities outside of Condor. This capacity demonstrates the strong institutional memory of the Project Team which enables adaptive management as well as the application of lessons learned for future projects.

In terms of team composition, the Project Team recognized gaps in expertise and attended to them as needed. However, the ability to fill gaps was likely not as effective as possible because the roles and responsibilities of Team members were not always well defined. Furthermore, partner selection appeared to be based on geographic location and expertise instead of on thematic expertise (this potential concern was raised by the Collaboration itself). As a result, there is currently some overlap of technical expertise among the partners which creates potential gaps in other technical areas. In addition, because partners are closely linked with geographic

location, there are apparent geographic gaps at the landscape scale. An example is the lack of involvement of GTZ and consequently lack of action in the Sumaco Biosphere Reserve.

As the Project Team (referred to as the Condor Bioreserve Consortium or just ‘Consortium’ with respect to future activities) moves into the next phase of conservation efforts for the Condor Bioreserve, it should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of its members. One suggestion is that this be made explicit in a document (such as a Charter) that is then shared with all relevant parties. The Condor Bioreserve Consortium should also take actions to reduce redundancy and thus improve efficiency; this is particularly pertinent as funding is a recognized limitation. As a potential efficiency gain, the Consortium should consider transitioning from a geographical to thematic focus. Furthermore, as part of an adaptive management process, it should regularly assess necessary capacities and geographical scope as the threats and opportunities on the ground evolve.

The specific findings and recommendations are now presented in a table and in bullet format as they were in the *Preliminary Findings and Recommendations* report:

1. Identify People Involved in the Project	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of core project team members and assignment of roles ▪ Identification of other planning team member and advisors as needed ▪ Identification of a process leader (as needed) 				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Extremely strong partner engagement (Program is a true joint effort; one of the best known) + Strong relationship (based on trust) between the Project Team and other stakeholders (i.e. community groups / municipalities) + Excellent transition/continuity of project responsibilities (to diff project managers) over time + Project Team recognizes gaps; Have brought in advisors as necessary + BRC Consortium represents a positive future vision / orientation 				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Roles/Responsibilities between partners not always perfectly clear (some coordination issues) – Partners (apparently) selected by geographical location; currently have <i>some</i> duplicate/overlap of technical abilities / administration (Key question: what is the right level of overlap without duplication/inefficiency?) – Some participation gaps in current partner group represented by BRC Consortium; e.g. GTZ – Future leadership of BRC Consortium unclear (though concept and need has been discussed) 				
<i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Clearly define roles/responsibilities of Project Team going forward; perhaps in a Project Charter type document [P] → BRC Consortium should emphasize efficiency as it grows: e.g. Transition from geographical focus to thematic focus [P] → (As strategy evolves) Regularly assess necessary capacities and geographical scope [P] 				

2. Defining the Project Scope & Focal Conservation Targets [5S = Systems]

With this step you define the extent of your project and select the specific species and natural systems that your project will focus on as being representative of the overall biodiversity of your project site. This step helps your project team come to consensus on the overall goal and scale of the project and your ultimate measures of success. Specific questions that this step answers include:

“Where is your project?”

“What are you trying to conserve or restore?”

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

The scope of the Condor Bioreserve is ambitious; it encompasses roughly 2.4 million hectares and seven protected areas, as well as privately owned buffer zones. Given the large size of the Project and diverse nature of local partners working on it, the Peer-Review Audit Team was extremely impressed that each local area partner truly thought of themselves as part of the whole and understood how they fit in. For example, a map of the entire Bioreserve seems to be in use throughout, rather than each protected area using a map that only applied locally. Mapping in general is a strong point of this project; they have a number of maps which effectively convey information and help to define the scope. There also seemed to be considerable interest from the partners in working together on the big picture. This is likely in part because the Bioreserve was well defined along ecological criteria rather than political boundaries, which enhances the need to work together to ensure effective management of the area.

On the other hand, one problem with the scope is that while it is very well understood internally, the Bioreserve has no legal status and is not legally recognized outside of TNC and our local partners, in other words with the Ministry of Environment. The vision statement also will likely need to be reworked to effectively convey the future concept of the Bioreserve. The current vision is partially phrased in a way that would better be captured as an objective (“By 2007, achieve an integral management of four protected areas in the Condor Bioreserve ensuring conservation of biodiversity”), and the rest of the vision is somewhat generic (e.g. “reducing threats to conservation targets” and “making sure that partners and key stakeholders are strengthened in their capacity of implementation of conservation strategies” should apply at any conservation site). In order to effectively manage the area as a functional landscape, it will be important to do a better job of communicating the concept/vision of the Condor Bioreserve externally (e.g. to the government, private landholders, and the public). Spreading awareness about the Bioreserve as a unique entity will be especially important once the Parks in Peril (PiP) funding ends; with less money available the Project Team will have to rely more on communicating the value of the Bioreserve in order to inspire others to support working at that scale.

The Project Team did an excellent job of limiting themselves to eight targets for such a large area, and provided thorough documentation on why these eight targets were chosen. They include both coarse and fine-filter targets, and in most cases each target should also act as a proxy for other species and systems of interest. They also had maps showing the location of the targets, which is extremely helpful. From a planning perspective, this was one of the most detailed and carefully written CAP plans that the Conservation Audit Team (and Program) has seen.

Unfortunately, in practice the original planning around targets has not been fully used. For example, of the eight targets chosen, the Project Team is actively focusing on only three of them. The Team believes that protecting these three should also conserve the remaining targets, but the evidence for this has not been effectively documented or communicated. For example, the Project Team has assumed that by abating threats to the Páramo, the freshwater targets (river otter and amphibians) will be effectively conserved as well. This may be true, but it also may

not; without evidence it cannot be assumed. The Audit Team was also unclear as to why the three “focused-on” targets in particular were chosen as special priorities.

The Peer-Reviewers have three recommendations for this basic practice Step: (1), and most importantly, TNC itself (The Region) will need to define how the work being done at the Bioreserve will fit into new organizational directions defined by the 2015 goal. It is our hope that despite the fact that protected areas in the Montane Grasslands and Shrublands Major Habitat Type is overrepresented in South America (in “Protected Areas”), that the organization will move into “maintenance mode” rather than abandoning the Bioreserve completely. (2) The target list should be revisited, focusing on biodiversity rather than areas. Targets currently listed which will not actively be worked with should be removed or nested under other targets as appropriate in the CAP. Finally, (3) a simple, but inspiring vision statement should be created by the Consortium to aid in internal consistency and external communication efforts.

The Findings and Recommendations as originally presented in bulleted format follow:

2. Define Project Scope & Focal Conservation Targets (5S = Systems)	1	2	3	4
▪ Text description and basic map of project area or scope				
▪ Statement of the overall vision of the project				
▪ Selection of focal conservation targets and explanation of why selected				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Scope is well defined and geographically understood; and was based on ecological criteria + Outstanding variety of maps of project area, (including location of targets, etc.) + Documentation of targets (in CAP workbook) is extremely detailed + Good mix of coarse and fine filter targets (e.g. systems and species) 				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Vision statement was both too generic (i.e. could be applied to any other site) and too complex – Rationale for decisions for targets not completely clear (and many targets have not been “acted upon”; e.g. are the river otter and amphibians nested into “aquatic”?) – Condor Bioreserve “scope” and value is potentially primarily internal, rather than externally recognized [This ties into an external communication need (Step 10)] 				
<i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ TNC needs to be clear about how BRC “scope” fits into the future (2015 Goal – MHT) [OU, Regional Science, GCAT] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any “effective conservation” already achieved needs to be maintained, not abandoned → Re-visit the target list (and ensure a focus on biodiversity targets, not just “areas”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ And remove (and/or nest) those that are not going to be a focal target → Create a simple, but visionary and inspiring “vision statement” (which can then be used for external communication) 				

B. DEVELOPING CONSERVATION STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

Historically, the most common (and challenging) part of Conservancy Conservation Projects is the development of strategies. The emphasis in the most recent versions of Conservation Action Planning (CAP), however, is to build into this the *simultaneous* process of identifying the appropriate indicators that will allow project management to assess the effectiveness of their strategic actions. Such planned feedback mechanisms have been a missing ingredient in most conservation projects (not just within TNC), but these are essential if we are to adequately and efficiently manage our work. The minimum set of CAP tasks listed in Steps 3 through 7 allow us to do just this if followed correctly.

