



Inspiring Marine Conservation of the Mesoamerican Reef Through a Strategic Visual Communications Campaign

Executive Summary

The International League of Conservation Photographers (iLCP) seeks a \$XX,XXX grant from The Summit Foundation in support of our efforts to provide a comprehensive package of visual (images and multimedia) and written materials for the Honduran-based Center for Marine Ecology (CME). These communications products, which will include photo essays, articles with images, video shorts, and a media packet with images and b-roll, will tell the compelling story of innovative bottom-up efforts to conserve marine biodiversity in the Honduran Mesoamerican Reef, including the Moskitio Coast, off-shore cays, and the Honduran Bay Islands.

This story will be captured in images and video, taken during three expeditions to the region, by some of the world's most accomplished nature photographers. iLCP's staff, known in their own right with respect to conservation communications, will then develop these visuals into a suite of messages and stories that will promote CME's marine conservation efforts to a variety of strategically-important audiences. The four primary audiences are:

1. Local fishing communities, which will gain an increased understanding that it is not only possible, but beneficial, to make some transitions in how they make their marine livelihoods;
2. Honduran government agencies and officials, who will be reminded of how their commitment to marine conservation is good for the well being of local communities, which in turn will increasingly help meet some needs of the government (such as monitoring and protecting natural resources), both of which will be good for the government's reputation in these communities;
3. Honduran general public, whom CME believes will be increasingly supportive of marine conservation and its benefits to local communities; and
4. International audience, primarily in the United States, where we can offer a good-news story about Honduras (to counter what is all too often a bad news perspective on the country) through these local marine conservation plans and efforts.

With funding from The Summit Foundation, iLCP will work with CME staff throughout a scheduled six month process to identify the best messages and story lines associated with four themes detailed in this proposal; capture these four themes (including key messages and messengers) through images and video; produce a suite of communications materials that convey these themes and the overarching story in compelling, viewer friendly formats, and deliver these products to strategically chosen local, regional, national and international audiences.

Finally, it is worth noting that this project, and the products and outcomes associated with the project, will help advance The Summit Foundation's efforts to protect twenty percent of the Mesoamerican Reef through the establishment and designation of "no-take" reserves.

Project Plan

The Center for Marine Ecology (CME) is pursuing a multi-faceted strategy of using no take reserves as a cornerstone of a broad fisher-led management and stewardship campaign in the Moskitio Coast, off-shore cays, and the Honduran Bay Islands. During iLCP's initial reconnaissance and planning mission (funded by the Summit Foundation), iLCP staff worked with CME's Steve Box to identify the key themes of the story behind CME's particular project to reduce the over-harvesting of spiny lobster. This overall lobster conservation project "storyboard" was finalized during a meeting in late March with iLCP staff, Steve Box, and Summit Foundation's Carlos Saavedra. The four themes of the story are:

1. Implementing Alternative Livelihoods Pilot Project for Former Moskitio Lobster Divers: Seeking Sustainable Fisheries in the Moskitio Coast and off-shore cays.
2. Training Hondurans in Artisanal Lobster Fishing: Learning the Belize Model
3. Honduran Lobster Fishers Become Sentinels for The Keys: Added Conservation Value
4. Roatan's Fishers Begin Implementing a Locally Designed and Governed Marine Conservation Plan: Setting the Foundation for Successfully Establishing "No Take" Reserves.

Between April and October, 2012, iLCP will conduct the following work that will result in a comprehensive set of communications products that CME and iLCP will use to convey these four themes of CME's overarching marine conservation message to our four key audiences.

