



Workplan (2025-2027)

Society for Conservation Biology's Revive Working Group

October 2025

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Overview

Purpose

This workplan serves as a guide for implementing Revive activities. The workplan reflects the vision and preferences of Revive Members and should inform budgeting and fundraising.

Process

This workplan was created by the Revive Board based on feedback from Revive Members. At least 30 Revive Members and Board Members (35% of our 85 members as of the writing of this document) contributed ideas, which were submitted via a Mentipoll and during an in-person Revive member meeting held on June 10, 2025 at the ICCB in Brisbane, Australia and two virtual member meetings on July 10, 2025 (held at times to accommodate different time zones). Ideas were synthesized by the Revive President (Jen Miller) and refined and ultimately approved by the Board during the Revive Board Retreat in September 2025. This workplan was then shared with Revive Members to serve as a foundational guide for organizing and implementing working group activities.

Time period

Revive was conceptualized in January 2025 and officially established as a provisional working group in June 2025. The timespan of this workplan from 2025-2027 comprises the first three years of the working group, which is the maximum period that Revive is allowed to function under provisional status before it is required to apply for full working group status with 100 members (although full status may be obtained before then, and these terms are currently

under review by the SCB Program Council). 2025-2027 also overlaps the first full terms of all elected Board Officials (two sequential terms of 2025-2026 and 2026-2027; a subset of Board Officials are elected every other year), although actual Board terms may differ due to the lag time of initiating the first official election cycle.

Strategic Framework

See Appendix I for a complete overview of Revive's Strategic Framework, including name definition, scope, goal, vision, mission, purpose, values and scales of impact.

Objectives and Activities (2025-2027)

Overview

Below is a high-level overview of the activities requested by Revive's membership as the highest priority for the working group to start organizing. Detailed descriptions in the following pages. See Appendix II for detailed descriptions of each activity.

Informational resources and events

- Resource list with existing publications, courses, workshops, groups (Activity 1.1)
- Fact sheet on conservationist emotional responses, eco-emotions, wellbeing, resilience⁺ (Activity 1.1)
- Monthly webinar to provide info and wellness exercise* (Activity 1.2)

Research

- Convene research group to identify needs⁺ (Activity 2.1)
- (Activity 2.2 could be shaped depending on outcomes from Activity 2.1)

Wellness support

- Self-guided worksheets with resilience exercises (Activity 1.1)
- Wellness workshops (Activity 1.2)
- Targeted support for early career conservationists (class or self-guided session) (Activity 1.2)
- Directory of mental health specialists with expertise for conservationists (Activity 3.1)
- Coordinate small peer groups to self-facilitate (Activity 3.2)
- Virtual or in-person group support meetings (Activity 3.2)
- Resilience grants to support wellness for individuals or work teams* (Activity 3.4)

Culture change

- Storytelling (Activity 4.1)

*Fundraising required

⁺Included based on Revive Board recommendation

Committees

Per Revive's bylaws, working group committees may be formed to address an issue related to Revive goals. Each committee is chaired by a voting member who is appointed by the President. The Chair is responsible for appointing other committee members and is accountable to the Revive Board. Committees should also coordinate where activities are complementary.

The following Revive Committees will be established to organize and implement the 2025-2027 Workplan activities. Logistics (e.g., budgeting, fundraising, communication, event coordination) will be supported by Revive Board Officials.

Committee titles reflect the "why" (goal/outcome) of the committee. The activities listed under each are the Board's recommendation for initial activities that the committee should start with based on Member ideas and feedback (see following pages for detailed descriptions of activities and outcomes).

