



# Community Conservation, Inc.

## 2015 Winter Newsletter

### Corridors, Landscapes, Flagship Species: Tools for Nepal Conservation

In this human dominated world, our lack of planning has left the natural world in a state of fragmentation, with animal populations separated from each other by farms, towns, and other areas of open spaces, creating an environment difficult for animal species to maintain connectivity within their ranges. For large mammals, such as tigers and elephants, these fragments at worst spell the demise of the species and often create situations of human-wildlife conflict. In planning a project, to have the maximum conservation regional effect, we must plan at a landscape level, incorporating forest fragments, rivers, animal populations, and human landscapes, searching for the easiest connections to reconstruct a landscape that can function for all of the existing life forms, including humans. Corridors between forest fragments can help maintain genetic and ecological viability of plant and animal communities while reducing

Below: A terai langur sits in a highway village in the Morang District



Project staff, including CC Director, Rob Horwich (3rd from left), Rupesh of CDAFN (center), and board member, Teri Allendorf (far right), are pictured with members of a Community Forest User Group in the Morang District.

the possibility of human-wildlife conflict. While large landscapes have been embraced by large NGOs and governments, they can also be accomplished through community conservation projects by assessing the human communities within a landscape, helping them to form their own conservation groups or community-based organizations (CBOs), and then helping to create complex federations using CBOs as building blocks. That is what Community Conservation (CC) has been doing in India, Ghana, Peru, and other countries.

When CC began work in Assam, India, having seen how regional work led to conservation contagion in Belize, we targeted the total Indian range of the golden langur, our flagship species. A flag-

ship species is just a focus animal or plant that has a high visibility and is often charismatic with positive attributes endearing it to humans living in the area. In Assam, we focused on the golden langur and since the major part of its range was the Manas Biosphere Reserve, the other species in the Manas Biosphere Reserve were being protected by our partner federation of CBOs working with the government to protect that large landscape. Realizing our community partners were protecting elephants and tigers, we were able to access money to protect the population of 1200 elephants in the Manas Biosphere until the tribal government could cover the cost.

Building on the success of the

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February 2015

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#### Community Conservation Board of Directors

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- Dr. Robert H. Horwich
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# Tools for Nepal Conservation

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CFUG members from Sarlahi, Mahottari, and Dhanusa Districts attend a meeting at the CDAFN office to learn about the corridor project.

10 districts in the eastern Nepal terai to make them aware of the wildlife and the importance of the corridor. They have linked up with Dinesh Neupane, a young elephant scientist getting his PhD from Arkansas State University. His thesis is focused on the human-elephant conflict in Nepal.

Following the meetings, Horwich, Allendorf, and Birendra Mahato, on-site project coordinator, met with a number of CFUGs to view their forests. At one of the meetings in the center of the proposed

Assam project protecting langurs and elephants as well as tigers, CC Director Rob Horwich, decided to focus on creating a large tiger landscape as tiger experts suggested. Manas was considered the site for the most promising tiger conservation and Chitwan National park in Nepal was the second most important site for tiger conservation. Horwich had been aware of the plight of tigers since his work as a young postdoctoral scientist in India, working for the Smithsonian Institution. But despite the vast quantities of money put into tiger conservation, and despite the efforts of international tiger experts, tiger populations have been continually decreasing until today there are only about 3,000 tigers remaining world-wide. Thus, CC proposed to create a large mammal corridor between Manas and Chitwan.

such a corridor was impossible seemed to hinder the proposals even though CC's project in Assam was already protecting a population of tigers. Working on small donor funding, the project showed that the community forest user groups (CFUGs) in the eastern terai (plains) area of Nepal had begun to reforest that corridor 8 to 20 years earlier. Additionally, although tiger experts said such a corridor was impossible, a tiger travelled from the Chitwan NP or Parsa Wildlife Sanctuary, across the Bagmati River, into the proposed corridor, and killed a man. At the same time, elephants from West Bengal, India were coming into the eastern border of Nepal to deplete crops of small Nepali farmers.

corridor, members of one CFUG were organizing a meeting of over 100 CFUGs whose forests created a continuous 200 kilometer community forest. Although the meeting that occurred in December 2014 was to discuss the collective protection of their community forests, this meeting was an optimum beginning to creating an important center for the future Eastern Terai Community Wildlife Corridor. Project staff will continue to meet with this central group of CFUGs and then integrate other CFUGs into the corridor.

Horwich and CC Board member Dr. Teri Allendorf, a Nepal expert, began working with Dr. Bhim Gurung, a Nepali tiger expert to develop a proposal to begin a tiger conservation project to create a corridor in eastern Nepal to connect with eastern India. They worked on small interim money in Nepal for three years but were unable to secure adequate funding for such a project. Lack of tiger expertise and the opinion that

Since there was a need, the Eastern Terai Community Wildlife Corridor project, working with Green Society Nepal and Community Development and Advocacy Forum Nepal (CDAFN), has met with CFUGs from

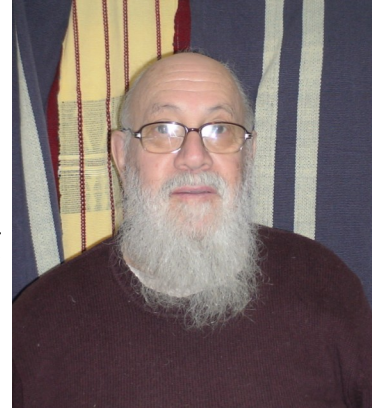
CC board member, Teri Allendorf (left), and Birendra Mahato of Green Society Nepal (right), speak with a member of a women's CFUG.



