

## CBSG's Annual Meeting and Working Groups

CBSG Annual Meetings have been described as chaotic, stimulating, disorganized, daunting, brilliant, useful, educational, ... and many other descriptors. One word that could never describe a CBSG meeting is "boring". CBSG Annual Meetings always feature an outstanding speaker or two to introduce a contemporary topic in conservation, perhaps for the first time in such a gathering. CBSG and its Member select topics very carefully for working groups, some of them as such as a year in advance. Sometimes it is a burning issue relating to zoos (or the world at large) that WAZA might take up and incorporate in their activities. CBSG working groups do the groundwork and pass on a Draft statement or plan for WAZA to take to the next levels.

One example of this process is the topic of "substandard zoos", this writer's obsession since day one of my zoo avocation, which started nearly 3 decades ago. The good zoos need to pay more attention to the issue of bad zoos and try to help them overcome their problems or maybe close down. I proposed it up as a CBSG Annual Meeting Working Group which discussed the problem and drafted a resolution to be handed over to WAZA for edit and presentation to their membership at their own Annual Conference. The resolution was accepted by WAZA membership and a whole raft of activities resulted ... a drafting committee, a protocol for zoos to address the issue, an inspection tool, and a complaint procedure. In a very short period of time, a way to work on it was created. In many instances, CBSG has done the groundwork and WAZA has gone about implementing a great variety of projects. Dr. Seal established this process and it works well. WAZA also suggests things to discuss at CBSG meetings to get a greater input from a range of zoo and field people.

Earlier in this issue you saw the range of species and issues taken up in PHVA, CAMP and other workshops. Each of

these workshops examine a species or issue in much detail with systematic analysis and finally an assessment. If you read a CBSG Briefing Book for an upcoming PHVA and the Report afterwards, you would learn almost as much about the species undertaken as if you had earned a degree in it. Some CBSG Annual Meeting Working Groups focus on species for which there is a decision to conduct a PHVA, or a Disease Risk workshop, design a breeding programme, plan movements of animals and/or gather more information.

CBSG working groups, whether in a PHVA, CAMP, Annual Meeting or other kind of workshop have a set of Ground Rules for Group Interaction. The rules, or principles, are a multi-purpose means of discussion in the group which permits everyone to speak, keeps strong individuals from dominating, keeps the group on point and practically guarantees a productive dialogue. These Ground Rules are familiar to CBSG members but maybe not to all our readers. These work well for any working group, but have blips and struggles according to the culture of the country! For example, there is an advice that the most knowledgeable or experienced person on the topic NOT be the Facilitator ... in some regions the hierarchy or seniority is so dominant that group members can't function if the senior officer is not the Facilitator, which is wrongly perceived "leader" or chair.

The facilitator should have a personality to move the group along, keep to timing, curtail diatribes, intervene in unproductive disagreements and 'too long' discussions of one aspect, etc. There are to be at least two recorders in working groups, one who records in short phrases on flip charts and one who takes notes or types the discussion into a computer file. Flip chart pages are put up on the wall so all the comments can be remembered and referred. The ground rules have reasons which are explained below.

### Ground Rules for Group Interaction

- Leave personal and institutional agendas aside – focus is on the species or issue and how best to work for its long range good, not personal or institutional preferences.
- All ideas are valid – everyone's idea is recorded on the flip chart, no matter how irrelevant or silly it seems to others. (I recorded for a group (not a CBSG meeting) in which a few individuals dismissed a certain lady's suggestion I put it up anyway and in the end when other suggestions proved unworkable they came back to that and accepted it!
- Everything is recorded on flip charts – If you don't put it up, you might forget to consider it and it could be the best idea after discussion has taken place. (As in the example above.)
- Everyone participates; no one dominates – no one should dominate discussion, even (especially) the senior-most.
- Listen to one another – this seems obvious but I've been in working groups where all the individuals wanted was to hear themselves! Not a good way to get consensus.
- Treat each other with respect – nearly all the ground rules are for this purpose: don't interrupt, talk while others are talking, insult or ignore your group members.
- Seek common ground – see the similarities in viewpoints instead of only the differences.
- Personal differences and problems are acknowledged - not "worked" – just admit there are different views and put them up on the flip chart but don't spend group time trying to solve individual arguments.
- Observe time frames – watch the clock throughout the sessions and make sure you leave enough time to come to a consensus and summarise your discussion.
- Complete the draft report by end of meeting – every working group has to report in front of the meeting 2 or 3 times depending on their progress and need to do so. A rough draft of the entire WG discussion is turned in end of meeting but the reporter can take some time to flesh it out for publication.

## 2010 Annual Meeting Working Group Report Summaries

(These were summarised by Editor from Drafts. CBSG Newsletter for Jan 2011 will have the official summary)

### Species Conservation Tools Working Group

To expose participants to the draft Conservation Planning (CP) Tools Table and to provide training in web-based workshop preparation, Miradi, and structured decision-making. The working group session included a series of review talks, an introduction to web-based preparation, a facilitated CP session, and hands-on training in the software program Miradi. To facilitate the application of these approaches in a real-world setting, the working group used a case study that focused on CP for Red Panda.

