



# LIVING LAKES

A GLOBAL NETWORK OF  
PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE

GUIDELINES AND CASE STUDIES FOR IMPROVING LAKE MANAGEMENT



## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
INTRODUCING LIVING LAKES	2
GETTING STARTED	4
CASE STUDY: LAKE CONSTANCE	6
CASE STUDY: LAGUNA DE BAY	8
CASE STUDY: LAKE ST LUCIA	9
CASE STUDY: LA NAVA	10
CASE STUDY: COLUMBIA RIVER WETLANDS	12

## WHAT THIS TOOLKIT IS ABOUT

Living Lakes is a network of environmental partnership organisations striving for the protection of lakes worldwide. The Living Lakes partnership promotes voluntary international collaboration among organisations that carry out projects benefiting lakes, people, and wildlife. This brochure explains how these partnerships work in practice and Unilever's role as global sponsor, and suggests ways for businesses, NGOs and others to work together to promote lake and wetland quality.



## LIST OF MEMBERS (see map on page 5)

**Columbia River Wetlands** Canada

**Mono Lake** USA

**Lake Chapala** Mexico

**Laguna Fuquene** Colombia

**Pantanal** Brazil

**Mar Chiquita** Argentina

**The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads** England

**La Nava** Spain

**Lake Constance** Germany, Switzerland and Austria

**Võrtsjärv-Peipsi lake system**  
Estonia and Russia

**Milicz Ponds** Poland.

**Nestos Lakes** Greece

**Wetlands of Larache** Morocco

**Lake Victoria** Africa

**Lake St Lucia** South Africa

**Lake Uluabat** Turkey

**The Dead Sea** Jordan

**Lake Tengiz** Kazakhstan

**Lake Baikal** Russia

**Lake Poyang-hu** China

**Lake Biwa** Japan

**Laguna de Bay** The Philippines

**Mahakam Lakes** Indonesia

## MESSAGE FROM THE UNILEVER CHAIRMEN



Antony Burgmans

Niall FitzGerald

Water is a shared resource and its care requires us all to act responsibly. Unilever is playing its part – and wants to do more – to help ensure that in the future there is enough clean water to meet all our everyday needs. As part of our approach to the sustainable use of water, Unilever is the Global Sponsor of Living Lakes, a network of environmental partnerships which has now grown to represent internationally important lakes and wetlands on five continents. Unilever's Water Initiative is one of our three sustainability initiatives, the other two being Agriculture and Fisheries.

Working with a wide range of partners, Unilever and an international panel of water experts developed SWIM, a practical management tool to help focus effectively on sustainable local water management projects of all sizes. The structured SWIM (Sustainable Water and Integrated catchment Management) approach to

understanding and responding to the demands of specific water catchment areas is the basis for this Living Lakes toolkit.

Making partnerships work is not always easy, particularly in regions suffering high water stress, where there are often historically entrenched positions, difficult environmental challenges, and many competing demands for a scarce resource. The partner lakes and wetlands of the Living Lakes network differ widely in character

yet have many management issues in common. In five selected case studies we illustrate the practical partnership approach to the improvement of lake conditions, and show how Unilever has engaged in different ways in support of local projects. We hope this toolkit will encourage more lakes and wetlands to adopt the Living Lakes approach, and promote new and useful partnerships between businesses, NGOs and local authorities in the conservation of water resources.

**Antony Burgmans**

**Niall FitzGerald**

Chairmen of Unilever

## MESSAGE FROM THE GLOBAL NATURE FUND



For Unilever, the world wide operating 'Global Partner' of Living Lakes, it is of course a daily matter to deal with international exchange and co-operation. Through Unilever's financial support and managerial input we have been able to further develop the Living Lakes network.

And Living Lakes is growing. According to our long-term strategy, by 2005 the network will comprise about 40 partner lakes and 50 associated members. It is important to work across a wide range of partners. What is still more important, however, is the quality of the co-operation. Networks are run by organisations with people behind them. Living Lakes is a 'personal' network based on confidence and reliability among the partners – this applies to lake partners and business partners alike. Mutual respect, reliance, and professionalism are attributes of Living Lakes – for a common vision and future.

Networking – an almost magic word these days. We are all part of one network or another. We benefit from networks through making contacts, exchanging information and learning from others, including perhaps people from quite different backgrounds.

When the Global Nature Fund created the Living Lakes network in 1998, we were well aware that the co-ordination of such an international network would be more difficult than one might expect. An effective exchange of information and experience requires well-functioning structures and available resources – otherwise the expected results and synergies do not come off. The network has been growing continuously during the past five years, and we have learned a great deal – thanks to our well-versed partner organisations of the lake regions throughout the world, and thanks to the support of Unilever.

**Marion Hammerl**

President, The Global Nature Fund

# INTRODUCING LIVING LAKES

Living Lakes is a global network of environmental partnership organisations striving for the protection of lakes worldwide. Conservationists at 23 member lakes on five continents are committed to the protection of the lakes in their respective countries. Together with decision makers and businesses, including Unilever as Living Lakes' Global Partner, this network strives for the preservation of water quality, the habitats of rare animals, migratory birds and plants, and to encourage lake-sensitive economic development by the lake communities.

