

# CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

## I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** Wildtracks

**Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):** Enhancing the site specific and national population viability of threatened upper elevation amphibian species of the Maya Mountain Massif in Belize

**Implementation Partners for this Project:** Belize Audubon Society, Friends for Conservation and Development, Institute of Archaeology, University of Belize, Bladen Management Consortium / Ya'axche Conservation Trust.

**Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):** 1 October 2007 – 30 June 2009

**Date of Report (month/year):** 20<sup>th</sup> November '09

## II. OPENING REMARKS

*Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.*

This has been a far-reaching project, designed and implemented to strengthen the conservation of endangered amphibians in Belize, through baseline data collection and dissemination, increased awareness and capacity, and the identification and prioritization of appropriate conservation strategies. Networking has been a key feature of project implementation, strengthening outputs and developing additional partnerships to bring in new skills and capacity where needed. It has achieved its goals and objectives, and is now embarking upon implementation of the strategies developed through this structured process.

## III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

**Project Purpose** Increased awareness and capacity of key stakeholders (particularly protected area managers of the Maya Mountains Massif) to conserve amphibians of concern of the Chiquibul / Maya Mountains of Belize, through implementation of the National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<b>Purpose-level:</b> <i>Increased awareness and capacity of key stakeholders (particularly protected area managers of the Maya Mountains Massif) to conserve amphibians of concern of the Chiquibul / Maya Mountains of Belize, through implementation of the National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan.</i>	There has been a substantial increase in both awareness and capacity. Project partners and additional stakeholders are now aware of the need and are prepared and capable to implement the NACAP.

1. <i>By the end of the project, the National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan has been submitted to Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources (Belize) for evaluation and endorsement</i>	Last reviews are currently in process, with the final review meeting scheduled with the Forest Department for 30 <sup>th</sup> November. Agreement already reached on policy recommendations, and submission of the NACAP scheduled for 15 <sup>th</sup> December '09.
2. <i>By the end of the project, National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan has been endorsed by 5 project partners</i>	All project partners have informally endorsed the outputs. Formal presentation and endorsement scheduled for 15 <sup>th</sup> December.
3. <i>By the end of the project, 5 project partners have signed agreements for implementation of strategies</i>	Scheduled for 15 <sup>th</sup> December, along with additional stakeholders.

**Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.**

The project has met with considerable success in achieving its impact objective, raising awareness and capacity to conserve the endangered amphibians of the Maya Mountains Massif. Final reviews have taken rather longer than planned, but are strengthening the outputs. All remaining performance indicators will be met by 15<sup>th</sup> December with the final presentation, endorsement and implementation agreements.

**Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?**

The regional implications of the agro-chemical pollution findings are certainly cause for concern – raising concerns about the level of pollution across protected areas, and that policies to maintain habitat structure may not be adequate in the abatement of such threats.

**IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS**

**Project Outputs:** Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project

**Planned vs. Actual Performance**

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<b>Output 1: Belize's National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan for the species of concern.</b>	Final review on 30 <sup>th</sup> November, final presentation 15 <sup>th</sup> December '09
1.1 <i>A summary report of the baseline information on species distributions and environmental parameters collected during fieldwork, has been produced by 30th March, 2009</i>	Completed
1.2. <i>5 project partner organizations and at least 2 identified key stakeholder agencies have participated in each of the two viability / threat/ strategy development workshops by 30th March, 2009</i>	Completed, in a series of smaller focal group meetings
1.3 <i>A summary report of the results of the threat assessment of Critically, Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable and other amphibian species of the Maya Mountains Massif has been produced by 30th March, 2009</i>	Completed
1.4 <i>A summary report of the strategies developed during the two strategy workshops has been produced by May, 2009</i>	Completed
1.5 <i>A long term monitoring framework towards increasing the viability of amphibian species of concern, and integrated into the National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan has been developed by</i>	Completed

