A guide to more effective conversations about WILD

Sometimes it can be hard to sum up WILD’s work in a few impactful words. This cheat sheet is designed for those board members who want to become more effective advocates for WILD.

MISSION

WILD protects and defends wilderness through cultural solutions that empower people to work together for a healthier and wilder world.

VISION

A world in which everyone is willing and able to protect and connect with wilderness.

SUMMARY

WILD leverages collaborative, cultural solutions to achieve more for conservation. We believe that culture – attitudes, values, and institutions – is the most effective and efficient method for creating lasting benefits for the wild.
SUPPORTING FACTS:

80% of the world’s biodiversity is stewarded by less than 5% of Earth’s population: Indigenous Peoples.

Nearly 40% of Earth’s remaining wild places are in Indigenous territories.

While Indigenous peoples are scientists, they still don’t have the same level of technical capacity as contemporary culture. Their conservation gains emerge from cultures that support wise stewardship.

This is just one of many reasons why WILD believes cultural tools must be elevated in the historic effort to protect Half of Earth’s lands and seas, avert the climate crisis, and keep Earth wild.

HOW WE WORK

Building coalitions and stewarding community-based initiatives are our superhero powers.

WHERE WE WORK

We do this on three different scales:

1 Regional  2 International Civil Society  3 Global Governance Institutions

METHODOLOGY

1 Step 1: Identify and support individuals committed to protecting the wild, especially those relying on cultural mechanisms to achieve their aims.

SUMMARY: SUPPORT CULTURE

2 Step 2: Build platforms for outreach from those individuals to invite in a larger community and for the basis for a powerful coalition.

SUMMARY: STIMULATE COLLABORATION

3 Step 3: Advise and steward coalition for maximum impact, be that on-the-ground conservation or global policy change.

SUMMARY: CONSERVE WILD PLACES

4 Step 4: Amplify the role of culture (values and institutions) in creating conservation success to bring greater attention to this powerful tool and to stimulate cultural shifts elsewhere.

SUMMARY: SPARK CHANGE
Culture

In the social sciences, culture is defined by values, beliefs, and institutions.

That is what WILD means by culture.
PROGRAM UPDATES
We believe that community is the basis of sustainability. While community alone is not sufficient for transformative change, it is an utterly necessary building block in the transformation timeline. WILD works in three different phases along the change timeline in order to create lasting solutions for wild nature. We initiate and maintain communities around shared values, then we will sometimes activate portions of those communities to drive specific changes around attitudes, values, and institutions. As attitudes, values, and institutions are the building blocks of cultures, we also work in those arenas to cultivate and nurture cultures that support healthy relationships with biodiversity.

Here is how we have worked across those three phases in the last six months.

### COMMUNITY

How is WILD fostering a community for wilderness?

**SUMMARY:** As we grapple with leadership transitions and different communication styles, WILD continues to build long-lasting communities for the protection of wilderness. One thing that we have learned is that to sustain communities, giving future leaders experiential training in leadership assists with smooth and effective transitions. For all the individual strengths and abilities current leaders bring to their roles, equally as important is their willingness and capacity to make space for future leaders within our various wilderness communities.

**PROGRAMMATIC VEHICLES:**

- NAWPA (North America Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation for Wilderness and Protected Areas Conservation)
- WILD12 (World Wilderness Congress)
NAWPA WINS

The Executive Committee met in-person in October, 2022, for the first time since 2017, the beginning of the Trump Administration, due in part to the delay in appointing agency heads and also due to COVID. Participants shared priorities and considered opportunities for ongoing collaboration. As a result, the Steering Committee and Working Group is updating and assembling a work plan with specific collaborative initiatives and on-the-ground actions of trilateral interest for 2023 and beyond. The broad list of thematic focus areas of interest includes: Environment-Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration, Landscape Scale Conservation and Connectivity, Climate Change Response, and Ecosystem Services; Visitors-Social Science, Environmental Justice and Diversity, and Visitor Experience; and Partners-Indigenous Partners. Recently, NAWPA was recognized at the North American Leadership Summit, a meeting between leaders of Canada, Mexico, and U.S., as an organization to assist overlapping conservation priorities across North America.