The Living Lakes partnership was established in 1998 by the Global Nature Fund, an international foundation for environment and nature based in Germany. Its aim is the protection of fresh water and the sustainable development of lakes and wetlands of international importance. There were four founder member lakes: Lake Constance (Bodensee) which is bordered by Austria, Germany and Switzerland; Mono Lake in the United States; Lake Biwa in Japan; and South Africa's Lake St Lucia. The network was sponsored by Unilever from the beginning, and in 1998 Unilever became Living Lakes Global Partner. A number of other companies also support Living Lakes as a worldwide network or more locally through individual member lake partnership initiatives.

As the Global Partner, Unilever not only contributes crucial funding to the global organisation of Living Lakes but also supports partnership projects with individual lakes and wetlands through its local companies.

But more than funding, Unilever contributes its management expertise in bringing people

together – NGOs, local authorities, other businesses and networks who may have much to offer as partners with a shared aim. Unilever's management skills can help to drive the necessary actions required to achieve the best solutions to improve lake conditions. Its association with individual lake initiatives has time and again proved useful to its partners in leveraging wider business support or gathering community support in engaging with lake community projects of all sizes and complexities.

Several of these partnership initiatives are described in this brochure in an attempt to indicate the variety of issues involved. Sometimes projects are initiated by business, others by NGOs. There is no one-fits-all solution, because every lake is different, but there are often issues in common. The experiences of the widely differing Living Lakes projects suggest possible approaches to setting up successful business-NGO relationships with a common interest in the preservation of lakes and freshwater.

## WHY LAKES ARE IMPORTANT

Lakes and wetlands are among the world's most important yet threatened ecosystems. They are a precious part of our cultural and natural heritage, providing a rich resource for many human interests and activities, as well as being habitats that support a vast diversity of animal and plant life. Lakes and wetlands

store rainfall, subsequently releasing water gradually into the ecosystem. They improve the water quality by storing nutrients and toxic substances in their plants and sediments. They are a source of renewable resources, such as reeds for construction, fish for human consumption and pasture for grazing livestock. They are also important for leisure activities. Above all, they are an essential source of freshwater for communities both on the lakeside and beyond.



**23** The Indonesian **Mahakam Lakes** (above) are the home of the very rare Irrawaddy dolphin (see map opposite).



**1 Mono Lake** (above) is located in the California Sierra Nevada and threatened by excessive diversion of water from its tributaries to Los Angeles.

**3** The wilderness of the **Columbia River Wetlands** in Canada is home to several large mammal species such as the grizzly bear.

**4 Laguna Fuquene** is a shallow water lake situated in the Colombian Andes at an altitude of 2,500 metres.

**5 Mar Chiquita** in Argentina is breeding ground for up to 50,000 pairs of Chile flamingo.

**6 Pantanal** (below) situated in the heart of South America, is the world's largest wetland.



**2 Chapala**, the largest lake of Mexico is under severe threat of drying up within the next few years if water consumption is not drastically reduced.

**7** The **British Norfolk and Suffolk Broads** (above) are Britain's only wetland with status equivalent to a national park.



**8** Years ago, the Spanish steppe lake **La Nava** was drained. Thanks to Living Lakes Spanish partners, it is a living lake again.

**9** Five million people from three countries, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, take their water from **Lake Constance**.



**10** Monks in the Middle Ages created the bird paradise of the **Milicz Ponds** (above) in Poland.



**11** Intensive farming taking water for agriculture is a major problem for the Greek **Nestos Lakes** (above).



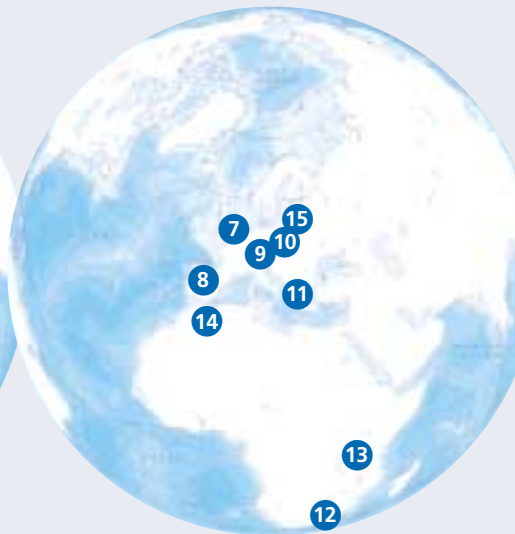
**19 Lake Baikal** (above), the 'pearl of Siberia', is the deepest lake in the world and the home of the rare Baikal seal.



**20 Lake Biwa** in Japan (above) suffers from damage associated with high resident and visitor populations.

**21** 95% of the world population of the endangered Siberian Crane winters at **Lake Poyang-hu**, China's largest freshwater lake.

**22 Laguna de Bay** in the Philippines is highly threatened by untreated domestic waste from towns and cities surrounding the lake.



