

# DOING CONSERVATION BETTER

## *BSP's Analysis and Adaptive Management Program*

*Exploring the relationship between health and the environment is not new. The health effects of air and water pollution, for example, have been common knowledge for decades. But looking at the links between human health and the conservation of biodiversity is a relatively new concept. Many populations around the world are keenly aware of their utter dependence on the biodiversity around them – and the need to conserve it in order to ensure their own health and development.*

*If there are, indeed, naturally occurring connections between community development and conservation, how can we identify and promote them? If health is a strong motivational force for conservation, how can we best harness it to reach conservation goals? What are some of the characteristics of community-based conservation and development projects that successfully link human health to conservation? What have others in the field learned about the opportunities and challenges to make this link work for conservation? These are the questions that drove our research.*

*This research project was a collaborative effort between BSP's Analysis and Adaptive Management (AAM) Program and Conservation International's Healthy Communities Initiative (HCI). HCI manages a portfolio of projects from Africa, Asia, and Latin America that aim to conserve biodiversity by aligning community development priorities with conservation goals. HCI's central hypothesis is that community well-being and environmental quality are linked. HCI projects address social development priorities in ways that build bridges between the well-being of people and the sustainability of the environment around them.*

*BSP's AAM Program was established to learn about ways to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of conservation efforts around the world. We do this by conducting practitioner-focused, applied research to clarify the conditions under which certain conservation strategies work. Our results are presented in two publication series: our Global Exploration Series presents the findings of our core, external research on high-priority issues identified by BSP's consortium partners, and our Lessons from the Field provide short, summary analyses of hot topics in conservation.*

*The framework we used to guide our selection of key topics in the Global Exploration Series is the BSP Analytical Agenda. This framework, which we developed in 1996, outlines the following five conditions for success in conservation:*

- 1. Clarity of conservation goals and objectives**
- 2. Equitable and effective social processes and alliances for conservation**
- 3. Appropriate incentives for biodiversity valuation and conservation**
- 4. International, national, and local policies supportive of conservation**
- 5. Sufficient awareness, knowledge, and capacity to conserve biodiversity**

*This publication, An Ounce of Prevention: Making the Link Between Health and Conservation, focuses on Condition #3. To complete the study, we closely examined three HCI-supported projects in Latin America and canvassed an additional 31 projects from around the world. This breadth of projects allowed us to arrive at a wide range of observations and recommendations that we hope will help clarify some key concepts, focus discussion, and spark curiosity in conservation practitioners around the world who might be considering integrating health and conservation activities. We hope that our findings also help point the way for future exploration and discovery.*



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# AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION:

*Making the Link Between  
Health and Conservation*

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TO LEARN  
MORE

TO HELP YOU  
ON YOUR WAY

FINDINGS IN  
PERSPECTIVE

WHAT DID  
WE FIND?

WHAT DID  
WE DO?

WHAT DID WE  
WANT TO KNOW?

WHY STUDY HEALTH  
AND CONSERVATION?

