



Pacific Biodiversity Institute

STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2016

MISSION

Pacific Biodiversity Institute combines innovative scientific research, education and technical support to inform, enhance and inspire conservation. Our goal is a rich and enduring biological heritage.

VISION

We envision a future rich in biological diversity in all forms and at all scales, allowing for the continued unfolding of natural ecological and evolutionary processes over time. We work at the forefront of biodiversity conservation, exploring new terrain through the use of professional and citizen scientists. In high conservation opportunity areas, PBI leads the way in developing new information and understanding to help realize this future.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- **Importance of biological diversity as the cornerstone of life on Earth.** The diversity of species, habitats, and ecosystems is fundamental to the natural processes that support life on Earth, including humans.
- **Responsibility to future generations.** We have a responsibility to safeguard Earth's rich biological legacy for those who come after us.
- **Adapting to a rapidly changing world.** The world is undergoing rapid changes at many levels, and conservation efforts must adapt to these changes. PBI will lead the way and scout out new terrain in research, education and conservation efforts that address the dynamic ecological and socio-political landscape of the 21st century.
- **Value of science in conserving biodiversity.** Successful efforts to conserve biodiversity must be informed by scientific understanding. PBI's role is to find and fill some of the most significant knowledge gaps that impede conservation progress.
- **Passion for finding innovative solutions.** The challenge of maintaining biodiversity requires a passionate commitment to developing innovative tools and strategies that are effective in the face of rapid change.
- **Compassion for people.** We believe that conservation of biodiversity is a fundamentally humane pursuit that benefits humans as well as the rest of nature.
- **Work through collaboration.** Collaboration is essential to effective conservation and conservation science, both because biodiversity conservation is complex and interdisciplinary, and because we are most effective by working in partnerships.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

PBI conducts scientific research in the fields of ecology, conservation biology, and natural resource management.

This Strategic Plan encompasses an array of goals and strategies that combine PBI's special competencies with the Board's sense of where the organization can have the greatest impact. Some of these strategies are funded and budgeted through available resources. Others will require new funding that is not yet identified, but will be the focus of development efforts as we move forward.

Biodiversity Research, Monitoring and Assessment

Goal: Conduct research that increases knowledge and understanding of biodiversity conditions and trends, and apply this research to improve conservation efforts.

- *Objective:* Monitor sentinel species as key indicators of ecosystem health, with the aid of citizen scientists.

- *Strategy:* Continue to develop and expand the harbor porpoise project in the greater Salish Sea region.

- *Strategy:* Continue to support the western gray squirrel initiative in the North Cascades, while evolving this effort to identify other sentinel species for the ponderosa pine ecosystem (see below).

- *Objective:* Conduct ecological assessments of areas important to biodiversity conservation.

- *Strategy:* Develop a new initiative focused on Washington State Park lands, identifying and communicating their key biodiversity values and working with others to promote stewardship of these values.

- *Strategy:* Conduct an ecological assessment of the ponderosa pine ecosystem, focused on the Okanogan National Forest and adjacent lands.

- *Objective:* Increase understanding of the effects of agriculture on biodiversity, assessing how sustainable agricultural practices can maintain and enhance biodiversity.

- *Strategy:* Develop a small-scale project to monitor biodiversity-sustaining agricultural practices, using this as a pilot to inform larger projects.



PBI's research on the harbor porpoise has helped bring more attention to this species and its value as a key indicator of ecosystem health. Next steps include recruiting additional citizen scientists and deploying more acoustic monitors to expand the area we study.

Photo: Florian Graner



Conservation Prioritization, Decision-Making Capacity and Conservation Support

Goal: Foster better integration of science and technology into decisions on conservation priorities, to achieve more impactful conservation and management outcomes.

- *Objective:* Develop and promote powerful, science-based decision tools for conservation prioritization.

- o *Strategy:* Develop and promote science-based conservation prioritization systems for use by land trusts and other conservation organizations, pursuing opportunities in both terrestrial and marine environments.