Evidence and Impact Committee – to deepen understanding

- Identify evidence for the best practice of Revive activities (including recommendations of best practices for other Committees)
- Develop impact indicators of conservation professionals' resilience
- Identify research needs, priorities and agenda
- Nurture the growing research community

Care Committee – to provide emotional support

- Nurture a community of practice on care approaches to support conservationists
- Develop list of existing resources
- Develop a directory of mental health practitioners with expertise for conservationists
- Develop a directory of Revive members who are trained/certified/experienced wellness facilitators/instructors
- Organize and lead wellness workshops
- Develop self-guided wellness exercises
- Create a peer support program (virtual and in person)

Amplification Committee – to expand the reach of voices and practices

- Webinar
- Storytelling events
- Advise Revive Committees and Board about additional ideas for community-building and external partnerships
- Assist Revive communications strategies and content

Appendix I. Strategic Framework

Working Group Name

Revive Working Group

- Revive - verb - 1. to restore to consciousness or life 2. to restore from a depressed, inactive, or unused state : bring back 3. to renew in the mind or memory.
- A working group dedicated to supporting professionals through heartbreak, grief, anxiety and other intense and draining emotions commonly experienced on the frontlines of conservation.

Scope

Working in the conservation profession is hard on the heart, mind and body. More than one in four conservation professionals internationally report moderate or severe levels of psychological distress (Pienkowski et al 2023). Compassion fatigue and burnout are common among conservation professionals, and can contribute to low morale and undermine conservation effectiveness. Research is increasingly documenting evidence of “eco-emotions” (e.g., eco-grief, eco-anger, climate change anxiety) and the role it plays for conservationists work and outcomes. Despite the heavy emotional burden of the conservation field, we lack an intentional, coordinated effort to strengthen research, training and workplace cultural norms to guide how conservation professionals should safely navigate the psychological impacts on ourselves, our colleagues and our collaborators.

The Revive working group will fill this niche. Revive programming will address two types drivers of psychological distress among conservation professionals:

- Existential drivers: The polycrisis of socio-ecological planetary change, and the sense of separation from and loss of nature
- Incidental drivers: Job-related and workplace or work culture factors

Goal

The goal of the Revive working group is to understand, normalize and support our professional community in living with the intense emotional responses (“eco-emotions”) which are commonly experienced while working on the frontlines of biodiversity loss, climate change and other existential threats driving socio-ecological crises. Research shows that emotional regulation is a critical professional skill set that can be strengthened through practice. By validating and learning from these recurring feelings, while not always comfortable initially, we can strengthen our sense of connection to each other and the Earth and potentially revive our motivation, energy and creativity for the conservation mission.

Vision

Revive's vision is an inspired, emotionally resilient conservation community where wellbeing is valued and nourished as a foundational part of our work to protect and restore our planet's biodiversity and ecosystems.

Mission

Revive's mission is to support conservationists in navigating the emotional responses that arise when working on social and ecological change, and more broadly normalize and integrate wellbeing and emotional resilience into the conservation field.

Purpose

The Revive working group supports conservation professionals navigating the intense emotional responses that commonly come from working on the frontlines of environmental and social crises. We aim to normalize and navigate these difficult emotions and nurture an authentic, empathetic conservation workplace culture that avoids burnout and deepens our interconnection with nature.

Values

Our values include introspection, growth, interconnectedness, nature and impact.

Scales of Impact

- Individual
- Work team
- Organization
- Conservation community as a whole

Preliminary Theory of Change

Conservationists recognize psychological distress in themselves and others

- research studies and informs evidence-based care approaches and
- practitioners identify care approaches
- individuals understand and apply self-care and
- individuals support others
- community culture of care develops
- practices and policies are institutionalized into conservation organizations
- supportive and caring conservation professional culture

Appendix II. Detailed Descriptions of Activities

Notes

- Prior to initiating any activity, organizers should assess:
 - Whether and what similar resources already exist, and how Revive can amplify, build on or complement them; and
 - Evidence of best practices to optimize the effectiveness of the activity towards achieving Revive's objectives and associated desired outcomes.
- Given that Revive serves conservation professionals globally, activities will need to be designed and implemented to be inclusive and representative of different conservation subfields, geographies, languages and other specific subgroups.

Objective 1: Develop the ability of conservation professionals to identify and navigate the emotional responses that arise when working in conservation.