Phil Miller provided an overview of the draft CP toolkit that was developed with CBSG and other partners at a meeting with the CPTF in Abruzzo, Italy. Phil also presented an overview of the existing CBSG tools for conservation planning, with a strong focus on the PHVA process and the particular role that VORTEX can play in providing a strong analytical and biological basis for developing recommendations.

Sanjay Molur and Kristen Leus were part of the Red Panda PHVA and CP workshop (NTNC Kathmandu) and provided an overview of the status assessment, threats, and context under which the first draft plan was developed which became the template for this WG. Caroline Lees presented an overview of web-based workshop preparation tools from New Zealand.

Amielle DeWan presented the background for CP planning framework outlined by the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, walking participants through a facilitated threats and situation analysis. Amielle presented a brief overview of SDM along how SDM tools may be used to enhance the conservation planning approach.

Phil, Jonathan, and Amielle recognized some of the challenges in the workshop were associated with differences in language, e.g. what a goal means to CBSG, Open Standards, or the SSC. They worked together to identify a preliminary crosswalk of language, which will be useful as the planning teams work together to enhance their respective approaches to strategic conservation planning.

#### Follow up and next steps

- Follow up with planning toolkit members to refine definitions
- Refine selection categories to be more discerning among tools
- Refine planning language crosswalk. Reach out to SSC planning committee members to clarify details.
- Defenders attend PVA/PHVA
- CBSG attend Open Standards training
- Defenders provide Miradi training for those who were interested

### First IUCN Species Conservation Congress Working Group

The working group first reviewed the IUCN resolution in detail. The resolution: REQUESTS the Director General, in consultation with the Commissions and IUCN's members, and the wider conservation community from all sectors of society, including but not limited to governments, multi-lateral agencies, foundations, non-governmental organizations, accredited zoos and aquaria, botanic gardens, academia, the media and the business sector, to: consider and consult with the intent to convene a World Species

Congress within a reasonable timeframe; note that the objectives of the proposed World Species Congress, which should be scientifically based, would be to highlight the status of the planet's species, articulate and review the consequences of the threats that they face, and chart their future conservation; ensure that the substantial funding required for the proposed World Species Congress is secured from external sources, and does not represent a drain on IUCN's flexible financial or human resources; ensure that the outcomes of the proposed World Species Congress support and enhance the objectives of international agreements related to species conservation; and ensure that the proposed World Species Congress draws together and synthesizes activities already included in the IUCN Programme, and does not add new elements to it.

The group initiated a discussion of some of the broader aspects of a Species Congress. Zoos and aquariums have relatively specific and narrow interests, but certainly should be represented as an integral part of the Congress. We discussed how we could use species, and thus the Species Congress, to generate broader environmental gains. Also discussed was how the Species Congress could, synergistically, fit well with other large, multi-national conservation efforts (such as the Parks Congress). We reviewed some of the results of the Fifth Parks Congress in Durban. We discussed how a Species Congress (which by definition focuses on individual species or, perhaps, closely related taxa) could fill the gap left by other NGOs which are moving away from species conservation. Finally, we discussed the fact that a Species Congress could have a profound impact on our community's on-going collection planning efforts.

The working group concluded that a World Species Congress is a critically important endeavor. We strongly recommend that the Species Survival Commission endorse and facilitate this Congress. We feel that, with the support and guidance of the SSC, the Congress can maximize participation and lend the Congress maximal legitimacy. We further suggest that the SSC set up a sub-committee to help organize and promote the Congress as we do not feel that any one Specialist Group has the mandate or wherewithal to accomplish such a far-reaching effort and, further, that using a sub-committee would result in maximizing participation of all the various specialist groups. As a precursor to making such a recommendation to the SSC, it was noted that the appropriate next step is to present our working group recommendations to WAZA Council and to the WAZA membership for their endorsement and approval.

### IUCN Guidelines on *ex situ* Intensive Management of Populations (IMP) for Species Conservation WG

Vision on Intensively Managed Populations (IMP)- When talking about intensively managed populations it is important to define aims. A vision on what we are trying to achieve is required which will lead to: -> Goals (assessment-> Objectives -> Actions

Definition of IMP - Before further discussing the vision it is necessary to define what we mean by IMP? It should be stressed that IMP refers to the level of management and not where the animals are situated (semi wild, *ex situ* or *in situ*). Suggestion for a definition: IMPs are those populations (or individuals thereof) that are reliant on



**Animal Welfare Scoping Working Group at CBSG Meeting**



**Bob Lacy, Chair CBSG, opens the Annual Meeting**



**Jo and Jonathan conducting a working group on climate change**

human intervention for survival of that population (or individuals thereof).

A scale demonstrated that "captive management", "intensively managed" and "light managed" are included under the definition of IMPs). The audience for this vision includes: informed public as represented by authorities; IUCN Specialist Groups; Those influenced by the policy and those having an influence on the policy; welfare organizations/ opponents? & and the world.