1. Develop Communications Plan: Work with Center for Marine Ecology to develop a six month communications plan that details the target audiences and related objectives, key messages and messengers (the beginning of an overall storyboard), suite of mediums for delivery (print, image, multi-media, online), partner responsibilities, and timelines - from initial image capturing to final communications delivery. This will be a collaborative planning process that iLCP will write, and which will serve as our collective strategy, work plan, and monitoring and evaluation guide. We expect to complete the initial plan by the start of the first iLCP expedition.
2. Collect Visual Assets and Potential Messaging: In each of three iLCP expeditions to the region, iLCP will record the places, people and activities around which CME's marine conservation program revolves. We will collect both images and video, which we will use to produce a series of communications products (detailed below). Working with CME's Steve Box and his newly hired communications specialist to ensure we are collecting images and video that will appropriately and comprehensively tell the story of this conservation campaign, we will conduct the following three expeditions:

a) In late April, iLCP will organize the first of three photographic expeditions to Honduras, to capture the Belize Model theme. An iLCP photographer and videographer will travel from Honduras to Belize with Steve Box (marine biologist and CME director), Nora Trina (Governor of Gracias a Dios), Oswaldo Eccheverrio (President of Active Divers Association of Moskitio), and selected Moskitio lobster divers, where the divers will learn the art and craft of artisanal lobster fishing.

b) In mid-May, iLCP will organize the second expedition, where an iLCP photographer and videographer will capture the Seeking Sustainable Fisheries and Added Conservation Value themes. iLCP will document this pilot program, whose primary purpose is to transition Miskito fisherman from dangerous lobster diving to sustainable artisanal lobster fishing, but will provide an added value of having these new artisanal lobster fisherman serve as stewards of the reef and empowered local guards against illegal shark fishing in the region.

c) In June or July, iLCP will organize the third expedition, during which an iLCP photographer and videographer will capture the voices and attitudes of the Garifuna fishing collective of Punta Gorda, Roatan, a fishing community which has taken on protecting their reef as their own responsibility. This story will help reposition the image of the Honduran fisherman, by promoting them as new stewards of their country's invaluable national marine resources. Specifically, the story will focus on local fishers' commitment to [1] protecting the parrotfish (an important species for sustaining reef's health), [2] commercializing lionfish (which are harmful to the reef's biodiversity), and [3] developing and monitoring a small scale no-take zone.

3. Process Visual Assets and Potential Messaging: iLCP will then edit the material we receive from the iLCP Fellow photographer and videographer, and prepare it for use in the various communications products we will develop. We will begin process images and video after each expedition, and expect to have completed all of this work no later than one month after the third expedition (i.e., no later than mid-to-late August). It is worth noting that CME and iLCP will be able to use these visual assets earlier than that, but only those materials that have been processed.

a) Process the images and video: This includes the technical work of [a] selecting the best images and video, [b] adding metadata to these images and footage, [c] logging the video footage, and [4] adding captions to the images.

b) Develop messages and messengers: Working with both the draft storyboard from the CME/iLCP communications plan, as well as new story and messaging ideas that emerge from the three expeditions, iLCP will develop a refined set of first and second tiered messages, as told by identified compelling messengers, to be used in the communications products listed below. We will then use these as we work with CME staff to finalize the storyboard, messages, and messengers before producing the communications products.

4. Produce Communications Products: With visual assets processed, the storyboard refined, and the overall communications plan further informed, iLCP will produce a suite of products for the Delivery component of the communications plan. Our products will be ready for general consumption no later than one month after our "Processing Visual Assets" work is completed (i.e., mid-to-late September).

a) Photo essays: iLCP will develop one or more photo essays/stories for each of the four themes outlined above. These will include a series of twelve photos with associated captions and messages. This product can serve as a stand-alone gallery, or a complement to a published article.

b) Articles with images: As a complement to the photo essays or a stand-alone piece, iLCP will also produce a written article that incorporates the photo captions and top tier messages, which are attributed to key messengers where appropriate.

c) Video shorts: iLCP will develop a short video that complements the photo essays/stories for each of the four themes outlined above. These will include footage of key messages and messengers.

d) Media packet with images and b-roll: Finally, iLCP will produce a media packet (or press packet) with ready-to-use information on a broad suite of topics and story styles (science, policy, cultural, human interest, etc.). The core of this packet will include press releases tailored to different types of media outlets, as well as supporting messaging and background information. It will also include links to our photo essays, articles, video shorts, as well as other raw b-roll footage. Beyond the core items, we can further tailor the contents to fit the wants and needs of different audiences working in different mass media and social media outlets in different geographic regions.

