Meeting Report

First South American Workshop for the World Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative: defining the South American Strategy

San Clemente del Tuyú, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

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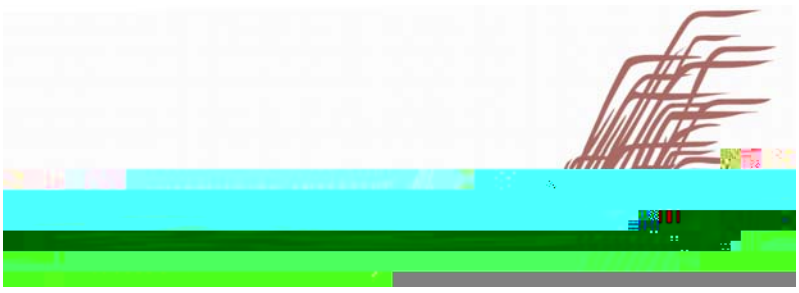

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A special thanks to the project team of the Temperate Grasslands Conservation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Temperate Grasslands in South America and the World

Temperate grasslands are one of the most extensive biomes on the planet, occupying

Table 1.

2. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE

The objective of the first South American workshop of the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN) was to define a strategy to increase the level of conservation of temperate grasslands in South America by 2014, through the promotion of the designation and sustainable management of protected areas representative of the biome, and the wide use of sustainable management practices beyond protected areas boundaries.

The primary expected results were:

- A South American network of communication and internationa

5. WORKSHOP RESULTS

5.1. Recommendation for the inclusion of additional eco-regions

On the basis of the objectives of the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN) in South America, the participants agreed upon the need to include all the temperate grassland eco-regions of the continent in the project. The following eco-regions that are currently not part of the project were suggested for further inclusion:

- Grasslands of the Jesuit ruins of Paraguay
- Campos Sulinos of Southern Brasil
- High Andes grasslands of Patagonia Argentina
- Grasslands of the hills in Pampas of Argentina
- Patagonian steppe of Chile

It was proposed that the information of these eco-regions be assembled and included in the regional analysis elaborated for the global workshop (Hohhot, June 2008). For the grasslands that can not be included in any pre-defined eco-region, an independent description document must be elaborated.

5.2. Transboundary Cooperation and Coordination

Transboundary cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands is crucial. It allows the integration of efforts made separately by government and non-government organizations of different neighbouring countries. It facilitates the action over natural, cultural, and social processes that transcend national borders (i.e. bird migration, indigenous people movements, cultural heritage continuum). In addition, it allows coordinated and joint actions aimed to face threats, such as the implementation of similar development plans for the conservation and sustainable management of the biome.

A set of themes where identified that are important to develop mechanisms for trans-border articulation in order to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands. For each topic, some specific examples for each eco-region were mentioned (Table 2).

Table 2. Themes and examples of transboundary cooperation identified in the workshop.
Ar: Argentina; Br: Brasil; Ch: Chile; Py: Paraguay; Uy: Uruguay
Common and scientific names are provided.

TOPIC	Eco-region		
	Patagonian Steppe	**Pampas and Campos**	**Central Andes and Paramo**
Important bi or tri-national geographic areas	• Lago Buenos Aires Steppes • Magallanes Steppes	• Río Negro (Br, Uy) • APA Ibirá Pytá (Br, Uy) • Espinillo - tres fronteras (Ar, Uy, Br) • Palmares de Colón (Ar-Uy) • Yacyretá (Ar-Py)	• There´s a need to identify these areas, especially in the case of the Southern Andes. • In the Northern Andes they are already identified. • San Guillermo (Ar, Ch)
Control of invasive species	• Cast[illegible] *tor co[illegible]ensis* •		

It was suggested that diverse international action must be implemented for better trans-national integration of work within temperate grasslands. International areas where these actions could be promoted were detected.

International Actions:

- Harmonize concepts and criteria between different countries (terminology, eco-region classification, etc.);
- Adjust management situations in neighbouring protected areas;
- Create new trans-border protected areas;
- Implement buffer zones in the borders of a country where adjacent protected areas exist in a neighbouring country;
- Elaborate international action plans (Pampas deer, Upland Sandpiper);
- Adjust financing lines;
- Integrate and articulate scientific investigation projects;
- Promote alternative sustainable strategies (tourism, product certification, livestock

5.3. Challenges and Opportunities

The regional work groups identified challenges and opportunities to in

- Encourage education institutions specialized in production to prioritize training that harmonizes biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
- Overcome the deficit in the transfer of information and technology to the producer.
- Promote the development of best management practices of temperate grasslands.
- To value and communicate the importance of environmental services (for example, water from the paramos).
- To take advantage of private investment (tourism industries, mining, etc.)