**12** Eco-tourism creates jobs in the **Greater St Lucia Wetland Park**, (left) South Africa's oldest nature reserve.

**13** The protection of **Lake Victoria**, Africa's largest lake, requires concerted international support.

**14** The wetlands of **Larache** in Morocco are an important resting place for thousands of European migratory birds.

**15** The rich fish stocks of the Estonian-Russian **Võrtsjärv-Peipsi** lake system provide livelihood for local communities.

**16** The **Dead Sea** (below) 417m below sea-level, is in danger of drying up.



**17 Lake Uluabat** in Turkey is crucial for migrating birds as surrounding wetlands have become degraded by human activities.

**18** The Kazakh **Lake Tengiz** is the largest intact steppe lake left in Asia.

# GETTING STARTED

You may be a business, or an NGO, so not all of the pointers here will be relevant to your situation. They are intended to help you structure your approach and indicate some of the barriers you may encounter, including those that may not be immediately obvious.

## A: SELECT A LAKE

Choose a lake or wetland that faces problems. If possible select one where the business has an impact through its operations, or where there is high demand for water to use and dispose of company products.

- How does it tie into the global and local business strategy?
- What is its local importance, both environmental and cultural?
- Is it easily accessible to company employees who may wish to become involved?
- What are the major problems of the lake?
- Work out in broad terms what you hope to achieve through a lake partnership programme. Be realistic about possible achievements within a defined timescale.

Degradation of lakes comes from many sources: Mahakam Lakes in Indonesia (top) suffers from communities and their waste. Nestos Lakes in Greece (right) is blighted by illegal rubbish dumping. Although Lake St Lucia in South Africa (far right) has so far successfully resisted titanium mining, extraction continues immediately outside the borders of the Park and is an ever-present threat.



## B. SELECT PARTNERS

Assess possible partners –

- Local NGOs (if you are a business) – choose one.
- Local business partners (if you are an NGO) – establish their reputations, priorities and company strategies. Do you share aims and ethics, and can you work together?
- Local authorities/organisations – you should consider involving one initially; who is in charge of lake issues; are there water-specific agencies or authorities?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

### General

- Look for opportunities to make a difference with a lake that does not already enjoy high profile attention.
- Define clear and measurable targets, with a timetable and milestones, key players, roles, responsibilities.
- Familiarise yourself with the scientific data, and be aware of the expertise available.
- Be clear and open about your shared agenda and common goals.

### If you are a business

- Establish the credibility of your chosen NGO, and the competition. Look for an established

track record, infrastructure, professionalism and strength of networks with other NGOs.

- Consider the lake project in terms of building the company reputation.
- Be realistic about what you can afford to contribute in terms of finance, expertise and personal commitment.

### If you are an NGO

- Establish the reputation of the company. Be familiar with their environmental and social policies and activities. Understand where they may fall short of your ideals. Do they do what they claim to do?
- How will a business partnership affect your NGO's reputation?
- How can the business help with advocacy, management expertise and volunteers?



Living Lakes partners and supports convene at Mono Lake in California for the World Lakes Conference 1999 to hear from NGOs, local authorities, politicians, scientists and community leaders and discuss problems and solutions to lake and wetland issues.

## C. GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

### Administratively:

- Work out a clearly structured, possibly eventually a legal framework for your partnership.
- Assess your pooled strengths and weaknesses including language barriers, missing skills, approaches to team work, working relationships between key players on each side.
- Allocate the practical next steps and work out strategies to fill the inevitable gaps.

### Practically:

- Start collecting lake data: historic, present and forecast (including impacts and threats).
- Discover who is responsible for key aspects of the lake: local authorities and communities, interest groups, international conventions, stakeholders (agriculture, tourism, industry, etc).
- Study catchment area and activities.
- Establish conflict areas.
- Define appropriate indicators (eg water demand, biodiversity) covering social, economic, cultural and ecological aspects.
- Set a limit to your research. You can never cover everything. Assess all you have gathered and consider what is still missing that is important. Don't reinvent the wheel.

## D. THE ACTION PLAN

- Can you summarise your message clearly?
- Is your report clear, and focused to its target audience?
- Do you know what you have omitted, and why?
- Does it reflect consensus?
- Has the NGO enough information?
- Does it identify key priorities?
- Consider next actions, budgets, timetables, responsibilities, communication plan on this basis.



Schoolchildren and their teacher performing at Silethukhanya school in the Dukuduku Forest in Lake St Lucia, South Africa. Two NGOs and Unilever South Africa are working on numerous long term development projects, including many school programmes and activities in the wider communities bordering the lake.

## DO

- Break down the lake catchment into manageable units
- Define SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) objectives
- Ensure full stakeholder dialogue
- Give local citizens the tools to engage in and own projects
- Identify natural community leaders
- Ensure communities know their limits
- Let communities devise their action plans
- Facilitate and provide support
- Be flexible
- Start with single community pilot project
- Work with those who may have started to tackle the problem. Respect existing efforts to tackle problems
- Produce a simple document for publicity purposes
- Anticipate problems and solutions

## DON'T

- Impose actions and processes on a local community

## BARRIERS

- Uninformed stakeholders
- Conflicting interests
- Poor track records
- Competition and mistrust
- Funding and dedicated resources
- Political appointees or agency heads

# LAKE CONSTANCE: A MATURE PROJECT AND NEW BEGINNINGS



ANDREA'S HAFEN



Lake Constance (top) is a popular holiday destination. Solar boats (above) such as this one designed by lake resident Joachim Kopf, offer advantages including: no emissions, no use of fossil energy and minimal running costs.

