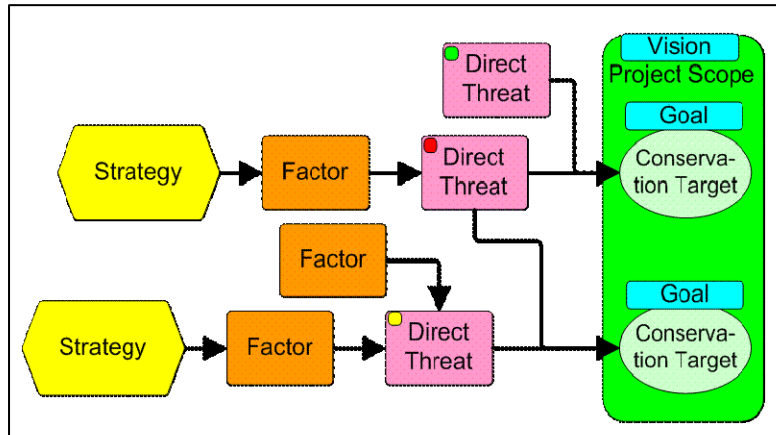


# SYLLABUS: ENVIRST 900 Conservation Planning Planning & Monitoring the Effectiveness of Conservation Projects

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Spring 2013, Mondays 1:00-4:00  
Science Hall Room 110

**Instructor:** Arlyne Johnson, PhD  
Senior Program Officer  
Foundations of Success  
Honorary Fellow, UW-Madison  
Nelson Institute for Environmental  
Studies; Room 70, Science Hall  
Office hours by appointment  
arlyne@fosonline.org

**Teaching Assistant:**  
Qingwei Wang, PhD candidate  
Environment & Resources  
Office : Room 175, Science Hall,  
Office hours by appointment ; qwang86@wisc.edu



**Project Representatives:** Mr. John Wagner, The Nature Conservancy; Dr. Erica Cochrane, The International Crane Foundation

## Course Description:

Conservation practitioners typically have extremely limited resources (money, time, and people) to protect ecosystems and minimize threats to environments. To be effective with those limited resources, conservation practitioners need to carefully choose and prioritize their strategies, monitor whether they are being effective, and adapt strategies when they are not working. In addition, to obtain support from funders, partners, or stakeholders, practitioners need to be able to clearly communicate their goals and strategies, demonstrate their effectiveness, and rely on clear, transparent decision-making.



This course is designed for graduate students who are interested in applied conservation, as a career or in terms of implementing a conservation project. For exceptional advanced undergraduates seeking a capstone experience this course would be suitable as well. The goal of the course is to provide these students with training and experience in a systematic and adaptive process for planning conservation projects. The course will be structured around the [Conservation Measures Partnership's](#) (a consortium of conservation organizations who have agreed on some basic steps and tools) cycle for planning and implementing conservation projects

(right). This course will focus largely on the Conceptualization and Planning portions of the cycle (Phases 1 and 2).

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students should be:

- Fluent in the language of conservation planning and adaptive management
- Familiar with the all basic steps for planning and implementing a conservation project
- Skilled at developing clear and useful visions, goals, objectives, and monitoring frameworks
- Familiar with different approaches to and challenges associated with selecting focal biodiversity targets (species, ecosystems, etc.)
- Comfortable using several planning tools including [Miradi Project Planning software](#), conceptual models, and threat assessments
- Familiar with some additional skills sets that are critical in planning and implementing conservation projects, including facilitation, fund raising, and external communication

**Readings and Tools:**

Required and supplemental reading materials, including the following training manual, will be available on the course website at Learn@UW. FOS. 2009. *Conceptualizing and Planning Conservation Projects and Programs. A Training Manual*. Foundations of Success, Bethesda, Maryland.

Students are required to download the latest version of Miradi Adaptive Management Software (Conservation Measures Partnership) at [miradi.org/download](http://miradi.org/download). Products developed each week will be recorded in Miradi and it is recommended that each student bring a laptop computer (Windows or Mac) to class each week. The program can be purchased and downloaded for a very reduced, student price of \$25 at <https://miradi.org/orders/pricing>. You will be introduced to this program on the first day of class.

**Accommodations:**

If you have any special accommodations that I or the TA need to be aware of, please let us know. This would include learning accommodations as well as other programmatic accommodations related your funding requirements (e.g., TA responsibilities), research or internship requirements (e.g., time away from campus).

**Course Structure:**

Conservation planning cannot be effectively learned in the abstract. It is best learned by doing. Therefore, during the course, students will work in small groups (3-6 students) to prepare a conservation plan for a real world project (e.g., a protected area, a landscape) with a conservation organization. Students will use the conservation planning software Miradi to proceed through phases 1 and 2 of the CMP Project cycle. By the end of the semester, a draft conservation plan for the project will be produced by each student group.

