Collaborative Conservation Planning
Resource Guide Summary

A full copy of the Collaborative Conservation Planning Resource Guide can be obtained from the following web address:
http://galianoconservancy.ca/publications
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"Planning human activities that protect, maintain, and, where necessary, restore ecosystem integrity and biodiversity is the basis for developing enduring, sustainable human economies and cultures."
Silva Forest Foundation

Landowners and conservation organizations provide key protection for ecosystem connectivity in endangered landscapes alongside acquisitions by provincial and local government. Conservation planning and management practices have evolved to acknowledge that ecosystem protection is rooted in social as well as ecological systems. This attention to the connection between human and ecological communities, particularly in rural and island regions, has expanded the notion of sustainability to include economic development within the parameters of ecosystem-based management, or conservation planning with social enterprise layered on top. Conservation organizations are developing new models of landholding and governance that apply ecosystem-based management approaches to sensitive landscapes.

The purpose of the resource guide is twofold: (1) to explain the principles and processes of socio-ecological conservation planning for ecologically important landscapes; and (2) to explore some of the complex regulatory processes involved in integrated mixed-use enterprises.

Conservation planning principles:

- Protect ecosystem function before integrating other uses of the land
- Protect and restore ecological connectivity and biodiversity,
- Ensure that the conservation planning process is collaborative – that it protects and restores Indigenous uses of the land and includes a variety of values and interests
- Provide for ecologically sustainable regional or island economies
- Apply the precautionary principle to all plans and activities and practice adaptive management

The process of conservation planning ideally begins with identifying sensitive ecosystems and elements and continues in perpetuity through monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management. Mapping is crucial for identifying biodiversity sites and connectivity corridors, and establishing priorities for land acquisition.

Members of the Galiano Conservancy vote unanimously in favour of the Learning Centre Management Plan

The process of determining the appropriate mix of uses and activities on a site is a collaborative effort that should take into account community interests and stakeholder values. By involving the broader community in management planning, more information about the site and its role in the region is brought to the table. Community members and local governments can also gain a better understanding of the motivation behind the planning process and potential changes on the site.

In a rural setting the social and economic goals of integrated land use are often based on the kinds of activities that can be sustained from the site itself. For example, agricultural production often supports daily activities as well as caretakers and others who live on the site. Ecosystem-based forestry of trees on a site can support value-added enterprises of wood milling and product manufacturing. Educational activities can contribute to the knowledge and monitoring of the site, as well as generate revenue for the overall activities.

Implementation of mixed-use conservation planning requires a variety of regulatory approvals from local and senior governments. In particular, local government zoning regulations control what uses are allowed on a property, and how much of that use is permitted. Local governments have considerable discretion to approve uses of land, and can permit mixed-use zoning tailored to conservation planning efforts where a variety of uses are permitted within certain zones on one property. Typical mixed-use zoning for conservation includes agriculture, eco-forestry, value-added processing, education, public events, residential and home based business.

Regulatory approvals that may be implicated in conservation management include potable water, building permits, and liquid waste (sewage). A variety of regulatory and fiscal tools can assist conservation planning, including official community plans, conservation covenants, development permit areas, development cost charges, leases and mortgages.

Land acquisition and management usually requires a corporate structure, such as a non-profit organization, cooperative, or company, as the legal entity through which activities can take place. Through this corporate structure the business model or operationalization of conservation management plans can involve several structures (governance and financing), legal arrangements such as use of land secured by leases, and funding sources. As each property is unique, so too is each business model adopted by conservation organizations.

Case Study: Galiano Learning Centre

The Galiano Conservancy applied Collaborative Conservation Planning to DL 57, a 188 acre property that it acquired to complete the Mid Galiano Conservation Network, while also providing the site for the Galiano Learning Centre. The Centre will follow a sustainable social enterprise model. Agricultural and forest uses alongside immersive education programs, will contribute to the health and resilience of the land and the community.

"The kinds of activities that will occur on [the Learning Centre property] are important not only because they might produce income but also because they begin to create a model of how we might bring together natural systems and human systems in ways that are mutually reinforcing."

Loren Wilkinson, Galiano Conservancy Association