

Section 9: Enhancing capacity - how on earth are we going to cope with the workload?

Co-ordinators: Dace Ground (Bermuda National Trust & UKOTCF Council) & Mat DaCosta-Cottam (Cayman Islands Department of Environment)

Help in finding resources for all the work that needs to be done is always one of the highest of priorities identified by many people for a conference session - and one of the most difficult to organise. As Dace Ground identified in her introduction, this session approached the issue from several angles.

First, it is important to have a clear idea of what the resources are needed for. In the first part, this is addressed from the important viewpoint of the implementation of species recovery plans. Fred Burton takes the successful Blue Iguana Recovery Programme as an example, while Colin Clubbe looked at why so many Plans run into bottlenecks impeding effective implementation. This, as for the other two parts of the session noted below, was followed by discussion.

The second part of the session addressed funding. Relevant to this was the document circulated in advance in the conference handbook (and included also here) in which Mat Cottam gives an example as to how to seek external funding. In the session, Nikki Chapman gave an outline of JNCC's efforts in identifying conventional grant sources. The funding to JNCC from UK Government for this work was itself a result of encouragement from UKOTCF and previous conferences to UK Government to address its Commitments under the Environment Charters:

The third part of the session addressed the matter of volunteer help. This started with a focus on local volunteers, addressed by Pierre Pistorius on the experience of the Falklands; and by an additional short contribution, prepared at short notice by Stedson Stroud, on Ascension. Then Dace Ground recalled the long role of UKOTCF in organising external volunteers to meet Territory requests, and how this had changed over the years. Steve Cheeseman outlined the recent experiences of a non-traditional UKOTCF volunteer. Within the discussion, Oliver Cheeseman summarised responses relating to capacity building to the recent wider consultation of UKOTCF Member and Associate organisations, and the question was discussed of how UKOTCF and others can help further.



*From left: Joseph Smith Abbott (rapporteur), Dr Colin Clubbe, Dr Nikki Chapman (hidden), Stedson Stroud, Pierre Pistorius, Dr Mat DaCosta-Cottam, Dace Ground and Steve Cheeseman
(Photos of participants in this section by Dr Mike Pienkowski and Dr Rob Thomas, unless otherwise indicated)*

Enhancing capacity: how on earth are we going to cope with the workload - Introduction

Frederic J. Burton MBE (Director, Blue Iguana Recovery Programme, Grand Cayman)



Burton, F.J. 2010. Enhancing capacity: how on earth are we going to cope with the workload - Introduction. pp 296-300 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

For those of us actually working in the UK Overseas Territories, it is an everyday fact of life that human resources for conservation work are extremely limited. Here in the Cayman Islands, we are probably better off than most, with a Department of Environment 32 strong, and a National Trust with 6 or so paid positions. But even here, for example, we have only two and a half qualified terrestrial biologists on anyone's payroll. More typically in a small UKOT, that might be one, or even none at all.

Match that against the work plans we aspire to, and there is obviously a huge mismatch. The Cayman Islands' new *National Biodiversity Action Plan* calls for active work on 19 habitats, 43 priority species, and still by no means covers all the environmental issues we would like to address. 36 of the NBAP priority species / species groups are terrestrial. Conservation of one single priority species can easily demand full time attention of a team of specialists, yet the well-staffed Cayman Islands has 0.07 paid terrestrial biologists per species for the job. In the UKOT's, the ratio doesn't get much higher than this; hence the question: indeed, how on earth are we going to cope with the work load?

Linking conservation of multiple key species, through conservation of shared habitat, is a potent way to maximize results using limited human resources. Volunteerism, training, academic affiliations, institutional partnerships, and use of strategic planning to focus resources to maximum effect, are the other main strategies the *Blue Iguana Recovery Programme* on Grand Cayman has used to manage successfully a typical workload for a priority 'flagship' species.

Frederic J. Burton, MBE, Director, Blue Iguana Recovery Programme, PO Box 10308, Grand Cayman KY1-1003, Cayman Islands. fjburton@blueiguana.ky
www.blueiguana.ky

For those of us working in the UK Overseas Territories, it is an everyday fact of life that human resources for conservation work are extremely limited.

Here in the Cayman Islands, we are almost certainly better off than most. We have a Department of Environment 32 strong, and a National Trust with 6 or so paid positions. But if, for example, we look just at conservation on land, we have only two, maybe two and a half qualified terrestrial biologists on anyone's payroll.

More typically, in a small UK Overseas Territory, that might be one - or, in some cases I have known, there are none at all.

If we just pitch those numbers against the work plans we aspire to, it all tends to look rather overwhelming. The clearest example I have looked at recently comes from the Cayman Islands' new *National Biodiversity Action Plan*. This calls for active work on 19 habitats, 43 priority species, and if we are honest, it still does not nearly cover all the environmental issues we would like to address.

Thirty-six of our BAP priority species / species groups are terrestrial. And we all know that conservation of one single priority species can easily demand full time attention of a team of specialists.

Yet the well-staffed Cayman Islands has 0.07 paid terrestrial biologists per species for the job. In the UK Overseas Territories, the ratio does not get much higher than this; hence indeed the question: how on earth are we going to cope with the work load?

I imagine that most of us here struggle with this question constantly. I have tendencies to over-extend myself chronically; so I may not be the best to advise anybody on the subject of coping. I think it will be more useful for me to stimulate discussion by using an example from my personal experience.

The *Blue Iguana Recovery Programme* shows quite well, I think, how several very familiar, often-used strategies can sometimes be combined to achieve multiple conservation goals with remarkably little by way of paid professional staff.

The Flagship Species approach is an obvious place to start. In the case of the Blue Iguana, if we are to restore a wild population then we need to protect its habitat. If we protect the Blue Iguana's habitat, we also protect *Agave caymanensis*, *Phyllanthus caymanensis*, *Scolosanthus roulstoni*, and *Coccothrinax proctorii*. That's five priority endangered endemics for the price of one. If you look at the Blue Iguanas' xerophytic shrubland habitat as a whole, we are saving one of the Cayman Islands two most biodiverse ecosystems.

The Blue Iguana happens to be the most charismatic and attention-grabbing element of all that biodiversity, so that's the creature we selected to make our case for them all.



Blue Iguana



Agave caymanensis



Phyllanthus caymanensis



Scolosanthus roulstoni

Linking conservation of multiple key species, through conservation of shared habitat, is obviously a potent way to maximize results using limited human resources. When the habitat concerned has



Coccothrinax proctorii

a good flagship species which commands public attention, that species can swing the balance of public opinion in our favour, perhaps better than any mere mortal can achieve.

Volunteerism is not the simplest thing to manage sometimes, but if you get the selection and management processes right, it gives you people power



very cheaply indeed. Nobody in this picture is being paid, and all were working six- or seven-day weeks on the *Blue Iguana Recovery Programme* when this shot was taken.



The Blue Iguanas' xerophytic shrubland habitat



We recruit our international volunteers online. The web site module (above) was built and is managed by volunteers. A local volunteer filters the applicants, checks references, and coordinates arrivals with accommodation space. We house our international volunteers in a building whose use is gifted to the National Trust.

Our use of international volunteers works well for a few reasons:

- The online application process demands a lot of information, which puts off casual or unsuitable applicants.
- We don't charge people to volunteer, so we can attract energetic young students and active professionals who don't necessarily have a lot of money. They just have to pay for their air fare and their own food.
- We do have just enough permanent staff to be capable of training and managing the volunteers at work.
- The work experience and programme success are psychologically and sometimes practically rewarding for the volunteers, and a little bit of training and experience helps students flesh out their resumés.