There are 14 class sessions (including the final evaluation session). Classes will meet on Monday from 1:00-4:00 from January to May 2013. Most 3-hour class periods during the course will begin with a review of the previous week's material and brief presentations by students.

**Version: 22 April 2013**

These presentations will be followed by a short lecture and discussion. The remaining part of the class period will be dedicated to starting on the next week's homework. In addition to weekly assignments, students will be asked to read and be prepared to discuss 1-2 readings per week. In addition to regular class time, students will have scheduled group work on Wednesday from 1:00-3:00 when student groups can work on their own on conservation project assignments. If needed, student teams will need to arrange for additional meeting times outside of these two time slots to complete weekly project products.

Classes will be held on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, in Science Hall, Room 110.

**Schedule (see Detailed Class Schedule for readings and assignments for each class session):**

- Jan. 28    **Introduction to Conservation Planning.** Review course structure, introduction to Miradi software, overview and selection of conservation project to work on throughout the course.
  
- Feb. 4    **Conceptualizing your project, Steps 1A and 1B.** Define the project team, scope, and vision. Define biodiversity targets.
  
- Feb. 11    **Conceptualizing your project, Step 1B.** Viability assessment for biodiversity targets. **Plan actions and monitoring, Step 2A.** Setting quantitative goals for biodiversity targets.
  
- Feb. 18    **Conceptualizing your project, Step 1C.** Assessing and ranking direct threats to biodiversity targets. Tips for preparing final written conservation plans.
  
- Feb. 25    **Conceptualizing your project, Step 1D.** Situation analysis and conceptual modeling. **Guest presentation.** Balancing TNC & partner needs, costs, people/community benefits.
  
- Mar. 4    **Planning Actions and Monitoring, Step 2A.** Identifying and prioritizing strategies.
  
- Mar. 11    **Planning Actions and Monitoring: Step 2A.** Clearly defining your assumptions and desired results in results chains. **Special Topic.** Spatial analysis and reserve design.
  
- Mar. 18    **Special Topic.** Multi-criteria decision support method for participatory intervention planning. Draft Conservation Plan is due for review.
  
- Mar. 25    **Spring Break**
  
- Apr. 1    **Planning Actions and Monitoring: Step 2A.** Defining measurable objectives and activities. Instructor feedback on draft Conservation Plans. Developing monitoring frameworks for demonstrating results.

**Version: 22 April 2013**

- Apr. 8 **Planning Actions and Monitoring: Step 3.** Preparing workplans and budgets.  
**Special Topic:** Communications Strategies, Media and Messaging.
- Apr. 15 **Earth Day Conference**
- Apr. 22 **Analyze and Use Monitoring Data: Step 4.** Case studies of evidence based conservation in practice. Tips for final presentation.
- Apr. 29 **Special Topic:** Fundraising for your conservation project.
- May 6 **Group presentations of final conservation plans.** Completed course and team evaluations.

**Grading:**

<b>Weekly group project presentations (11) – 10 pts. each</b>	<b>110</b>
15-minute group presentation is done efficiently and in an organized fashion (emphasizing most important points, highlighting unanswered questions, facilitating discussion)	
<b>Draft group written Conservation Plan – due March 20</b>	<b>20</b>
Instructors' evaluation for completeness (coverage of OS steps to date), clarity and effective communication of key concepts.	
<b>Final group Conservation Plan presentation – on May 6</b>	<b>25</b>
-15 from other class-mates' evaluation of your team's presentation (logical organization, clarity of presentation, persuasiveness)	
-10 from instructors' evaluation (logical organization, clarity of presentation, thoroughness of research, fact-checking)	
<b>Final group written Conservation Plan – due May 8</b>	<b>25</b>
Instructors' evaluation for completeness (coverage of all steps), design, clarity and effective communication of key concepts.	
<b>Individual attendance and participation</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>

The highest score in the class will receive an A. Scores between this and 50% will be determined on a curve at the instructor's discretion. A score below 50% will fail.

**Instructor and Student Expectations:**

Instructors expect students will arrive on time for class or notify us beforehand of planned tardiness or absences. If you unexpectedly encounter problems attending a session you **MUST** notify the instructor or TA by email prior to the end of class. Failure to attend class or notify us of absences before they occur will result in loss of points from participation. Instructors expect all students will complete all assignments by class start on the day listed in the syllabus. Assignments must be based on your own original, creative thinking. Late assignments will lose 25% of their value immediately and 25% for each full day late. Appropriate reasons for late assignments include: medical emergency for self or immediate family or professional travel (this requires formal letter of explanation from the host or agenda showing student's name).