

Interactive Session: *Building Bridges between Conservation Biology and Energy Technology – Opportunities for Bidirectional Information Exchange and Direct Collaboration*

Final Report

Abstract:

The purpose of this interactive session is to build bridges between conservation biology and energy technology researchers. The interactions between the two fields—which include pollution and climate change, human energy use patterns, resource extraction, and beyond—indicate that frictionless information exchange and frequent collaboration can have profound impacts on both fields.

Number of Attendees: 18

Activities:

The session began with an introduction and overview from S. DeCaluwe, followed by a series of short “ignite style” talks (5-8 minutes each) from three researchers—Dr. Lilo D. Pozzo, Professor of Chemical Engineering at University of Washington, Dr. Grace Wu, David H. Smith Postdoctoral fellow at The Nature Conservancy and the National Center for Ecological Analysis & Synthesis, and Dr. Chad Gallinat, Senior Program Manager at Conservation X Labs. Each speaker gave a quick overview of their work, then provided answers to two prompts: (i) *What are some things you would like to know about the other fields present in this session?* and (ii) *What are some things you would like others to know about your field?*

The ignite-style talks were immediately followed by open discussion amongst the participants. Conversation was free-flowing and enthusiastic, with 10 of the 18 attendees contributing ideas, questions, and/or feedback. Among other topics, conversations centered on information sharing (how can we efficiently share information, knowledge, and expertise across domain boundaries?), integrated decision frameworks (how do we get decision makers in one field/domain to consider outside information or values/principles from other fields?) and information shortages (what information is still lacking, in order to reduce the ecological disruption from energy and other technologies?). There were also a number of convergent research interest between participants, where participants indicated an interest in following up with one another, offline.

During the final 15 minutes, conversation shifted to identify: (i) challenges to collaboration, (ii) venues/platforms to bring researchers together, and (iii) initial projects and possible funding sources. Several participants shared links for possible funding. In the near-term, there was great enthusiasm for two action items: (i) establish an online virtual work group (e.g., Slack workspace) to enable initial communication and team-building; and (ii) publish a series of papers outlining opportunities and challenges and generating interest in the cross-disciplinary collaboration between energy technology, conservation biology, and required adjacent fields (social sciences, business & economics, etc). Twelve of the attendees provided email addresses to be part of the Slack workspace, to continue these conversations and initial efforts.