



Conservation Conflict Transformation*

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Conflict is an opportunity that often presents as a complex, destructive and overwhelming obstacle to progress for people and wildlife. Through a conservation conflict transformation (CCT) approach, the energy from destructive conflicts can be transformed into a constructive opportunity for collaboration and progress – for people and wildlife.

Drawing from disciplines ranging from neurology to complex systems theory, CCT is science put into practice. What distinguishes a CCT approach is that, in terms of conflict, it goes deep, wide and long. CCT goes deep by reconciling the deep-rooted identity-based conflict so that adversaries become allies. CCT goes wide, by taking a systems approach so that progress is widely supported and widespread. Finally, CCT goes long, building capacity to ensure long-term resilience and targeting change in the underlying structures and processes that often give rise to conflict.

In the words of Paula Swedeon, *"The impact from the CPeace intervention on wolf conflict in Washington state in the USA has been enduring. Even three years after CPeace left the system, a stakeholder representing agricultural interests noted recently how proud he was of our diverse stakeholder ability to have meaningful dialogue and collaboratively work towards solutions in the midst of one of the most politically and socially polarized periods in our country's history." She further noted, "CPeace's CCT capacity building workshop helped me understand and engage with the identity-rooted issues that stakeholders raise. This helps me shift group dynamics from being stuck in disagreement to being joined in shared-problem solving. In so doing, meeting conservation objectives becomes possible and accepted."*

To that end, capacity building is a cornerstone of positive change because those who are invested in the outcome of a conservation conflict are the most important agents for ensuring and supporting long term progress. The following cases illustrate this point.

"Andean cats are the most endangered cat in the Americas. After years of trying to address human-carnivore conflict in a system with no solutions and high mistrust, we achieved one of our greatest outcomes for Andean cat conservation when the farmers and community worked with us



and decided to create a wildlife reserve for Andean cats. This huge step toward human-carnivore coexistence resulted from my integration of CCT.” – Rodrigo Villalobos

“Pangolins and the people working to save them are under incredible pressure. My work building and sustaining a global coalition and strategy to reverse the decline of pangolins across their 54 range states relies heavily on the capacity I developed through my participation in two CCT workshops. Save Pangolins’ investment in building the CCT capacity of range state pangolin champions enables us to foster a collaborative, productive culture so that collectively we can make progress toward our mission.” – Keri Parker

“My participation in a CCT capacity building workshop was truly transformational, resulting in critical partnerships among organizations that once saw themselves as competitors. Our shared work to create human-sea turtle coexistence has, in a short time, already demonstrated concrete results. For instance, so far, we’ve documented a significant increase in fishing line recycling from 18% pre-intervention to over 50% post-intervention. Undoubtedly, our ability to work more collaboratively and effectively together will lead to better outcomes for endangered sea turtles.”

– Taylor Rhoades

“I participated in a CCT capacity building workshop only a year ago. I then took what I learned and shared it with my team. We integrated CCT in our work to conserve king cobras and the results were fast and profound. Although we have been working for years to try to stop the needless killing of king cobras in our region of India, we only saw a significant reduction in the rampant community killing of king cobras and a simultaneous increase in coexistence with them after our project team integrated CCT in our efforts.” – Murthy Kantimahanti

“Because of my integration of CCT, our upper Texas coalition for sea turtle species successfully worked through a crisis of funding and management that was critical for ensuring sea turtles had the care they needed to make it back to the wild.” – Lisa Marie Avendano

“Both the CPeace intervention and the CCT capacity building created the single biggest and most critical turning point in our organization’s ability to create and sustain 100% support of community and government to do critical ecological restoration on an inhabited island in the Galapagos whose community was previously divided regarding proposed conservation actions. We would never have otherwise come this far.” - Karl Campbell