5. Deliver Communications Products: As part of our joint communications plan, iLCP and CME will develop strategies for how we will use these communications products to inform and influence each of the four identified audiences (local fishing communities, Honduran government agencies and officials, Honduran general public, and strategic international audiences). These audience specific plans will be important in helping iLCP determine any variations in content and style of product we would need to develop for a given audience.

For instance, the lead messages and/or language we use in the articles or press release we craft for the local fishing communities would likely be different than for that of the international audiences. So, while it is obvious that CME will take the lead in using the products to reach out to the first three audiences, and iLCP has the international audience expertise, the two partner organizations still need to co-determine and co-develop our strategies so they ultimately support CME's overarching marine conservation game plan. That game plan will be fully fleshed out in the above-mentioned Communications Plan, and fully implemented through this Delivery component. As we further and finally develop the Communications Plan, we will share our final strategies and tasks with The Summit Foundation.

These strategies will also be important to ensure iLCP is meeting the needs of CME with respect to our international audience outreach. While iLCP has the expertise to determine what type of messages and language we should use for any of a number of chosen audiences, and we are able to help identify the most important audiences for a given strategy objective, we look forward to working with CME to define those international audiences. For instance, in conversations thus far between CME and iLCP, we have discussed whether or not there are one or two objectives for the international audience outreach portion of this Delivery component.

We know for sure that iLCP will take the lead on securing positive news stories about Honduras in the United States, Canada and strategic countries in Europe. Our objective at the international level will be to provide some good news media coverage about Honduras, to help counter what is all too often bad news about the country, its crime rates, corruption and the like. In the United States, in the traditional media markets, we would focus our efforts in Washington, DC, New York, Miami and Los Angeles. Additionally, we would work to secure coverage in influential opinion outlets (ex: Huffington Post), nature outlets (ex: National Geographic), travel outlets, and other "trade" publications where Honduras might be of interest. As for Canada and Europe, iLCP and CME need to further flesh that plan out, which will occur during the first photo/video expedition, when an iLCP staff will be on-sight and able to work directly with CME staff to develop this aspect of the overall strategy.

Another strategy to be determined is whether or not CME would also like iLCP to inform strategic US Departments (State, etc.) or agencies (Coast Guard, Interior, etc.) about CME's project, so that these policy and/or decision makers [1] know of CME's marine conservation program and [2] how it relates to the work of a given U.S. Department or agency in the Honduran MAR. The objective in doing so would be to gain some type of support from these Departments or agencies in advancing CME's work in Honduras. This is a conversation CME and iLCP staff will have during the first photo/video expedition.

In terms of the timing of these Delivery outputs, CME will use these products as part of its communications efforts for many months, and iLCP will spend no more than two months completing our portion of the "delivery" strategy. To that end, iLCP will provide all of the communications products to CME, and iLCP will be happy to send the products to other partners, agencies or media outlets which CME requests of us (to be determined as CME and iLCP further develop the Communications Plan). Finally, no later than mid-May, iLCP will provide The Summit Foundation with a memo outlining the final strategies CME and iLCP adopted regarding the Delivery component of the overall project.

iLCP Capacities and Qualifications

International League of Conservation Photographers' mission is to further environmental and cultural conservation through ethical photography. iLCP brings to this project both a collective, or fellowship, of world-class, world-renowned photographers, and the staff's combined eighty years of conservation communications (including communications strategy, message and messenger development, photo and video acquisition and editing, written and visual story telling, product development, and media outreach). This project plays to iLCP's strengths in three ways:

- 1) The cutting edge nature of the conservation project, and the great potential for leveraging the story throughout the MAR region, is worthy of being captured in images and video by some of the world's best nature photographers.
- 2) This story is about both an ecosystem and the people who are dependent upon that ecosystem. iLCP's mission is to further environmental and cultural conservation through ethical photography, thus highlighting our commitment to promoting the balance between people and place - where each depends on the other for survival.
- 3) The nature of the project's communications plan takes advantage of iLCP's broad suite of communications services - from image collection to messaging, and from product development to utilizing our U.S. and international media contacts.