3. Assessing Viability of Focal Conservation Targets [5S = Systems]

This step asks you to first look carefully at each of your focal targets to determine how to measure its “health” over time. Next, to identify how the target is doing today and what a “healthy state” might look like. This step is the key to knowing which of your targets are most in need of immediate attention and for measuring success over time. Specific questions that this step answers include:

“How do you define ‘health’ for each of your targets?”

“What is the current status of each of your targets?”

“What is your desired status for each of your targets?”

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

The Project Team has done an extremely thorough viability assessment. Each target has a good, wide mix of key ecological attributes in different categories of size, condition and landscape context, and at least one indicator has been identified for each attribute. In addition, the Project Team has managed to determine viability thresholds for all key ecological attributes, thus providing an extremely detailed and complete point of reference for managing biodiversity health. While this exercise provided the Team with a better understanding of ecological processes and functions, they mentioned that in the future they would be more efficient, having less detail and not necessarily dedicating as much time and effort. While we understand that valuable insight (i.e. key lesson learned – which itself is good), the Peer-Review Team also views the fact that the Project originally did a very thorough job of assessing the “universe” of possibility as a positive. The key now is to use that effort, over time, to iterate and guide the management of the Project’s work.

The Conservation Audit Team found some aspects of the viability assessment which could be improved, including: 1) reassessing viability ranks for current and future conditions with a temporary reference; 2) updating geographic information on target occurrences (ideally showing *good & very good*, and *fair* occurrences); 3) showing a more explicit link between objectives & strategies and target viability; and 4) questioning assumptions about threat mitigation strategies to restore target viability.

If the Project team decides to review the Project’s viability status (for example through a 1-2 week rapid CAP update process with a 6-8 person core team), the Audit Team recommends to record the date for the current status (as a baseline) and the date by which the future expected

status can be achieved. These time references will enable the Project Team to look beyond the timeframe of a specific project or funding source, such as PiP. In conjunction with the detailed threshold information (which already exists), the Project Team would know what change needs to be achieved, and by when, to develop strategies and make the necessary adjustments within a mid- to long-term management perspective.

If viability information is updated for the Project, the Audit Team strongly encourages the Project team to update geographic information on where viable target expressions are located (ideally showing good & very good, and fair occurrences, bearing in mind key attributes when ranking each occurrence). This information will allow the Project Team to know what needs to be done to reestablish viable conditions, by when and where on the ground we should be able to find the evidence of our efforts.

The very detailed viability information (which tells us exactly what changes need to be evidenced by an ecological attribute to bring it to a viable status) is not explicitly being incorporated into the objectives or strategies. It could be that the Project Team is linking this information to management decisions mostly through biodiversity status monitoring, but this was not evident to the Audit Team. This is problematic as the viability of biodiversity is ultimately our mission – despite a potential shift towards a sustainable development focus in the BRC Consortium, ensure that the Project Team doesn’t lose focus on this biodiversity (and its status).

For instance, four conservation targets were ranked as fair, which means that specific attributes are out of balance and require management efforts to establish acceptable conditions. While the Project Team established a link in the strategy section of the CAP workbook between several strategies and specific ecological attributes, those strategies seem to focus more on threat abatement than on restoring conditions which are out of balance. It is possible that some attributes could recuperate if the sources of stress are no longer active, but the Peer-Review Team thinks that it would be valuable to re-examine the management hypotheses which state that certain attributes will experience improvements – in other words, to “test management assumptions”. This could be done through a “Results Chains” exercise for priority strategies, to compare if these results ultimately change the situation of attributes ranked as fair to the conditions described by experts as good. This exercise could include attributes ranked as good, which need to be maintained in that condition.

The topic as discussed on the last day of the Conservation Audit are presented in the bullets below:

3. Assess Viability of Focal Conservation Targets (5S = Systems)	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of at least one Key Ecological Attribute (KEA) and Indicator for each focal target 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assumption as to what constitutes a viable level (range) for each KEA 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determination of current and desired status of each KEA 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documentation of viability assessments and potential research needs 				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Outstanding example of this CAP Step – very detailed (good use of KEAs) + Have learned from the experience of doing a detailed CAP; now understand how to be more efficient with the process/tool (this is adaptive management if applied) 				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The very detailed viability work appears theoretical (is this why it has not been applied? i.e. it seems like there is not a clear link between the strategies and the viability thresholds) – A number of targets with Fair condition; but (restoration of) these have not been a focus 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Date of current status doesn't exist so there is no point of reference to maintain or improve the situation (not a good baseline); Is the "current viability" the reality, or is it out-dated?
<p><i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The viability of biodiversity is ultimately our mission – despite a potential shift towards a sustainable development focus in the BRC Consortium, ensure that the Project Team doesn't lose focus on this biodiversity (and its status) → Recommend a rapid re-assessment of "current" and desired viability

4. Identifying Critical Threats [5S = Stresses & Sources of Stress]

This step helps you to identify the various factors that immediately affect your project's focal targets and then prioritize them so that you can focus your conservation actions on the most critical threats. Specific questions that this step answers include:

- "What threats are affecting the status of our targets?"*
- "Which threats are more of a problem?"*

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

Both stresses and sources of stress were identified and ranked for the Project area. There seems to be agreement among key partners on the critical threats that need to be addressed, and in general, strategies respond to key threats. The Project Team has also generated some cartographic support materials which recognize that the extent and intensity of threats varies across the landscape, which provides useful management support.

The Conservation Audit Team found some aspects of the threats assessment which could be improved, including: 1) conducting a rapid reassessment for current and potential threats; 2) documenting technical justifications and updating geographic information on areas where critical threats originate and advance; and 3) developing "Results Chains" to show a more explicit link between strategies and the expected effects in reducing threats at an appropriate scale.

The Audit Team's first recommendation is a revision of stresses and sources, which could be done through a rapid approach in 1-2 days with a small core team. During this exercise, the Project Team is encouraged to include all possible threats regardless of feasibility for implementation (e.g. climate change; incompatible policies; land tenure, etc.). Updating threat information on maps is also strongly recommended.

From the information provided, the Audit Team was unable to determine if documentation exists on how threats were ranked. Both the technical documentation on threat ranks, as well as mapping areas where critical threats originate, where they are more intense or the areas where threats advance can be important management resources. By overlaying mapped information on viable target occurrences and areas where critical threats originate or where they are more pervasive, the Project Team could focus management and monitoring efforts better.

While most strategies respond to critical threats, a revision of causal chains, or "Results Chains", could help the Project Team establish more explicit links between strategies, and expected changes in threat mitigation, considering both the geographic and temporal scope, and even linking expected changes to viability status. Since several strategies have been implemented for some years, these results chains could also link measures information and field observations, to document what has worked and what needs to be adapted.

The bulleted notes from the original Conservation Audit preliminary feedback session follow:

4. Identify Critical Threats (5S = Stresses & Sources of Stress)	1	2	3	4
▪ Identification and rating of stresses affecting each focal target				
▪ Identification and rating of sources of stress for each focal target				
▪ Determination of critical threats				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
+ Very comprehensive overview of potential threats, with linkages made to targets and strategies				
+ Recognition that threats vary across the landscape by type and/or intensity				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
– [Unclear to the audit team if the threat documentation is only in the Spanish version of the workbook]				
– Unclear (to the audit team) how threats were prioritized / ranked				
– Unclear if geographic representation of critical threats has been conducted				
– Apparent <i>initial</i> assumptions about feasibility of implementation (with current capacities) limited identification and possibly biased ranking of threats				
<i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i>				
⇒ Conduct a (rapid) re-assessment of threats to ensure that all critical threats have been identified and prioritized				
○ During re-assessment, be sure to map location of sources of stress				
→ Include all possible threats regardless of feasibility for implementation (e.g. climate change; incompatible policies; land tenure)				

5. Conduct Situation Analysis

This step asks you to describe your current understanding of your project situation – both the biological issues and the human context in which your project occurs. This step is not meant to be an unbounded analysis, but instead probes the root causes of your critical threats and degraded targets to bring explicit attention/consideration to causal factors, key actors, and opportunities for successful action. Specific questions that this step answers include:

“What factors positively & negatively affect our targets?”