Locally, we have two different types of volunteer: weekend work crews, and individual long-term volunteers. Finding suitable tasks for corporate volunteer groups, like this crowd from our Domino's Pizza company, isn't always easy. There's little scope for training with a one-off group like this; so it only works for minimally skilled jobs. But weekend work crews pay off in other ways – it's a kind of community outreach, it catches individuals' interest and it makes news.

Individual volunteers are harder to find, and very valuable. At best, someone who isn't in full time work can end up being a voluntary full member of staff. In fact, most of the staff the BIRP has ever hired started out with us as volunteers. These are people that we can invest in training, so they can take on key roles and feel some real ownership and pride in their work.



Postgraduate students can sometimes offer substantial benefits to conservation. The key in these university partnerships is to ensure the project's academic agenda is negotiated with the student and their supervisor - so that it generates information that the conservation programme needs, and can use. This kind of negotiation needs there to be an academic within, or advising, the conservation or-

ganization, maybe even serving as the local supervisor. Without that, there is the risk the opportunity to benefit conservation gets missed, no matter how triumphant the purely academic outcome may be.

Universities apart, the BIRP relies very heavily on long-term institutional partnerships. Locally, we operate under the umbrella of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, and we have a close link with the Department of Environment. We are operating our captive facility and tours within the QE II Botanic Park; so there's three local institutions to start with.

Screenmaster images credit: Blue Iguana Recovery Programme

P.O. Box 10308
Grand Cayman KY1-1003
Cayman Islands

www.blueiguana.ky



BLUE IGUANA RECOVERY PROGRAM, GRAND CAYMAN, CAYMAN ISLANDS

A programme of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, with local and international partners



Internationally, we get all kinds of support, both technical and financial, through the International Reptile Conservation Foundation, and the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. Then San Diego Zoo advises us on genetic management; the Wildlife Conservation Society sends specialist vets down annually to health-screen our iguanas before release; and so it goes on. The Iguana Specialist Group network, and many individual zoos are some of the others who stay involved, one way or another.

With so many independent players, there is a danger of conflicting agendas, duplication of effort, turf wars, and other common expressions of tribal behaviour.

I have always found the best way to keep everyone aligned and working happily together, is to maintain a detailed and realistic strategic plan, and to invite anyone who wants to help, to help us implement specific elements of that one plan. Our major partners are intimately involved in formulating the plan, so it's theirs as much as it is ours. We're now updating it every 3 years.

So to summarize, linking conservation of multiple key species through conservation of shared habitat,

Species Recovery Plan
for the
Grand Cayman Blue Iguana, *Cyclura lewisi*

2009 - 2011

Formulated in a workshop held on 2nd to 5th December, 2008
Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands



OVERALL PROGRAMME GOAL

To restore a self-sustaining, free-roaming population of
Grand Cayman Blue Iguanas
in the wild

We envision a population of at least one thousand Grand Cayman Blue Iguanas, living freely within protected areas, reproducing naturally and continuing to evolve in step with their ever-changing natural environment.

Together with the iguanas, the native ecosystems in these protected areas will be managed over the long term, to control or maintain eradication of non-native species which threaten to disrupt natural processes, and to ensure that human activities do not conflict with the well-being of the iguanas and their natural environment.

The Blue Iguana will be a flagship for the conservation of the ecosystems which they inhabit. As such, they will attract nature tourism and be the inspiration for a range of commercial products. Commercial activity linked to the Blue Iguana and their habitat will generate sustainable revenue which will fund management of the Blue Iguana population and its associated protected areas, indefinitely.

is a powerful way to maximize results with minimal staff. And good flagship species can really help bring public support to bear on habitat protection. Volunteerism, training, academic affiliations, institutional partnerships, and use of strategic planning, are the other main strategies we have used successfully, to manage a typical workload for a single priority 'flagship' species. But, as I've said, this lets us pull in habitat protection and so saving a bunch more priority species, on the same wave of public support.

This is a success story, but it's also a bit of a story about how success breeds more success. A lot of what works with the BIRP works because we already have some expertise and human resource in place. So we have people to attract and manage the additional support we need. We have people to keep that support working on our agenda, to keep it focussed on our goals.

As bullet points:

- Use flagship species if you have them.
- Save many species by conservation of shared habitat.
- Select, recruit and train your volunteers.
- Look for postgraduates to produce conservation-relevant data.
- Find and keep the right institutional partners.
- Use Strategic Planning to hold it all together.

I have seen situations where some of this would

not work so well, because the trained local human resources are just too scarce to manage it. In other words, if you've got people, you can greatly amplify their capacity in some of the ways I've just described. But zero times anything is still zero, and there are situations where investment in hiring and training local people is still needed first, before any of the rest of this can really get off the starting blocks.



Bottlenecks in implementing action plans

Colin Clubbe (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew)



Clubbe, C. 2010. Bottlenecks in implementing action plans. pp 301-302 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Conservation is essentially 'management for change'. Effective management requires planning. Good planning requires understanding, documentation and actions. To conserve, maintain, manage or utilise biodiversity requires clearly articulated action plans. Many UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) and Crown Dependencies (CDs) are developing action plans.

Action plans come in all shapes and sizes, to meet many and varied specific needs. At the country level, 166 of the 190 Parties that are signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have developed National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) ([//www.cbd.int/nbsap/](http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/)).

At a species level, IUCN-The World Conservation Union's Species Survival Commission (SSC) has co-ordinated some 75 action plans for a wide range of key taxa groups of plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and a few invertebrates (www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/publications_technical_documents/publications/species_actions_plans/). Individual Species Action Plans have been developed for a wide range of single species in many countries across the world.

Sadly, many action plans are inactive and gather dust on shelves! Why is this? What are the bottlenecks to implementing action plans? Is it a question of funding? Is it lack of capacity? Is there inadequate legislation? Is there a lack of political will? The talk will explore some of these causes in relation to examples drawn from UKOTs and CDs, in an attempt to examine the challenges of implementing action plans and promoting a discussion that might identify key bottlenecks and come up with strategies to clear these, so that action plans can be activated and conservation action results. Only then, will we stand some chance of even remotely achieving the 2010 biodiversity target: "to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth" (www.cbd.int/2010-target/).

Colin Clubbe, Head, Conservation Team, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3A, UK. c.clubbe@kew.org

I want to focus in this short presentation on one specific aspect of conservation management that highlights the extreme capacity issues that most UKOTs are facing – identifying the bottlenecks to implementing Action Plans and identifying strategies to unblock these

We've been hearing during this week of the tremendous pressure that biodiversity is under from:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation

- Development
- Invasive species
- Global climate change.

We need agreed Action Plans to conserve biodiversity in the face of these increasing these threats.

Action Plans have been a key feature of biodiversity planning and management for many years. They are, in fact, built in to many Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). They are also part of



Government planning and a key mechanism for implementing MEAs - be it species action plans, habitat action plans, or biodiversity strategy and action plans. But how many of these action plans have been implemented, let alone successful?

A good plan emerges when it is inclusive and all stakeholders have the opportunity to input. Isabel Peters told me of the phenomenon of ‘consultantitis’ when I was in St Helena recently, whereby consultants come to St Helena, write a report which then sits on a shelf, often completely ignored. This is applicable to action plans, where an ‘expert’ might write the plan and then hand over to a local implementing organisation who have no real ownership - and so the plan sits on a shelf! The key to getting a good plan that has the potential to be successfully implemented is for it to be developed in an inclusive and participatory way

Much wildlife legislation is out-dated and not up to the job of protecting biodiversity, so needs updating. We heard, for example, from Stephen Mendes on the drafting of the Conservation and Environmental Management Act (CEMA) as a comprehensive way of including all the needs in this area. We heard also from Gina Ebanks-Petrie on Sunday (Section 1) about the problems of out-dated legislation and the challenges of getting good new legislation passed and enacted.