Opportunities

The main opportunities to increase the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands are presented below:

- Currently, there is public sensitivity and awareness for the environmental theme.
- Valuable and priority areas for the conservation of temperate grassland are already identified or under evaluation in some eco-regions (Pampa and Campos completed; Patagonian Steppe in process).
- A National Protected Areas System has been created in Uruguay.
- There are large, abandoned stretches of land in the Patagonian Steppe, but they are highly deteriorated.
- International and national NGOs are already working in the creation of private protected areas (FVSA, TNC Patagonia).
- Brazil and Uruguay have mechanisms that guarantee the long term protection of private protected areas.
- Some government institutions and international NGOs are working on the evaluation of effective management of protected areas and on the generation of mechanisms to improve their effectiveness (APN, TNC Patagonia).
- Various academic and technical institutions are developing investigations about temperate grasslands (for example: IFEVA-UBA, INIA, INTA).
- There are research and restoration experiences in the Patagonian Steppe and the Pampa eco-region.
- There is some legal framework compatible with the conservation of temperate grasslands. For example, Sheep Husbandry law in Patagonia; Spatial Planning law in Uruguay; new proposal of Spatial Planning in Río Grande do Sul, Brasil; Supreme Decree of Spatial Management with Shared Responsibility in SERNAP protected areas, Bolivia; Management Plans for Protected Areas.
- There are some existing experiences of knowledge transfer, for example the one developed by INTA (although it focuses on agricultural supplies and replacement of natural grasslands with pastures).
- Some institutions have developed information and knowledge about temperate grasslands management (INIA, INTA, EMBRAPA).
- Some best management practices have been developed (Manual of Best Practices for Livestock Management by FVSA and Aves Argentinas).
- An emerging market for natural products exists. Also there is a FAO mandate regarding to food quantity vs. quality.
- Carbon markets and green certification exist.
- International conservation agreements exist.
- Regional conservation strategies exist (Regional Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of High Andean Wetlands).

5.4. Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the South American Temperate Grasslands

Scope and Advantages of a Continental Focus

The participants of the workshop expressed interest in the elaboration and implementation of a South American strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of the temperate grasslands. A continental strategy will allow the following:

- Increase public attention around the conservation and sustainable use of

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Promote the generation of scientific and technical knowledge and its adequate transfer for better decision making.

- Establish a common ecological classification for all of South America.
- Identify knowledge gaps about grasslands in relation to sustainable management and conservation, and promote corresponding research.
- Promote the development of research and the generation of tools for the restoration, sustainable management and use, monitoring of status and condition of temperate grasslands.
- Analyze the bio-geographic representation of the ecosystems in the priority conservation areas.
- Study temperate grasslands functioning and the threshold of use of the principal resources.
- Analyze the economic and social functions of each eco-region.
- Generate knowledge about ecosystem services of temperate grasslands.
- Elaborate the red list of critical ecosystems of the temperate grasslands.
- Assist existing efforts of transfer of information and technology to the producer, or generate new programs where required.
- Encourage education institutions specialized in production to prioritize training that harmonizes biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
- Promote participative research with producers on aspects of sustainable use and management of temperate grasslands.

AJUSTMENT AND APLICATION OF POLICIES

Promote the adjustment and application of policies and national and institutional laws that incorporate measures of conservation and sustainable use.

- Encourage the inclusion of conservation and sustainable use practices for temperate grasslands in the development policies.
- Promote spatial planning that considers guidelines for the conservation of temperate grasslands.
- Promote the incorporation of specific steps for the conservation of temperate grasslands in Environmental Impact policy.
- Urge the national governments to comply with international agreements (CBD, Ramsar).

COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND EDUCATION

Generate and consolidate dissemination, communication and education processes to improve the perception and increase the value of the biome among general public.