“Who are the key stakeholders linked to each of these factors?”

“What are the hypothesized causal links of all these factors to the targets?”

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

During the Conservation Audit, the Peer-Review Team was not provided a (set of) situation diagram(s) to review and further discussion revealed that there is not one such document for the whole project. That said, it is clear that the Project Team’s intuitive understanding of the situation is impressive. Particularly, Team members show a good understanding of the context in which the Condor Bioserve exists and operates; and respective partners appear to have very good understanding of the specific areas within which they work. Conversations between members of the Peer-Review Team and Project Team as well as detailed presentations from TNC staff provided a clear picture of this site and the primary factors “at play”. The Project Team described partial models that had been developed, and examples of these were shared with the Peer-Review Team after the site visit. Below these are discussed: The Project Team’s initial conceptual model and results chains offered a more explicit account of the indirect and direct threats that affect their conservation targets.

These conceptual models and “Results Chains”, which were developed in December 2004, varied in complexity and completeness. Some chains did an excellent job of depicting the

Project site and approximating relative impacts of critical threats. Others were less detailed and did not clearly define critical factors as effective points of intervention. Identifying such key points in a causal chain can provide the Project Team with a focal point on which to develop and refine their strategies.

Development of conceptual models and “Results Chains” are a best practice in conservation, and as such, the Project Team should capitalize on the all the work they have done to date by updating and using these documents more frequently, both as management tools and communication devices to share concepts with multiple stakeholders across this complex area. As part of the update, the Project Team should take into account the latest threats assessment, and include three main topics that were mentioned throughout the Conservation Audit, yet were not highlighted in the 2004 situation analysis. These topics (as examples only, for surely there might be others of equal importance) were global climate change, incompatible government programs / policies, and land-tenure issues.

While the situation analysis should include these important threats, it should not consist of only threat-based causal chains. The Project Team should also identify and incorporate potential opportunities within the framework of the situation analysis. Finally, aggregating the separate causal chains into a simplified, summary version would also be a concise way to describe the context of the project and the reasoning behind the Project Team’s interventions. This could serve as a key communication tool for sharing information about the BRC, both internally and externally.

5. Conduct Situation Analysis	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List indirect threats/opportunities and associated stakeholders behind all critical threats and degraded KEAs ▪ A “picture” (narrative or a diagram) of hypothesized linkages between indirect threats, critical threats and focal targets 				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Good (implicit) understanding of factors and stakeholders and the relationships between them + Have developed some results chains (which is a best practice) 				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Apparent lack of documented comprehensive situation analysis for the entire project (for <i>critical</i> threats and targets) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Without an understanding of the most effective point(s) in the chain of causation, it is difficult to define and prioritize appropriate strategies ○ A clear, simple documentation of the situation analysis can be a very useful communication tool 				
<i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Update and aggregate (where appropriate) situation analyses for critical threats and targets (does not have to be a single-page model) [P] → With updated threats assessment, be sure to consider three topics which came up regularly during our discussions this week: Global climate change, incompatible gov’t programs/policies, and land-tenure issues [P] → Do not bias situation analysis by focusing only on threat-based causal chains (without considering scale) and thus ignoring potential opportunities [P] 				

6. Developing Strategies (Objectives & Actions) [5S = Strategies]

This step asks you to specifically and measurably describe what success looks like and to develop the specific actions you and your partners will undertake to achieve it. In particular, you

want to try to find the actions that will enable you to get the most impact for the resources you have. Specific questions that this step answers include:

“What do we need to accomplish?”

“What is the most effective way to achieve these results?”

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

The Conservation Audit Team found that the Project’s strategies were identified and developed in a very consistent and robust way (some of them even were based on “Result Chains”). The further adaptation of the strategies into the Logic-Framework was considered by the Peer-Review Team as an excellent adaptation of the CAP process (and a great complement to the workbook), and which provided a more practical (and locally acceptable) management tool as well as a helpful instrument for tracking project progress towards very specific objectives. The objectives themselves are mostly well written and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time-bound). There is a good, intuitive, high-level linkage between the strategies and the general threats facing focal conservation targets.

Some strategy-related aspects of the Condor Project could be improved. For instance, the Project Team conducted a rich viability assessment that was not fully used to drive strategic objectives. It is not clear, for example, whether all targets will be covered. The Peer-Review Audit Team believes that the development of most strategies was biased by the PiP priorities and time-frame, so long-term objectives that would allow addressing the viability of targets ranked as “fair” were not considered in the project. Similarly, some focal issues – as examples only: Climate Change, Policy and Land-Tenure – were not totally addressed or addressed at all in the (current) set of strategies, either because results would be noticeable beyond the PiP time-frame, or because the Project Team believed that it was lacking capacity for implementing those strategies in earlier phases of the Project. As discussed previously, the use of a situation analysis for developing strategies is not clear or well documented.

In order to improve the quality of strategy development (and iteration/adaptation) in the next phase of the project (post-PiP), the Audit Team recommends:

Conducting new rapid analyses of viability, threats and situation, so that strategic objectives and strategic actions can be re-assessed, updated and prioritized (Are the same threats and strategic response to them still relevant?). It is encouraged to mapping threats (stresses and sources) and strategies scope, as well as linking the situation analysis to critical threats and targets.

In updating strategies, use “Result Chains” so that more specific outcomes (at every step of the casual chain) and results could be envisioned/hypothesized and then tracked/tested.

Assessing, along focal issues, critical geographic areas in which actions are more urgent. The Project area is large, so that the Project Team needs to identify the most critical areas for investment.

Identifying long-term strategic objectives, regardless the current or actual financial source of the Project, and plan accordingly.

Paying particular attention to enabling strategies that may ensure the long term sustainability of the Project. Issues such as long term finance, research program (tied to project needs), and policy need to be addressed.

Additional, specific, findings and recommendations are now presented in a table and in bullet format as they were in the *Preliminary Findings and Recommendations* report:

6. Develop Strategies: Objectives & Actions (5S = Strategies)	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At a minimum, good objectives for all critical threats and degraded Key Ecological Attributes ▪ One or more strategic actions for each conservation objective 				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Have technically followed this Step to an amazing degree (i.e. very SMART objectives) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → And have used the workbook (& ConPro) to its fullest linking strategies to threats and targets + Log Frame tool is an outstanding adaptation (to local needs, for USAID, etc.) and used in conjunction with the CAP workbook + Have developed some results chains (which is a best practice) 				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The rich viability assessment was (apparently) not used to drive objectives (e.g. is a Protected Area strategy alone sufficient to preserve biodiversity? [Our understanding is that PiP funding limited the project to this]) – Objectives were time-bound based on the life of project (PiP), rather than being biologically relevant; so potentially missing mid- and long-term strategies – Unclear if all critical threats have been addressed, and at the appropriate scale, (i.e. appears that many strategic actions have been opportunity based) 				
<i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Post-PiP, with threats re-assessment and project situation analysis update completed, re-assess strategy development → Corridor (“connectivity”) strategy should be relabeled as “buffer” 				

7. Establish Measures [5S = Success]

This step involves deciding how your Project Team will measure your results. This step is needed to help your team see whether its strategies are working as planned and thus whether adjustments will be needed. It is also needed to keep an eye on those targets and threats that you are not acting on at the moment, but may need to consider in the future. Specific questions that this step answers include:

“What is the status of (a) focal biodiversity targets, (b) threats facing them?”

“What do we need to measure to see if we are making progress towards our objectives and whether our actions are making a difference?”

“Are there other targets or threats that we need to pay attention to?”

