



NatureServe

Strategic Plan

2007-2011

GUIDING
CONSERVATION ACTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We envision a world where people recognize and value the importance of biodiversity, and where the information and expertise of the NatureServe network is relied upon to understand and effectively conserve the diversity of life on Earth.

A non-profit organization dedicated to providing the scientific basis for effective conservation action, NatureServe is a leading provider of scientific information, expertise, and information technology tools that connect science with conservation.

The NatureServe network is a public-private partnership that includes 80 independent member programs, commonly known as natural heritage programs or conservation data centers. Together, we seek to bring high-quality, consistent, and objective information about species and habitats to the forefront whenever people make decisions about how to best use or conserve natural resources.

Decisions about the management and use of natural resources are most directly made by those who own or manage lands and waters—principally by governments, corporations, landowners, and conservation groups. These *natural resource decision-makers* are our key target audiences; informing their decisions to help secure desirable conservation outcomes is our primary focus. We will work closely with natural resource decision-makers to identify their key information needs, and will serve them by providing information products that are globally consistent, yet adapted to specific circumstances.

The quality of our data, our scientific expertise, and our information technology must continually meet the high standards required by our partners and clients. We will advance the quality of our core datasets on species and habitats, and will develop analytical tools that evaluate and integrate our information with other data about natural resources and human communities. We will use current and emerging technologies to ensure that the information is easy to access, to understand, and to apply.

To meet these high standards, all member programs of the NatureServe network must be active and healthy institutions, working collaboratively towards common objectives. Over the next five years we will invest in and build on our existing network in the Western Hemisphere, and extend its reach by establishing enduring partnerships with like-minded organizations and networks elsewhere. Each node of our network will help inform on-the-ground resource management, and will bring the value of local experience and innovations to the entire enterprise. This strong emphasis on supporting our network and building conservation capacity provides the essential foundation for mission success.

We will organize our work for the next five years around these three goals:

Goal 1: Inform Natural Resource Decisions. Help make biodiversity a mainstream consideration in all significant conservation and natural resource management decisions by making it simple for conservationists, government agencies, corporations, and landowners to access and use high-quality biodiversity information.



"I hope that others will join in helping to make NatureServe a growing and strong organization, because of the extremely important services that it offers . . . not just to nature, served by our conservation effort, but because of how nature serves humanity."

— DR. EDWARD O. WILSON
UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR EMERITUS
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Goal 2: Advance Scientific Understanding. Advance our scientific resources and information technology systems in order to meet the needs of our clients and partners.

Goal 3: Build Conservation Capacity. Strengthen our organizational effectiveness and capacity and better leverage the power of the NatureServe network to inform conservation action at local, regional, national, and international scales.

We recognize that these goals, and the detailed objectives and strategies supporting them, are ambitious. Clearly, we face significant challenges in terms of organizational growth and the continued need for increased funding. But the power and reach of our network presents enormously promising opportunities. NatureServe has made great strides since the establishment of our partnership. Now, with this strategic plan, we take the next step. No other organization is as well prepared as NatureServe to fill the crucial niche where biodiversity science and information technology meet.

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Our Mission



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