# **Open Standards Case Study Competition**

## The competition

The Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) and the Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet) are committed to improving the practice of conservation by promoting and building capacity for crossorganizational, cross-project, and cross-coach/practitioner learning about adaptive management in conservation. To this end, in 2016 we launched our first global Open Standards Case Study Competition to identify and share excellence in adaptive management practice across the conservation community.

We were looking for case studies that both describe what was done and provide clear lessons and advice to others on what it means to undertake adaptive management using the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation or similar approaches. Stories or cases that describe learning from "failure" were as valued as those about success.

# The judges

We received ten excellent entries and went through a first set of judging to narrow down the entries to five in order to facilitate a second round of crowd source voting. Our judging panel included Elizabeth O'Neill, Susan O'Neil, Rob Sutter, Daniel Sprod and Nina Hadley. With the input from crowd sourcing our judges selected the final three winners.

# The power of the process

Each case study, including those that were not winners, demonstrated the flexibility and variety of approaches within the Open Standards and the power of adaptive management to employ new information to address the causes of and solutions to real-life conservation challenges. The five case studies selected as "finalists" by our judges will be featured on the Open Standards website over the coming months.

#### The winners!

Congratulations go to case study competition winner, <u>Twenty years and counting: adaptive management of Chimpanzee habitat in Tanzania</u> by the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI).

Coming in second and third are Full cycle adaptive management in Australia's arid rangelands by Bush Heritage Australia (BHA) and 25 years of adaptive management in the Cascade Head Preserve and Salmon River Watershed, Oregon USA by the Nature Conservancy (TNC) respectively.

# Chimpanzee Habitats, Tanzania

In Chimpanzee habitat that occurs in village lands above Lake Tanganyika, the Jane Goodall In stitute assessed their project situation using the steps of the Open Standards and realised some of their primary assumptions were misplaced and thus some strategies employed were less effective.

Using participatory planning localised to each village community and with the aid of spatial mapping, they refocused their efforts resulting in 26% of the area being voluntarily set aside as forest reserves by villages. Now an increase in regeneration is being observed in much of these areas. This model has successfully been redeployed elsewhere and ongoing review is revealing other factors that need to be addressed.



Participatory village land use planning in Tanzania. Future forest reserves are marked with leaves.

### Boolcoomatta Reserve, Australia

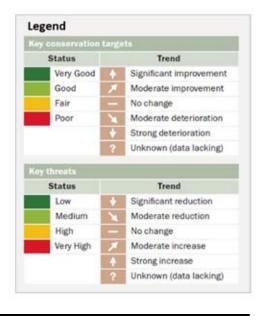
Boolcoomatta, 64,000ha conservation reserve managed by Bush Heritage Australia is a formally grazed property in the arid lands of South Australia. The reserve has been through three cycles of Open Standards planning and management in ten years.

This commitment to adaptive management has yielded a consistency in effort through four different project managers, numerous stakeholders, and a diversity of approaches, all combining to document an improvement in the health of the targets identified.

Lessons learned include the importance of systematically recording project information and decisions, adequate resourcing - especially for monitoring, and periodic reviews allowing changes in definition of targets and threats.

Part of the success of the approach has been development of simple visual indicators of progress that easily communicate status and trends.





Simple visual indicators of progress in target health, Boolcoomatta Reserve

# **Butterfly conservation, USA**

In Oregon, efforts to maintain a population of a critically endangered butterfly have been through several cycles of conceptual modelling, each building on targeted research and management, gradually building the knowledge base and management skills of the Conservancy staff for managing this rare habitat.

Lessons learned include showing that active adaptive management can advance our understanding even at a small site with a modest budget and limited staff and can lead to the elimination of ineffective management actions, and that collaboration with key partners is an effective way to stretch resources.

Using the Open Standards planning methods provides a compelling approach for bringing diverse stakeholders to the table.



Cascade Head Preserve is located on a basaltic headland rising 365m at the mouth of the Salmon River estuary. Steep, south-facing slopes harbor remnant coastal prairie surrounded by Sitka spruce/western hemlock forest. It harbors several endemic species, including the threatened Oregon silverspot butterfly.