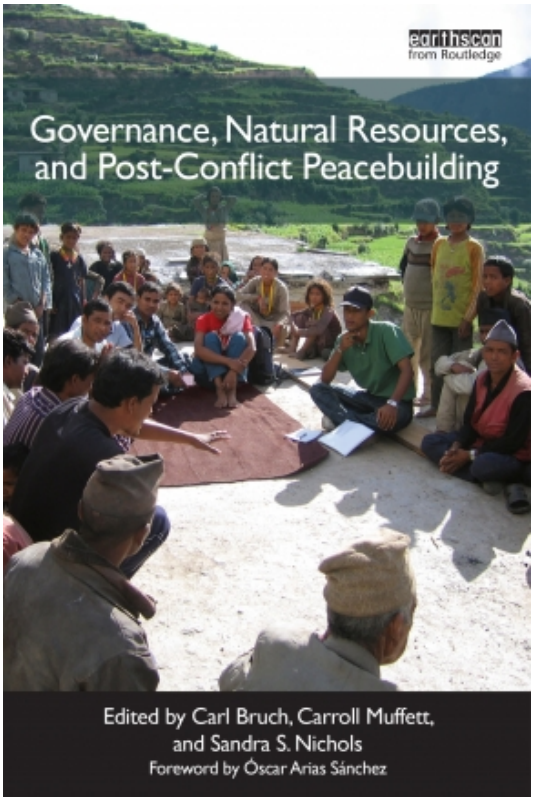
This chapter first appeared in *Governance, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* edited by Carl Bruch, Carroll Muffett, and Sandra S. Nichols. It is one of six edited books on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Natural Resource Management. (For more information, see www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org.) The full book can be purchased at http://environmentalpeacebuilding.org/publications/books/governance-natural-resources-and-post-conflict-peacebuilding/.



Part 6: Confidence Building

Carl Bruch[a], Carroll Muffett[b], and Sandra S. Nichols[c]
[a]*Environmental Law Institute (ELI)*
[b]*Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)*
[c]*European Forestry Institute (EFI)*

Online publication date: 30 November 2016

Suggested citation: C. Bruch, C. Muffett, and S. S. Nichols. 2016. Part 6: Confidence Building, *Governance, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding,* ed. C. Bruch, C. Muffett, and S. S. Nichols. London: Earthscan.

PART 6

Confidence building

Introduction

Since the mid-twentieth century, 81 percent of major armed conflicts have occurred in the thirty-four most biologically diverse areas in the world (Hanson et al. 2009). Where biologically rich areas span more than one country, transboundary cooperation is needed for environmental protection and restoration during and after conflict. Transboundary cooperation may also be necessary where conflict-affected countries share essential natural resources, such as water, or where conflict-related activities in one country threaten to cause environmental degradation in another.

Left unresolved, transboundary environmental issues can spark tensions and undermine peace. Transboundary environmental cooperation, however, can support the peace process by creating avenues for dialogue, building confidence and trust between countries, developing governance capacity, and laying the groundwork for cooperation in other areas; in particular, joint environmental conservation and restoration can provide a less politically contentious entry point for international cooperation following conflict.

The chapters in this part explore transboundary mechanisms for environmental cooperation after conflict. These mechanisms—which include regional environmental institutions, regional environmental and security initiatives, transboundary environmental impact assessments, and peace parks—have been central to building confidence following conflict.

Regional environmental institutions can help strengthen legislation, build institutional capacity, and coordinate regional action, with benefits for both environmental management and peacebuilding. In "Environmental Governance and Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Central America: Lessons from the Central American Commission for Environment and Development," Matthew Wilburn King, Marco Antonio González Pastora, Mauricio Castro Salazar, and Carlos Manuel Rodriguez present an example of a successful regional environmental institution in a region emerging from conflict.

The Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) was created in 1989 to promote sustainable development and natural resource management in war-torn Central America. By fostering the resolution of natural resource–related issues that had contributed to conflict, and by facilitating dialogue and cooperation in support of regional political and economic integration, CCAD helped build and sustain peace. Specifically, CCAD coordinated the development and adoption of harmonized environmental legislation, strengthened the participation of civil society in environmental management, promoted the signing and ratification of multilateral environmental agreements, leveraged financial support for conservation and natural resource management, and facilitated implementation of environmental norms.

Other regional mechanisms, such as the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), which operates in Central Asia, focus on the relationship between

security and the environment. In "Promoting Transboundary Environmental Cooperation in Central Asia: The Environment and Security Initiative in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan," Saba Nordström describes a pilot project in which ENVSEC coordinated a transboundary environmental impact assessment of a new copper and gold mining operation near the border between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The project revealed several potential transboundary issues that the countries were able to resolve—and as a result of its experience with the project, Kyrgyzstan amended its environmental protection laws. Nordström suggests that such projects could work in other fragile areas, preempting conflict by building confidence and dialogue between countries.

Transboundary environmental cooperation can also play a role in resolving conflict and establishing peace. In the Cordillera del Cóndor region between Ecuador and Peru, the creation of a transboundary protected area was a major element in the resolution of a 170-year-old territorial dispute. In an innovative agreement that gave Ecuador property rights and Peru sovereign rights over a piece of disputed territory, both parties agreed to create demilitarized conservation areas on either side of the new border, and to establish a peace park that bridged the two countries. In "The Peru and Ecuador Peace Park: One Decade after the Peace Settlement," Yolanda Kakabadse, Jorge Caillaux and Juan Dumas describe the history and implementation of the peace park. Although environmental conservation has been delayed by the removal of landmines, as well as by pressure from logging, mining, and oil interests, the authors view the park as a potential model for resolving border disputes in other remote and biologically rich areas.

Peace parks such as the one in Peru and Ecuador have become increasingly common. Conservation of biological diversity, including the protection of endangered species, is important and economically valuable, especially at the local and regional levels; it can also be less politically sensitive than other natural resource–related issues, such as water allocation and the extraction and trade of oil and minerals. Transboundary protected areas can thus be a good entry point to build trust and confidence following conflict.[1]

In "Transboundary Collaboration in the Greater Virunga Landscape: From Gorilla Conservation to Conflict-Sensitive Transboundary Landscape Management," Johannes Refisch and Johann Jenson discuss cooperation in the management of the mountain gorilla habitat that spans areas of Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Even during decades of conflict within and between the three countries, park rangers coordinated patrols across boundaries—and when the security situation prevented access to certain areas of the park, rangers relied on informal information networks to continue to monitor gorilla populations. The environmental cooperation sustained during conflict eventually gave rise to high-level political cooperation and formal mechanisms for joint management.

---

[1] On peace parks and post-conflict peacebuilding, also see Walters (2015) and Westrik (2015).

As the chapters in this part illustrate, both environmental problems and violent conflict can spill across national boundaries. Migratory species and water and air pollution cross borders, as do rebels, refugees, poachers, and smugglers. Effectively addressing environmental and security problems following conflict can require a transboundary approach that recognizes the linkages between conflict and natural resources. Conflict-sensitive transboundary environmental cooperation can provide an effective pathway to establish and consolidate peace and promote regional post-conflict development.

REFERENCES

Hanson, T., T. M. Brooks, G. A. B. da Fonseca, M. Hoffmann, J. F. Lamoreux, G. Machlis, C. G. Mittermeier, R. A. Mittermeier, and J. D. Pilgrim. 2009. Warfare in biodiversity hotspots. *Conservation Biology* 23 (3): 578–587.

Walters, C. 2015. Transboundary protected areas: Opportunities and challenges. In *Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding*, ed. H. Young and L. Goldman. London: Earthscan.

Westrik, J. T. 2015. A peace park in the Balkans: Cross-border cooperation and livelihood creation through coordinated environmental conservation. In *Livelihoods, natural resources, and post-conflict peacebuilding*, ed. H. Young and L. Goldman. London: Earthscan.