This objective focuses on providing resources and events to strengthen understanding about the role of emotional responses in the conservation profession and equip professionals with approaches to process these feelings and explore their drivers.

Desired outcomes

1. Increased understanding of the 'normal' types of impact that eco-emotions can have on conservation work, including our own work and our conservation partners
2. Increased sensitivity to and comfort with recognizing and responding to one's own and other colleagues' experiences of eco-emotions
3. Increased skills in applying a variety of tools to navigate emotions as they arise, in ourselves and conservation colleagues

Activities

Activity 1.1. Develop and publish guides and resources on approaches for resilience. These will include:

- **Fact sheets** on resilience topics
- **Informational lists** with existing publications, courses, workshops and groups
- **Activity worksheets** and recorded facilitation with self-guided resilience exercises

Activity 1.2. Deliver events on emotional literacy and resilience to conservation professionals through presentations, webinars, workshops and classes. Events will target different subgroups across the conservation profession and prioritize sub-groups of professionals that are known to be especially high-risk for ecogrief, such as invasive species biologists, wildlife trafficking specialists, veterinarians, early career and BIPOC professionals. Activities will include:

- **Hosting a virtual monthly webinar** with invited guest speakers who share different aspects of eco-emotions and emotional resilience for applied conservation practice. Guest speakers will include researchers, eco-therapists, leaders of resilience professional groups and others. Talks would be recorded and posted on the working group website as

an evergreen resource. To ensure an equitable space for our speakers, we will strive to offer an optional honorarium for speakers who feel they need monetary compensation.

- **Delivering workshops and classes** to support conservationists in exploring the source of their emotional responses and teach emotional resilience skills. We envision that members and affiliates of the working group would create and offer these events to SCB members (and the public, as registration space allows). The working group will provide support to its member trainers through feedback to refine products and provide the promotional service of outreach to external NGOs, government agencies and universities (e.g., list of available speakers/trainers, area of expertise and offerings). If there is sufficient capacity long-term, the working group could create a 'train the trainer' program where more experienced trainers support other members to design and facilitate their own workshops.
- **Developing classes or guided sessions for early career conservationists** on emotional resilience. The working group would partner with SCB university chapters to develop content curated for early career conservationists that would be available to university conservation clubs.

Objective 2. Support research on eco-emotions and emotional resilience among conservation professionals.

This objective focuses on supporting research about emotional responses in conservation professionals. Since this research topic is still nascent, activities will initially focus on identifying needs.

Desired Outcomes

- Increased research on the presence and impact of eco-emotions on conservationists and our work
- Strengthened evidence base for approaches and best practices to support conservationists

Activities

Activity 2.1. Identify research needs, including topical priorities and support infrastructure.

- **Identify the state of the research field** by assessing the state of knowledge (e.g. literature review).
- **Create a research agenda** to identify future needs and priorities.

Activity 2.2. Develop a research community and support infrastructure.

- **Organizing a researcher community** to foster collaborations, identify needs and determine next steps.
- **Organizing a conference or research symposium.** Organize a gathering to share and foster ideas and collaborations on related research, including studying the prevalence and impact of eco-emotions on conservation professionals work and wellbeing.

- **Supporting research grants and the teams doing the research.** Could establish feedbacks/connection with the conference/symposium, e.g. topical priorities for funding could be related to topics identified during the research conference/symposium.
 - **Small research project grants.** For new/continuing projects.
 - **Research team resilience grants.** Small grants that would support a research team's resilience while working on a larger conservation-focused project.

Objective 3: Create support spaces for conservation professionals.

This objective focuses on providing resources, funds and facilitation for conservation professionals to access mental health practitioners and peer-support groups, to enable them to get direct help and support.

Desired outcomes

- Increased access to mental health specialists in eco-emotions for proactive prevention and crisis management
- Established, accessible community of practice for conservation professionals to connect with others about emotional resilience

Activities

Activity 3.1. Increase access to mental health specialists with expertise on eco-emotions.

