Welcome to the first edition of CLAN, the newsletter for Alumni of the Masters in Conservation Leadership at the University of Cambridge!

CLAN is intended to keep alumni up to date with what is happening on the Masters, and to help you to keep in touch with us and each other. We hope to produce an issue every six months. Please let us have your news and views!

Updates from the Course
Time has flown by and much has happened since we said goodbye to the founder class of 2010-11.

- The second class of 12 students all graduated successfully in October 2012
- The third class of 17 students has now finished their first term
- We have moved into a new and larger teaching room next door to the old room, which now houses conservation-related PhD students. The new space is working very well
- We were delighted to host Dr Amanda Vincent, from the University of British Columbia, as our visiting scholar during 2011-12. Amanda inspired us all with her passion for marine conservation!
- We have updated our course website, which now includes some videos featuring students from the class of 2011-12.
- October 2011 saw the establishment of the Cambridge Conservation Seminars, held weekly during the Michaelmas and Lent terms. These have been very well attended, and offer Masters students the opportunity to interact academically and socially with a wide range of conservation professionals
- We have enjoyed insightful Conservation Leadership Lectures from Georgina Mace, André Hoffman, and Amanda Vincent
- New sessions have been added to the course, including an immersive networking evening hosted by Mark Rose, CEO of FFI, and some taught sessions, that particularly strengthen the communications module
- Placements and MoTI consultancies have continued to be a great success. One of the MoTI groups for 2011-12 developed a new performance monitoring process for RSPB that is now being implemented throughout their organisation!
Alumni News
We hope to share news from a few of our alumni in every issue of CLAN. Here we set the ball rolling with some updates from four members of the founder class of 2010-11.

Julie Griffin
Masters in Conservation Leadership 2010-11

After finishing the MPhil last Autumn I bought a one-way ticket to Kathmandu. I planned to travel for just a few months then return home to get a job. Thirteen months later I did eventually complete what became a self-designed expedition to cycle and sail from Thailand back to my home in Switzerland. I joined my boyfriend Adam (who started in New Zealand) to cycle 9,000km from Thailand to Tajikistan (passing through southeast Asia, China and several of the Central Asian republics) and sailed 1300 nautical miles from Greece to Spain across the Mediterranean Sea.

It was environmental, experiential and very educational: I cycled through markets selling bear paws, saw fantastic rare birds right outside my tent, pedalled over a 4,700m (15,420 feet) pass, witnessed pollution I hope most people never have to smell and developed a whole new appreciation for sustainable transportation systems. It was also a low-carbon self-propelled way to get from one sustainable sports location to the next: from rock-climbing to kiteboarding to horse-trekking to hiking!

The MPhil emphasis on entrepreneurship, and in particular a lecture by Sir Ranulph Fiennes, really inspired me to find ways to combine my two great passions: conservation and outdoor sports. I expanded the conservation blog I started during the course by adding a section called "Playground Earth" to frame the natural environment as a safe space to learn, play, and have fun and adventures. Trying to document my bicycle-transect across the planet was more challenging than I expected but gave me a new perspective on my place as a conservationist.

In January 2013 I will start work for Epic Europe, a Switzerland-based travel company specialized in private custom adventures and outdoor corporate team-building in the Alps. My first assignments include developing a new youth summer event focused on outdoor learning and a CSR retreat as a special corporate event. I am extremely excited to bring my environmental and social experience to local adventure tourism.


[Images: Adam Hughes]
After completing the MPhil in Conservation Leadership, Bruno was hired by Cambridge’s Geography Department to research the potential use and implications of digital games for conservation purposes. A project funded by CCI in collaboration with Professor Bill Adams and our very own Chris Sandbrook, Lecturer of Conservation Leadership. Together they organised a seminar and workshop, and developed an online platform to enable people to discuss and learn more about the topic. In April 2012, Bruno presented a playful poster about Games for Nature during the SCCS 2012.

Back in Peru, Bruno received the Carlos Ponce del Prado Conservation Award 2011 in the category Young Professionals. He also decided to return to his former workplace, the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law – SPDA after being offered a promotion as Director of the Private and Communal Conservation Initiative. As part of this Initiative, he has designed a new campaign called Conservamos por Naturaleza that seeks to create a cultural movement based on reconnecting people with nature and facilitating opportunities for citizens to engage in concrete activities to protect and give value to the natural heritage Peruvians share.

To design this campaign Bruno used what he learned in Cambridge, including strategic planning, leading people, negotiating with organisations and corporations, and planning conservation actions. The campaign was launched with great success last August in Lima with the presence of the Ministry of the Environment and in public spaces in the Amazon. As part of the campaign, Bruno has been travelling to remote places in Peru to gather first hand stories, produce videos, photo essays and chronicles that have been widely disseminated through our website, social networks, Vimeo and Twitter, with the idea to inspire people with real stories from those who are already marking the path towards the construction of a more sustainable, just and natural Peru.