For successful implementation, it is vital that the skills necessary are possessed by those implementing action plans. This is where international partnerships are important, and where I feel Kew’s key role in UKOTs lies – capacity building. We have a range of programmes and opportunities for international partners.

Funding is the major issue and often why a good action plan remains on the shelf – lack

of the sustained funding to implement the plan. It is really important to include a realistic budget to implement plans, and to identify sources of funding.

A clear implementation plan is the real key to a successful action plan:

- Who is responsible to do what?
- What is the timeframe?
- What resources are needed for each step?
- Who is responsible for providing these resources?

One area that we have discussed extensively this week is:

- how do we mainstream biodiversity/conservation issues into the political process?; and
- how do we ensure it appears as a key priority, rather than, say, purely as a supporting pillar for tourism?

In summary, for a successful Action Plan, we need to unblock the various bottlenecks identified, enhance capacity and resource all elements of the process to ensure that the Plan is:

- Inclusive
- Agreed
- Owned
- Resourced
- Funded
- Implemented
- And finally ensure that it results in action!

We need to unblock these because the clock is ticking. As we’ve heard throughout this week, the UKOTs hold unique biodiversity which is under extreme pressure, and there is not the capacity for everything that needs to be done. And as we delay in liberating these resources and enhancing capacity, we are still losing biodiversity.



Enhancing capacity - sponsorship

Mat DaCosta-Cottam



DaCosta-Cottam, M. 2010. PEnhancing capacity - sponsorship. pp 303-311 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

As an introduction to seeking sponsorship funding and to stimulate the discussion, Dr Mat DaCosta-Cottam has written the following article, based on his forthcoming book *Goose Whisperer - The Fundamental Principles Of Writing Grants, Winning Sponsorship, And Obtaining Free Money And Stuff For Your Worthy Cause*.

Dr Mat DaCosta-Cottam, Manager - Terrestrial Unit, Cayman Islands Department of Environment, Cayman Islands. mat.cottam@gov.ky

THE GOOSE THAT LAID THE GOLDEN EGGS

Most of us will know the story of *The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs*, attributed to Aesop. It tells the tale of an old farmer and his wife, who had the good fortune to possess a goose that squeezed out eggs of the 24-carat variety.

Lucky though they were, the couple soon began to think they were not getting rich fast enough. Neither the old farmer nor his wife were blessed with a background in avian biology, and it was not long before they started to imagine that, to lay a golden egg, the insides of their prize bird must be made of solid gold.

Tempted by glossy real estate magazines, and frustrated by the innocent goose's low rate of return, the old farmer and his wife hatched a dastardly scheme to cash in the mother load.

There followed a terrible scene involving a hatchet, a chopping block, flying feathers and the cold steel of betrayal. When they cut the goose open, however, they made a solemn discovery. *The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs* was just like any other goose: all guts, no gold.

After one good meal, and a few pâté sandwiches, they were broke.

The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs has always been one of my favorite tales. It has all the essential elements of a good drama: conflict, high cash stakes, a bit of murder and mayhem, and no schmaltzy ending involving magical kisses or woodland creatures holding hands and singing.

You might be tempted to dismiss *The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs* as a fairytale. It isn't. It is a fable: a story which illuminates a moral – a fundamental principle of life.

The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs enshrines the fundamental principles of *Writing Grants, Winning Sponsorship, and Obtaining Free Money and Stuff...*

Greed destroys the source of good.
Think before you act...

... and last, but by no means least...

A well-tended GOOSE will keep you in GOLD.

WORKING WITHOUT AWARDS CRITERIA

Identifying which DONORS are best suited to funding your PROJECT is usually a simple matter of comparing your SKELETON PROPOSAL to the AWARDS CRITERIA of potential DONORS...

... but how do you identify your ideal DONOR in the *absence* of any AWARDS CRITERIA?

Poorly defined (or completely lacking) AWARDS CRITERIA probably represent the single biggest reason why many fundraisers shy away from approaching a CORPORATE DONOR.

To pluck your golden-egg laying goose from the pedestrian gaggle, you will need to use the following 3 MAGICAL ITEMS:

Your NETWORK
Your RESEARCH MATERIALS
Your THEMES

NETWORK

Your NETWORK is probably the most powerful tool you have at your disposal. Some people overlook their friends, family and people they know... *after all, what could they have to offer?*

Don't be one of these people. Your NETWORK is packed full of people with insider information and experience, just *waiting* for that warm and fuzzy feeling from *helping YOU*. Your NETWORK is there to help.

Do them a favor – let them HELP YOU.

If you know someone, or know *someone who knows someone* who might be interested in supporting your PROJECT – they *deserve* a place on your DONOR SHORTLIST.

REMEMBER: *There is no NEED to feel embarrassed about asking. You are NOT asking for something for nothing. You are OFFERING your prospective DONOR the opportunity to be a part of your great PROJECT.*

RESEARCH MATERIALS

A large part of targeting your ideal DONOR boils down to *effective* RESEARCH. Nothing can guarantee you success, but effective research will *minimize* your chance of rejection.

THE INTERNET is an invaluable tool for hunting down DONORS. Anyone can select a SEARCH ENGINE such as Google, then type a combination of the words and phrases such as “charitable”, “funds”, “grant”, “awards”, “philanthropic”, “grant awarding trusts”, “corporate giving”. Press ENTER and see what turns up.

Many search engines offer ADVANCED SEARCH options. ADVANCED SEARCH options enable you to search for specific phrases or groups of words, while excluding others.

A more *targeted* approach is to check the CORPORATE WEBSITE of a potential donor. Look for the section devoted to “Charitable Programs” or “Corporate Giving”. If you don't find what you are looking for, drop them an email through the “CONTACT US” section.

You can also use the INTERNET to search for LOCAL PRESS items.

THE LOCAL PRESS is an important source of information on LOCAL donors. WHO is giving? HOW much? WHEN? To WHAT causes? The easiest way to search the LOCAL PRESS is through their own INTERNET websites. Most publications have an online version which is easily searchable.

LIBRARIES will usually take a wide variety of LOCAL and NATIONAL PRESS, allowing you to keep tabs on potential DONORS free of charge.

LIBRARIES are a great source of information. LIBRARIES will help you search and REQUEST books, including DIRECTORIES OF CHARITABLE TRUSTS... enabling you to take advantage of their valuable information completely free of charge. Libraries are also a source of PRESS, and (often free) computer and INTERNET access.

Your LOCAL TELEPHONE DIRECTORY is an essential research tool. Not everyone is online or has a website... but almost everyone is in the PHONE BOOK. Use the TELEPHONE DIRECTORY to source LOCAL DONORS. You can also use the phone directory to get *quotes* on items of equipment and professional services enabling you to quickly construct an accurate BUDGET for your PROJECT.

ESSENTIAL FIELD EQUIPMENT:

HIGHLIGHTER PEN: When you are researching potential DONORS it can be easy to accumulate a large amount of paperwork, press articles and corporate literature. Your HIGHLIGHTER PEN will help guide your eyes back to the *key* words and phrases, and save you from having to re-read the fluff.

Effective research on your prospective DONOR is essential. The more YOU know about your DONOR, the more YOU will know what they find *attractive*.

... you will discover their THEMES...

THEMES - HARNESSING THE POWER OF COMMONALITY

A THEME is a concept or an ethos, a way of thinking that is central to a company or business. THEMES influence mottos and logos, product design, Mission Statements and advertising campaigns. THEMES are powerful. Rather like an iceberg - just a small part might be visible, but the business end lies out of sight... and carries some serious weight.

