"For want of a nail, the battle was lost," goes the old proverb. Substitute "vital data" for a messenger's horseshoe nail, and focus "the battle" on saving endangered species and their habitats, and you have the 21st century dilemma facing a wildlife conservation organization that works in 24 countries around the world.

Overview

The Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) is a non-profit that works to protect endangered species and preserve their natural habitats by supporting entrepreneurial conservationists around the globe who pursue innovative strategies for people and wildlife to coexist and thrive.

"We're unique among non-profits in that we focus on supporting independent conservationists who live and work in the field and are committed to working over the long term with local communities to save threatened wildlife. We provide them with training and resources to build sustainable organizations," explains WCN Director of Technology Dave Cortright. "Everything we do is done so that our partners can be as effective as possible on the ground."

As WCN partner organizations apply their dedication, innovations and skills to reduce human-wildlife conflict and other threats, they employ a wide array of data-gathering technologies, including digital camera traps, video cameras, radio collars, recorders, camera phones, tablet computers and laptops.

The Challenge

Partner staffers and volunteers use these devices daily to monitor and document the numbers, conditions and migratory habits of species in their geographies. For example, movement-triggered digital cameras, known as camera traps, are deployed along trails frequented by target species to capture striking images of animals

seldom observed by conservationists, greatly improving accurate counts from month to month. Gathering, compiling and analyzing data on the state of the animals and their habitats is essential to effective conservation.

Working closely with communities is fundamental to the work of WCN's partners. At the Niassa Lion Project in Mozambique's Niassa National Reserve and elsewhere, conservationists provide employment opportunities and skills training in areas such as anti-poaching, construction (for environment centers) and agricultural alternatives to hunting bushmeat. Capturing, storing and sharing digital photos and videos of how these initiatives are designed and deployed

facilitate collaboration for the mutual benefit of all WCN partners.

But storing and sharing the large quantities of data involved in this critical work has often been an ad hoc occurrence, relying on thumb drives and emailed files that all too often were misplaced or lost. In some instances, innovative programs and their results were not archived at all.

With collaboration, education and technical support as mainstays of WCN support to its affiliate partner groups, the organization realized that it could improve and enhance those efforts by giving partners high-capacity yet portable and durable storage devices with instructions for their use.

The Solution

In 2014, WCN began providing its partners with dozens of Seagate Backup Plus Slim portable drives. About the size and weight of a smartphone, these versatile pocket-size drives don't require separate power sources, but run directly from the laptops they are backing up via simple USB connections. Requiring virtually no training, these durable metal-cased devices back up any digital data simply by plugging into a Windows or Apple OS computer, and afford easy file sharing between those platforms as well.

WCN has benefitted from a donated Seagate Business Storage 4-Bay Rackmount Network Attached Storage (NAS) system, which provides centralized storage and automatic backup for PCs and Apple's Time Machine support for Mac

computers. With file transfer speeds up to 200MB per second, the system features Seagate's Sdrive remote access, which allows WCN seamless, secure collaboration and anywhere access from PCs, Macs or mobile devices. Seagate and WCN will be working in partnership to provide similar NAS systems and cloud storage accounts to all WCN partners.

As a fail-safe for backing up and recovering irreplaceable data, WCN has deployed Seagate EVault Cloud Disaster Recovery Services. EVault provides Seagate Disaster Recovery experts on a 24/7/365 basis to ensure that WCN gets up and running after any outages with easy and secure Cloud access to recovered systems.

✦ S E A G A T E

Results

WCN partners are seeing progress on many fronts, which ultimately translates into more animals saved. The number of lions in Mozambique's Niassa National Reserve has grown from 600 to more than 1,000 in the past nine years, African wild dog numbers are increasing in Zimbabwe and the Grevy's zebra population has stabilized in Kenya. Strategic use of technology has contributed to these successes.

"The bottom line for us is that Seagate products and services help WCN and our partners reliably reach our goals by greatly reducing technology risks," says IT Director Dave Cortright. "They ensure that the critical data being captured every day in the field are reliably stored and protected, and put to the best possible use on behalf of WCN and our partners. And, as a one-man IT department, it allows me to rest easy at night!"

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- Outdated external USB drive and "SneakerNet" system which lacked capacity to handle growth

- Inefficient means for field partners to store and share data

- Limited means of Cloud based backup and recovery

IT ENVIRONMENT

- Seagate Business Storage 4-bay NAS 16TB with Private Cloud Access

- EVault Cloud Backup and Recovery Service protecting NAS data

- Seagate Backup Plus Slim Portable 2TB Drives

RESULTS

- Reliable, high-capacity data storage from any digital media greatly increases security of data captured in the field for analysis and knowledge-sharing with other conservation organizations around the world

- Reliable Cloud backup and recovery services from any location secures essential WCN data

- WCN and its field partners will reach their goals more rapidly and reliably, turning the tide against threats to endangered species and their habitats

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