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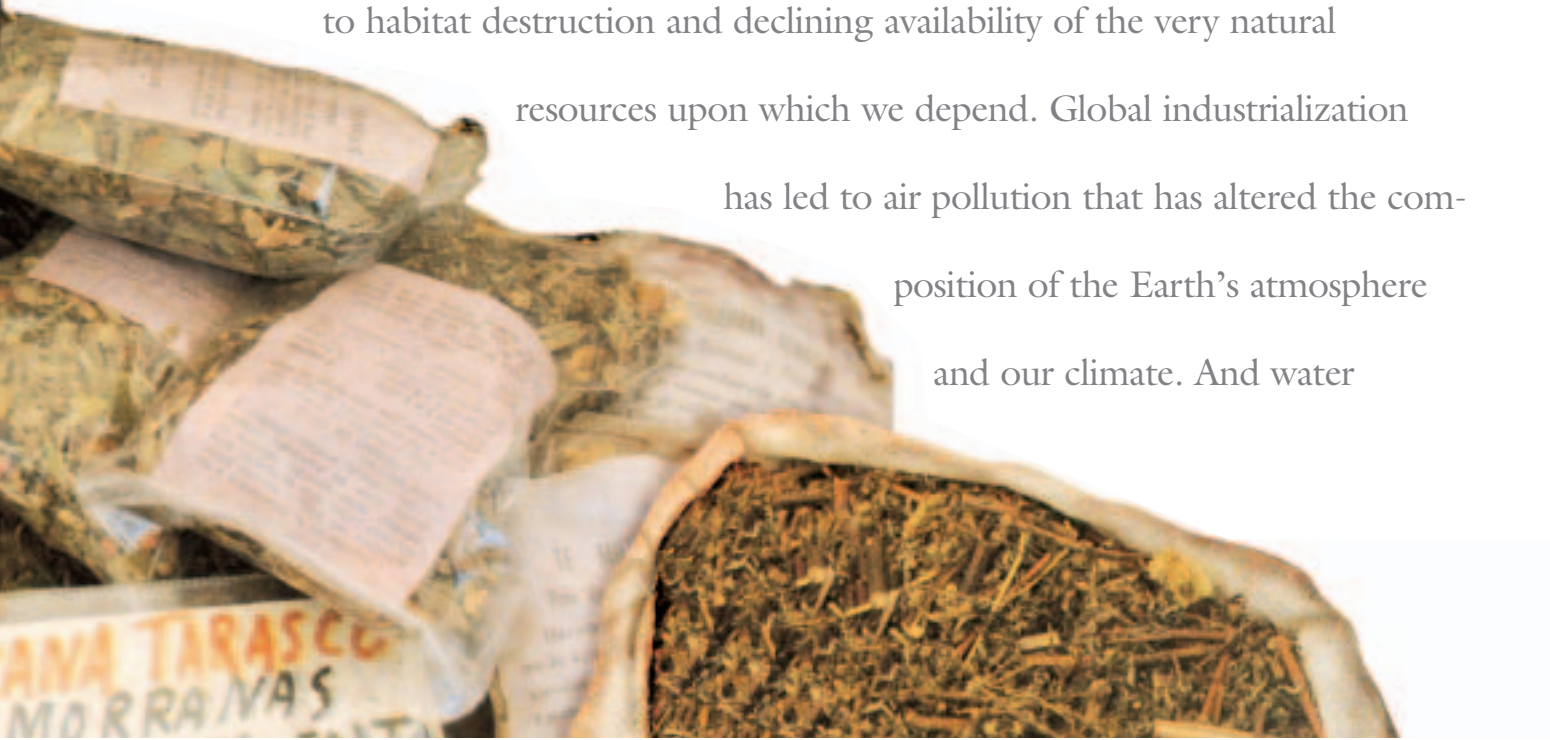
**For a summary of the major findings and recommendations, see page 39.**



# AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION:

*Making the Link Between  
Health and Conservation*

**HUMAN ACTIVITY** has become the dominant force shaping the face of our planet. While our exploitation of the world's natural resources has brought about great advances in human development, progress has not come without cost. Human expansion into virtually every corner of the globe has led to habitat destruction and declining availability of the very natural resources upon which we depend. Global industrialization has led to air pollution that has altered the composition of the Earth's atmosphere and our climate. And water



pollution and over-fishing have severely damaged the vitality of our marine and freshwater resources. The links between these human-induced environmental impacts and health have been debated for some time now, but even the strongest of skeptics is hard pressed to deny that, indeed, the very survival of life on Earth — including our own — is inextricably linked to the health of the environment in which we live.

Environmental degradation is not necessarily the product of malicious design. Instead, it is the sum of countless daily decisions made by people from all walks of life, at all levels of society, across the entire globe. For residents of underserved rural areas, these decisions often revolve around immediate needs to provide for themselves and aspirations to improve their future standard of living. To make conservation work, therefore, conservation practitioners must clearly understand and demonstrate the links between health and biodiversity — to promote conservation as a means to protect and improve human quality of life.