COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION AND ADAPTATION STRATEGY TOOLBOX
CCAST: An Online Library of Conservation Case Studies

Through the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative, conservation partners in the southwestern US and northern Mexico identified the need to create an inventory of case studies on management actions, partnership and collaboration, monitoring, and adaptive management. Sharing lessons learned through case studies can inform management practices by facilitating communication and learning in the conservation community.

With funding support from the USDA Southwest Climate Hub, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and Forest Service are partnering to launch CCAST to share case studies on a new online platform. The goal of this effort is to develop a user-friendly "management toolbox" to inform achievable on-the-ground actions that will help meet conservation goals.

WHAT IS A CASE STUDY?

A case study is an example of an on-the-ground conservation project, monitoring and adaptive management program, collaborative conservation effort, or resource assessment project. Case study narratives focus on lessons learned and share project resources (such as presentations and protocols) for projects implemented in the southwestern US and northern Mexico. Most importantly, case studies increase communication between resource managers and the scientific community throughout the region by sharing stories that are not otherwise readily accessible.

Components of each case study are:

Background	*Project Highlights*	*Collaborators & Funding*
Key Issues Addressed	*Lessons Learned*	*Project Resources*
Project Goals	*Next Steps*	*Key Contacts*

The case studies are co-authored by partner staff and contributors. In many cases, the required text has been previously developed for plans, reports, and presentations, and we simply adapt text for the case study. We will request additional project resources from contributors including photos, links to online reports, presentations, and datasets, if available. A draft is then sent to a technical review team. Technical review comments are addressed, and the final content is converted to a 2-page handout formatted for printing or email distribution. The content is also then added to CCAST.

WHAT PARTNERS ARE SAYING

"I am always looking for new ideas to guide us in our restoration and resource management responsibilities. Narratives like these offer real-life examples of the challenges we all face and provide solutions." Jeff Bennett, National Park Service

"These adaptation case studies will be a great resource for the collaborative planning that is taking place in the Lower Santa Cruz watershed." -Federal agency partner

Regarding a case study on bullfrog removal in the Cienega Watershed in southeastern Arizona: "It is a nice report, well-written, accurate, noteworthy, and useful across the larger landscape." -Bill Radke, US Fish and Wildlife Service

CASE STUDY PRIORITIES

Desert LCC partners identified a suite of high priority stressors that must be addressed through management actions in order to improve conservation and socioeconomic outcomes.

High-priority stressors that we will address through case studies include:

Native and Non-Native Invasive Species *Drought and Flooding*
Stream Channelization *Rising Temperatures*
Erosion in Uplands *Wildfire Regime Changes*
Water Resource Utilization *Unsustainable Grazing*
Anthropogenic River Management *Habitat Fragmentation*
Decreased Water Availability

In addition to overcoming challenges presented by ecosystem stressors, long-term success of conservation requires sustained collaboration, monitoring, and adaptive management. Case studies describing these aspects are also considered high priority.

CCAST

The Collaborative Conservation and Adaptation Strategy Toolbox serves as the online Case Study platform. CCAST is designed to facilitate information sharing between resource managers improve the conservation community's ability to respond to existing and emergent challenges.

CCAST presents case study content through both map-based and thematic galleries. The map shows where the case studies are located in the geography and allows the user to filter the case studies based on ecosystems, stressors, and management priorities or strategies.

Thematic galleries can be used to quickly navigate to case studies based on key priorities:

Riparian and Aquatic Ecosystems *Grasslands and Shrublands* *Water Resources*
Desert Wildlife *Working Lands* *Landscape-Scale Monitoring Collaboration*
Socioeconomics *Cultural Resources*

CCAST users can navigate to individual case study content using these tools. Case study content will include expanded versions of text, photographs and videos, and links to online project resources.

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE?

If you would like to share your project with other conservation professionals through CCAST and help build this community of practice, please contact Matt Grabau, Science Coordinator: matthew_grabau@fws.gov