- *Objective:* Improve the effectiveness of existing conservation systems in maintaining biodiversity values.

- o *Strategy:* Conduct a performance study of conservation easements to better understand the effectiveness of this tool and best practices for its use in protecting biodiversity values.



Finding the funding to complete conservation work is one of the primary challenges facing most agencies and organizations. Thus, it is critical that the limited dollars available to these groups are spent on the most important projects. PBI's decision support systems help groups to navigate competing priorities.

High Opportunity Biodiversity Hotspots and Wildlands

Goal: Identify and protect high opportunity biodiversity hotspots and high value wildland areas.

- *Objective:* Pursue conservation science projects and partnerships in specific wildland areas with high biodiversity values and high potential for protection, with the aid of citizen scientists.

- o *Strategy:* Advance the South American Wildlands project, through:
 - additional mapping and research
 - expansion of field studies and expeditions, incorporating volunteer citizen scientists
 - promoting the project in the USA and abroad
 - rapidly expanding South American partnerships with local, national and international conservation NGOs and scientists.

- o *Strategy:* Use the results of the Washington Wildlands Project to highlight unprotected biodiversity hotspots in Washington State, sharing these results with the rest of the conservation community and developing partnerships to protect wild biodiversity hotspots that often span multiple ownerships.



The vicuña (*Vicuña vicuña*) is one of two wild South American camelids regularly seen on PBI's research expeditions in high alpine areas in and around the Andes in northern Argentina. PBI documents the presence of charismatic wildlife like the vicuña; this information helps our conservation partners who are working to protect these wildlands.

Organizational Capacity

Goal: Ensure a highly productive and sustainable non-profit organization.

• *Objective:* Ensure PBI has the staffing resources needed to pursue its ambitious agenda, and to be sustainable over the long term.

o *Strategy:* Expand professional staff through a mix of full-time and part-time staff, interns and volunteers.

o *Strategy:* Pursue an effective approach to succession planning, particularly to provide a transition for the founding executive director over the next 3 to 5 years.

• *Objective:* Develop and pursue a funding strategy that provides adequate organizational resources for present needs and future growth.

o *Strategy:* Increase and diversify fundraising through a mix of government and foundation grants, individual donors, and corporate gifts, achieving a level of \$500,000 - \$1 million per year in the next five years.

o *Strategy:* Generate 20-30% of the above revenue target from client-based work, where consistent with PBI's mission and competencies.

o *Strategy:* Use bequest funding to advance this strategic plan, while setting aside an appropriate share (at least 25%) of bequest capital to maintain the organization's long-term sustainability.



For the organization to be most effective in achieving its mission, its staffing and equipment needs must be met first. Here, researcher Aileen Jeffries is shown retrieving the acoustic monitor she uses to record the presence of harbor porpoise in Burrows Pass.

ABOUT PACIFIC BIODIVERSITY INSTITUTE

From old-growth forest to the desert, from the marbled murrelet to the harbor porpoise, from Alaska to Argentina, PBI has studied many different ecosystems and many species since our quest to conserve biodiversity began in 1993. Our work has informed and influenced many important conservation decisions. You may have read about one of PBI's studies in places like the Wall Street Journal, the Methow Valley News, the Vancouver Sun or the LA Times. You may have listened to a story that references our work on National Public Radio, Arizona Public Television or other stations from Seattle, Washington to Cordoba, Argentina.

PBI is a small non-profit organization known for moving fast and light into new terrain on topics that are not getting sufficient attention—but are of critical importance to ecosystem health. We develop advanced tools and methods that support biodiversity conservation. PBI provides scientific support to public agencies, educational institutions and other non-profit conservation organizations. Our internships have trained over 50 aspiring young conservation scientists. Citizen scientists have contributed over 9,500 hours to our projects in the last year. Our scientific reports are freely available on the internet.

Our home base is in Washington's beautiful and biologically-rich Methow Valley, yet our research, education and scientific support activities carry us throughout the western hemisphere.

Learn more at www.pacficbio.org