## THE LAKE

Lake Constance – Bodensee – is Europe's second largest freshwater lake, fed principally by the Rhine River which eventually drains out of the lake and into the North Sea. It is bordered by Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and is the source of drinking water for more than 4.5 million people, half of whom live within its watershed. The shallow waters and marshes are critical to the 250,000 waterfowl and shorebirds that winter or nest here. Its reed marshes are home to threatened species of birds and plants, and migrating birds rely on the area as a stopover en route from Siberia and Scandinavia to the south.

From the 1950s the lake's composition started to change, in great part due to chemical detergents and phosphate-based fertilisers. By the middle of the 1970s it was clear that the health of the lake was in jeopardy, largely due to nutrient pollution from sewage and other sources. While investment in sewage treatment plants and an underground network of canals has brought these problems under control, other threats have grown. They include a fast-growing shoreline population, intensive horticulture, increased road traffic as well as boat traffic and sail-boarding on the lake. Two thirds of pleasure boats are motorised, which has led to pollution from engines and wastewater discharge. Birds are regularly disturbed from their shallow-water feeding and roosting areas.

The problems of Lake Constance were well known. In 1982 the bordering countries agreed to protect the shoreline. In 1989 the European Community included the lake in its list of the 60 most important and threatened European habitats. In 1990 The Deutsche Umwelthilfe joined forces with Lever Fabergé to create the Lake Constance Project, which in turn became a founder member of Living Lakes. Over twenty years later a combination of NGOs, industrial and political groups, local authorities and community effort have put Lake Constance on a more sustainable footing. Population levels continue to rise, but pollution levels are contained, and wildlife thrives again.

## BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

### Lever Fabergé – Sabine Tandela, Technical Business Support Manager

"It was back in 1990 that Lever, as Lever Fabergé was then called, started to support Deutsche Umwelthilfe, an NGO campaigning on behalf of Lake Constance. Within Unilever as a whole we were increasingly aware of the potential adverse effects of some of our products on water, not just in the factories and the waste water, but the impact of products as they are consumed, and we began a major review of our environmental practices.

Lever Germany took the lead to show the public we did care about the eutrophication of the lake, regardless of whether our products were contributing to it (in fact agriculture was later shown as the main culprit). In Deutsche Umwelthilfe we found a professional NGO partner. Business and environmentalists were traditionally in a position of conflict, and we were some of the first in Germany to start working together in a genuine spirit of collaboration. Besides providing funds, this collaboration helped form a platform for a new working relationship between Lever and major NGOs in three countries. A dialogue began which was later reflected in new more environmentally sustainable products, water conservation initiatives, new relationships with consumers and environmental groups, and many sponsored programmes around the lake as well as company awareness programmes. The 1992 Rio conference and the impetus of

## HUBERT NEIDHARDT RESTAURANT OWNER



"Our family has owned Grüner Baum restaurant in Moos near Lake Constance for five generations. I took over from my father in 1982. Building on family and local traditions, I have specialised in fresh regional products, maintaining quality, developing the best of old and new. We are in close touch with farmers and fishermen throughout the seasons. A speciality is the Burbot *Lota lota*, a typical ancient fish species not offered by other restaurants because of the long preparation involved.

I have been involved with the Lake Constance project since the beginning. Successful sustainable tourism is based on three pillars: culture, landscape and gastronomy, and for that to work it is important to cultivate a regional identity. One must be efficient too. The success of regional markets depends on an efficient delivery chain, and here we are up against large companies. We organise workshops of farmers, restaurant owners, butchers, fishermen, community representatives and environmentalists to tackle these issues.

We have started projects such as farmers markets and delivery services. We aim to source locally – from new furniture to flowers from our own garden grown using our own compost. We show paintings from local artists in the restaurant. We serve local wines, beers, and even mineral waters. All these things add up."

efforts on the River Elbe near our Hamburg head office and co-operate with Deutsche Umwelthilfe in the "Living Elbe" project. Industrial activities particularly threaten the Elbe and we have begun stakeholder dialogues to find a balance between economic and ecological interests. Our experience and learnings from the Lake Constance partnership are proving beneficial."

Agenda 21 with its blueprint for sustainability helped provide the framework that united different stakeholders who might otherwise have had problems working together.

With Lake Constance on a firm environmental footing, Lever Fabergé has started to split its funding in order to support other water projects. We are now concentrating our

## NGO PERSPECTIVE

### Lake Constance Foundation – Marion Hammerl

"For more than 70 years, citizens groups around Lake Constance have sought to protect its water quality, sensitive habitats, and wildlife. But the problems facing Lake Constance towards the end of the 20th century had become daunting. Not only was the lake and local freshwater systems threatened environmentally, but the situation was further complicated by legal differences between its three surrounding countries – Germany, Switzerland and Austria. There were numerous local authorities, many NGOs, as well as anxious communities and industries, all concerned about poor water quality in the catchment. The lake was seen as an alternative freshwater source, but that too was degraded. Everyone agreed that radical changes needed to be made in terms of water management, tourism, agriculture and other areas. Finding a way to co-operate effectively was the challenge.