# A Message from our Director

## Sustainability Futures

By Dr. Rob Horwich



When I first began community conservation work in Belize in 1984, I was only thinking small and how to influence one village because I had no experience working with villagers. Very rapidly, with the help of volunteers and community partners, I could see how valuable it was to think about protecting larger areas and long-term sustainability of the protection. This was especially so as I saw the power of conservation contagion occurring in Belize. Since those early years, I now think how to proceed regionally and how to involve more people. Now after 30 years working in 15 countries, Community Conservation has been planning for sustainability of its projects through bringing people in a region together to generate contagion and thinking regionally through the use of corridors. By helping communities to form their own conservation groups, and by mentoring conservation NGOs throughout the world, Community Conservation has been laying a foundation for international conservation at the community level. Almost all (96%) of our projects are currently on-going, many for 23 to 30 years. In more than 75% of our projects, communities have formed over 44 community groups to promote their sustainability.

Further, we at CC have engendered our concepts into regional areas through our strong NGO partners, who have developed effective skills in working with communities, so that our projects are continuing their successes, particularly in West Africa, South and Central America, Asia, and the United States. Our partners in Ghana, West African Primate Conservation Action, are spreading ideas to Ivory Coast and perhaps elsewhere in the future; in Peru, Neotropical Primate Conservation (NPC) has created NPC-Peru composed of Peruvian activists to carry on work so they can expand into other South American countries; in Belize, the Community Baboon Sanctuary has been a model for 30 years that has generated about 20 community co-managing CBOs; in India, our partner, Nature's Foster, is continuing to stimulate communities throughout Assam and has spread the word through conferences into Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Laos; and in Wisconsin, our project community groups have been forming other CBOs to strengthen community and conservation in southern Wisconsin.

Now, the time has come for Community Conservation to form its own sustainable base in order to continue helping others throughout the world propagate empowered communities to protect their forests and natural resources. Our Board, spearheaded by Board President, Keefe Keeley, has been meeting with consultant Janine Veto, thanks to a matching grant from CORE (Consulting for Organizational Reflection and Effectiveness). From those meetings, we are beginning the process of developing a capital campaign to expand our organization, allowing CC to move from what has essentially been a voluntary organization to one that can begin to generate its own funds. The campaign will provide the opportunity to expand the organization so that it can move into the future with my guidance, but not dependent on me as its founder.

CC's 30 years of pioneering experience was initiated by me, but was always dependent on empowered community and regional NGO partners. Through these partnerships, CC has developed an effective, flexible formula for working with and empowering communities that we hope to continue to pass on to future partners through an expanded organization. We will keep you informed about our progress in our growth and capital campaign and hope you will continue to support us as we grow.



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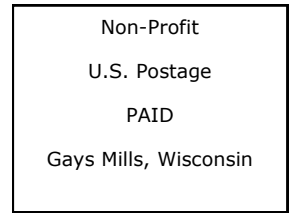
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*In order to promote global biodiversity and sustainable land use, Community Conservation catalyzes, facilitates, and empowers local people to manage and conserve natural resources within the social, cultural, and economic context of their communities and facilitates widespread, global adoption of community-based conservation.*

## Spreading the Word: CC Addresses Society of Conservation Biology

As part of Community Conservation's expanded mission, we are trying to change the traditional paradigm of conservation, because communities are so essential as on-site environmentalists and are an important solution to the world's current environmental problems. Under the auspices of this campaign, CC Board and staff have been writing popular and professional articles about the importance of community conservation, as well as seizing opportunities for both formal and informal outreach.

This past July, four of our Board travelled to Missoula, Montana for the North American Congress of the Society for Conservation Biology (NACCB). Two of the board members organized a symposium focused on working closely with communities

on conservation projects. Our goal in organizing this symposium was to bring a distinct community-based perspective to the conference. Speakers at the symposium included CC Board Members Rob Horwich, Teri Allendorf, Keefe Keeley, and April Sansom, as well as Joe Meisel of Ceiba Foundation, Andrew Haloran of Lynn University, and Brendan Fisher of the World Wildlife Fund.

We were delighted to have about 40 people attend our symposium. Several members of the audience asked pertinent questions regarding our work with communities across the globe. We did not have enough time in the morning session for our symposium to answer all the questions that were posed to us, so we organ-

ized an informal meeting over lunch to talk more about working with communities towards shared conservation goals. More than 20 people joined us for this informal lunch, where we talked about the challenges facing conservation, and how these challenges affect conservation efforts at the local scale, where communities are directly involved in the efforts to protect the resources on which they depend.

We were all very encouraged by the interest and attendance at our symposium. We were proud to bring a very community-based perspective to the table at the NACCB meeting of over two thousand conservation professionals working in various countries across the globe and many places throughout the United States.

**Learn more about CC's work on our website:  
[www.communityconservation.org](http://www.communityconservation.org)**