May, 2009	
1.6 Strategies for regional collaboration have been integrated into the National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan by 30th March, 2009	Draft completed, finalized by 30 <sup>th</sup> November '09
1.7 Strategies for financial sustainability have been integrated into the National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan by May, 2009	Completed
1.8 The National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan has been produced by May, 2009	Final reviews & presentations scheduled for 30 <sup>th</sup> November & 15 <sup>th</sup> December '09 respectively
1.9 The National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan has been distributed by 30th June, 2009	Scheduled for final presentation on 15 <sup>th</sup> December '09
1.10 By the end of the project, a summarized Technical Manual of the National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan has been developed and distributed to the protected area management and co-management agencies, and key stakeholders	Completed
<b>Output 2: Awareness strategies designed and implemented amongst a broad stakeholder community regarding the challenges to be faced in ensuring the continued viability of Belize's amphibians of conservation concern, with development of strategic partnerships amongst relevant cross-sectoral stakeholders</b>	Strategies completed and incorporated into NACAP, implementation initiated during project period and will be continued thereafter in an ongoing process
2.1 5 project partners and representatives of at least 3 identified stakeholder agencies have participated in each of the three meetings designed at increasing awareness (December, 2007; January, 2009; May 2009)	Completed
2.2 Three post-meeting reports, one for each of the three meetings designed at increasing awareness, disseminated to all project partners and key stakeholders (December, 2007; January, 2009; May 2009)	Completed
2.3 Time set aside in agendas at each meeting and workshop for networking forum for protected area managers and stakeholders	Completed
2.4 90% of project partners and key stakeholders have endorsed the National Amphibian Conservation Action Plan by 30th June, 2009, demonstrating an increased awareness of the challenges to be faced in ensuring the continued viability of Belize's amphibians of conservation concern	100% of project partners and primary stakeholders have given informal endorsement. Formal endorsement scheduled for the final presentation on 15 <sup>th</sup> December '09
2.5 80% of relevant cross sectoral stakeholders have signed an Agreement of Collaboration towards ensuring the continued viability of Belize's amphibians of concern by 30th June, 2009	Scheduled for 15 <sup>th</sup> December '09
<b>Output 3: Greater technical capacity amongst relevant stakeholders to facilitate implementation of conservation actions for maintenance of viable populations of amphibian species of concern</b>	Completed – capacity built, ongoing support to be supplied beyond project period
3.1 By the end of the project, 20 participants from 5 project partner organizations have attended at least one training workshop and at least one field training session, gaining greater technical capacity to implement conservation strategies towards maintaining viable populations of amphibian species of conservation concern in Belize	Completed, with increased number of partners and stakeholders.
3.2 Post-workshop and field training session reports produced for each training event (December, 2007;	Completed

<i>June, 2008; September, 2008; December, 2008)</i>	
<i>3.3 More than 80% of workshop / field training participants have passed the end-of project technical capacity skills assessment in December, 2008</i>	Completed
<i>3.4 80% of local community participants (guides and porters) employed during field visits have been trained in basic field survey and amphibian identification techniques</i>	Completed – 100% trained.
<b>Output 4: A database of information on the status of Belize's amphibian species of conservation concern – their distribution, relative abundance, population viability, the threats impacting them, the conservation actions being taken to address these threats, and the key stakeholders involved in the process, feeding into national, regional and global initiatives</b>	Completed
<i>4.1 A database of the status of the amphibian species of concern in Belize has been developed and is populated with all project data by 30th March, 2009</i>	Completed
<i>4.2 All biodiversity records from fieldwork have been entered into BERDS (Biodiversity and Environmental resource Data System of Belize), and reports into BERDS and the Belize Clearing House Mechanism by 30th March, 2009</i>	Biodiversity records entered onto BERDS, final reports to be posted after final presentation on 15 <sup>th</sup> December '09. Belize Clearing House Mechanism is currently not being serviced and is dormant: reports will be posted if CHM is revived.
<i>4.3 Summary data has been shared with the Global Amphibian Assessment initiative by April, 2009</i>	Data and reports to be forwarded to the IUCN Amphibian Specialist Group after final presentation on 15 <sup>th</sup> December '09
<i>4.4 At least one paper has been submitted to peer-reviewed journal by 30th June, 2009</i>	Completed
<i>4.5 Regional and international networking and information exchange has been on-going throughout the project</i>	Completed, and remains ongoing

***Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.***

The project has achieved all its intended outputs, and indeed added more. At the Purpose level it has very significantly raised the awareness and capacity of key stakeholders to conserve endangered amphibians through the implementation of the NACAP. Completion and final reviews of some of the outputs have taken longer than initially planned, but with the flexibility afforded by the CEPF team this has resulted in stronger outputs of greater impact. The project has determined that Belize's amphibian fauna is significantly more diverse and regionally important than had previously been suspected, and has made significant progress in threat assessment and strategy development that may be applied elsewhere in the region.