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

The Condor Project has defined a lot of potential indicators both in the CAP workbook and the log frames they use more actively/regularly, and in general has put a lot of time into thinking about measures. The log frame in particular has been used to help focus on indicators; this tool represents a benchmark. Working with their partner EcoCiencia, they obtained a substantial set of data about these indicators in 2005, and conducted an internal review to see where they had information and where they didn’t. This was documented with each indicator receiving a percentage representing how much progress has been made towards the goal (ranging from 0% to 5,800% of the goal achieved). Overall, this is one of the most measures-focused projects that has been audited to date. As just another representative example, during the first day of the

Conservation Audit, there was substantial discussion of the log frames and indicators – this rarely happens, and should be viewed as a real positive for this Program.

The Project Team also has developed proxy indicators for threats and biodiversity health. While these proxy indicators have limitations, the Team is aware of them and is using them as the best currently available data. In fact, across the board the Team seems to be well aware of the shortcomings of their measures, including missing baselines.

On the other hand, while it’s certainly positive that they are aware of their shortcomings, there remains the fact that these measures are limited and incomplete in most areas. Most importantly, what is missing is a simple set of clear indicators about the Project’s work (e.g. as this is a protected area strategy, change in consolidation over time linked to reduction in threats). There is also a lack of clarity on whether or not there is an ongoing monitoring plan for the indicators; there seems to have been a single snapshot taken in 2005 rather than a plan for monitoring status regularly. It is also not clear how some of the indicators were chosen, and importantly why they almost exclusively focus on activities and outputs rather than outcomes and impacts. This focus makes it easier to measure progress, but these goals unfortunately are less meaningful from a perspective of viability than goals that actually measure the response of critical threats and eventually conservation targets to our strategies. Finally, the Project Team readily admits that there has been a lack of sharing of monitoring information among the partners.

Our key recommendation is that in order to make the measures for the Project useful, they will need to shift from emphasizing activity measures to effectiveness measures (i.e. outcome and impact measures) and creating and implementing a monitoring plan (listing specific indicators, purpose, methodologies, roles and responsibilities, etc). By doing this, the Project Team will actually be able to measure whether or not their activities are having the desired effects (as opposed to simply tracking what has been done without knowing whether or not it worked). They should also create a small set of simple materials that demonstrate these results, which should be useful both for internal review and management, and for communications/outreach with external groups to demonstrate the changes they’re creating.

The measures framework will also need to be simplified and made more practical if it is to be useful (and frankly, implemented to more effect). Given the limited resources of the Project (especially once PiP funding is gone), they will need to streamline the measures process so that it is easy enough to act on; it should serve as a management feedback tool.

Below are the original bulleted *Findings and Recommendations* for this section of the CAP:

7. Establish Measures (5S = Success)	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A list of indicators and methods to track effectiveness of strategic actions ▪ A list of indicators and methods to assess status of targets and threats which are not currently being worked on 				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Very measures focused (one of the best) – have brainstormed a lot of potential indicators (both in the CAP workbook) and the Log Frame [was very impressed that the discussion on the first day focused on measures – this is rare!] + Log Frame tool readily used to focus on indicators + Project Team is aware of short-comings, missing baselines, etc (Have self-assessed what baselines they’ve been missing [mid-term evaluation]) + Vegetation mapping used as proxy indicators for both threat / biodiversity health 				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Measures focus still emphasizes Activities & Outputs rather than Outcomes / Impacts 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not clear how they chose certain indicators - Unclear if the Team has a monitoring/measures plan - (Self-admitted) lack of sharing of monitoring information among the partners - (Recognize that) Vegetation mapping as a proxy to evaluate target viability has limitations
<p><i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Simplify the measures framework (i.e. make more practical) ⇒ Emphasize Effectiveness measures, that is Outcomes / Impact measures, where-ever possible ⇒ Create and implement a monitoring-plan) listing specific indicators, purpose, methodologies, responsibilities, etc. [P] ⇒ Create a small set of simple materials that demonstrate results (for internal management and for out-reach) → Continue to consider socio-economic indicators as program evolves (and link them to other indicators / situation analysis)

C. IMPLEMENTING CONSERVATION STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

Implementation seems straightforward to most project team members but it is not as simple as it appears. Many conservation projects are little more than grand plans that never get put into production. Many others are flurries of activity with poor strategic connections and equally poor assignment of roles and responsibilities; Team members are often unsure of how what they do relates to the larger objectives of the project. This section of the CAP Process aims to assess these important Steps to ensure that all the significant planning gets coordinated into action.

8. Developing Work Plans

This step asks you to take your strategic actions and monitoring indicators and develop specific plans for doing this work. Specific questions that this step answers include:

“What do we specifically need to do?”

“Who will be responsible for each task?”

“What resources do we need?”

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

The Project Team’s workplan had a staggering level of detail and precision. Adherence to the PiP workplan structure proved useful for organizing this complex planning document. Additionally, the log frames developed by the Project Team supported their workplans by integrating (and highlighting) objectives and indicators.

In light of the upcoming close of PiP funding in June of this year, the Project Team presented some post-PiP potential funding strategies. These financial plans benefited from the positivism and forward thinking of the Project Team. While post-PiP financial planning is clearly underway, documentation of post-PiP workplans were not yet well developed. The Project Team should apply the same rigorous planning structure to developing work plans for the entire BRC Consortium, including activities and the roles and responsibilities of partner organizations, for the future of BRC after the end of PiP.

Because many of the recommendations from previous sections include updating various components of the strategic plan, the workplan should also be adjusted as necessary. Specifically, the Project Team must regularly assess the capacity of its Team members and partners, as well as the geographic scope of the BRC in order to effectively apply and adapt any new strategies.

The amount of time and effort put into the PiP workplans was very impressive, but a similar document detailing the BRC plans for monitoring and evaluation was absent. The Project Team should invest some time in developing a complete monitoring plan, in which all indicators are listed with explicit details (i.e. the who, what, when, where, and how) on the collection and evaluation of the monitoring data. This will enable the Project Team to systematically monitor and evaluate their progress towards their objectives and eventual vision.

Bullets as identified and discussed with the Project Team follow:

8. Develop Work Plans	1	2	3	4
▪ Lists of major action steps and monitoring tasks				
▪ Assignments of each step or task to specific individual(s)				
▪ Brief summary of project capacity and a rough project budget				
▪ If necessary, objectives and strategic actions for obtaining sufficient project resources				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
+ PiP structure provided a fantastic workplan structure				
+ Log Frame provided excellent detail for objectives and indicators in a language familiar to Project Team members				
+ Examples of Post-Pip financial planning “workplans” are very positive and forward-thinking				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
– As PiP is now ending, it’s not perfectly clear that the workplan (including roles) for future activity is well developed				
<i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i>				
→ Develop the future (BRC Consortium) workplan with the same amount of rigor that the PiP work-planning effort used [P]				
→ (As new Strategies are developed) Regularly assess necessary capacities and geographical scope [P]				
→ Create a document (i.e. a monitoring-plan) listing specific indicators, purpose, methodologies, responsibilities, etc. [P]				

9. Implementing (Actions and Measures [5S = Success])

Ok, so now you have your action and monitoring plans. But they will not do any good sitting on the shelf – the challenge here is to implement them to the best of your ability. Although this is the most important step in the whole CAP process, the only requirement is:

- **Put your plans into action** – Do the work that you have set out for yourself. Expected products include:
 - Action!
 - Monitoring!

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

In terms of **actions**, the Conservation Audit Team recognized that the Condor Bioserve Team (TNC and partners) did a good work in implementing a significant amount of fundamental action. Among these achievements, the strengthening of area management and (presumed) decrease of threat level in at least three reserves (Cofán Bermejo, Cayambe-Coca and Antisana) must be highlighted. The participatory approach (i.e. park guards program with support of communities, local authorities and private sector), as well as the involvement of key stakeholders (such as private owners) and their credibility (within and outside the Project Team) may represent a valuable opportunity for sustaining both the results and the enabling environment for implementation over the long term, particularly after the PiP project is completed. As mentioned by partners, the institutional commitment has been a key factor for implementing the Project, and will be especially critical for its future as well. Additionally, some key actions have had an important leveraging, triggering effect (involvement of private owners, for instance), and/or had resulted in sharing management costs (park guards) or in financially sustainable activities (e.g. FONAG - the Water Fund).