The following is a list of iLCP's staff skills sets pertinent to each of the five proposal components:

1. Develop Communications Plan

Tom Skeelee: Nearly twenty years of conservation communications planning experience, having developed and implemented one-week to one-year traditional and social media campaigns at the regional, national and international level. These campaigns have addressed a broad suite of topics and story styles (science, policy, cultural, human interest, etc.) for diverse audiences (media, supporters, opinion leaders, public). Examples include policy, legal, and administrative decisions, grassroots organizing, and public awareness building efforts regarding land and wildlife conservation issues on behalf of individual organizations or coalitions.

Mikael Castro: Five years of experience working with non-profits in developing and implementing communication plans. An expert communicator, Mikael speaks four languages and understands the subtleties of inter-cultural communication.

Mark Christmas: Four years as News Producer for the National Geographic Society web-site, where he participated on cross-platform discussions and implementation of news roll-outs on a variety of stories. As Media Outreach Manager in National Geographic's Research, Conservation and Exploration group, Mark has developed and secured news stories of NG grantee's scientific, conservation and expedition work, which were featured in magazines, television, websites, and books.

2. Collect Visual Assets and Potential Messaging

Mikael Castro: Spent nearly a year collecting visual assets in 18 countries in Africa; has managed dozens of international expeditions (photographic and others) with his formal training in ecotourism, extensive experience organizing and implementing efficient and effective expeditions.

Meghan Lamb: Graduate degree in photography and nine years experience as a photo editor, she has extensive experience in capturing and organizing images in the field, as well as working with hundreds of photographers to collect images on deadline for communications purposes.

Mark Christmas: With a degree in radio, television and film production, he has worked in the photography profession since 1985 (including digital images since 1999). Served as audio engineer, camera operator and field producer (stills, video, audio) at National Geographic, and oversaw the production of iLCP's video for the Wild Salmon Center.

Tom Skeele: Has a degree in environmental education, multiple professional trainings in communications, message development and branding, and fifteen years experience developing messages for issues as controversial as wolf reintroduction, grizzly bear conservation and wilderness designation on public lands. Throughout this work, he focused the message on not just the ecological needs, but the economic and social benefits, of these species and lands.

3. *Process Visual Assets and Potential Messaging* Meghan Lamb: Highly skilled in Adobe Bridge, for organizing and editing image metadata, credits and captioning for enhanced search engine optimization; as well as Adobe Photoshop.

Mark Christmas: Accomplished editor of stills, video, and audio from twenty-four years at National Geographic and three years at iLCP.

Tom Skeele: See above for messaging-related experience.

4. *Produce Communications Products*

Tom Skeele: Fifteen years experience managing concept and storyboard development, writing and editing, production of media press releases & OpEds; fact sheets & brochures; websites and Facebook pages. Specific to media, extensive experience producing media packets with press releases, ready- to-use articles, fact sheets, key messages from key messengers, images and video clips.

Mikael Castro: Has written of dozens of feature articles, as well as edited and produced short video segments. Worked with iLCP staff and partner organizations to develop messages for images, articles and social media communications.

Mark Christmas: Proficient in Final Cut Pro digital video editing systems and has edited productions incorporating video, stills, and audio.

5. *Deliver Communications Products*

Tom Skeele: Fifteen years experience using media packets to pitch stories to, be interviewed by, and build relationships with reporters in local, regional & national papers, regional & national "trade" publications, and local & regional TV and radio stations.

Meghan Lamb: iLCP's lead expert on creating and posting photo galleries, and sharing them with partners and media.

Mark Christmas: Has overseen iLCP's delivery of media product to such outlets as National Geographic online, Huffington Post, and major newspaper and television outlets in North America (fewer in Europe).