The Lake Constance Environment Council (later the Foundation) was formed in 1994 representing an alliance of 18 regional and national NGOs from the three countries. From a position of mutual suspicion, they started to work together in a series of practical partnerships. Industries were approached and encouraged to improve their environmental performances. Farmers, foresters, tourism businesses and others were urged to review their practices. A sustained and widespread campaign caught the public's imagination.

Some of the many initiatives include:

- Encouragement of organic farming and farmers' markets, including information for local populations on sources of regional organic supplies.
- Co-operation with restaurants and hotels to promote local organic foods.
- Workshops with mayors, local councillors, architects, forest owners and others to promote use of regional woods.
- Boats – study of anti-fouling paints, and promotions to demonstrate the effectiveness of environmentally friendly anti-fouling substances.
- Promotion of solar energy, especially through solar boats.

### Challenges

- Land use and planning – we are promoting the introduction of environmental management schemes into community land use planning.
- Differing priorities – some partners are more proactive than others. We want to motivate and involve everyone.
- Collaboration – many organisations are not used to collaborating with business and local authorities. We want to encourage partnerships.
- Lack of finance – a problem for most NGOs."

## LIVING LAKES CASE STUDY

# LAGUNA DE BAY: CLEAR WATERS



Representatives of CLEAR, the tripartite partnership formed to conserve Laguna de Bay: Chito Macapagal (Unilever Philippines), Amy Lecciones (Society for the Conservation of the Philippine Wetlands), Gel Tabia (Unilever Philippines), Graham Brown (Unilever), Jika Mendoza-Dalupan (Unilever Philippines), Joan Caldito (Laguna Lake Development Authority). Unilever contributes its marketing and advocacy skills, helping in the conceptualisation of events and the production of publicity material, including the Laguna de Bay coffee table book published in 2002.

### THE LAKE

Laguna de Bay is the largest inland body of water in the Philippines. It is an indispensable source of water for fishing, irrigation, power supply, recreation, navigation and drinking. The lake has an average depth of 2.5 meters and is under constant pressure from the effects of development activities in its vast watershed of 2830 km<sup>2</sup>, which includes Manila and Metropolitan Manila. Its most pressing problems are siltation and pollution from domestic, agricultural and industrial wastes.

In 2001 Laguna de Bay joined the Living Lakes Network through the efforts of Unilever Philippines (ULP), the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) and the Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands (SCPW). The tripartite body adopted the name CLEAR (Conservation of Laguna de Bay's Environment and Resources), with the goal of increasing environmental awareness among stakeholders by soliciting the support of local industries and communities in a unified effort to conserve the lake's resources.

CLEAR is seen locally as a pioneering partnership between government, civil society and the private sector in the spirit of Agenda 21. Programmes in the first five-year plan include a biodiversity survey, environmental education training courses, lake monitoring programmes for community and industry, ecology courses focusing on lake management, and advocacy and publicity campaigns to encourage stakeholder support.

### LOCAL AUTHORITY PERSPECTIVE

**Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA)**  
**Lennie Santos-Borja, Division Chief for Research and Development**

"The LLDA is mandated by the government of the Philippines to carry out the development of the Laguna de Bay Region in its many aspects including environmental management and control, preservation of the quality of human life and ecological systems, and the prevention of undue ecological degradation. Although the LLDA began with a developmental mandate, since 1975 it has operated with a heavy bias on regulation and control.

In recent years the LLDA has recognised the need to be developmental and is now aggressively pursuing this role. Other government agencies operate within the region, and a key challenge is the harmonization of planning and environmental legislation to provide a framework under which this development can take place.

One of the activities has been to initiate collaboration in training programmes with the business sector. Living Lakes is an enabling environment for this initiative. For example, in our seminars and training courses for pollution control officers (PCO), Unilever Philippines PCO lectures on good practice. A lecture on the importance of Laguna de Bay as a Living Lake is also a topic, emphasising the responsibilities of stakeholders for the future of the lake."

### NGO PERSPECTIVE

**Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands – Amy Lecciones, President**

"The SCPW was established in 1998 to advocate the conservation of the more than 60 important wetland areas in the Philippines and to serve as a forum for national and regional wetland issues.

The decision to join the partnership was based on three major factors:

- It provided the opportunity for SCPW to implement a site-based project demonstrating wetland conservation strategies.
- The concept appealed because of its practical and holistic approach.
- It allowed us to work at community level through our partnerships with other locally-based NGOs and people organisations (POs).

CLEAR activities largely complement government efforts to manage the lake wisely through the LLDA. This is why CLEAR has focused mainly on information, education, and communication and other capacity-building strategies. We are still defining our relationships with our partners including the major ones (LLDA and Unilever) and the various stakeholders. Providing accurate and timely information to stakeholders so they make informed decisions seems to be a niche that CLEAR can fill."