There were, however, three constraints that, if overcome, could lead to optimal results (and may enhance the further implementation): 1) Implementation did not include other relevant, strong

stakeholders that were working in a considerable portion of the Project area (GTZ) under the assumption that “they were already doing a work there.” Thus, while the Project did consider a landscape approach, it did overlook important sectors within the Project area (Sumaco Reserve), 2) The action implementation focused on what could be counted under the PiP project time frame, and did not consider addressing long-term strategies, 3) Most of the actions implemented were limited to actual capacities at the moment. Because some needed capacities were not available, key strategies were not considered for implementation.

As for *measures*, the Audit Team was positively surprised about the level of detail that the Project Team had given to identifying indicators for each one of their actions. Moreover, the Project Team attempted to report the progress of their actions accordingly. The Project’s Logic-Framework, required by PiP and resulting from a CAP adaptation, provided a good structure to the Team for keeping track of their actions results and achievements. Nevertheless, the Audit Team also noticed that while the Project did an excellent work in developing indicators for reporting to PiP, many of these indicators were limited to the life-time of the PiP project, overlooking future, long-term results and related indicators needed for reporting actual changes in target’s viability. Similarly, many actions that had resulted in successful achievements (i.e., private owners involvement, water fund, park guards) must to be tied to ultimate impacts in biodiversity conservation in order align them with the monitoring of targets and threats status. Both, the Conservation Audit Team and the Project Team had identified the need of emphasizing actions aimed to track the effectiveness of strategies towards their ultimate “outcomes” and “impacts” (not only Activities and medium term “Outputs”), as well as strengthening applied research strategy to the needs of tracking long term changes and results in biodiversity and threat statuses. Finally, as the Project will increase its approach in sustainable development, socio-economic indicators should be included as well.

In sum, the Peer-Review Conservation Audit Team recommends for further implementation:

While the Conservation Audit Team members applaud the partner’s engagement and team spirit that has allowed the Project to get to make progress towards objectives, they also encourage the current project partners (now assembled in a Consortium) to have a more inclusive approach in order to also involve stakeholders that also play a relevant role in conservation actions within the Project area.

Action implementation needs also to incorporate capacity building in thematic areas where there is not existing capacity available, but is needed in order to address long term or pervasive threats. Policy, land tenure and climate change seem to be areas to be develop in further implementation. The selection criteria of the most urgent strategies to be implemented, and the way they are sequenced need to be documented.

While already considered, a long-term financial strategy needs to be put in place in order to ensure the implementation of the most critical strategies. The Audit Team suggests conducting a scenario-planning analysis (i.e. best-case, worst-case) that would allow the Project Team to foresee different financial situations vis-à-vis the project, and to plan accordingly.

In order to improve the measures component of the Project, the Audit Team recommends developing a more rigorous monitoring plan to which it is accountable, which emphasizes specific indicators, purpose, methodologies and, importantly responsibilities. Such a plan needs to foresee over the long term (i.e. outcomes, and ultimate impacts), particularly for targets and threats whose changes need such a time frame to be noticeable, and may be included as part of

the applied research strategy. Adding socio-economic indicators, as appropriate, is much encouraged.

9. Implement	1	2	3	4
▪ Actions!				
▪ Measures!				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Key actions are being / have been implemented (by a wide-range of partners) + Some actions were high-leverage and have become self-sustaining (e.g. FONAG) + Extremely strong partner engagement (Program is a true joint effort; one of the best witnessed) [and motivation to continue Post-PiP is positive] + Strong relationship (based on trust) between the Project Team and other stakeholders (i.e. community groups / municipalities) 				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Only some of the monitoring planned is actually being done – Unclear how certain activities were prioritized, or how well linked they were to threat / target status / situation analysis – PiP has apparently biased the action steps taken to date (e.g. time-frame, certain activities ‘blocked’) 				
<i>Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Create a document (i.e. a monitoring-plan) listing specific indicators, purpose, methodologies, responsibilities, etc. [P] ⇒ Emphasize (implementation of) Effectiveness measures, that is, Outcomes / Impact measures, wherever possible [P, CMG] → Ensure funding for critical strategies (if they really are critical) [P, \$] 				

D. CLOSING THE CYCLE

One of the key missing ingredients in conservation work to date (across the conservation community) is a true adaptive management process. In most cases, this is because adequate feedback mechanisms (i.e., measures systems) have not been put into place to allow practitioners and management to really assess their progress and make appropriate, educated adjustments. There are a large number of projects that collect a significant amount of monitoring data but simply never analyze it. And even those that do invest in strong analysis often don't communicate and share the results broadly enough to make the best use of their findings. This section of the CAP Process describes and defines the key tasks that build in these important features into a conservation project. Ultimately, "evidence-based" Conservation, and true adaptive management, is the objective for all of our work.

10. Analyze, Learn, Adapt & Share

This step first asks you to systematically take the time to evaluate the actions you have implemented, to update and refine your knowledge of your targets, and to review the results available from your monitoring data. This reflection will provide insight on how your actions are working, what may need to change, and what to emphasize next. This step then asks you to document what you have learned and to share it with other people so they can benefit from your successes and failures. Specific questions that this step answers include:

"What are our monitoring data telling us about our project?"

"What should we be doing differently?"

"How will we capture what we have learned?"

"How can we make sure other people benefit from what we have learned?"

More specific questions the Conservation Audit Team considered were:

"Are the types of data you are collecting providing meaningful information to inform viability and threat status of conservation targets?"

"Did you use the data to make adjustments to your understanding of target viability and threat status?"

"Was data used to make adjustments to objectives, strategic actions, and work plans?"

"Have you identified your key partners and audiences and developed appropriate strategies and products with which to communicate with them?"

Conservation Audit Findings and Recommendations

In general, the Project is well focused on improvement and learning. This is most evident possibly in the Project Team's request for the Conservation Audit as well as the revision of the planning documents in 2003 and a mid-term evaluation in 2005. In other words, this is a Team that continually strives to improve its work.

More specifically, the Project Team has also accumulated a series of PiP evaluations that have documented lessons learned throughout the history of the Project. The PiP Consolidation scorecards themselves also offer a mechanism to analyze progress made in protected area management over time, although a simple, explicit demonstration of this analysis does not appear to have occurred to date (or at least was not showcased during the Conservation Audit).

The Project also benefits from a wide-range of “promotional” materials that facilitate communication about the Project’s objectives, activities and successes.

Nevertheless, there is room for improvement in knowledge management. Institutional memory has benefited from the systematization of more recent experiences but is at risk from the lack of documentation about the earlier years of the Project. Furthermore, while individual members of the Project Team collect information related to the Project, best practices and experiences are not necessarily disseminated and shared effectively among the team members and to other stakeholders; systematizing this (in some way) would be important given the large number of partners/stakeholders involved.

Another really important factor is that the Project Team has not updated the CAP (threat status, viability, etc.) since it was completed during the original planning of the Project. Monitoring data does not appear to regularly feed an evolving understanding of the Project’s context nor underlie strategic changes to activities (or even objectives). In other words, while adaptive management may be happening, the Team is not being explicit about it, and using the CAP workbook as a tool for management over time. CAP as a philosophy needs to be viewed as a dynamic process of continual iteration.

As the Consortium moves forward with its conservation efforts, it should consider rapidly updating the key CAP Steps (targets, viability, threats, situation analysis). This could be considered as a new baseline moving forward that should be regularly compared to monitoring data as it is collected. With the support of synthesized monitoring data, the Consortium should conduct Post-PiP scenario planning to facilitate the adaptability and readiness of the project to meet an ever-evolving context. Though the closure of the Parks in Peril program is a loss, it is also an opportunity to focus on the future of the area.

In order to capitalize on lessons learned both in and outside the scope of the Project, the Consortium should improve internal and external communications mechanisms. For example, the Project has developed robust examples of conservation mechanisms (such as FONAG - the Water Fund) that should be disseminated and leveraged at a National or even Regional system level. Simple communications materials should be developed to highlight key results’ specific impacts on biodiversity and target status.

