The next 10 years!

CPSG RRC Meet 5-7 June, Minneapolis, USA

First established as the Captive Breeding Specialist Group (popularly CBSG) more than three decades under the SSC IUCN, the highly active and innovative group continues to contribute in the field of conservation planning, justifying the name change recently to Conservation Planning Specialist Group or CPSG. The mantle of responsibility of leading the group has changed hands from Ulie Seal, the founder & innovator to Bob Lacy, developer of Vortex to Onnie Byers, the current chair. Many a conservation leader has contributed to the functioning, development and running of CPSG over the decades and many continue to do so currently keeping the spirit of the organization flying high.

Sally Walker of Zoo Outreach Organization was responsible for one of the outreach innovations of the then CBSG when she convinced and got unconditional support from Ulie Seal to set up the first national network CBSG-India in 1991. Continuous engagement of CBSG-India in all of the processes and techniques of CBSG made the national initiative into a regional one for South Asia. Following on the heels of CBSG-South Asia was the establishment of CBSG-Meso America based in Costa Rica. Several network experiments later CPSG today is represented in regions of Australasia, Brazil, Europe, Indonesia, Japan, Mesoamerica, Mexico, North America, South Asia, Southern Africa and perhaps soon in Southeast Asia too.

Over the years the networks of CPSG have by themselves become a centre of expertise in various aspects of CPSG processes such as facilitation, population viability assessments, population and habitat viability analysis, risk assessments, conservation needs assessments, disease risk assessments, conservation plans, species action plans, among others. This

extensive spread of knowledge and empowerment prompted the current chair of the SSC IUCN, Jon Paul Rodrigues to recognize CPSG as the species planning arm of the Species Survival Commission, giving one-third of the mandate of the SSC's ambit to the specialist group; and officially changing the name to Conservation Planning Specialist Group in early 2017. The erstwhile networks also changed their involvement from



Mind map for an ideal regional resource centre by 2028. © Sanjay Molur

CPSG RRC MEETING



A selfie of some of the CPSG folks in front of the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. © Sanjay Molur

being mere representations to Regional Resource Centres or RRCs. Zooreach is the home for CPSG-South Asia RRC.

The CPSG RRCs met up recently in Minneapolis, the HQ of CPSG, 5-7 June 2018. As part of the biennial meeting of the RRCs since 2013, this year's gathering proved very invigorating as we discussed the plans for the next ten years of CPSG RRCs. The onus was not on what each RRC was doing currently, instead what each RRC wanted to build its cores strengths in the

next five years. Capacity building, participatory approaches, exchange of expertise, mentoring, etc. are critical areas of future development of the RRCs, feeding back into the construction of the HQ itself.

Three days of hard work, typical of CPSG's workshops, were interspersed with some extracurricular and team building activities such as kayaking/canoeing, 'Fly Over America' at the Great Mall, and dinner at the famous Guthrie Theatre. The tribe of CPSG grows as its spirit remains flying high. Here's to looking forward to proactive conservation planning around the world.

Sanjay Molur Convener, CPSG-South Asia Executive Director, Zoo Outreach Organization

