

*Grassroots Conservation of Biological  
Diversity in the United States*

February 1986

NTIS order #PB86-181997

Grassroots Conservation  
of Biological Diversity  
in the United States

Background Paper #1



Recommended Citation:

U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *Grassroots Conservation of Biological Diversity in the United States—Background Paper #1*, OTA-BP-F-38 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1986).

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 85-600633

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents  
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402

# Preface

In recent years an increasing number of individuals and citizen-based groups in the United States have undertaken activities that contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity. While many do not define their activities in these terms, their contributions—through activities devoted to conservation of ecosystems, wild species, and agricultural crops and livestock—have had significant beneficial impact. Although grassroots efforts are not likely to replace public or national efforts, they form an integral part in the Nation's efforts to maintain biological diversity. They, however, can accomplish some activities unlikely to be undertaken by government agencies and large national conservation organizations. These individuals and groups commonly have a number of constraints that can limit their effectiveness. This background paper examines the contributions of grassroots organizations and individuals by illustrating the diversity and range of efforts and indicating, where possible, the present and potential impacts of these activities on the overall effort to maintain biological diversity.

This paper is part of the Office of Technology Assessment's forthcoming assessment of *Technologies To Maintain Biological Diversity*. A concurrent background paper, *Assessing Biological Diversity in the United States: Data Considerations*, examines the technological and institutional aspects of biological data relevant to maintaining biological diversity in the United States focusing primarily on Federal data collection efforts. This assessment was prepared by OTA in response to requests from the House Committee on Science and Technology, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, and supported by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, and the House Committee on Agriculture.

OTA wishes to thank and acknowledge the participants of the grassroots workshop, the advisory panel, authors of the four OTA commissioned papers on grassroots activities, and a number of other individuals who provided helpful materials and reviews to the OTA staff. In addition, OTA is grateful for the support, assistance, and cooperation of the various groups and individuals working to maintain biological diversity in the United States and described herein.

# **Technologies To Maintain Biological Diversity Advisory Panel**

Kenneth Dahlberg, *Chair*  
Department of Political Science, Western Michigan University

Stephen Brush  
International Agricultural Development  
University of California, Davis

Peter Carlson  
Director  
Crops Genetics International

Rita Colwell  
Office of the Vice President for Academic  
Affairs  
University of Maryland, Adelphi

Raymond Dasmann  
Department of Environmental Studies  
University of California, Santa Cruz

Clarence Dias  
president  
International Center for Law in  
Development

Donald Duvick  
Vice President of Research  
Pioneer Hi-Bred International

David Ehrenfeld  
Department of Horticulture and Forestry  
Rutgers University

Major Goodman  
Department of Crop Science  
North Carolina State University

Grenville Lucas  
Keeper, the Herbarium  
Kew Royal Botanic Gardens

Richard Norgaard  
Department of Agricultural and Resource  
Economics  
University of California, Berkeley

Robert Prescott-Allen  
PADATA, Inc.

Paul Risser  
Chief  
Illinois Natural History Survey

Oliver Ryder  
Research Department  
San Diego Zoo

Michael Soule  
Center for Wildland Management Studies  
School of Natural Resources  
University of Michigan

John Sullivan  
Vice President of production  
American Breeders Service

# OTA Biological Diversity Project Staff

Roger Herdman, *Assistant Director, OTA  
Health and Life Sciences Division*

Walter E. Parham, *Food and Renewable Resources Program Manager*

## Analytical Staff

Susan Shen, *Project Director*

Edward F. MacDonald, *Analyst*

Michael Strauss, *Analyst*

Catherine Carlson, *Research Assistant*

Carolyn Jabs, *Freelance Editor'*

## Administrative Staff

Beckie Erickson, *Administrative Assistant*

Nellie Hammond, *Secretary*

Carolyn Swarm, *Secretary*