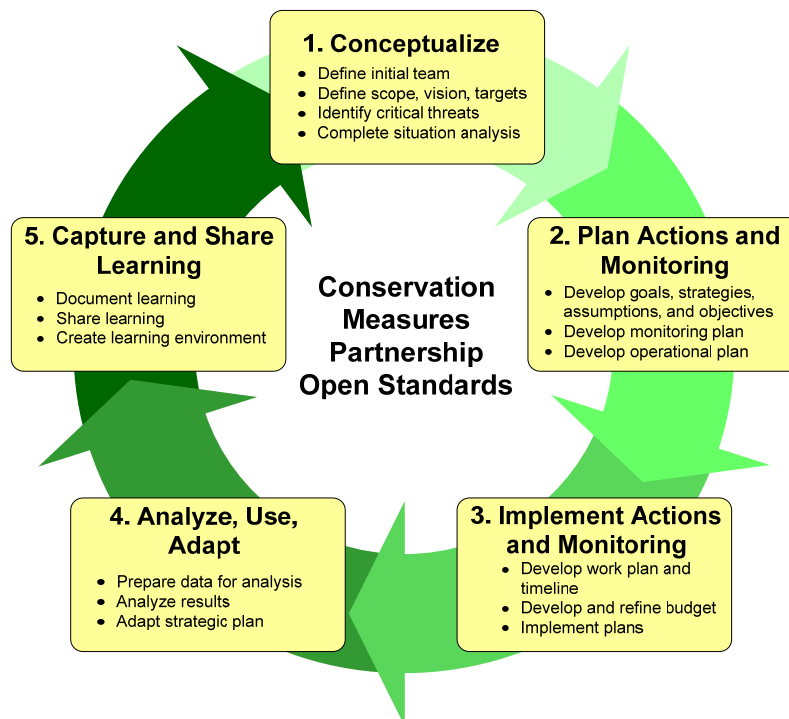


Increasingly, conservation organizations and agencies **seek employees with skills and experience with adaptive management.** In the fall of 2009, the University of Maryland’s CONS program (Master’s Program in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology) and Foundations of Success (FOS), a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to improving the practice of conservation, will offer an 11-week, graduate course in adaptive management for conservation projects, based on the CMP *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*. This course will be open to conservation practitioners and graduate students in the Washington D.C. area.

Content Background

In recent years, there has been great convergence among conservation organizations in thinking about how best to plan and implement conservation actions. The member organizations of the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP)¹ have pooled their collective experience in designing, implementing and appraising their conservation projects to develop a set of project cycle or adaptive management *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* (see Figure 1) that they believe are fundamental to effective conservation (www.conservationmeasures.org).

Figure 1. Conservation Measures Partnership – Steps in Project Management Cycle



¹ The Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) is a partnership of conservation NGOs that seek better ways to design, manage, and measure the impacts of their conservation actions. CMP members include The Nature Conservancy (TNC), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), and Foundations of Success (FOS), among others.

What will this course cover?

The purpose of this course is to equip practitioners and students with the skills necessary for effective adaptive management of conservation projects, as outlined in the steps of the CMP *Open Standards*. An understanding and ability to apply these steps is crucial for current and future conservation practitioners.

The format of this course is a combination of lecture, discussion, and practice (see attached class schedule). Clear and concise reading material will be assigned as the basis for the lecture and discussion portion of each session. During this course, participants will not only learn the theory and concepts behind each step of the *Open Standards* but will also learn to use tools that provide specific instructions on how to complete the various tasks required for each step. Working in teams, participants will apply these tools in developing a draft management plan for a 'real-world' project offered by a conservation organization. Facilitation by course instructors, consultation with project organization staff, and feedback from classmates will help students put these tools and skills to use in the context of their projects.

The following goals and objectives detail what we hope course participants will learn:

Goals:

By the end of the course, students will understand the process of adaptive management in terms of the CMP *Open Standards* and be able to apply Steps 1 and 2 of these *Open Standards*. Students will also be comfortable using Miradi² (adaptive management software developed by CMP and Benetech) to document their work.