Vision (from us in the room vs. global conservation community) i) Human intervention reasonably considered and appropriate in scale to the population, ii) Prevent extinction [ensure survival?], iii) Intervention should be aiming at being successful; iv) Maintain or improve status; v) Maintaining or improving biodiversity; vi) Interest of the species comes first (survivorship) vii) Whenever it is necessary to prevent species extinction. Or: IMP will be used whenever extinction is anticipated otherwise or whenever extinction risk is deemed to be too high?

The plan does not stop when bringing animals in a managed environment. The ideal aim is to not have to have IMPs. It is stressed that we need to be careful not to reword what is already successfully covered by the present guidelines. We need to include (what is not in the current IUCN statement), e.g. the range of options; some species need it others do not; we are aiming for it not to be needed.

#### Compromise/adaptation of the vision:

To preserve biodiversity and prevent the extinction of species the global conservation community commits to providing intensively management of populations where it may be needed as part of an integrated and holistic conservation plan through the application of best practice available science technology and practices. There were modified visions received after the meeting.

#### **Public Education to bring about Behavioural Change Working Group**

The topic arose from a mind-mapping session in CBSG Steering Committee, 2009. CBSG central mission is 'We save threatened species by increasing the effectiveness of conservation world-wide'. A submission suggested then was *we create and disseminate innovative and interdisciplinary science based tools and methodologies*. Public education in conservation for creating behavioural change was also the teaching of conservation biology. A short scoping workshop identified that public education is not a core competence of CBSG. The public are zoo visitors, people connected with zoos, various stakeholders in CBSG and (importantly) decision makers. We identified the main areas to address in the main CBSG workshop as i) Identify existing tools, ii) identify what new tools are required, iii) formulate a work-plan.

We looked at existing tools and processes. Many of the educational tools and processes are products of CBSG workshops – particularly in South Asia where education is a stated goal of each workshop, among the other objectives. There is a considerable amount of education expertise in the global zoo community. Many tools have also been developed by other organizations. Public education to promote changes needs to be carried out locally, due to differences in resources, technical tools and cultures. New tools and processes exist with other organizations and zoo educators, such as an application that made a children's game out of the PHVA process. CBSG can source many tools from other organizations which is better than making new educational tools but a list of ideas should be produced.

An embryonic work plan was produced in which i) CSBG needs to be aware and alerted to ensure education outputs from various workshops which will need contributors with educational expertise. ii) engaging children and young people and to use the expertise incorporated from the zoo world, other ngo's and sharing expertise between regional organizations; iii) a stronger link between IZE and the regional education associations should be found; iv) A list should be made of available ideas and processes; v) be aware of regional differences and cultural sensitivities and differences in access to technology

#### **Animal Welfare Working Group**

There is a need to address animal welfare concerns (for animals in zoos AND field biologists handling animals in field projects). CBSG does have a role to play—to provide high level strategic guidance; specifically in such actions as feeding into WAZA, regional zoo associations, IUCN (e.g., propose a position statement on welfare of wild animals). CBSG can help define welfare in a conservation context (science based); be the medium to lead to welfare standards as it did in providing the platform for development of work on climate change, AArk, 'disfunctional zoos', etc. projects; CBSG can help to define links between welfare and conservation (animal welfare in the continuum of intensively managed populations, breaking down the *ex situ - in situ* barrier); 'wildlife welfare' is a new and handy term. Chair of WAZA's Ethics and Welfare Committee to work in collaboration with regional zoo associations

Welfare as it applies to conservation practice (day 2) The issue is receiving recent attention, including two journals that have had recent issues devoted to conservation animal welfare, including Zoo Biology and Animal Welfare Journal, UFAW, UK, and a recent workshop on "Compassionate Conservation" by ZooCheck at Oxford with Wildcru.

- Agreed it is not our focus to develop welfare standards.
- Agreed we should focus on animal welfare rather than ethics/rights. Conservation is often considered antithetical to animal welfare; some field conservationists may not consider animal welfare when handling animals. Animal welfare community historically has used "Five Freedoms" to describe welfare; these are fairly old, and also less relevant to zoo animals - more for domestic or companion or livestock animals.
- Must have a scientific measurement of welfare. Agreed there are many challenges of defining welfare, and of measuring it; also there are significant cultural differences, differences in the sanctuary approach vs zoo approach, public engagement/education, application of welfare constructs in zoo environments and in field are very different.

#### Action points are

- engage with conservation NGOs and animal welfare community to understand where the gaps are;
- define why CBSG should be involved in our role as a science based organization
- define contexts where welfare and conservation really intersect - where the impact of welfare in conservation lies
- IUCN statement on conservation welfare
- address cultural differences in welfare - science, regulatory/legal and society/public opinion
- CITES issues; public education; address conflicts between welfare and conservation; define continuum between "extensively managed/wild/less responsibility" and "intensively managed/zoos/complete responsibility for welfare"; consider human/wildlife conflict and how that relates to conservation welfare clarify our targets - are we assisting all zoos, those actively working on conservation?