When CORPORATE DONORS see that *your* PROJECT shares *their* THEME, they will immediately feel they have something in common with YOU. When corporations sponsor PROJECTS which match their core THEMES, it facilitates a simple and effective advertising avenue for them.

... no doubt, they also help out of the goodness of their hearts – but that great advertising sure is a bonus ...

The general public often overlooks THEMES, or thinks they are little more than an advertising gimmick, but in many cases THEMES run to the very *heart* of big business.

If your PROJECT shares a THEME with a DONOR, your PROJECT will appeal to the very heart of the company.

THE THEME MACHINE

Fortunately there is a simple technique YOU can use to identify common THEMES at will. All you need is a PEN and PAPER, or alternatively, a spreadsheet program like EXCEL. This is all you need to make

yourself a THEME MACHINE.

I first developed the THEME MACHINE as a teenager. At the time I was determined not to get a proper job, and planned instead to make my living by traveling the world and winning commercial caption writing competitions in my spare time. (*Yes, father, you were right...*).

For those who don't know, caption writing competitions are the ones you sometimes see on the back of cereal boxes: *"Complete the following sentence in 15 words or less..."* The objective of the competition is to deliver a catchy phrase, which links together a brand product, some mythical product virtue, and an obscure prize - like a holiday for two in Ibiza. To win a *caption writing competition* you need to identify COMMONALITIES between disparate entities, and wrap it up in a punchy, one-line sales pitch.

CASE STUDY:

Caption competition for Budweiser, the "great American beer". Complete the following sentence in 15 words or less. "I'm gonna beam with Budweiser because..."

The THEME MACHINE identified the commonalities as "gonna" and "wanna", and "beer can" and "Uncle Sam" - on the basis that they both sort of rhyme with each other, and that "can" was a homograph with alternate meanings of a "a container for beer" and "a prison".

The prize winning caption: "I'm gonna beam with Budweiser... because I wanna spring Uncle Sam from the can".

Why am I telling you all this?

YOU can use a THEME MACHINE to identify COMMONALITIES between anything: beer cans and the U.S. of A. : your PROJECT and your DONOR.

Maybe you have a PROJECT and want to know what sort of DONOR might sponsor you?

Maybe you have a PROJECT and a prospective DONOR, and want to identify which aspects of your project will most likely interest them?

... the THEME MACHINE will help you.

EXAMPLE: You are busy conducting a research project on an interesting but obscure little lizard on the Caribbean Island of Little Cayman. The lizard is called the "Little Cayman Green Anole", and though it is endemic to the island, and bright green with a remarkably long snout, its diminutive size and unassuming nature mean many locals have never even heard of it. You are concerned by loss of lizard habitat to development, and the possible impact of insecticides on their food sources, making your survey of great conservation value. One fateful day, however, an unexpected global economic meltdown results in your project funds being redirected to bail out a major financial institution, and your anole study suddenly looks to be out on a limb...

What sort of CORPORATE DONOR might sponsor your anole project?

Let's run your lizards through a THEME MACHINE.

STEP 1:

Take your spreadsheet (electronic or paper) and in the top left hand corner write down your KEYWORD – THE WORD central to your PROJECT QUESTION... let's try LIZARDS...

STEP 2:

Move along the row, adding DIFFERENT KEYWORDS or COMMON PHRASES as they come to mind. Keep going till you get six or so *different* words or phrases. Try to cover *different* aspects of your PROJECT.

Different words →

LIZARDS	Little Cayman	Endemic	Long nose	Survey	Green
----------------	---------------	---------	-----------	--------	-------

STEP 3:

Next, go back along your line of WORDS and PHRASES, and beneath each one, write down as many *related* WORDS and PHRASES as you can – each one should have *something in common* with the word or phrase at the top of the column. *Just add whatever comes to mind.* It doesn't matter whether your words appear in another column, are ridiculous, or don't even make sense. RANDOM WORDS are often the best ones - they are the ones bubbling up from your subconscious...

↓ Similar words

LIZARDS	Little Cayman	Endemic	Long nose	Survey	Green
Anole					
Scales					
Claws					
Gecko					
Agile...					

IMPORTANT: *Don't stop to edit your list, or check your spellings.* DON'T THINK, JUST WRITE!

STEP 4:

When you have run dry of new words and phrases, *then and only then*, reach for your DICTIONARY or THESAURUS, and add additional words or phrases which take your fancy, until you feel your spreadsheet is complete.

How long should you take filling out your THEME MACHINE? This example took about five minutes to finish, but I have spent an hour or more on larger ones. The best idea is to stop before you get bored.

LIZARDS	Little Cayman	Endemic	Survey	Long nose	Green
Anole	Little	Rare	Look	Nose hair	Green lantern
Scales	Cayman Islands	Unique	Search	Tweezers	Green goblin
Claws	Peaceful	Species	Opinion poll	Pinocchio	Eco-friendly
Gecko	Diving	Local	Compass	Elephant	Recycling
Agile	Beaches	Conservation	Land	Win by a nose	Solar power
Cute	Peace and quiet		Surveyors	Knows	Village green
Tiny	Relaxed		Chartered	Runny nose	Bowling green
Godzilla	Sun			Have a nose	Grass
Dinosaur	Tourism			Nose for trouble	Green iguana
Cold-blooded				Nosey parker	

STEP 5:

Look through your matrix. HIGHLIGHT any words and phrases which look interesting. Highlight anything you LIKE. Highlight COMMONALITIES.

- WORDS and PHRASES which rhyme, or nearly rhyme, or just sound good together
- Synonyms, homographs and other words with the potential for word play

- WORDS and PHRASES which appear in more than one column, or
- PHRASES which contain a word or similar words to other columns.

Whatever the reason they appeal to you, it doesn't matter, just highlight them.

When you have finished you will have highlighted a list of interesting and catchy words and phrases which are linked to one another, and which are also linked to your central QUESTION. These WORDS and PHRASES represent your raw THEMES.

IMPORTANT: For anyone who thinks that incidental COMMONALITY with an obscure lizard will likely be insufficient reason for a CORPORATE DONOR to drop thousands of dollars, I suggest you look no further than the Geico gecko... yup, that's a multi-million dollar ad campaign based on words which are "sort of similar"...

USING YOUR PROJECT THEMES TO DETERMINE WHAT SORT OF DONOR MIGHT SPONSOR YOU

So, how did our LIZARDS do?

Let's see what LIZARD THEMES leap out at us...

LIZARDS: The first column highlights an interesting issue with LIZARDS – there are words like "cute" and there are words like "claws". Mention "lizards" and some people will immediately think "ahh", others will be rolling up the newspaper or reaching for a handy flip-flop. In the CORPORATE world, IMAGE IS EVERYTHING... and so IMAGE is worth bearing in mind when YOU approach a CORPORATE DONOR. Well... let's not give up hope just yet, Godzilla and Dinosaurs are certainly cool (if unlikely sources of sponsorship). For me, the only thing creeping out of this list is GECKO... hey, if Geico can cash in on lizards, maybe our lizards can cash in on Geico?

NOTE: It should come as little surprise that Geico do indeed use their Gecko in support of wildlife conservation, most recently with the GEICO-AZA 'Traveling Gecko' Exhibit.

LITTLE CAYMAN: Hmm... I am relaxing just reading this column. This makes me think "eco-tourism industry". In the case of Little Cayman, this option is perhaps not so strong... anole lizards are tiny, and the island has already filled its billing for herpetological superstars with the impressive Sister Islands Rock Iguana.

ENDEMIC: Boy, this column was a struggle... however, once again it highlights an important concept: facts such as "ENDEMISM", which may be of key scientific interest or conservation importance, may not be so helpful in securing a CORPORATE DONOR. If your background is in science or conservation, it may benefit you to put your value system on hold... at least temporarily. If "a bird with pretty colours" feeds on your "critically endangered endemic slime", you may be better off angling your corporate approach towards helping feed the pretty birds...

