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Success in Community Conservation Partnership Initiatives on Public Conservation Land: A Case Study of a Successful West Coast Community-based Conservation Trust

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ABSTRACT

The New Zealand Department of Conservation administers 8.5 million hectares of public conservation land and is focused on growing conservation by increasing partnerships with the community.

Limited research exists on the Department's engagement with the community and, more specifically, on what enables successful conservation partnerships. This research aims to change that and provide a greater understanding of the characteristics underpinning success in conservation partnerships on public conservation land. By identifying these characteristics favourable conditions for success can be established increasing the likelihood of success. Success is defined as achieving predetermined conservation outcomes.

The characteristics found to underpin success were: early engagement with the local community; the Department having the flexibility, expertise, and capacity to assist the community group; the preconditions identified by Plummer and FizGibbon (2004a); building capacity within the community group; strong trusting relationships; and open communication.

The challenge for the Department is to develop these underpinning characteristics when the Department is not integrated into the community and where there is resistance from the community.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	II
ABSTRACT	III
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Foreword.....	1
1.2. The Department of Conservation.....	1
1.3. Research justification	3
1.4. Problem statement	4
1.5. Research question	4
1.6. Objectives.....	4
1.7. Thesis structure	4
2. CHAPTER: LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1. Introduction	5
2.2. Governance and community-based conservation	5
2.3. Defining community-base conservation	6
2.4. Catalyst for community-based conservation	7
2.5. Uncertainty with community-based conservation.....	8
2.6. Support for community-based conservation	8
2.7. Defining Community.....	8
2.8. Success in community-based conservation.....	10
2.9. Characteristics underpinning success in community-based conservation.....	11
2.10. Conclusion	20
3. RESEARCH DESIGN	21
4. CASE DESCRIPTON	24
4.1. Introduction	24
4.2. Department of Conservation.....	24
4.3. The West Coast region	25
4.4. The West Coast and the Department.....	25
4.5. The West Coast Conservation Trust	25
5. CASE STUDY RESULTS	29
5.1. Introduction	29
5.2. People with a passion.....	29
5.3. Skills and expertise	32
5.4. Respect and trust	35
5.5. Community engagement.....	39
5.6. Funding.....	41
5.7. Conclusion	44
6. DISCUSSION	46
6.1. Introduction	46
6.2. Defining success in departmental partnerships	46
6.3. Defining success in the Conservation Trust.....	47
6.4. Community engagement.....	48

6.5. The Department embedded in the Conservation Trust	49
6.6. Preconditions for success	50
6.7. True partnership.....	51
6.8. Capacity building	54
6.9. Adaptive Co-management	56
6.10. Conclusion	57
7. CONCLUSION	58
REFERENCES.....	60
APPENDIX 1	67
Defining Terms.....	67
APPENDIX 2	70
Additional analysis of catalysts for community-based conservation	70