10. Analyze, Reflect, Adapt & Share	1	2	3	4
▪ Appropriate (and scheduled) analysis of data				
▪ Updated viability and threat assessments				
▪ Modifications to objectives, strategic actions, and work plans (as warranted)				
▪ Regular document updates				
▪ Identification of key audiences and appropriate communication products for each				
<i>Findings: Positive – Innovations / Best-Practices</i>				
+ Program is focused on improvement and learning (e.g. have undergone many evaluations, and volunteered for this Conservation Audit)				
+ Have a good set of PiP evaluations which recorded lessons learned (and challenges faced)				
+ Pip Consolidation scorecards could serve as excellent record of successes (progress) over time				
+ Have a number of brochure-type documents				
<i>Findings: Opportunities for Improvement</i>				
– Have not updated the CAP (threat status, viability), even though a fair amount of strategic action has taken place				
– Pip Consolidation scorecards can serve as excellent record of successes (progress) over time; but it doesn’t appear that the Project uses these in this way				

Recommendations: [⇒ High Priority → Medium Priority - Low Priority]

- ⇒ (As a Team, perhaps even a workshop) Conduct Post-Pip scenario planning (what is worst case, what is best case?)
- ⇒ In summary, use the ending of PiP to “rapidly” update the key CAP Steps (Targets, viability, threats, Situation Analysis – especially including social factors) to better prepare for Post PiP Strategy development, implementation and success measurement [P]
- ⇒ Pip Consolidation scorecards should serve as excellent record of successes (progress) over time and as a communication [P]
- Improved external communications documents (e.g. Executive Summary, Vision, Out-reach materials for different audiences, comic-book) [P, MRC-SA]
- Create a small set of simple materials that demonstrate results (for internal management and for out-reach) [P, CMG]
- Use PiP evaluations to inform strategy revision (see Step 6) [P, PiP]
- BRC Consortium should strengthen formal and informal internal communication / collaboration (and learn from communities and neighbors) [P]

CONCLUSION

TNC's Condor Bioserve Program is program of significance, and stands as a flagship project in the Conservancy's history (and that of Parks in Peril). The Team should be commended for many innovative practices and their use of key tools (such as the CAP workbook, Log Frames, and "Results Chains").

As always, there are opportunities for improvement. The most important philosophical concept to improve on is that of "iteration"; that is, the need for the Project to continually re-visit their understanding of the Project's context and situation, then to update their extremely well conducted threats and viability assessments, to better inform the next round of strategic action.

The **principal "high-priority" recommendations** of this Conservation Audit are provided below, along with an indication of appropriate audiences for each⁴.

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of Project Team going forward, perhaps in a Project Charter type document [P].
- Conduct a (rapid) reassessment of threats to ensure that all critical threats have been identified and prioritized [P]. During the reassessment, be sure to map the locations of sources of stress.
- Create and implement a monitoring-plan listing specific indicators, purpose, methodologies, responsibilities, etc. [P].
- Emphasize the implementation of Effectiveness measures – that is, Outcome and Impact measures – wherever possible [P, CMG].
- PiP Consolidation scorecards should serve as excellent record of high-level success and progress over time.
- Create a small set of simple materials that demonstrate results, both for internal management and for outreach [P, MRC].
- As a Team, perhaps even a workshop, conduct post-PiP scenario planning, identifying both best and worst case scenarios [P].
- In summary, use the ending of PiP to rapidly update key CAP Steps (e.g., targets, viability, threats, situation analysis – particularly including social factors) to better prepare for post-PiP strategy development, implementation, and success measurement [P].
- In addition, TNC needs to be clear about how the BRC "scope" fits into the future, including the 2015 Goal related to Major Habitat Types (MHTs) [OU, Regional Science, GCAT]. In pursuing the BRC scope, ensure that any "effective conservation" already achieved is maintained and that TNC's role is clearly defined.

⁴ The reference key for audience specific *Recommendations* is as follows: P: Program/Project Staff and Management; OU: Operating Unit Management; R: Regional Management; R SCI: Regional Science staff; XA: External Affairs; MRC: TNC's International Marketing Resource Center; EXEC: TNC Senior Executive Management; TNC: TNC-wide learning; CMG/GCAT: Conservation Measures Group/Global Cons. Approach Team.

In short, the Project Team did a very good job of utilizing the historic CAP process and innovating on top of it (for example, the Log Frames focusing on indicators), but the Program now needs to refresh its understanding and assessment of threats (and targets) and explicitly iterate. This lack of “closing the loop” is not uncommon, and the Condor is well positioned now to remedy this, given the strength of their initial planning and the excellent, committed extended Team they have assembled.

One very important point of discussion, internal to TNC, is the relationship between projects like Condor and the 2015 Goal. It appears that the South America Region, as a result of its analyses of “Effective Conservation” in the MHTs in which it works, has determined that high-elevation grasslands are “over-represented” in Protected Areas. As a result, there appears to be a sentiment of moving on from this work. The Conservation Audit Team would be concerned that TNC’s incomplete understanding of Effective Conservation on the ground, within the scope of the Condor Program, doesn’t support a complete withdrawal. Certainly the 2015 Goal guides us toward new places – but to suggest that Condor is fine because it is under Protected Area status would be to disregard our current inability to demonstrate viable biodiversity and adequately mitigated threats. This project serves as an important example of the challenge we face in using Habitat Assessment-scale information to denote progress toward our mission.

The Program Team and the various members of key partner organizations who participated are thanked for their voluntary participation in this Conservation Audit and for their preparation and assistance with logistics. While the recommendations made during this Conservation Audit are not formally binding (i.e. specifically accountable to the Conservation Audit Program), it is intended that the Program itself and the Operating Unit Program(s) and Region will review these ideas and act on those deemed most relevant and practical. The Conservation Audit Program looks forward to continued engagement with the Program, including a follow-up review in late 2009.

For further information about this, or other Conservation Audits, please contact Tim Reed, TNC’s Conservation Audit Manager, at Treed@TNC.org. More can be found online at: http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/Conservation_Audit. Finally, project staff who are interested in anything related to TNC’s Conservation Approach and Conservation Action Planning (CAP) methodology are strongly encouraged to utilize the extensive resources found at the Conservation Gateway: www.conservationgateway.org.

APPENDIX A: CAP SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (DRAFT)

[Highlighted Rating = TNC Standard for the 2015 Goal]

Working Draft

Project Name:

Workbook Date:

Assessment Date:

Assessed by:

1. IDENTIFY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN YOUR PROJECT	
Key Questions: <i>Is project team membership clear and are roles well-defined?</i>	
Rating	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Team is only loosely defined and is missing key actors (e.g., important partners, key disciplines).
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Core team and extended team membership clear, but roles may be poorly defined or members insufficiently engaged or there are some serious gaps in representation of stakeholders/partners/disciplines. – Community relationships may be lacking or poor.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Core and extended team is explicit (i.e., they see/think of themselves as a Team), team members are engaged, and roles are clearly assigned, including a clear project leader. – Key partners are represented on at least the extended team or as advisors (and see/understand their role vis-à-vis TNC’s staff). – Most disciplines appropriate to the project (botany, zoology, hydrology, etc) are represented on core team, extended team, or advisor groups. – Project has sufficient local community relations.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Core project team is explicit (i.e. they see/think of themselves as a Team) and roles are clearly assigned, including a clear project leader. – Key partners and stakeholders are included as team members, engaged, and understand their roles – Core team members are clearly engaged and have sufficient time allocated. – All disciplines appropriate to the project (botany, zoology, hydrology, etc) are represented on core team, extended team, or advisor groups*. – Collaboration with partners is strong; relationships and engagement are clear. – Project has strong local community relations. <p><i>* Advisors may change as focal targets are selected, threats identified, and strategies picked in subsequent steps</i></p>

2. DEFINE PROJECT SCOPE AND FOCAL CONSERVATION TARGETS

Key Questions: How does the project fit into a regional picture of conservation? Is there a clear vision stated for the project, and has the team selected conservation targets on which to focus planning and implementation?