## LIVING LAKES CASE STUDY

# LAKE ST LUCIA: COMMITTED SOCIAL AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMMES



Confiscated fishing nets demonstrate the scale of illegal commercial activities on Lake St Lucia (top). The Eco-Partners Programme is using limited funds to bring about empowerment to the villagers of Simunye through a programme of tourism initiatives (above). Amon Sithole, chairperson Simunye Community Tourism Association says, "We Zulus are historically sensitive and nature loving people. We wish to restore our heritage, and the way to do this is through sustainable projects that bring job opportunities and conserve what we have regionally."

### THE LAKE

Lake St Lucia is a 70 km long shallow estuary on the eastern coast of South Africa at the southernmost end of the Mozambique coastal plain. It is the heart of Great St Lucia Wetland Park, a protected natural area with five distinctive ecosystems. Unreliable rainfall leads to extremes of drought and flooding, and periods of highly salty conditions. The area is regarded as critical for the survival of a large number of species including South Africa's largest populations of hippopotamus, Nile crocodile and white-backed and pink backed pelican.

However, the integrity and long term survival of the lake and surrounding area is not secure. The lake is surrounded by a mix of commercial agriculture, forestry and impoverished rural communities. Agriculture and forestry impact heavily on the watershed, through water extraction and land degradation from poor farming practices. Similarly, the rural communities have an enormous impact. Illegal harvesting, run-away fires, littering and a simple desire for land, leading to land claims and political pressure on the park.

Two NGOs, the Wildlands Trust and the Wilderness Foundation, together with Unilever South Africa, have worked together since 1998 to address core conservation needs, facilitate sustainable development of lake communities and nurture support for conservation.

### NGO PERSPECTIVE

**The Wildlands Trust – Andrew Ventner, Executive Director**

"The fundamental issue we face in St Lucia is Third World rural poverty in a World Heritage area. High density populations round the lake edge, unemployment, conflicting land claims, poaching and other issues are some of the challenges. We see our role as brokers and lobbyists in a structured partnership programme to alleviate some of the problems and provide opportunities for employment and conservation for a sustainable future.

We are involved in many developments, including those facilitated through the Simunye Community Tourism Association whose members are working to conserve the lake in numerous small projects. They include fencing and managing reserves, sustainable market gardening, controlled permit systems for resource management, training of nature guides, management and funding programmes, and much more. Community awareness and participation is increasing all the time.

Communication and consultation is essential for successful community-based projects, and part of our work is to help facilitate discussions and help find solutions to the critical issues we face. On a wider canvas we work closely with Unilever South Africa in particular, and other partners and businesses concerned with the sustainability of Lake St Lucia and its surrounding area."

**Unilever South Africa – Andrew Kinmont, Corporate Affairs Manager**

"We began our involvement with St Lucia 1998 in the Khula Agri-Village community, working particularly with the school and through contributions to lakeside environmental projects. Apart from a funding in excess of 1 million Rand, the programme has included a committed contribution of Unilever staff time, including many weekends of voluntary work. St Lucia is a glamorous and popular destination, and it has not been difficult to recruit and retain company volunteers. Activities include:

- Workshops, field trips and activity days.
- Contributing managerial expertise.
- Development of a school computer laboratory with on-going maintenance programme, provision of library resources.
- Walk-through exhibit at Cape Vidal.
- Environmental awareness resource material.

New community projects include the creation of the Sacred Forest within the grounds of a school, tree planting programmes, sustainable water management programmes and a great deal more. Unilever's commitment to St Lucia has helped our partners leverage support from other businesses. It has also provided us with valuable team-building and management experience, tapped into the volunteer ethic and helped us develop environmental and social awareness among future business leaders."

## LA NAVA: RESTORING A WETLAND



So far 307 ha of La Nava in Spain have been converted back to wetlands, and once again the area is a breeding ground for endangered species and other wildlife. A phased management plan is tackling issues such as control of water abstraction, improved sewage treatment, improved agricultural practices – including creation of buffer zones, improved biodiversity and sustainable tourism initiatives to boost the local economy

### THE LAKES

The wetlands complex of La Nava and Boada is located in the province of Palencia in the north of Spain. The area used to be a lagoon until the 1940s, one of the country's three largest wetlands of more than 4000 ha, and a key wintering and migration site for thousands of birds, as well as a nesting site for endangered species. Winters are bitterly cold, summers scorchingly hot. In the 1950s the area was drained for farming, with consequent loss of wildlife habitat. In 1990 Fundación Global Nature Spain started the restoration of the La Nava lagoon, helped by EC money and local council support. This was followed in 1998 by the neighbouring Boada de Campos wetland, supported by Lever Fabegé Spain and other companies.

### NGO PERSPECTIVE

**Fundación Global Nature Spain –  
Fernando Jubete Tazo**

“As a biologist I was aware that the La Nava steppe lake had disappeared with the 1950s drainage programme, and with it many forms of wildlife that were once abundant. Contrary to their expectations, local people had not gained from the programme – in fact it had led to serious problems. Their horses, cattle and sheep needed water. Waterfowl they had previously hunted had moved away. Crops died of drought. The drained lake clearly was offering few advantages and we had to do something about it.

