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Dear Dr. Game,

### Please find attached our manuscript entitled “*Integer Linear programming outperforms simulated annealing for solving conservation planning problems*”, which we wish to submit for consideration to *Conservation Letters*.

### In this paper we compare integer linear programming with simulated annealing (i.e. Marxan) for solving systematic conservation planning problems using real-world data from Western North America. We find that integer linear programming produced higher quality solutions potentially saving >$100 million (or 13%) for realistic conservation scenarios, and that solutions were generated >1,000 times faster than using simulated annealing, opening up new possibilities for conservation planning.

### Our manuscript highlights the potential integer linear programming solvers show for conservation planning. We end by recommending that conservation planners consider adding this modified approach to solving systematic conservation planning problems, which will be of interest to many readers of *Conservation Letters*.

### This manuscript reports original research that is not published or under consideration for publication elsewhere. The submission for publication has been approved by all relevant authors and institutions, and all persons entitled to authorship have been so named, seen and agreed to the submitted version of the manuscript.

Sincerely,

Richard Schuster

(on behalf of all co-authors)