SURVEY: Again, not much luck with the technical side of things. While dedicated scientific funding sources might relish an opportunity to support a well-designed population survey, CORPORATE DONORS are likely to be less thrilled at the thought of your innovative mark and recapture technique. On the other hand, "Chartered surveyors" might just relate to your interest in tape measures? Remember, when corporations sponsor PROJECTS which match their core THEMES, it facilitates a simple and effective advertising avenue for them.

LONG NOSE: The long nose of the Anole is a novel feature, and one which is great visually. GREAT VISUAL = GREAT ADVERTISEMENT POTENTIAL. This is complemented by "knows" and "nose" - a powerful homograph, because most businesses like to consider themselves professionally "in the know"

or to “have a nose” for their area of expertise. Combining these two THEMES, “a good nose” and “a big nose” makes me think of WINE TASTERS!

GREEN: In addition to bringing to light my latent and rather embarrassing interest in comic books, this last column gave rise to some interesting opportunities through the homograph “green” – which is the NAME and the COLOUR of our ANOLES *and* also means “environmentally friendly”. What better MASCOT or LOGO for a local green initiative, than a funny-looking local endemic species which is actually called the “GREEN ANOLE”?

A cursory glance through the matrix, has revealed a couple of THEMIC opportunities already. Time to reach for your HIGHLIGHTER PEN and highlight the most interesting words and phrases. Remember, ANYTHING GOES! Look up and down columns and BETWEEN columns for words which are repeated or possess similarities. THEMES repeating between columns indicates MULTIPLE COMMONALITIES. In the “GREEN” column, I immediately highlight “SOLAR POWER”. A “GREEN” “SOLAR POWER” company is likely already sympathetic to environmental causes. Additionally, our “GREEN” “LIZARDS” are “COLD-BLOODED”, and so they are effectively “SOLAR POWERED” too... and in “LITTLE CAYMAN” there is plenty of “SUN”. There – a triplet of good reasons for our local SOLAR POWER company to sponsor our lizard project.

Okay, so you have used your THEME MACHINE to successfully identify potential CORPORATE DONORS. Given the strong connecting THEMES of being “GREEN”, relying on “SOLAR POWER” the “SUNNY” Cayman Islands, and the NETWORKING value of a local company, approaching a local SOLAR POWER company would probably be my number one choice. Approaching GEICO might be my number two choice...

... however, lets make life difficult for ourselves... and set our sights on the more obscure option of the WINE TASTER. Personally, I am a *Red Stripe* guy, so a bit of RESEARCH is needed for me to find out something about the WINE business.

My first INTERNET search is for “CARIBBEAN WINE” to capitalize on the THEMES of “ENDEMIC” and “LOCAL”. Unfortunately, Caribbean wine is not on a par with Caribbean rum, so I move further afield to search for “FLORIDA WINE”... only to discover 90% of U.S. wine is produced in CALIFORNIA, way over on the west coast. Looks like we might have to lose the “LOCAL” THEME if we are going to pursue a WINE TASTER donor.

The Wikipedia page for “CALIFORNIA WINE” states “Today there are more than 1,200 wineries in the state, ranging from small boutique wineries to large corporations like E & J Gallo Winery with distribution across the globe.” So, let’s take a closer look at “E & J Gallo”.

What we need to do now is get to KNOW our prospective DONOR.

The best way to do this is to go on a WEBSITE TREASURE HUNT.

WEBSITE TREASURE HUNT

Forget about wearing your heart on your sleeve, DONORS wear their CORPORATE HEARTS on their WEBSITES. If you want to get inside the heart of a potential DONOR - get inside their WEBSITE.

ORACLE MOMENT: *Getting to your DONOR’S heart is the first step to getting into their pockets.*

Time to use your THEME MACHINE to identify commonalities between E & J Gallo Winery and our lizard study...

The key phrase this time is, rather imaginatively, “E & J Gallo”, beneath which I list everything I know about the company. As you can see, I am no aficionado, however, after noting “GRAPES” I am reminded

that a major habitat for our anoles is “SEAGRAPE”. Sure, it’s tenuous. Make a note of it anyway.

E & J GALLO	Environment	Geography	Marketing
Wine	50:50 set aside	California	Barefoot Cellars
Red	Code of practice	Cayman	Sebka cheetah
White	Beneficial insects	Community	Black Swan
California	Hawk encouragement	90 countries	Leaves
Grape	Prevention of soil erosion	Wine buyers	Fact sheet
Seagrape	Goose habitat	Sales	
	Bird survey	Distributors	
	Wetland creation		
	River restoration		
	Composting urban waste		

Next I SEARCH for “E & J Gallo Winery” in Google. The top hit is their homepage. One click and we are transported to a world of lush vineyards and ancient barrels slumbering in mysterious cellars.

The first tab on the page invites us to “Meet our family and discover the values that guide our business”... not a bad idea! Here we discover the Mission Statement, and Values of the company. We also discover an “ENVIRONMENT” tab... this will become our next column heading.

In the “ENVIRONMENT” section we learn that “As a family-owned winery, it is important to us that future generations can enjoy the natural resources we take pleasure in today”, and the page goes on to list a slew of ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS which the company has supported, including a 50:50 wildlife habitat set-aside for each acre of vineyards. It would seem that this company appreciates the value of a healthy environment for healthy crops, and is prepared do something about it. So far so good. Their work on encouraging natural crop management and BENEFICIAL INSECTS is especially interesting given our concern regarding the impact of insecticides on our anoles.

However, the page also states “The company underlines its commitment to develop environmental and business strategies that demonstrate our long-term commitment to the communities in which we operate”. This may raise a flag regarding “GEOGRAPHY” - California is hardly in the neighborhood of the Cayman Islands. An apparent lack of international projects in their ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS list could work against us... it could equally work *for us*, if we make an approach which makes a strong case that the Cayman Islands is one of the “communities” in which E & J Gallo operate. One thing is for sure, plenty of wine is drunk in the Cayman Islands. In this case, PARTNERING with a LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR of E & J Gallo, would certainly support an approach. YOU *know* the LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR, and he *knows* E & J Gallo (at least on a professional basis). As such, PARTNERING in this way would transform our approach from a COLD CALL to a NETWORK approach.

Okay, lets get back to the WINE. According to their list of BRAND NAMES, the winery produces many different brand products. No “GREEN ANOLE WINE” unfortunately, though I make a note of “BARE-FOOT CELLARS” as that sounds kinda islandy. Their Sebeka brand has a cheetah on the front, so they are not averse to animal labels... other logos used include a crest, twin cockerels, a Black Swan, and an abundance of barrels. “LEAVES” feature as a prominent logo on many labels. Anoles live on leaves... (hmm, that really *is* tenuous...)

Review your new THEME MACHINE, and also compare it with your first attempt. It would appear that our Little Cayman Green Anole Project has several THEMES in common with E & J Gallo as a prospective DONOR:

- NOSE: A good nose is a cornerstone of the wine-making industry, and our anole is certainly nasally advantaged.

- ENVIRONMENT: The company seems to have a healthy history of supporting diverse environmental projects. Of special interest is their work on reducing crop spraying, and use of beneficial insects.
- COMMUNITY: Pitching the wine buying public of Cayman as part of the E & J Gallo “community” would likely be an important component in the potential success of our bid. An apparent lack of involvement in international conservation projects, however, may indicate a strict preference by the company, to support projects closer to home.

Okay... are these common THEMES enough to warrant an approach to support our project? Maybe. Maybe not. My gut feeling is that our “E & J Gallo” THEME MACHINE did not reveal any stand out COMMONALITIES. If one of their wines had actually had a lizard on the label, that would have been great... hey, wait a minute...