- **Develop a directory of licensed health providers**, including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and counselors with expertise and experience supporting conservation professionals. May be opportunities for developing relationships or affiliations across multi-discipline professional associations.
- **Reduce costs for professionals to access mental health specialists** (2026), such as by recruiting *pro-bono* provider time, working with providers to develop subsidized offerings or offering small subsidies for conservation professionals in high-risk subgroups, in a time-sensitive crisis or with financial need. This activity will involve developing a respectful, criteria-based prioritization process and will depend on the ability to fundraise funds from external sources.

Activity 3.2. Develop a community of practice and peer support.

- **Organize virtual or in-person group support meetings** at SCB meetings or independently. It may be appropriate to have support subgroups to nurture a stronger sense of community, such as by career stage (e.g., early career, retired), conservation subfield (e.g., invasive species removals, wildlife trafficking officers), sector (e.g. federal employees, consultants), or even resilience approach (e.g. mindfulness, art/music/poetry).
- **Coordinate small peer groups** (3-4 people) that self-facilitate and are supported by guiding discussion questions and exercises.
- **Increase visibility of people in need of support** at SCB meetings, such as a pi or nametag for people feeling intense distress so others can connect with them (like the sunflower pin for less-visible disabilities)

- **Create an incident-based support system** for conservationists to request support during a specific high-stress incident (e.g., losing a job, searching for a job, navigating a stressful work time, dealing with a difficult workplace relationship)
- **Create a network of resiliency working groups** across environmental professional societies (e.g., The Wildlife Society, Ecological Society of America, American Ornithological Society).

Activity 3.4. Support individual conservationists and conservationist work teams engaged in emotionally-intense conservation projects.

- **Resilience grants.** Small grants that would support an individual or team's wellness and resilience while working on a emotionally challenging conservation project.

Objective 4: Normalize eco-emotions and emotional resilience in the conservation workplace.

This Objective focuses on shifting cultural norms at organizations throughout the conservation field (e.g., non-profit organizations, government agencies, academic institutions) to foster a workplace culture where the impact of eco-emotions on conservation professionals is expected and resilience approaches are proactively implemented.

Desired outcomes

1. Most conservation professionals feel comfortable discussing and addressing emotional responses as part of their conservation work.
2. Organizational leaders and staff show increased sensitivity to and comfort with addressing eco-emotions within the conservation workplace
3. Organizational goals and activities reflect emotional resilience and wellbeing approaches

Activities

Activity 4.1. Organize platforms where SCB members and others can share stories about their resilience journeys.

- **Publish conservation professionals' stories** about navigating emotions on SCB website and mainstream media channels. This will be done in coordination with other storytelling groups, such as The Lonely Conservationist.
- **Coordinate with The Moth or The Story Collider** to organize themed conservation professional storytelling events. Such events may be suitable fundraising opportunities to support other working group Activities.

Appendix III. Member Ideas

Feedback from Member Survey

Below is a synthesis of priority rankings from a survey conducted with Mentimeter, which asked members to rank activities for each Objective in the [Revive Proposal](#) in order of their preference for Revive's focus over the 2025-2027 time period. Higher priorities indicate a recommendation to start with these activities first; lower priorities indicate activities could come later. Detailed results are available [here](#).

Objective 1: Develop conservation professionals' understanding of eco-emotions and their impact on us and our work, and strengthen their skills for emotional resilience

High priority:

- Create self-guided resilience recordings and exercise worksheets
- Compile existing resources (publications, courses, workshops)
- Create self-guided courses on resilience for students
- Host a virtual webinar series with speakers on various resilience topics
- Deliver trainings on resilience skills
- Offer grants to support resilience among researchers studying stressful conservation topics

Low priority:

- Organize virtual discussions between resilience researchers
- Organize a research symposium on resilience
- Offer grants to support research about impact of psychological distress on conservation professionals and partners

Objective 2: Create support spaces for conservation professionals

High priority:

- Develop a directory of licensed health providers with expertise in conservation professionals
- Coordinate small peer groups (3-4 people) that self-facilitate
- Organize virtual or in-person group support meetings at SCB meetings or other times