I traced the outline of the original lake from an old map. I sought advice and help from authorities and scientific experts, and eventually in 1990 some 60 ha of the lake in the town of Fuentes de Nava was flooded again. A restoration project was designed and submitted to the European Union, which was then executed by the Environment Authorities of Castilla y León.

### Problems and learnings

We are a small NGO, and the international support offered by Living Lakes and Unilever has been crucial in making our case. Until recently, few Spanish authorities or businesses have wanted to work with NGOs, often seeing them as competitors. Examples of other Living Lakes collaborations (eg Mono Lake Committee and Californian authorities, or Lake Constance and its regional and

international partners in Europe) helped us convince the Castilla y León authorities of the importance of partnerships in making radical changes. Further progress came in 1999 with an international press conference in Palencia, supported by Lever Fabergé Spain and the Global Nature Fund which attracted a great deal of publicity. Today the situation is much improved and we enjoy the support of the local mayors and their communities in our negotiations over issues such as permissions, land, water – including difficult management problems – and money for restoration.

Our achievements have come after many legal hurdles, the establishment of careful irrigation techniques and strict control of water quality. We work to a defined programme to restore the wetland, to inform and involve the public and to improve sustainable tourism to help the local economy. We have been talking to farmers about sustainable agriculture, and we have now established clear guidelines for the next few years.

The worst problems were experienced in early years when farmers, politicians and residents watched incredulously as water flooded their former grazing lands that had been so carefully drained decades before. Jealousies and misunderstandings between local councils added to the hurdles. But gradually these difficulties have been overcome, and today the wetland has the approval of the local population, and local councils are working together.



### LIVING LAKES CO-OPERATION

Membership of Living Lakes has brought many advantages, including knowledge sharing. La Nava and Lake Constance exchanged know-how on sewage treatment, organic farming, sustainable tourism, and the land-use plans of communities. La Nava and Norfolk Broads in the UK (left), an area of managed rivers, marshes and fenland, co-operate on habitat restoration, bio-manipulation of shallow lakes, vegetation and recreational management.

“The early support of Lever Fabergé Spain enabled us to keep going against the odds. We could show that the La Nava restoration concerned not just ecologists but a range of stakeholders, from large companies to individuals who were originally unaware of the programme. On a practical level we could pay the rent on the wetlands, meet management expenses, and more recently carry out public works. We have found that joint projects with Lever Fabergé Spain are easier, quicker and more practical than those with government. We prepare an annual budget and work programme, complete individual projects and report on the progress – achieving our objectives far faster than if we had to go through the normal bureaucratic channels.

### Next Steps

Based on our expertise, in 1999 the European Union asked us to reclaim another three Spanish lakes in Villacañas (Toledo), in

Castilla-La Mancha, by means of a LIFE Nature Project, and the Living Lakes network played a decisive role in its execution. As with La Nava and Boada lakes, the Villacañas wetlands restoration project has received support from Lever Fabergé Spain throughout its programme.”

### BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

#### Lever Fabergé Spain – José Luis Galiana

“Most Lever Fabergé Spain’s products are used with clean water, and therefore the progress of our business is closely related to the long-term conservation of drinking water resources. Lever Fabergé Spain has been involved with La Nava’s restoration since 1997. We signed a covenant with Fundación Global Nature Spain in 1998 when business-NGO co-operation was unusual. Publicity following the Palencia conference dramatically raised the profile of the campaign, and we have supported

subsequent partnership restoration projects in La Nava, Boada and Villacañas. They include:

- Conservation projects including reforestation, species surveys.
- Infrastructure construction including bird observatory, new water treatment systems.
- Publications including publicity material for education, press, exhibitions.
- Participation in international conferences and other public events.
- Organisation of work experience for children of Lever Fabergé Spain employees.

### Benefits to Lever Fabergé Spain include:

- Participation in projects in alignment with overall Unilever policy which have been enthusiastically supported by Lever Fabergé Spain employees since 1997.
- Empathy among the public: Lever Fabergé Spain’s concern for environmental conservation helps us to communicate with new groups of potential clients, especially young people. Widespread support for the campaign encourages further participation and employee involvement.
- The on-going relationship between Lever Fabergé Spain and Fundación Global Nature enables the continuing step-by-step restoration programme to proceed confidently.”



Lever Fabergé has contributed a bird observatory, visitor information boards and other educational materials to La Nava (top). Lever Fabergé’s employees and their children enjoy outings to La Nava, Boada and Villacañas wetlands on occasions such as International Wetlands Day (above).

## COLUMBIA RIVER WETLANDS: FINDING A LOUDER VOICE



LARRY TOOZE

The Columbia River Wetlands suffer from their beauty. Hugely popular for recreational activities including watersports and heli-activities, and a wide variety of wildlife including grizzly bears, they are argued over by scientists, environmentalists, developers and others. Much of the cost of providing the infrastructure to support its visitors falls on the relatively small local population.