Rating	Description
1	– Overall goal or vision is lacking or unclear - <i>OR</i> - Focal targets are not selected.
2	<p><u>Vision:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An overarching goal or Vision is stated for the project, but it may not be inspiring, general, brief, or achievable. <p><u>Maps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A map or text description may or may not be consistent or widely-shared, but team has some general idea of scope of project. <p><u>Targets:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Focal targets are selected, but the rationale for decisions may not be given or logic is unclear. – Nested targets representing ecoregional targets (if Ecoregional Assessment has been completed) are not listed or relationship of focal targets to nested targets may not be evident.
3	<p><u>Vision:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A Vision is stated for the project, but it may not meet all criteria of being general, brief, and achievable. <p><u>Maps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clear map(s) showing the scope of the project and text description are available and understood by Project Team. <p><u>Targets:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The rationale for selecting the focal targets to represent the project’s biodiversity is well documented. – Ecoregional targets are linked to focal targets in nested targets table, plan text, or supporting documents. <p><u>Charter:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A written Project Charter is available
4	<p><u>Vision:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A clear Vision is stated for the project (inspiring, general, brief, and achievable). – Project vision reflects the main reason this project area was chosen in Ecoregional or other regional analysis. <p><u>Maps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clear map(s) showing the scope of the project and text description are available and understood by the Project Team – Maps are effective and show location of focal targets, other features, and scope of project. <p><u>Targets:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The rationale for selecting the focal targets to represent the project’s biodiversity is well documented. – Ecoregional targets are linked to focal targets within the nested targets table and/or plan text. <p><u>Charter:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A written Project Charter is available and well-understood by project team

3. ASSESS VIABILITY OF FOCAL CONSERVATION TARGETS

Key Questions: What defines viability and how far off is the current viability status from the desired status? Which conservation targets are most in need of attention?

Rating	Description
1	– Key Ecological Attributes (KEAs) have not been selected for most of the focal targets.
2	<p><u>KEAs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Team has selected one or more KEAs for <i>some</i> of the focal targets <p><u>Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Indicator(s) are selected for <i>some</i> KEAs. – Acceptable range of variation may be missing for many indicators. – Current and desired status may be missing for many indicators.
3	<p><u>KEAs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Team has selected at least one KEA for <i>most</i> focal targets – KEAs represent a reasonable mix of key environmental regimes, area requirements, species composition and structure for system targets – KEAs represent a reasonable mix of population and habitat requirements for species targets <p><u>Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – At least one indicator for <i>many</i> KEAs – An acceptable range of variation is defined for <i>many</i> indicators – When available, a best estimate of current and desired status is given for <i>many</i> indicators, even if it is a guess <p><u>Documentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brief documentation of literature used, experts interviewed, and rationale for choice of KEAs, indicators, indicator ratings, and current and desired status. This documentation may occur in workbook, plan text, <i>or other project files.</i>
4	<p><u>KEAs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Team has selected at least one KEA for <i>each</i> focal target. – KEAs represent a reasonable <i>and comprehensive</i> mix of key environmental regimes, area requirements, species composition and structure for system targets. <i>Needs of nested targets were explicitly considered in selection of KEAs for system and assemblage targets.</i> – KEAs represent a reasonable <i>and comprehensive</i> mix of population and habitat factors for species targets <p><u>Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – At least one indicator for <i>each</i> KEA – <i>Indicators are brief, consistent across categories, and at an appropriate scale for the project.</i> – An acceptable range of variation is given for <i>most</i> indicators. – When available, a best estimate of current and desired status is given for <i>most</i> indicators. <p><u>Documentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brief documentation of literature used, experts interviewed, and rationale for choice of KEAs, indicators, indicator ratings, and current and desired status is available in the workbook or plan text.

4. IDENTIFY CRITICAL THREATS

Key Questions: Why are some key ecological attributes not at their desired status? What threatens the future of conservation targets? Which threats are most pressing?

Rating	Description
1	– Threats are poorly identified if at all.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A comprehensive list of stresses is given for <i>some</i> focal conservation targets. – A comprehensive list of sources of stress is given for <i>some</i> focal conservation targets. – Sources of stress /stresses may not be separated/distinguished by the Project Team. – Some sort of determination of which threats are most critical has been made, although it may not be a formal or systematic ranking. – Severity, scope, contribution, and irreversibility ratings may be inconsistently applied. Stresses and sources may not be directly linked to each focal target.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A comprehensive list of stresses is given for <i>each</i> focal conservation target. – A comprehensive list of sources of stress is given for <i>each</i> focal conservation target (or at least a distinction between stresses and sources of stress). – At least one source is given for each stress – A ranking of the sources of stress affecting each focal target and a determination of the critical threats affecting the overall project is made.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A comprehensive list of stresses is given for <i>each</i> focal conservation target. – A comprehensive list of sources of stress is given for <i>each</i> focal conservation target (or at least a distinction between stresses and sources of stress). – At least one source is given for each stress – A ranking of the sources of stress affecting each focal target and a determination of the critical threats affecting the overall project is made. – Rankings are clearly agreed to by the Project Team, including partners, etc. – Documentation of information and assumptions made is presented in the workbook or plan text.

5. CONDUCT SITUATION ANALYSIS

Key Questions: What are the underlying causes of threats or opportunities for successful actions? How are they related to each other and to the stakeholders involved? What is the most effective point in the chain of causation to intervene with conservation strategies?

Rating	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No situation analysis. – Team members have a weak understanding of (and/or ability to communicate) factors affecting the Project's focal targets.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Simple diagram(s) or text narrative of the situation of some of the focal targets, critical threats, stakeholders, or linkages is presented. May be simple discussion of underlying causes and/or stakeholder influence. – Team members have an understanding of the factors affecting the Project's focal targets, but may not communicate them well.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One or more diagrams or text narrative of the situation that shows the key, hypothesized causal relationship between focal targets, critical threats, related indirect threats, opportunities and stakeholders is presented. – Team members understand the factors affecting the Project's focal targets, and can communicate the situation well.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One or more diagrams or text narrative of the situation that shows the key, hypothesized causal relationships between focal targets, critical threats, related indirect threats, opportunities and stakeholders is presented. – Team members understand the factors affecting the Project's focal targets, and can communicate the situation well. – Model is simple and does not show extraneous factors, yet is complete enough and specific enough to encourage understanding of the situation and provide a good basis for identifying opportunities for developing strategies and monitoring. – An interdisciplinary team and Stakeholders/partners are involved in developing the situation analysis, especially in identifying underlying causes of threats and opportunities. – Model could be used to help communicate the situation and our work to key stakeholders.

6. DEVELOP STRATEGIES: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Key Questions: Have measurable objectives been set and strategic actions developed to ensure that the greatest threats are abated and target viability is maintained or enhanced? Are the objectives worded in such a way that the project team will know if the conservation actions are successful?

Rating	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Objectives and strategic actions not identified, or are not SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Time-bound), and/or many critical threats or degraded KEA's are not addressed.
2	<p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Objectives for some of the most critical threats or degraded key ecological attributes are presented. – Objectives may not meet several of SMART criteria. <p><u>Strategic actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some objectives may not have strategic actions linked to them. – Strategic actions are identified, but may not be linked to objectives.
3	<p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Objectives for <i>each</i> of the <i>most</i> critical threats and degraded key ecological attributes are presented. – Objectives meet most of SMART criteria. – The number of objectives is feasible given project resources <p><u>Strategic actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Each objective has one or more strategic actions linked to it – All strategic actions are linked to objectives
4	<p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Objectives for <i>all</i> critical threats and degraded key ecological attributes are presented. – Objectives meet SMART criteria <i>and are politically, socially, and ecologically appropriate.</i> – The number of objectives is feasible given project resources – Partners are involved in the development of at least some objectives – Objectives are explicitly linked to the situation analysis, if one is available. <p><u>Strategic actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Each objective has one or more strategic actions linked to it. – All strategic actions are linked to objectives – Partners are involved in the development of at least some strategic actions – Strategic actions are high-leverage and feasible. – Strategic actions are ranked for benefits, cost, and feasibility

7. ESTABLISH MEASURES

Key Questions: Will it be clear if progress is being made to achieve objectives? How will the Project Team know if threats are increasing or decreasing? How will the Project Team know if target viability is getting better or worse?