Learning Objectives:

1. Become familiar with the first and second steps of the *Open Standards* – “Conceptualize Your Project” and “Plan Your Actions and Monitoring.”
2. Apply Steps 1 and 2 of the Open Standards to a real project by producing the following parts of a strategic plan for that project:
 - A clear conceptualization of the project, including:
 - A team charter that defines the initial project team, its goals and objectives, individual roles of team members, team norms, and the questions the team wants to answer in the assessment of its work (to promote team learning and development).
 - The definition of project scope and conservation targets.
 - Rating of threats to biodiversity.
 - A conceptual model describing the current situation in the project site, including the factors (direct threats, indirect threats and opportunities) influencing each conservation target, and the causal relationships among these factors.

² For more information, visit miradi.org

- An action plan including:
 - Well-defined goals for all conservation targets.
 - Prioritized strategies identified for key intervention points in the project conceptual model.
 - Results chains defining core assumptions about how project strategies will contribute to reducing threats and conserving targets.
 - Well-designed objectives linked to key results in a project results chain.
 - Activities required to implement a strategy and achieve objectives.

- A monitoring plan for measuring the effectiveness and impact of the project. The monitoring plan will include:
 - Definition of audiences for the monitoring and their information needs.
 - Indicators for monitoring goals and objectives.
 - Monitoring methods, who will gather the monitoring data, when and where will monitoring take place.

Who will teach this course?

The lecture and group work portions of this class will be taught and facilitated primarily by FOS staff members, Marcia Brown and Vinaya Swaminathan, a CONS alumna. Marcia and Vinaya are part of the FOS team that has trained over 1,000 practitioners in adaptive management over the last seven years. For profiles on Marcia and Vinaya, see: www.fosonline.org. Lou Ann Dietz, CONS Graduate Program Adjunct Faculty Member, educator, and conservation practitioner with 20+ years of experience will coordinate the course and help facilitate group work. For Lou Ann's profile see: <http://www.life.umd.edu/CONS/adjunct.html>.

Course logistics

The course will take place at the Smithsonian's Conservation Biology Institute at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. each Wednesday evening from 4-7 pm, beginning September 9th, 2009. Participants will also need to reserve additional time outside class for group work on their projects. For participants who bring a project from their work, this will be time spent improving the project's chances of success as everyone learns.

The Smithsonian's Conservation Biology Institute is convenient to metro (Woodley Park - Zoo/Adams Morgan station) and has free parking.

Course cost

This is a three-credit graduate course, and participants may choose the three-credit or non-credit options. The cost is:

- Tuition and fees for three credits for non-Maryland residents total \$ \$3,385.
- Tuition and fees for three credits for Maryland residents total \$1,750.
- Workshop cost for participants not wanting graduate credit is \$1,700.

If you are not a current student at the University of Maryland and want to take this course for graduate credit, you will need to apply for admission as an Advanced Special Student. For information on how to do this, please refer to the following website, and note that there is a \$60 application fee: http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/non_degree_admission.htm#apply.

Registration details

If you would like to register for this course, please send the following information to the CONS office at consoffice@umd.edu, who will inform you of the registration details for your specific situation. **The deadline for registration is September 1.**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Employer:

Education/degrees:

Current position:

Years of experience working in conservation or in your current position:

Are you able to bring a conservation project for course participants to work on?

Registration option:

For credit, out-of-state resident—Are you currently registered as a University of Maryland student?

For credit, Maryland resident—Are you currently registered as a University of Maryland student?

Non-credit option

Please describe briefly (short paragraph) why you are interested in this course and how you believe it will contribute to your work:

For more information contact the course instructors:

Lou Ann Dietz - louann.dietz@verizon.net

Marcia Brown – Marcia@FOOnline.org

Vinaya Swaminathan - Vinaya@FOOnline.org