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

This time we’re catching up with some of the 2011-12 cohort, reviewing one of last year’s placements, and getting a little bit festive with the current Conservation Leadership students at their ‘Cambridge Conservation Fête’...

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 produce an issue every six months. Please let us have your news and views!

Updates from the Course

- The third cohort of 17 students all graduated successfully in October 2013
- The 2013-14 cohort of Conservation Leadership students have finished their first term. With 23 students from 20 different countries, this year marks the largest cohort to date!
- Applications for 2014-15 entry have now closed, with 70 candidates for next year
- The students attended another successful Networking Event in London hosted by Mark Rose (FFI) on 28 November
- The first Leadership Lecture of the year was given by Sir Graham Wynne, former Chief Executive and Director of Conservation at RSPB and currently Senior Advisor to the Prince of Wales International Sustainability Unit
- The students have been on visits to UNEP-WCMC, FFI, BirdLife and, for the first time ever, BTO at their HQ in Thetford. The latter visit gave students the chance to meet more BTO staff and to have their lecture by Gavin Siriwardena at the BTO office
- A new session on ‘What kind of leader are you?’ was run by Kathy Kingstone of the Personal & Professional Development division of the University of Cambridge
- Bill Adams, a regular lecturer on the Masters and a former examiner, is now Head of the Geography Department. Congratulations to Bill on his promotion!
As you’ll have seen from the cover photo, our cohort has almost doubled in size since the founder year of 2010!

This year we have 23 students, from countries as diverse as Uruguay, China, Nigeria, Uganda, France, Mexico and Egypt, to name just a few. We’re also pleased to welcome our first two students from Australia among the group. This means that we have now officially hosted students from every (inhabited) continent on the planet! With applications now in for 2014-15 entry, we’re expecting an equally diverse group next year too.

Following tradition, these new Conservation Leaders had the opportunity to get to know one another (and experience some of the Great British weather) during the start of term fieldtrip to the Norfolk Broads from 10-12 October. Hosted at How Hill Trust at Ludham, the trip was once again brilliantly arranged and facilitated by Michael and Mary Green for the duration of the 2 ½ day visit. This year’s programme included a visit to an Eco-Schools Primary school to learn more about their progress leading the way in environmental education, as well as another great introduction to the Norfolk Broads and Broads Authority by CEO John Packman.

Other highlights included a discussion on tourism with one of Wroxham’s main boat hire providers, touring Neatishead Hall Farm with Louis and Fran Baugh, and hearing more about the problems of coastal erosion with Malcolm Kirby at Happisburgh.

Back in the classroom, the first term’s teaching is now complete and was supplemented once again with another series of Cambridge Conservation Seminars, the details of which can be seen online, here.
Alumni News
In this issue we’re catching up with some of the alumni from the 2011-12 cohort:

Tracy Wright
Masters in Conservation Leadership 2011-12

After completing the MPhil in Conservation Leadership I returned to Canada to begin the daunting job search process. Before too long, I found myself completing a 3-month internship with Xerox Corporation, working on their corporate social responsibility platform and their environmental sustainability strategy. After Xerox, I completed another 3-month internship with Environmental Defence Canada, a Canadian non-governmental environmental advocacy organization. My role on the Communications team of Environmental Defence involved promoting the protection of coastal ecosystems through the Blue Flag clean beach certification program (blueflag.ca).

I now find myself working full-time for the City of Vaughan, a medium-sized municipality in one of Canada’s most populous areas – southern Ontario. As the Sustainability Coordinator for the City, my role is to implement the City’s Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan, a long term plan guiding the City towards a more sustainable future by addressing environmental, cultural, social, and economic issues.

One of the biggest projects I am involved in right now is the drafting and implementation of a local Community Climate Action Plan - fostering community engagement in actions to combat climate change and reduce local greenhouse gas emissions. Applying the creative communications and conservation management skills I garnered through the MPhil, I find myself working in partnership with school boards, youth groups, local businesses, transportation authorities, and the general public.

Using social marketing and social media tools such as Twitter and IdeaScale, I am working to encourage a local dialogue on climate change and simple actions that the community can take to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

Another project that has been a significant focus for me is working to promote local food security. In this, I have crafted a community garden policy and program for the City of Vaughan. Applying the knowledge and skills the MPhil afforded me in the area of promoting conservation enterprise, I am now working with City staff and local non-profits to transform City-owned land into productive local food hubs. Through a network of community gardens, we hope to promote the cultivation of local, organic and nutritious food while working to preserve green spaces, enhance biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with food production and transportation.

I keep up-to-date on the Conservation Leadership alumni happenings through the growing Facebook group and I always look forward to the CLAN newsletters!

Left: Community gardeners in action

Tracy is also keeping her connection to Cambridge alive by joining a local Cambridge Alumni Chapter, where she enjoys attending lectures and formal dinners – a little bit of the spirit of Cambridge in Canada!

(Images: Tracy Wright)
After finishing the MPhil I completed a 3 month contract at BirdLife International. This involved collating information on the seabird colonies across the island nations of the Pacific, the threats faced by these and where conservation action is showing positive results. The end product was a BirdLife glossy which was good fun to produce!

(http://www.birdlife.org/community/2012/12/key-sites-for-seabird-conservation-identified-in-the-tropical-pacific/).

Following the completion of this post I was offered a 6 month contract at the RSPB in the Conservation Science (International Research) department. This contract has now been extended for a second time so I will be there until at least next March. I have two projects on the go here. The primary project I am involved with is collating as much knowledge as possible on the biodiversity occurring on each of the UK Overseas Territories (what species have been recorded there, have they been assessed for the IUCN Redlist, what if any conservation action is currently underway). This work will feed into the future conservation strategies of the RSPB, Foreign Commonwealth Office, and UK Overseas Territories Governments.