### THE LAKES

Within the Canadian Southern Rockies, the Columbia River Wetland covers some 27,430 ha of pristine wetlands between the Purcell and Rocky mountain ranges. Fed by mountain streams, they are the headwaters of the Columbia River system – the fourth largest body of water by volume in North America. This is an area of publicly and privately owned mountains, meadows, forests, grasslands and other critical habitats, including world-class wetlands that are home to endangered species and the staging grounds for flights of North America’s migratory birds. The region boasts numerous large mammal species including the largest inland population of grizzly bears in North America, and the most southern population of mountain caribou which needs protection if it is not to become extinct.

Just 60,000 people live here, although many thousands more visit all year. The area is developing a tourism-based economy as an alternative to the declining forestry and mining businesses, but unfortunately tourism developments are focusing on initiatives that encroach on wilderness areas and sensitive habitats. Golf courses, mega-ski resorts and holiday homes are the main focus of developments. ‘Wilderness tourism’ is expanding too: snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, jet boats and heli-holidays are putting increased pressure on the most remote areas including waterways, as well as populations of endangered species.

### NGO PERSPECTIVE

**East Kootenay Environmental Society – Anne Levesque, Corporate Relations Director**

“The East Kootenay Environmental Society, established in 1987, works alongside community groups, other stakeholders and local and regional decision makers to promote the environmental protection and long-term viability of communities in south-eastern British Columbia. EKES’ wide programme attracts strong grassroots and regional support, but issues here have federal implications too. The region is over 4000 km away from Toronto and Ottawa, the country’s business and political hub, but federal decision makers must become aware of the region if we are to manage it sustainably for the long term. One aim is to harmonise legislation between provincial and federal governments, so that the law respects biodiversity,

When Unilever Canada approached us in 1999 we were anxious: although we have links with local businesses we had never accepted money directly from a large company before, and we feared it might lead to unacceptable pressures. But we needed to find a way to get our message to Eastern Canada and international visitors. Membership of Living Lakes and the support of Unilever Canada has gradually strengthened our case and raised the profile of the region and our campaigns. EKES has recently requested further support from Unilever Canada in areas where we lack experience and expertise.”

## THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

### Unilever Canada – Catherine McVitty, Corporate Relations Manager

“Since the early 1990s Unilever Canada has been part of a major partnership water programme, the Task Force to Bring Back the Don River which flows through heavily industrialised areas including Unilever Canada’s site in Toronto. Unilever’s involvement began based on local interest, and expanded to include the entire Don watershed. It remains key to the company’s water stewardship activities.

We wanted to expand our water partnership programme, ideally with a project that might suit Unilever’s global sponsorship of Living Lakes. We knew the Columbia River Wetlands was a unique wetland region in the Canadian Rockies and we contacted the East Kootenay Environmental Society to offer to help through the Living Lakes network. Although the region is a three-hour flight and two-hour drive away from Toronto, Unilever has a sales office in Calgary. Nevertheless, part of our challenge has been to find ways to involve our employees in the programme.

An opportunity arose when it became clear that, despite their record of accomplishments, EKES was having difficulty in getting their message heard outside British Columbia. In January 2003 six members of Unilever’s marketing department and a representative from one of the advertising agencies visited British Columbia to lead the EKES staff

through a brand strategy exercise. Unilever personnel are also helping EKES communicate the importance of their work within Canada and beyond. The 2004 Living Lakes conference in the Columbia River Wetlands will provide an opportunity to re-launch the organisation, with a newly focused identity.

Our president and CEO Kevin Boyce adds, ‘We recognise that our partnership with EKES can extend beyond the traditional financial support to a sharing of expertise and knowledge that brings value to both our organisations.’ As our staff learn more about the project, they are increasingly enthusiastic about finding ways to contribute.”



## FURTHER READING



### Agriculture

[www.unilever.com](http://www.unilever.com)

click on links to Environment & Society:  
Sustainability initiatives: Agriculture



### Fish

[www.unilever.com](http://www.unilever.com)

click on links to Environment & Society:  
Sustainability initiatives: Fish



### Water

[www.unilever.com](http://www.unilever.com)

click on links to Environment & Society:  
Sustainability initiatives: Water



### SWIM

[www.unilever.com](http://www.unilever.com)

click on links to Environment & Society:  
Sustainability initiatives:  
Water: SWIM

### Credits

Writing	Juliet Walker
Design	Red Letter Design, London
Photography	© copyright Living Lakes unless indicated otherwise
Printing	Scanplus, London
Paper	The pulp used in the manufacture of this paper is from renewable timber produced on a fully sustainable basis. The virgin pulp is bleached by an elemental chlorine free basis (ECF). This paper is suitable for recycling.



MICHAEL SUTOR

Pantanal Wetlands, South America



[info@unilever.com](mailto:info@unilever.com)  
[www.unilever.com](http://www.unilever.com)  
[info@globalnature.org](mailto:info@globalnature.org)  
[www.globalnature.org](http://www.globalnature.org)  
[www.livinglakes.org](http://www.livinglakes.org)  
LL/RLD/SP/5000/0303