WILD12

Conservation Challenge: The biosphere is a singular network of interdependent and interconnecting ecosystems. National, cultural, and institutional boundaries hamper the protection of the biosphere as a whole, especially its wilder areas. The World Wilderness Congress builds and sustains a global community of wilderness advocates, coordinating on crafting new values, definitions, and global objectives for the protection of wild nature.

Impact if we do not address this challenge: No global platform to build support for wilderness or create shared values, visions, and solutions, leading to disconnected and fragmented efforts that become less effective over time, and resulting in less wilderness.

What does success look like: The next World Wilderness Congress held within 2-3 years, addressing one of the most important challenges: the reinterpretation of wilderness through the lens of Indigenous Peoples. This is necessary and important to heal a historic wound and to build credible support for wilderness among Indigenous groups. Currently, many Indigenous Peoples are deeply critical of wilderness and this is hurting the wilderness movement.

WILD12 BY THE NUMBERS (CONFIDENTIAL)

• 1 potential host: the Oceti Sakowin, the Seven Fire Councils of the Lakota. Potential location: Rapid City
• 3 potential co-organizers: Grounded.org, Avaaz, the Global Biodiversity Narrative
• 2 prospective sponsors: Grounded.org, Cattail Philanthropy

Over a dozen meetings thus far with the following groups and individuals:
Alan Watson (former director of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute), James Taylor (current director of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute), Bob Dvorak, (Editor-in-Chief of the IJW), Grounded.org, Cattail Philanthropy, Gwen Bridge, the International Buffalo Relations Institute, and the Oceti Sakowin.
WILD12 PROGRESS

Last autumn at the Oceti Sakowin Treaty Council meeting, Phil Two Eagle asked me if I could bring the world to the Black Hills to hear the Lakota people and listen to the land speak. He also brought me before his entire council to discuss this further. I had not been thinking about WILD12 prior to this discussion, except for a conversation a year before with the Executive Director of the International Buffalo Relations Institute. This is how the conversation about WILD12 was born.

COALITIONS

How has WILD activated coalitions for wilderness and wild nature?

SUMMARY: Coalitions are powerful vehicles for short and mid-term collaboration around specific calls-to-action. Stable issue communities help seed coalitions, but coalitions often involve new actors outside of these communities. This occurred this year during COP15 when WILD meant several new potential partners and funders through our coalition-building work around Nature Needs Half and Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Convention.

PROGRAMMATIC/CAMPAIGN VEHICLES:
NATURE NEEDS HALF: COP15 CAMPAIGN

NATURE NEEDS HALF/COP15

Conservation Challenge: Global environmental goals or targets based in science help governments, business, and philanthropy assess and plan better, more effective conservation strategies. It is why such goals are oftentimes heavily contested. United Nations COP15 (the Biodiversity COP) was an opportunity for the world to select science-backed, rather than politically-determined, targets for the protection of Earth’s lands, seas, and biodiversity.

Impact if we do not address this challenge: Insufficient amounts of wild nature and ecological services to support local communities and global ecological services, this ranges from Earth’s ability to capture and store carbon to stable weather patterns that support billions of dollars in agriculture world-wide to the ability to slow and even halt mass extinction.

What does success look like: A planet where at least half of the lands and seas are ecologically intact and capable of sustaining the web of life.
COP15 BY THE NUMBERS

- **8** coalition members, including WILD and CoalitionWILD
- **2** side events, **+150** in attendance
- **2** new foundation prospects including Grounded.org & Cattail Philanthropy
- **1** Press Conference

**Partners**

One Earth, Grounded.org, Avaaz, Resolve, Weeden Foundation, Gwen Bridge Consulting, CoalitionWILD

COP15 WINS

In the lead up to the COP, several of WILD’s staff members and trustees were instrumental in organizing and mobilizing an effective coalition. Yen Parico and Rob Harding played major roles in this. In fact, overheard at one COP event was Karl Burkart of OneEarth who called Yen his “hero” for bringing more youth attention to Half. At another event, when a prospective funder was asked what gave her hope, she answered that WILD’s team gave her hope for their fearlessness around Half. With these and others, WILD’s team made a big impact.