A quick Google search of “Lizard Wine” results in some recipes for a rather literal traditional Vietnamese beverage ... and then up pops “Leaping Lizard Wine”. A wriggly lizard unashamedly adorns each bottle. “Leaping Lizard”, a product of Adler Fels Winery, is also located in the Napa Valley, California. (We can probably assume that the lizard content of “Leaping Lizard” is restricted to the label).

“An entertaining name, easy-drinking wine...” ... and these guys obviously love lizards!

Maybe it’s time for another website treasure hunt?

IMPORTANT: *Don’t use your RESEARCH as an excuse for not IMPLEMENTING. It is not necessary for you to find “THE ONE best donor in the whole world” for your PROJECT – you simply need to find “ONE OF THE ONES” that will give you the support which YOU and your PROJECT need. Once you have found ONE GOOD DONOR - go for it - finding extras is a waste of time.*

2 MORE IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Don’t assume that just because you share many common THEMES with a prospective DONOR, you are on to a sure thing. *There is no such thing as a sure thing.*
- THEMES are a POWERFUL TOOL. Don’t get carried away by a THEME which is not your own. If your CORPORATE DONOR wants to turn your project into an advertising fiasco, look for someone who is interested in helping you as well as helping themselves.

DISCLAIMER: Please note company names appearing in this example are by way of illustration only, and carry no inference.

Adapted from Goose Whisperer - The Fundamental Principles Of Writing Grants, Winning Sponsorship, And Obtaining Free Money And Stuff For Your Worthy Cause

© All rights reserved

No reproduction without the written permission of the author

Dr. Mat DaCosta-Cottam 2009

www.thegoosewhisperer.com

JNCC Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Programme - Fundraising

Nikki Chapman (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)



Chapman, N. 2010. JNCC Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Programme - Fundraising. p 312 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

In November 2008, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) appointed a UK Overseas Territories Fundraising Officer, Dr Nikki Chapman. This is a 12-month, fixed-term appointment position, funded by Department for International Development (DFID). The position was the UK's response to acknowledging the requirement that nature conservation in the UKOTs is a priority and that by facilitating access to existing and new funding source information it may assist in providing needed support for future nature conservation projects.

There are two main deliverables within the appointment:

1. To collate both existing and new funding sources into a database which is accessible to UKOT personnel.
2. To support, where required, UKOT personnel in funding applications or related training

The database, located on the JNCC webpage [http://www.jncc.gov.uk/International/UKOT and crown dependencies/Funding Sources](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/International/UKOT%20and%20crown%20dependencies/Funding%20Sources), will be launched at this conference. The poster advertises both the launch of the database and also invites UKOT personnel to provide feedback to whether they would like support from the Fundraising Officer, between June-December 2009, and in what format e.g. literature, advice, workshop.

Dr Nikki Chapman, Joint Nature Conservation Committee,
nikki.chapman@jncc.gov.uk

[The full version of this article was not received.]

Mobilising local volunteers in support of environmental work: a Falklands Conservation Case Study

Pierre Pistorius (Conservation Officer, Falklands Conservation)



Pistorius, P. 2010. Mobilising local volunteers in support of environmental work: a Falklands Conservation Case Study. p 313 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Falklands Conservation, the charity taking action for nature in the Falkland Islands, was established in 1979 and has since become the lead organization involved in many aspects of biodiversity monitoring, research and habitat restoration. To increase the capacity to allow for the myriad of field-based activities necessary to meet some of the larger goals of the organization, a volunteering programme was established in 2000. Engaging local volunteers has increased the capacity of the organization to deal with environmental problems, such as oiled penguins, habitat restoration (mainly through tussock planting) and coastal pollution. Although volunteers that have listed with the organization are often used, the local community at large are also called upon through the local newspaper to assist with functions such as beach clean-ups. Members of a “Watchgroup”, consisting of school children at various levels, are also called on to help and engage in environmental programmes. While this fulfils some of the organization’s needs, it also instils a sense of environmental custodianship within the community. The Falklands host significant proportions of the world populations of several seabird species, and these have been central to Falklands Conservation’s activities. This has attracted global interest from foreign ornithologists to volunteer with the organization. These candidates are often used to fill in during the summer months and breeding season for most monitored species. The use of foreign volunteers to help with this relatively glamorous work comes at a cost, as local volunteers often lose interest and become difficult to recruit for the more arduous field activities.

Dr Pierre Pistorius, Conservation Officer, Falklands Conservation.
pierre.pistorius@conservation.org.fk

[The full version of this article was not received. The rapporteur noted the following key points of conclusions additional to the information provided by the author in the abstract above:

- Effective coordination and recruitment of volunteers
- Having a prioritised list of work/projects that can be undertaken at various times of the year
- Engaging military in volunteer work
- Ensuring volunteers are good custodians
- Networking with other organizations that could benefit from volunteers
- Enabling locals to assist with passive surveillance.]

Mobilising local volunteers in support of environmental work: Ascension

Stedson Stroud



Stroud, S. 2010. Mobilising local volunteers in support of environmental work: Ascension. p 314 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Stedson Stroud, Ascension Island Government Conservation Officer
Stedson.stroud@ascension.gov.ac www.ascensionconservation.org.ac

Good afternoon everyone. I would like to begin by thanking the UKOT Conservation Forum for inviting me to this event. My name is Stedson Stroud and I head the Ascension Island Government Conservation Department. I am originally from St. Helena.

On Ascension, we have an up and running volunteer programme. We started this by developing a policy framework for volunteers which addressed a range of areas, including health and safety, liability etc. We also developed information packs for the volunteers. This framework has proved to be very successful and is being considered as a model by other South Atlantic Overseas Territories. The framework and volunteer packs are on our website – please feel free to copy them as you wish if that is useful.

The volunteers come from a range of different backgrounds: local youth groups, UK and US military personnel, visiting scientists, visitors to the island and expats' spouses to name a few.

What do the volunteers do? There are a range of activities that volunteers become involved in – from species monitoring of whales, dolphins, land crabs, turtles and endemic plants, to invasives species control. Many volunteers pull out weeds from endemic plant restoration areas and from wild habitats. Others do beach clean-ups or path clearing.

Volunteering on Ascension works really well. Part of this is because there is a good framework in place. The volunteers are integrated into existing work programmes and used almost as 'free' extra members of staff. Part of our volunteer programme is to appreciate their work with a departmental traditional Ascension Fish Fry in their honour when they leave.

If you would like any more information our programme, please contact me or feel free to look at and use the documentation on our website.



For those of you who don't know, Ascension island is 5 degrees south of the equator. in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. As someone said, it's the gateway to the lost islands of the South Atlantic.

The role of UKOTCF in recruiting and coordinating volunteers for UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies

Dace McCoy Ground (Bermuda National Trust; UKOTCF)



Ground, M.C. McCoy. 2010. The role of UKOTCF in recruiting and coordinating volunteers for UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. pp 315-316 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

This presentation recalls the long role of UKOTCF in organising external volunteers to meet Territory requests, and how this has changed over the years, to take account of both the success of this programme and changing needs.

Dace McCoy Ground (Bermuda National Trust; UKOTCF), dace@logic.bm

Initially, UKOTCF worked mainly to co-ordinate the efforts of the UK-based member organisations, to help meet the needs of the member organisations in the territories.