I currently spend lots of time communicating this project to politicians and government departments where the advocacy and communication skills taught on the CL course are proving essential.

The second project involved an incredible two month stay on Henderson Island in the South Pacific, while I lead a team carrying out research on its rat population. This project is the start of trying to understand why the eradication attempt in 2011 was unsuccessful, and deciding the next steps forward.

With a mountain of data collected I think that the next months will be mainly report writing and communicating our results!
On graduating from the course in 2012, I returned to my home country of Zimbabwe to continue my role as Park Ranger for Hwange National Park.

As of October 2013 I have been appointed as the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) Liaison Officer for Zimbabwe.

This new role has provided me with such a rich platform, enhancing an incredible wealth of exposure and experience.

The initiative is a conservation and development programme of the governments of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. My main purpose is to ensure effective implementation of national and local level activities and programmes that will facilitate the establishment, development and management of the KAZA TFCA.

Another part of my role is to promote and facilitate regional cohesion in planning developments in the KAZA TFCA. Many aspects of my new job require strong leadership, and I am very excited to be putting into practice many of the skills I learnt whilst on the course!

More details on the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) can be found here.

- **New paper from CL alumnus**

Congratulations are also due to Godfrey on the publication in Conservation Biology of his co-authored paper “Insights for Integrated Conservation from Attitudes of People toward Protected Areas Near Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe.”

**Conservation Biology**  
Volume 27, Issue 4, pages 844-855, August 2013
2013 Placements – Belize

In 2013, three of the Conservation Leadership students were lucky enough to complete their placements, working with Fauna & Flora International in Belize. We hear one account of their experience from Fiona Danks:

I have been living about 1000km south of the North Pole on and off for the last few years, and here I have been exposed to the broad array of fascinating and critical Arctic science disciplines. I was determined to do something entirely different for my Placement and so I found myself in Belize, Central America, 60 degrees to the south and up to the same number of degrees (Celsius) warmer than the Arctic!

My project was one whose topic sounded even more unfamiliar than the heat of the tropics: development of a long-term sustainable financing strategy for a local NGO, the Belize Association of Private Protected Areas (BAPPA). The real, and most interesting, details were to come the day I set foot in Belize: BAPPA, I discovered, was dormant. I was faced with a true leadership challenge. Developing a sustainable financing strategy seemed not to be the most critical focus although this was my assigned task. More valuable and time-critical was to focus first on the operation, leadership and co-ordination of the NGO, before considering its financial viability.

And so, instead, I set about trying to re-establish BAPPA, meeting with anyone relevant from former or potential members to the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainability to government funding agencies.

My focus on the sustainable financing was necessarily limited but I am pleased to say that BAPPA now has an ad hoc Chair and Board of Governors, a coordinator, and what I sincerely hope is enough momentum to carry it through into the future so that a detailed long-term sustainable financing strategy can be implemented. I thoroughly enjoyed the placement, the setting, the people I had the privilege of working with, the challenge and even the heat!

We need your submissions! Don’t forget we need your stories of life after the Masters for future editions of the CLAN Newsletter. You don’t need to wait for the next edition – we’re always pleased to hear from you!
Keeping in touch with our graduates is a key part in developing the Conservation Leadership Alumni Network, and this newsletter is just one way of sharing some of the developments on the course and the successes of its students, past and present.

We currently have two separate ways for you to interact with the Cambridge Conservation community, and most importantly, one another –

LinkedIn group http://www.linkedin.com/

LinkedIn is a professional network which allows you to make connections with other people working in your area. The MCL group now has 85 members, and is specifically for alumni, current students and lecturers on the course. It’s a great place for discussions of interesting topics, job listings and sharing updates with the rest of the group. Keep your profile up to date to make the most of this valuable networking tool!

Facebook group http://www.facebook.com/

This group was established by 2010-11 graduate Juile Griffin (thanks Julie!) and is a fun and informal network just for CL students and alumni. With 44 members to date it’s a fast growing community where Cambridge Conservation Leaders can connect.

Mentoring

This year, we also established a paired mentoring scheme, connecting our incoming students with existing CL alumni. We hope that these opportunities for contact between year-groups will be beneficial both now and in the future, as our Conservation Leadership family continues to grow!

Are you a mentor or mentee for 2013-14?
If so, we’d love to hear of your experience. Comments, questions and suggestions for how we can improve the scheme are always very welcome, so do get in touch with a member of the Course Team – we’d be pleased to hear from you!
2013-14 Christmas Event – a Cambridge Conservation Fête!

Following on from the success of last year’s Conservation Extravaganza, we once again handed over the reins to this year’s cohort to put on an evening event for the conservation community. It was a hard act to follow, but the Cambridge Conservation Fête, held in the Cormack Room of the University Centre, brought fun, music, and lots of laughter, as you can see from the following photographs taken on the night.

The Conservation Leadership students’ Cambridge Conservation Fête!
03 December 2013
(Images: Jay Williams)
Around 60 guests – lecturers or supervisors on the Masters from all partner organisations – attended during the course of the evening. One of the highlights of the event was a Conservation Wishing Tree, where the students had hung notes of their future hopes for conservation, and guests could also add their own wishes. Other interactive features of the evening included an 'Unlucky animals' Raffle, with all raffle ticket animals from the IUCN RedList winning prizes for lucky guests, and a Conservation Leadership crossword, containing clues as to student names from their conservation interests!

Guests were also entertained with two dance performances, of Chinese and Mexican dancing, arranged via international University Societies.

All in all it was a very real celebration of the great diversity of countries and cultures of the Conservation Leadership students, and a fantastic way of getting to know them individually!

From all of us on the Masters in Conservation Leadership, wishing you all a very merry festive season and all the best for 2014!

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!