WILD organized and carried off the only two COP15 events dedicated to the topic of protecting Half. Through these events we were able to convert a couple of high ranking skeptics and empower them to more publicly support Half. Our event speakers included Dr. Stephen Woodley, Science Chair for Biodiversity, World Commission on Protected Areas; Karl Burkart, Co-Director, OneEarth; Gwen Bridge, Saddle Lake Cree; Cathlyn Traeynor, Tenure Facility; Erinn Drage, World Commission on Protected Areas; and Maggie Fox, formerly head of Climate Reality and now Co-Founder of the Global Biodiversity Narrative. While only parties to the convention (national delegations) can sit at the negotiating table, WILD’s delegation worked hard to participate in the negotiations by bringing Half to the discussion through a creative and fun social media campaign, press conferences, and side events.

Our delegates also worked sometimes one-on-one and in a coordinated fashion to hold important COP15 actors to account. One of the major frustrations at the COP was that the IUCN, which holds a similar relationship to the biodiversity COP as the IPCC holds to the climate COP, did not fully implement Motion 101. While IUCN members overwhelmingly voted for the IUCN to officially recognize that Half is the science-backed recommendation, this never happened. Half was not mentioned once in any official IUCN communication with COP15. Because of this WILD, and our coalition, were the only actors publicizing Half. Now the work begins to create a better, more transparent and responsive IUCN Directorate . . .
CULTURE

What is WILD doing to support and build cultures that act with respect for biodiversity and wild places?

SUMMARY: Culture stems from attitudes, values, and institutions, which need not be formal and can be expressed in the habits and rituals we form throughout our lives. WILD works within cultures to transform attitudes and shape institutions in such a way that benefits people and nature. This is most apparent in our work with CoalitionWILD and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

PROGRAMMATIC/CAMPAIGN VEHICLES:
CoalitionWILD

COALITIONWILD

Conservation Challenge: In a recent call with a potential CoalitionWILD partner, the organization representative admitted that they treated their youth programs in the Global South and Global North differently. Whereas Global South programs tended to ensure youth have access to nature, Global North programs focused on developing the next generation of conservation leaders.

CoalitionWILD believes there are “too many rooms” in conservation, silos designed to visibly include underrepresented groups, but not necessarily give them equal access to influence or decision-making. CoalitionWILD is changing that by creating a global youth culture of youth-led conservation programs, many on the frontlines of some of the most dire threats to biodiversity, empowering youth to become their own leaders as opposed to waiting for an invitation from others.

Impact if we do not address this challenge: If we are not considering the diversity and nuance of solutions needed to address conservation issues, we are on the path to getting stuck in practicing conventional ways that may not be effective in a certain location. Hitting a roadblock is one thing, but applying the wrong solutions in a certain area which has a specific need that could have been addressed in the first place, would be a waste of time and resources.

What does success look like: 10 years from now, we would have a range of youth-led projects that tackle complex conservation issues driven by local contexts. It would not be mind boggling for the world to see a young person leading a project, instead, it would be the norm.
COALITIONWILD BY THE NUMBERS

Mentorship Program:

- **34** mentorship pairs (38 female, 30 male; 20 countries represented)
- **84.9%** of program participants rated the program as being good, very good, or excellent
- **94%** of program participants state that they were matched somewhat well, very well, or extremely well
- **75%** of participants would recommend it to others

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2021 EXCELeator Program (updates):

Since January 2023, **2 tons** of plastic collected weekly with a team of **50** plastic pickers

Over **300** young students are taught about the environment, in general

**543** listeners of a podcast that is focused on topics like halting biodiversity loss

**3000** hectares of land in Kenya was stewarded by an EXCELeator participant, this area accommodates over 2,000 community members. This also accommodates 85 resident elephants while 415 are nonresidents that pass through the area.

**10** young islanders certified in the PADI open water course

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2022 EXCELeator Program (ongoing):

**45** participants from across 27 countries are recruited to work on their own action projects

More than half of the initiatives are focused on protecting and restoring nature.

Campaigning at COP15, a total of **159** live participants attended four side events either led or co-led by CoalitionWILD.

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COALITIONWILD WINS

CoalitionWILD, Yen Parico and her steering committee, were instrumental in changing minds about Nature Needs Half at COP15. CoalitionWILD’s efforts there may have removed a significant barrier of resistance to half emanating from the Global Youth Biodiversity Network.
**INDIGENOUS GLOBAL COUNCIL**

**Conservation Challenge:** Regardless of our varied walks of life, many would agree that contemporary culture has at least a few shortfalls, not the least of which is the broken relationship it fosters between society and wild nature. In this regard, and in others, traditional wisdom and culture has much to offer the contemporary world. But it needs a visible platform through which it can exert more influence.