Rating	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Indicators and monitoring, if described, are not tied to essential elements of plan (objectives, target viability information, threats).
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Indicators are described but many stated objectives, critical threats, and key ecological attributes are not the subject of monitoring. – The monitoring plan may include very little or no detail on proposed methods. – Monitoring has been identified and is linked to at least some objectives, threats, or attributes.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Indicators are described for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Nearly all</i> objectives to track the effectiveness of planned strategic actions. b. Selected threats and targets to determine if a change in status warrants new strategic actions. – Indicators are closely linked to the objective, threat, or KEA they are intended to measure. – The monitoring plan includes descriptions of proposed methods for <i>most</i> high priority indicators. – <i>Most</i> indicators are measurable, consistent, cost-effective and timely in response. Most indicators are at an appropriate scale. – The number of monitoring indicators is feasible given project resources – Monitoring indicators are prioritized – Research needs are documented
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Indicators are described for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>All</i> objectives to track the effectiveness of planned strategic actions. b. Selected threats and targets to determine if a change in status warrants new strategic actions. – Indicators are closely linked to the objective, threat, or KEA they are intended to measure. – The monitoring plan includes a description of monitoring methods for <i>nearly all</i> high priority indicators. – <i>Nearly all</i> indicators are <i>sensitive</i>, measurable, <i>precise</i>, consistent, cost-effective and timely in response. <i>Nearly all</i> are at an appropriate scale. – The number of monitoring indicators is feasible given project resources – Monitoring indicators are prioritized – Research needs are documented – Partners are involved in the development of indicators, especially those conducting their own monitoring (agencies, universities, etc). – Monitoring program is not limited to biological or environmental sciences but incorporates social sciences and other sciences as appropriate. – Monitoring indicators are explicitly linked to the situation analysis, if one is available.

8. DEVELOP WORK PLANS

Key Questions: Is there a detailed plan outlining the steps needed to complete conservation actions and monitoring? Are roles and timelines clearly assigned? Are there enough resources allocated for the implementation of conservation actions and monitoring?

Rating	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Action steps and monitoring tasks have not been identified or are unrelated to critical threats or viability information.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some action steps have been identified, but few assignments made or steps budgeted. – Some monitoring tasks have been identified, but few assignments made or tasks budgeted.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lists of major action steps and monitoring tasks are presented in the planning documents. – The team has assigned most steps and tasks to specific individual(s) and developed a rough timeline. Roles and responsibilities for tasks are agreed upon by team members and others that will be performing them. – Project Resources Scorecard completed and/or another assessment of funding, staffing, leadership, and external resources exists and is current. – At least a rough project budget has been developed. – Work plans are in alignment with State or Country program annual objectives.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lists of major action steps and monitoring tasks are presented in the planning documents. – The team has assigned steps and tasks to specific individual(s) and developed a rough timeline. Roles and responsibilities for tasks are agreed upon by team members and others that will be performing them. – Project Resources Scorecard completed and/or another assessment of funding, staffing, leadership, and external resources exists and is current. – A detailed project budget exists and is used on a regular basis. – Work plan is integrated into annual objectives for the State or Country program. – Data management and analysis is planned in advance. – Steps and tasks include planning for communication of results including determination of key audiences and appropriate communications products for each. – Steps include a process for adjusting plan elements if monitoring results show a need for change.

9. IMPLEMENT

Key Questions: Is the plan being implemented? Does it get support from partners/stakeholders/upper management/ funding sources?

Rating	Description
1	– Actions and monitoring identified in plan have not been implemented to any degree.
2	– Some of actions in plan are being implemented (or have been implemented). – Some of monitoring in plan is being implemented (or has been implemented).
3	– Key actions in plan are being implemented (or have been implemented). – Priority monitoring is being implemented (or has been implemented).
4	– Conservation actions follow strategic actions and action steps described in plan and/or plan is adjusted as necessary and with good rationale – Monitoring program follows indicators and methods described in plan and/or plan is adjusted as necessary and with good rationale. – Partners/stakeholders/upper management/funding sources are continually educated about the plan and are involved with, or at least informed of, implementation and monitoring status. – Sustainable sources of funding are available and planned.

10. ANALYZE, LEARN, ADAPT AND SHARE

Key Questions: Is feedback / data analyzed and interpreted regularly and explicitly? Is it used to update plan elements and to re-assess assumptions and strategies to further progress towards goals and objectives? Are results being communicated with partners/stakeholders/supporters and other audiences?

Rating	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Monitoring data do not exist, have not been summarized, used to adapt actions, or shared with appropriate audiences. – Objectives, strategic actions, and work plans are not regularly updated based on new information.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Monitoring data may be summarized, but not adequately shared or used to adapt actions. – Some review of the implementation of work plans and progress towards achieving the intended results is made. – Modifications to objectives and actions may be made, but not documented or shared.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Monitoring data are summarized regularly – Appropriate and scheduled review of the degree of implementation of the Project’s work plan is made. – Scheduled review of progress towards achieving results is made – Viability and threat assessments and the situation analysis are updated and revised as needed. – Modifications to objectives, strategic actions, and work plans are made as warranted with adequate explanation for the changes made. – At least some results are regularly shared with key audiences. – Progress status is regularly reported to supervisors and OU managers
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Monitoring data are summarized regularly. – Appropriate and scheduled review of the degree of implementation of the Project’s work plan is made. – Scheduled review of progress towards achieving results is made – Viability and threat assessments and the situation analysis are updated and revised as needed; <i>revisions are based on results of analysis.</i> – Modifications to objectives, strategic actions, and work plans, are made as soon as warranted with <i>clear and complete</i> explanations for the changes made. – Communication products are tailored for each key audience. Interpretation is made as clear and practical as possible to all audiences, but conclusions are not overstated. – Managers are informed of results early and involved in revision of plan elements. Joint meetings with project partners/stakeholders/supporters are held. – Monitoring program is flexible and adaptable; effectiveness of indicators and methods are analyzed as well as effectiveness of strategic actions being taken. – Progress status is regularly reported to supervisors and OU managers

APPENDIX B: CONSERVATION AUDIT ON-SITE SCHEDULE

Condor Bioreserve Project - Conservation Audit April 17-20, 2006 Proposed AGENDA (Draft)

Day 1: (Tues)

- Peer-Review Audit Team arrives Monday, settles in
- 0930 – 0945 Conservation Audit Kick-off (Introductions all around)
- 0945 – 1030 Introduction to Conservation Audits, ppt presentation [*Tim Reed*]
- 1030 – 1045 Conservation Audit Protocol – The CAP “Checklist” as guidance
- 1045 – 1115 Expectations setting / agenda & scope finalization
- 1115 – 1130 Break
- 1130 – 1330 Project “high-level” background [*Project Team presenting*]
- 1330 – 1500 Lunch Break
- 1500 – 1530 Further project background [*Project Team w/ Tim facilitating*]
- 1530 – 1645 Begin protocol using CAP Checklist
- 1645 – 1700 Agenda finalization
- 1700 End workroom session
- 1830 Group Dinner (all that can attend)

Day 2: (Wed)

- 0900 – 0910 New Introductions / Review Schedule
- Ongoing Conservation Audit discussion - Field site visit

Day 3: (Thurs)

- 0830 – 0845 New Introductions / Review schedule
- 0845 – 1500 Continue Conservation Audit [Group Discussion and including Lunch]
- 1500 – 1800 Audit Team prepares for Findings & Recommendations session
- 1830 – 2200 Audit Team Dinner (review and preparation for Findings session)

Day 4: (Fri)

- 0830 – 1030 Audit Team prepares for Findings & Recommendations session
- 1100 – 1330 *Preliminary Findings & Recommendations* Session [*Audit Team leads*]
- 1500 – 1515 Next Steps discussion / Other Questions
- Lunch
- 1530 – 1555 After-action review (How did this process work/not work? How can the Conservation Audit Process be improved?)
- 1600 End of Conservation Audit (visitors depart in evening/sat am)