Bruno is also Editor of Sustainable Regions, a bulletin widely and freely disseminated in the Peruvian Amazon, with the aim to make people in rural places to be better informed about conservation issues. He also collaborated with an interactive mural for the Afuera Project consisting on a series of public art interventions in Cerro de Pasco mining town.

Bruno has been selected by the World Economic Forum as a Youth Global Shaper. He recently attended the IUCN Congress as Head of Delegation of SPDA and as Chair of CEL’s Young Professionals Group.
Rob returned to the US to pursue his twin passions of conservation and communication. Now living in Portland, OR, Rob works with the Metropolitan Group, the social change agency that crafts strategic and creative services to empower social purpose organizations to build a just and sustainable world.

Rob’s portfolio at Metropolitan Group includes public relations for Clean Energy Works Oregon, PR and fundraising for a small timber town that is creating a new and sustainable future based on its natural resources heritage, and most recently, marketing for Bio-Logical Capital.

After studying how the news interacts with negative versus positive leads during the MPhil in Conservation Leadership placement at Cambridge, Rob was particularly proud to get a positive story on the front page of the Oregonian, and to get that same story on all four local TV stations, plus a widely-popular call-in radio program and a long story on public radio, among other media. It turns out that positive news can get great coverage, if the news is good enough and it’s a slow news day!

Rob also served on a team that evaluated interviews and group listening sessions to assess how the U.S. Forest Service Region 6 engages with the public, and identified narrative shifts that may better enable the Region to articulate its multiple-use mandate.

Rob’s passion for consensus building for conservation manifests itself through his work with National Fisheries Friends Partnership. In July, Rob coordinated a policy roundtable that united a diverse coalition of aquatics interests—including leaders from sport fishing, boating and conservation interests—to begin shaping the consensus agenda for aquatics conservation nationwide. That work is just beginning, and shows great promise.

In his spare time, Rob is writing a story about a young wayward artist and his creative meditations on the beauty of nature.
I landed an exciting position as Programme and Research Associate with the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) soon after graduating and I could not have asked for a better transition from the MPhil in Conservation Leadership programme. This new role with CCI has given me the opportunity to not only implement some of the recommendations made and lessons learnt as part of my placement stint but also to play a part in the strategic planning of a unique conservation collaborative cluster initiative.

One of the main things I am working on presently is to help CCI improve both their external and internal communications and chalking out a long-term strategy for effective communication of CCI opportunities and collaborative programmes across the CCI organisations and departments.

I also recently presented my work on conservation clusters, which I did as part of my MPhil thesis, as a talk at the recent SCCS (Student Conference in Conservation Science) Conference in Bangalore and it was well received. During the Who’s Who session of the conference I used the opportunity to market CCI and the MPhil in Conservation Leadership course to the conference attendees.

The course has trained me to look at and think of the conservation of biodiversity through an interdisciplinary prism and imparted some of the necessary skills that a person needs today to tackle conservation issues on the field and when managing a conservation organisation.

These new perspectives were revealed not only through our cross-disciplinary teaching modules but also through our classroom discussions, debates and sharing of ideas and reflections from our own conservation work experience from across the world. I feel much more confident and better prepared to take on the kind of conservation work that I want to do now than I did two years ago, and the course has played a big part in this.
The class of 2012-13
This year we have the largest class yet, with 17 students. We will never tire of telling everyone that they hail from 17 different countries and all corners of the globe! Check out their biographies and nationalities online.

Despite being a larger group than the first two classes, the students have formed a very tight group and everyone is enjoying teaching them.

The undoubted highlight of the year so far has been the Cambridge Conservation Extravaganza. A successful second Pecha Kucha was put on by the second class. But this year we decided this year to give the students complete freedom to put on an evening event and Christmas party for the CCI community. What they came up with was quite amazing – an evening of music, debate, pictures and storytelling that blew everyone away. We never knew we had such multi-talented students.
Visit by Mr André Hoffmann
We were very pleased to host Mr André Hoffmann of the MAVA Foundation when he gave a Conservation Leadership Lecture in February 2012. As the donor, and an inspiration behind the philosophy adopted by the Masters, he was very well placed to give the class of 2011-12 an inspiring talk on his approach to philanthropy in conservation.

Here’s to an even better 2013!
2012 has been a great year for the Masters in Conservation Leadership, as the course further develops its shape and distinctive niche. We hope that 2013 will be even better, and you can play a part in making that happen! Our alumni network is growing, and will be 41 strong by October 2013, and we want to make sure that you are all getting the maximum benefit from it.

Join our Alumni Network!
Please make full use of our reinvigorated LinkedIn group. We will now be posting all news, interesting links and job opportunities to this site, so join the conversation.

We’re always happy to hear from you, so please get in touch if you have any other ideas for alumni events or networking opportunities.

As a first step – please do contribute to the next newsletter!