***Were any outputs unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?***

All outputs have been realized, albeit some behind schedule on the original timeline. These delays have strengthened outputs.

**V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS**

***Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.***

As project design incorporated extensive planning for minimal environmental impact, normal operating procedures were followed to ensure zero / minimal negative environmental footprint. These procedures focused primarily on operating procedures during field assessments: use of hammocks to minimize camp footprints, proper camp-fire control, no-cutting policies, carry-in / carry-out of all foodstuffs and refuse, etc. The project had only positive social impacts and did not require safeguarding policies except those relating to benefit sharing and personal safety.

## VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

***Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.***

The Project Tracking Tool is extremely helpful in keeping activity implementation on track! Timelines for deliverables are essential, and CEPF's support in granting extensions where needed has proven to strengthen outputs. The CEPF-Partner meetings in Antigua (and additional one in Zamorano) were invaluable in strengthening networking, information sharing and providing a regional perspective. Ongoing support from the CEPF team was also instrumental in facilitating project implementation and ensuring success in goal fulfillment.

***Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)***

Sound conservation planning, and the building of awareness and capacity amongst key stakeholders is critical if Belize's endangered amphibians are to be conserved – this was only possible with the extensive data acquired through the field assessments component of the project. Project design was focused on identification of conservation needs, and the steps required to meet those needs – largely following the international standards and mechanisms of conservation action planning. This structured, bottom-up approach to conservation planning and implementation ensures greater effectiveness of outputs and achieves a far greater stakeholder buy-in than could be achieved through a narrower application of science to individual issues.

***Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)***

Numerous factors contributed to the project's successful implementation, not least being the inputs from the various team members. Of special note is the "Team of Three" – the Maya field assistants / porters who earned special recognition for their invaluable input and capacity gained: from local farmer to experienced field research assistant in a very short time. Developing synergies and including botanical assessments of as many sites as possible strengthened conservation outputs and gave greater value for money. CEPF's flexibility allowed project re-scheduling when national security and national emergencies (floods) challenged project implementation – such support was a key factor in success in project execution.

## VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

***Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.***

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount US\$	Notes
Wildtracks	A	> \$90,000	Cash and in-kind
Columbus Zoo	A	\$10,000	Grant to co-fieldworker
Belize Audubon Society	A	>\$1,500	Discounted fees
University of Lancaster	A	~\$1,500	Water quality testing

ECOSUR	A	~\$2,000	DNA analysis
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**\*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF project)*
- C** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- D** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

**Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.**

Yes, the project is continuing: it has achieved its goals, but implementation of the outputs is now the priority. This will be achieved through continued collaboration with the project partners and key stakeholders, and indeed with a broader audience of cross-sectoral interests. Additionally, outputs will be strengthened on an ongoing process – numerous conservation questions and challenges have been raised by the project’s discovery of several new species for Belize, including endangered and critically endangered species – continued field assessments are necessary to effectively fine-tune the conservation planning for such species, and monitor their status over the coming years. Aspects of the project are also being applied to new conservation challenges – such as the new dam that is being proposed within the Core Protection Zone of the (theoretically) most protected area in the Country.

## VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CEPF is making a considerable difference, and has developed an impressive ability to select viable, priority projects that will make meaningful differences in the conservation of critical biodiversity. Technical expertise within the CEPF team is key to this ability, and to assisting project partners in the smooth implementation of the supported projects. In examining opportunities for project consolidation (in whichever sub-region), priority should logically be given to implementation of project outputs and policies associated with them: CEPF support (even if in name only) can lend significant weight to credibility to such activities.

## VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

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