Additionally, Indigenous Peoples globally have not come to consensus about conservation spatial targets. While nearly everyone in the environmental movement agrees with the scientific consensus of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 Degrees Celsius, the same cannot be said of the equally necessary goal of Nature Needs Half, which many Indigenous Peoples view with at least some reservation emanating from the many instances in which their land was confiscated in the name of conservation.

By creating a Global Indigenous Council for the governance of the biosphere we can elevate the role traditional cultures can play in achieving Half.

**Impact if we do not address this challenge:** A contemporary culture that never learns from traditional leaders, and lost time as continued resistance to the scientific consensus on Half is based in critiques resulting from a lack of Indigenous leadership.

**What does success look like:** A conservation sector that isn’t just including traditional leaders, but is learning from them even as it aligns itself closely with traditional communities to achieve Half.

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**PROGRESS**

Resubmitting the America the Beautiful grant to reapply for funding to begin this project. We did not receive the grant last year, but the feedback on the application was very positive, requesting only that we begin with a more North American focus and demonstrate more endorsements for the idea.
**PROTECTING TRADITIONAL CULTURE & THE HEART OF THE AMAZON**

**Conservation Challenge:** One of the most iconic and vital landscapes, the Amazon rainforest, has been besieged for decades. The threats no longer occur at the fringes, but are now located at the very heart of the jungle. Some of the highest densities of biodiversity and carbon-sequestering forest exist in territories stewarded by traditional cultures, but like the forest itself, these cultures are fraying.

Absent substantial and immediate strengthening of formal institutions in the state of Acre, Brazil, show that traditional cultures might not only be the best stewards of the forest, they may actually be the only attainable, long-term conservation vehicles.

WILD is partnering with the Yawanawá People to preserve traditional culture and empower the Yawanawá to be even more effective stewards of biodiversity.

**Impact if we do not address this challenge:** Intact forest at the heart of the Amazon could be lost to deforestation.

**What does success look like:** Stable traditional leadership within the Yawanawá, the successful defense of the forest, and expanding regional influence.

**OBJECTIVES**

Enable and incentivize the retention and learning of traditional culture, ceremony, and prayer, and strengthen traditional leadership institutions

- Public acknowledgement/recognition of traditional knowledge
- Documentaries/video instruction to retain elder knowledge and ceremony
- Prepare next generation of leaders

Provide technical capacity to improve sustainability and forest protection

- Guard Towers
- Permaculture
- Education, traditional and contemporary
- Mapping (contemporary and traditional)
• Community workshops
• Health
• Managing lakes and rivers

Establish sustainable income
• Acai
• Ethno-tourism
• Carbon
• Artisanal products

Expand traditional culture and knowledge
• Regional corridor
• Global alliance
• Annual meeting/publicity

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2023 PRIORITIES

Enable and incentivize the retention and learning of traditional culture, ceremony, and prayer, and strengthen traditional leadership institutions
• Documentaries/video instruction to retain elder knowledge and ceremony
• Prepare next generation of leaders

Provide technical capacity to improve sustainability and forest protection
• Guard Towers
• Permaculture
• Managing lakes and rivers
OVERALL

The project has handed over responsibility for anti-poaching unit to government and is focusing on the community work, at the same time as moving into a more institutional phase with more responsibility taken by the local team.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Anti-poaching

The management of the finances of the anti-poaching unit has been fully handed over to the government (thanks to the provision of funds by the GEF-UNDP project) who has to date done nothing with it. This is partly due to their inertia and partly due to the bureaucracy that UNDP has tried to impose on the management of the unit, making the whole operation unfeasible. Worryingly there have been 4 cases of poaching this year, however this could force the DNEF to work with the army. There has been a mid-term review of the GEF-UNDP project (that finances the APU) that has been extremely critical of government implementation and the Head of the Project Management Unit has just been sacked.

The project has rendered airworthy the MINUSMA aircraft, handed it over to the government and is managing the training of pilots, after which MEP’s responsibility ends.