- Promote environmental awareness, communication and education focused on different actors.
- Incorporate an education and dissemination strategy in the curriculum and study plans of field professionals.
- Promote the reinforcement of basic education, at a university or non university level (i.e. community or society level), related to conservation and sustainable management of native temperate grasslands.

Network Structure

Initially, the network will be integrated by all of the participants of the first South American workshop (Appendix 1).

The members of the network have a tec

Baseline information for the network

The formation of a scientific-technical steering committee was decided in order to supervise the basic information of the initiative (for example: diagnostics, maps).

Various organizations can contribute more information to subsidize different actions of the network. For example, some organizations are Ministério de Méio Ambiente de Brasil, Fundação Zoobotánica de Río Grande do Sul de Brasil, Nodo SIB de la Delegación Regional Centro de APN.

The need to establish another work group with a technical-scientific profile to elaborate the red list of temperate grasslands ecosystems was discussed. It was proposed that this group is initially made up of the following institutions.

- Rumbol SRL, Bolivia
- SERNAP, Bolivia
- Nodo Sib del NOA- APN, Argentina
- Fundación Moises Bertoni, Paraguay

5.6. Financing

Discussions about fundraising for the initiative were centered on the functioning of the South American network.

It was considered unnecessary to count on large amounts of funding at the beginning of network operation. Initially, funds are only required to cover the wage of one person in the IUCN SUR to coordinate the initiative.

In the future, it will be necessary to search for more financing to achieve the network goal through work in the six areas (see 5.5).

There was agreement that the first amount of funding that is raised should be destined to the homogenization of information (guideline 4).

5.7. Action Plan

The action plan for the South American network can be found in a separate document.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The regional analysis presented at the workshop and the subsequent conversations allowed for each participant to gain basic knowledge about temperate grasslands in South America and their conservation status. Additionally, the workshop was able to update and complement the information that the initiative had prepared for the global workshop in Hohhot.

The discussions about challenges, opportunities, and guidelines allowed the participants to identify the common needs and areas of work and other specifics for each eco-region.

The importance of an integral conservation framework for temperate grasslands of South America was agreed upon. This will be achieved through the construction of a common strategy for the entire continent.

The future South American strategy will be based in the following central themes: protected areas; sustainable use and management; research and knowledge transfer: adjustment and application of policies; communication; dissemination and education; regional cooperation and coordination.

A viable South American strategy that contemplates the necessities and requirements of the region should be built by a work group that knows the problems of the different eco-regions and can think about strategic solutions as a whole.

Therefore, a scientific-technical network of communication and cooperation will be formed, whose initial members are those present at the workshop.

The network will base its activities on guidelines that will contain the following lines of work: communication; transboundary cooperation; dissemination and education; knowledge; policies; fundraising.

The results of this meeting provide the bases for the elaboration of a strategic framework for the operation of the network and the achievement of its goal: to increase the effective conservation of the temperate grasslands of South America.

7. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Participants List

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Appendix 2. Workshop Agenda

		November 18th
7:00	14:00	Participants arrival to Buenos Aires City
14:00	19:00	Bus to San Clemente del Tuyú
21:00	23:00	Welcome dinner
		November 19th
Morning		
9:30	10:00	Welcome speach (IUCN Sur, APN, FVSA)
10:00	10:15	Workshop presentation
10:15	11:00	Participant Introduction
11:00	11:30	Coffee Break
11:30	12:00	TGCI summary
12:00	13:00	Regional Overview (description, status, threats): (1) Páramos; (2) Central Andes
13:00	14:30	Lunch
Afternoon		
14:30	15:30	Regional Overview (description, status, threats) (cont.): (3) Pampas and Campos; (4) Patagonia steppe
	15:45	Instructions for working groups
	17:00	Challenges, opportunities and course of action for each eco-region and transnationally (5 groups)
17:00	17:20	Coffee Break

Appendix 3. Instructions for working groups

Challenges, opportunities and guidelines

- Identify conservation problems present in the región that have not been considered in the presentation.
- Discuss and prioritize the principal challenges and opportunities of each eco-region depending on the presentation and previous discussion.
- Discuss and propose guidelines to deal with the principle challenges and opportunities
- Discuss what other grasslands should be included in the initiative

Cross-border conservation

- Identify areas of interest for cross-border conservation (areas or network areas) and discuss viable actions in each case.
-