Some of the examples of these which depended on the co-ordination of volunteer input were:

- Helping local people to establish and develop conservation NGOs in several territories
- Helping both NGO partners and some government departments develop their capacity
- Providing assistance to several territories to help review conservation legislation.
- Facilitating the review of conservation priorities in the territories
- The Seabird Restoration in Ascension
- Establishing a biodiversity survey in an example Caribbean Territory, initially Montserrat and then (after volcanic interruption) the Cayman Islands
- Pulling various partners in to assist the conservation of the Montserrat Oriole and the Mountain Chicken, after the Montserrat volcano.
- Helping to explain the implications of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to decision makers in various territories, resulting in complete sign-up to Ramsar by UK territories; and continuing to advise in this area.

- At various stages putting forward the idea of what became the Environment Charters, and facilitating their use.
- Developing conferences, website and other communication means to help partners in the different territories exchange ideas, something that rarely happened previously between either NGO or Government bodies.
- Initiating ideas for the recent series of studies on Tristan da Cunha
- Promoting the initiation of the OTEP fund and some of its FCO predecessors

With the successful development of these over several years, UKOTCF encouraged its member organisations to develop strong links between each other, so that the UKOTCF secretariat needed to play less of a role of intermediary. The Forum re-directed effort to widen the involvement to include individual volunteer experts (mainly scientific), as well as member organisations, in work to support local partners.

The work with partners in the Turks and Caicos Islands provides an example of this, elements include:

- Identification, with the local community, of the potential and needs for conservation, interpre-

tation and sustainable use of the areas adjacent to the North, Middle and East Caicos Ramsar site.

- Darwin Initiative Project to investigate the natural and other interest of these areas.
- Work, supported by OTEP and many other bodies, to use the Darwin results to implement interpretive and conservation facilities.
- Facilitation, with TCI Government and stakeholders, of a strategy to implement the Environment Charter, a pilot for other territories also.
- Work on the TC National Trust Primary School Education programme, “Our Land, Our Sea, Our People”

In recent years, the Forum has been investigating the potential for bringing in a wider range of volunteer specialists – in addition to the scientific, conservation and education areas that are well established.

One of these involved the completion of the refurbishment and fitting out of the Middle Caicos Conservation Centre of the Turks and Caicos National Trust. This was done by Steve and Mary Cheeseman (see following article). Mary is a semi-retired primary school teacher. Steve was previously a Harrier pilot in the Royal Air Force (including a stint as head of the detachment in Belize), and then a senior pilot with British Airways. Since retiring from BA, he has developed his own business. He advises schools on their Information Technology needs and is an IT consultant. In addition, he designs and manages building renovation projects. His talents in this area range from sophisticated technical computer-aided design to being able to fix nearly anything. Steve will shortly give a short taster of working as a volunteer.

The Future

Several partners in the Territories have indicated interest in UKOTCF developing this work. The Forum already receives offers of such help, and is working to develop a programme putting these together.

Volunteering: a view from the bottom up by a non-traditional UKOTCF volunteer; or *Are volunteers an invasive alien species?*

Steve Cheeseman (UKOTCF volunteer)



Cheeseman, S. 2010. Volunteering: a view from the bottom up by a non-traditional UKOTCF volunteer; or Are volunteers an invasive alien species? pp 317-322 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

A slide-based presentation from a 'non-traditional volunteer' about experiences of volunteering for UKOTCF in Turks & Caicos. At the end of a long supply chain, a high degree of flexibility and preparedness to face challenges is required. In this case, considerable discomfort for the volunteers should result in a much more comfortable and practicable working environment in future for scientists and conservationists, as well as enabling a working visitor centre for passing on the conservation message. UKOTCF is exploring further use of novel forms of volunteering.

In this light-hearted, but serious, presentation the author indicates: who these volunteers are and what they did, and offers some conclusions.

Steve Cheeseman (UKOTCF volunteer), steve.cheeseman@hemscott.net

We, Steve and Mary Cheeseman, are not scientists. I am a retired pilot (Royal Air Force harriers and then British Airways longhaul) and Mary is a teacher. We were 'recruited' by Mike and Ann Pienkowski at a party in our village at home; as we walked home from the party, we realised we had volunteered to go to a small island that we didn't even know where it was...

We both had time to do something different for a challenge, and both had a fairly wide range of skills and experience. The eventual outcome was that we survived having done a lot of work, and our experiences suggested that this might provide a model for some future project-based volunteering.

Where did we go? To the Middle Caicos Conservation Centre (MCCC), Bambarra, Turks & Caicos Islands. Middle Caicos covers about 48 square miles and has a human population of about 300.

The MCCC had been converted from a disused school building by a local contractor, but the stand-





One of the smaller faults: light fitting not well fitted - and positioned where it would be hit every time the door opened.

ard of finish was very poor and the building could not be used for the purpose it was designed for.

We went out for 4 weeks. During this

time, we were to get the buildings into a fit state for use. The main building was really two adjoining ones, one with rooms to serve as a visitor centre, an office and a laboratory, and the other as accommodation for visiting scientists. A separate building provided a laundry room and washrooms for visitors to the Centre.

We had a 6-page list of tasks. We also had a number of challenges, such as being at the end of a tenuous local supply chain which included the new causeway from North Caicos to Middle Caicos. Travel was by British Airways to Providenciales, then small boat to North Caicos. then truck to the MCCC on Middle Caicos.

The mosquitoes were in season.

We had limited resources: building materials, tools, transport, time, endurance and, last but not least, tonic for Gin & Tonics.



Transport was, in fact, very limited. One of our first tasks was to look at this truck and fix it. We could not - it was in such poor condition.

This had a significant impact on our work. We had two bikes instead.

It was 40 minutes by truck to the nearest shop. So

we had to share a truck with Naqqi, who lived an hour away and needed the truck for his own work.

.....then a wheel fell off this other truck, just to make things more difficult.

One of the major tasks was to fix the toilet block which had 4 toilets installed but had no connections and no water supply. Our task involved getting into an old raised concrete tank, fixing old pipework, and installing a new system. Unfortunately, this tank was also part of the social housing area for mosquitoes.



Pictures of toilet block and associated work



We finished the toilets in a nice blue colour. (It was all they had in stock.) The toilets are now in regular use - both by the intended users and by an invasive species of frog.



The next task was to build a storm drain and retaining wall from local resources. This was needed because the



Flooding into MCCC from heavy rains

original building had been badly positioned, leading to flooding into the MCCC and soil runoff whenever it rained heavily - which, of course, it does in the hurricane season and at some other times.

We completed the digging of a storm drain and wall using entirely local resources. The stone was dug from the 'swamp' around the building, another area of mossie social housing. It was then cut by hand. The sand was dug from the beach (under a local byelaw) and transported, using an old dustbin and a box from the local dump. Unfortunately the wheelbarrow wheel fell off - which did not help.



Storm drain and wall being built and finished

We did a number of tasks in the accommodation, including reinstalling the oven which had been put in by a local 'electrician', who really did not understand; the casing had been wired to the live supply, causing some fireworks and a certain amount of pain.

Also in the accommodation, we:

- moved the kitchen units to fit;

- installed hot water pipework from the boiler to the kitchen and bathroom;
- wired and commissioned the boiler;
- re-wired the phone points so that they worked;
- installed network wiring and points;
- made curtains, coat hooks and a bookshelf.



Part of finished accommodation. We ran out of tonic. due to the transport problems: hence the orange juice with the gin on the table (not recommended).



This shows a SkeeterVac, a device designed for reducing mosquito impact in a restricted area.

We had to assemble these without instructions - which proved amusing.

They take 3 weeks to work - by attracting and then killing the breeding females. They were very suc-

successful at attracting mossies, but quickly became full. They were meant to be serviced every week, but we had to do this every day and even then we could not keep up with the excessive supply of mossies. Mike and Ann tell us that this shows how biologically rich the area is.

The mossies that got away seemed to be very aggressive. So, assesment for mosquito control: a short term failure – long term hope....