Learning visit to the “Hommes et Terres” project near Bankass

Visit for 49 members of the local community representing community leaders and ecoguards from all over the elephant range, to visit the Hommes et Terres’ project which uses low technology approaches to land reclamation. These techniques are to be included as part of the CBNRM systems under the second EU grant (starting 16th June 2023), and this visit was to demonstrate the techniques.

An attitude survey is currently underway to understand local attitudes to elephants in conflict areas compared to non-conflict areas, and the perceived impact of project activities, comparing areas with/without conflict and with/without project engagement

Elephant census – a simultaneous ground and satellite count is being conducted in April-May (at the end of the dry season) when elephants are restricted to just a few water points.

Environmental management (NRM) revenue generating activities (RGA)

• 2 workshops to develop 7 commune-level NRM plans (103 pers - 94M, 9W)
• 1 meeting to share the contents of the 2023 communal conventions (70 pers – 66M, 4W)
• 18 local committees (1,531 pers) to monitor and support the implementation of the conventions.
• 1,514 committee members trained in 2-day workshops.
• Contents of the conventions disseminated on local radio stations.
• 21 local protected areas established (1,004 pers – 781M, 223W).
• 1 local youth association (22M, 4W) funded through the stabilization scheme.
• 1,558 km of firebreaks to protect natural habitat (977 youths - 916M, 61W)
• Investigation of poaching incident (23 eco-guards).
• 5 community representatives (incl. 2 wom) attended the regional EU programme’s Steering Committee meeting in Ouagadougou, BF (to great acclaim!)
• 1 Administrative & Financial Manager hired in Mali.
• 1 visit to Mali by the UK team.
- Engaging Eolas Insight to conduct a satellite count of elephants

- Training teams of ecoguards to conduct ground counts at the water-points with elephants

**This has two aims:**

(a) To estimate the number of elephants; although this will depend on the actual elephant distribution and whether these areas can be accessed safely. Elephants and armed groups both prefer remote areas with water and trees.

(b) To gain an idea of the relationship between numbers counted from the ground with those counted from the air as both will be recording GPS locations of elephants.

**MAJOR OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS 2022-3**

- Closing out the first EU grant which ends on the 15th of June 2023. This involves:
  - Ensuring all supporting information for all expenditure is in order
  - Finalising the procedures manual
  - Completing the remaining activities under this grant
  - Engaging an end-of-project evaluation

- Compiling a database of all community engagement activities since the beginning of the project. This will enable us to understand the areal extent of project engagement; the amount of “effort”/funds put in to each area; the number of communities and people engaged; the area that is protected locally etc. These data can be put together with cost information to assess how much is required and how this changed with the conflict, for example.

- Engagement of Maliasili to help with a transition of the day-to-day management and leadership to the Mali team so the Director is freed to focus more on communication and dissemination of lessons learned.

**OBSTACLES OR ISSUES TO OVERCOME (THE USUAL)**

- The on-going crisis in the country makes everything more difficult

- Insecurity; gold mining; shift in elephant distribution to more populated areas... as always

- The withdrawal of European bilateral funding from Mali (and the freezing of EU funding)
Lack of secure funding, compounded by the lack of internet profile, and therefore more difficult to disseminate the achievements and lessons learned as a result.

- Working with a government partner which is very weak in every way. While we maintain good relations with our government partner it is extremely difficult to engage with them when their focus and goals are different from our own, which is to deliver conservation outcomes.
LEADERSHIP & STAFFING

Welcoming Luna Yawanawá

WILD is proud to welcome our new cultural liaison intern, Luna Yawanawá, to the WILD team. Luna will be contributing dispatches from the Yawanawá people throughout the year. Currently, she is still learning enough English to be effective at this role, so her dispatches will not begin until later this summer.

WILD’s support of Luna is essential for her to acquire a college education and prepare to be one of the new generation of Yawana leaders.

Current + Future Staffing

The current staffing situation at WILD and the lack of, as one board member puts it, “doers” is requiring us to rethink adding a new executive, which we likely also cannot afford, and instead add a part-time grants manager and, later in the year, a part-time program manager, especially for the Yawanawá and especially if we should help them develop carbon market accreditation. These two positions will significantly increase our capacity.
“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.” – Franklin D. Roosevelt