Low priority:

- Subsidize costs for accessing mental health specialists with expertise in supporting conservation professionals
- Create a network of resiliency working groups across environmental professional societies

Objective 3: Normalize eco-emotions and emotional resilience in the conservation workplace

High priority:

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- Publish conservation professionals' stories about navigating emotions in mainstream media
- Coordinate with The Moth or The Story Collider to organize themed storytelling events on resilience
- Offer grants to universities, NGOs or government agencies to support resilience activities among staff

Low priority:

- Host workshops with leaders of universities, NGOs, government agencies to encourage wellness practices among conservation institutions

Suggestions from Members

There are multiple dimensions of causes, stress from both broader driver of planetary change and incident-based driver of job-related factors

- Encourage preventive measures, on root causes of pain and struggle, not just individual resilience/response. Proactive focus. Resiliency is essential, but it's reactive - treating symptoms. We need advocates and resources for healthier work habits and workplaces, not just treatment.
 - work life balance
 - eating well
 - Writing manuscripts sustainably
 - There has to be more proactive focus.
- Need to center on the original messaging about the need for Revive: the work of conservation itself is the "root cause" - climate change, biodiversity loss, culling of "invasive" species, illegal wildlife trade, veterinarian work with wildlife disease, etc. Revive is not a general wellbeing group; we are primarily responding to the stressors of the topic we work on. Consider this as we develop activities.
- Recognizing the above, to support members struggling with more general workplace stressors (e.g. difficult relationships, poor communication, lack of psychological safety at work), consider pointing them towards existing frameworks
- Resulting framework to capture these drivers of emotional distress in conservationists:
 - Existential: polycrisis of socio-ecological planetary change, and the sense of separation from and loss of nature
 - Incidental: job-related and workplace or work culture factors

Applied research topics

- Assessing what SCB members perceive as support for their own resilience? How may this differ by culture/gender/etc?
- Intersection with identity, e.g. race, gender, sexual orientation
- Assessing the current state of mental wellbeing/psych safety in conservation - what is available at the local/national/international level and how is it utilized?
- Measuring progress/impact of resilience techniques/Revive

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- Develop indicators based on desired outcomes (below proposal) and develop a survey to measure progress

Objective 1 (learning/teaching)

- Recommendations for retreats, trainers, workshops (with mechanism for participant feedback/reviews)
- In person activities, retreats, workshops wherever possible (especially for global south)
- Topics
 - Navigating stressful job-related factors with resilience
 - Tom's [latest article](#): job-related factors—like organizational instability, lack of resources, and constant time pressure—were strongly associated with distress
 - Flexibility and adaptation through planetary/workplace change
 - Approaches for navigating the emotional challenges of our profession
 - Fieldwork: isolation, failure, adapting, discrimination and harassment, leading a field team
 - Distressful aspects of the professional environment and expectations. Then liaison with institutions to discuss tools to address these expectations and demands.
 - Training on cultivating a culture of care: how to support one another, connect deeply, genuinely and authentically engage, how to have trauma-sensitive conversations
 - Not just talking. Accessing emotions, how to show emotions in a “healthy” way in the professional workplace, emotional intelligence
 - Hold sessions to explore and help us self-identify a meaningful role and impact within the professional ecosystem (e.g. using systems thinking)
- Learn from the Future of Work in Conservation (Lonely Conservationist)
- Host a (mindfulness/grief) retreat for conservationists

Objective 2 (community support)

- Develop a pin or nametag for people feeling intense distress to help them connect with others (like the sunflower pin for less-visible disabilities)
- Incident-based therapeutic or mentorship/peer support (e.g., lost a job, job search distress, navigating difficult supervisors/advisors)
- Practice expressing and feeling emotion
 - Normalize talking about emotions in group settings and feeling emotions in the body

Objective 3 (institutional norms)

- Create a “SCB Revive certification”
 - Could undermine the reinforcing, organic nature of norm shifts