We also had to fix leaks in the roof and fix the gutter, which had been installed so that all the water ran to the middle. However, there was no down-pipe there, so the water just overflowed. We fixed this by re-installing the gutter with a new down-pipe.



Roof and gutter – both had major leaks. The gutter was rebuilt, and the roof leaks plugged from inside and out. Also showing the home made ladder; the proper one had gone missing but re-appeared late in our stay.

UKOTCF, with help from Naqqi, had designed, produced and mounted, in the public area, a series of display boards on the natural and cultural heritage of the area, and its sustainable use and conservation. However, some boards relating to exhibits



Mary working on the display boards in part of the public area.



Part of office with, in the background, the backs of the mangrove aquarium and cave diorama exhibits, with access in the laboratory area

needed special mounting. We made and installed these.

We rebuilt the supporting structure for the mangrove aquarium and cave exhibit, which had been built by the contractor at the wrong height, in spite of specific instructions. We also installed the lighting for the aquarium.

We installed a wired and wireless network, with internet access and an office computer and printer

We isolated faulty electrics in the lab area, which had been installed incorrectly, and re-wired the phone sockets

While we were at MCCC we were also asked to be on hand if any illegal development activity was reported in the area. The pictures below show the theoretically protected site at Indian Caves and an illegal development there. The site had been transferred to the Turks & Caicos National Trust but others seemed to think that they owned it. A developer broke through into part of the cave when



Inside Indian Cave



Forest illegally cleared and foundation/cistern excavation above Indian Cave, with (below) breakthrough to cave at the bottom of the excavation



the cistern hole was dug out. We were able to take photos of the site and email them direct to Mike Pienkowski who could then get pass these on to TCNT and the relevant authorities to try and get the work stopped.

Outcomes of our volunteering

The outcomes of the work were that we completed most tasks.

We returned for another two weeks some month later to build screening around the MCCC accommodation, build a covered decking area using wood already bought but not used for another project, and help install the air conditioning with the contractors

The MCCC is now in use:

- by scientists working on the Pine Scale project
- as a public visitor centre
- and the toilets are in regular use - by visitors and the frogs

We produced an extensive series of reports for



Finished MCCC building with screening and hut

TCNT and for UKOTCF, to help in further work.

Scientific conclusions

The scientific conclusions we drew were:

1. Processed orange juice is no substitute for tonic in G&T.
2. There are a limited number of ways to cook spam. Despite being an island, the only fish we could get was frozen and spam was what the shop had in stock.

3. Scientists may not be the best people to build things (see nearest chair in picture). So, use volunteers and match skills to tasks. Naqqi is an excellent botanist and educator, but it is a waste of his time and skills to employ



him assembling furniture. (On an aside, it is in the culture of pilots to be very open about errors - with obvious benefits for safety - but this is not the same in many cultures. It would have been nice if someone had told Naqqi he had put the chair together wrong when he was doing it.)

Volunteering Conclusions

Volunteering can be a highly rewarding experience for both volunteers and hosts.

Planning and open communication are essential to make the best use of volunteers' time and skills.

We would volunteer again for UKOTCF and its partners without hesitation, and would thoroughly recommend this model of volunteering as a practical answer to some of the resource problems facing organisations.

We would like to thank UKOTCF and TCNT for the opportunity to participate, particularly Mike, Ann, Ethlyn, and especially Naqqi for putting up with us.

Something to ponder

Would it be useful to have a UKOTCF database of volunteers with their skills and availability for project-based work, so that UKOT organisations could refer to it when considering projects?

Finally, are volunteers an invasive alien species? The *Casuarina* pine is seen as useful by many people in the short term, but is a long term problem as it damages native species, reproduces *in situ*, and is difficult to get rid of. Whereas volunteers are *in situ* for a limited time and, hopefully, leave behind only long term benefits.



UKOTCF did insist that we took a few hours off during our 6 weeks; this beach was not too far a cycle away.

Discussion

For most points coming out of the discussion, readers should look to the summary prepared by rapporteur, Joseph Smith Abbott and co-convenor Dr Mat DaCosta-Cottam, and included in the introductory section of these Proceedings. Some additional points are given below.

Barriers to achieving project goals

There was wide support for the key conclusions of the two presentations:

1. Use flagship species if you have them.
2. Save many species by conservation of shared habitat.
3. Select, recruit and train your volunteers.
4. Look for postgraduates to produce conservation-relevant data.
5. Find and keep the right institutional partners.
6. Use Strategic Planning to hold it all together.
7. Successful action plans are inclusive, agreed, owned, resourced, funded, implemented and result in action.

Funding

Wide appreciation was expressed for Mat Cottam's article in the conference handbook (and these proceedings) on seeking of funding particularly from commercial sources, often a difficult area but potentially a very rewarding one.

In relation to the developing JNCC database, questions were raised about the applicability to UK Overseas Territories of many of the entries and the way in which it would be updated after JNCC's set-up phase.

Comment was also made that a lot of funding organisations were not aware of the UKOTs; various bodies, including UKOTCF, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and JNCC, could build on UKOTCF's earlier work in making funding bodies more aware of the UKOTs.

The issue of funding organisations covering overheads, such as salaries and servicing costs, was also raised.

Participants from several coordinating bodies noted

the difficulties in securing funding from European Union sources. This seemed to result from a combination of: excessive and inflexible bureaucracy; understaffing at the European Commission; poor internal communications there; Commission staff lacking in relevant knowledge and experience; a tendency to re-interpret their own procedures unilaterally and retrospectively, and the dealing of applications from UKOTs via EU offices in foreign countries, rather than from Brussels.

Volunteers and the role of UKOTCF

There was general agreement that, if local volunteers with the skills required are available, they should be employed with international ones being used if they are not. Steve Cheesman noted that that was the case in the example given, with neither suitable local volunteers nor paid personnel being available. He encouraged international volunteers to train local personnel where possible, as he and Mary had done.

The importance of having a reward or recognition scheme for volunteers was also widely agreed.

Oliver Cheesman (no relation) took the opportunity to refer to the relevant results from the consultation exercise with UKOTCF Member and Associate organisations, initiated at the end of 2007, and co-ordinated by the 'Review Team' of John Cortes (Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society), Rob Thomas (Royal Zoological Society of Scotland) and Oliver Cheesman (UKOTCF). Key elements were outlined in *Forum News* 33 and in UKOTCF's *Annual Report 2008-9*. The response rate was impressive (for a questionnaire-based survey) at 74%, and feedback was received from all but three of the 21 UKOTs/CDs. There was overwhelming support for the Forum's stated purpose: *to promote the conservation of the rich and unique biodiversity, natural environment and related heritage of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies of the United Kingdom*. Most respondents felt that UKOTCF had met this purpose 'well' or 'very well', by providing the hub for a network of organisations, reducing the sense of isolation of Territory-based bodies and enhancing collaboration. Feedback suggested that the strategic approach and priorities already embraced by

the Forum were essentially the right ones. Particularly relevant to the current discussion, capacity building in UKOT/CD-based NGOs was seen as the most important future priority, followed by identification of local priority needs (and development of strategies to address these), raising awareness in the UK of UKOT environmental issues, and exchange of information. UKOTCF saw increased coordination of volunteers as a key way in which it could contribute to the highest priority need (and several others) expressed by the UKOTs.

Several partners in the territories had already indicated interest in UKOTCF developing the volunteer work. The Forum already receives offers of such help, and is working to develop a programme putting these together. Further discussion stressed that there should be a well-established volunteer scheme, with a structured application process, and contracts should be signed before the volunteers started work, setting out expectations and defining work. UKOTCF was encouraged by many to develop this coordinating scheme further, to marry up requirements with volunteer human resources.



This session in progress