

Handout 2

North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative Steering Committee January 24, 2011, Conference Call DRAFT Minutes

Action Items

LCC Staff (Tai-ming Chang) will provide an update on marine initiatives, issues and relationships at the April Steering Committee meeting.

LCC Chair Ken Elowe will develop a nominations committee and seek nominations for a vice-chair.

LCC staff (Andrew Milliken) will make revisions to the mission statement based on input from this call and email follow-ups.

Additional technical committee members will be added as needed to balance existing membership.

LCC staff will ensure that LCC Steering Committee and Technical Committee are invited to participate in June Regional Conservation Workshop.

LCC Staff (Andrew) will provide revised LCC boundary map to steering committee.

LCC Staff, NOAA and NEAFA will discuss coordination of various climate initiatives at April meeting.

Roll Call

Thirty-two members and staff participated in the call - attendees listed at the end of these minutes.

Introduction and Approve Minutes from November Meeting (Handouts 1 and 2)

Ken Elowe (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) thanked the North Atlantic LCC Steering Committee for their hard work at the November 17, 2010 steering committee meeting in New Hampshire. He outlined the call by saying we would start with action items from the New Hampshire meeting, report on assignments, and then discuss how the partnership will move forward in the next few months. Ken entertained a motion to accept the minutes from the November 17, 2010 meeting. David Whitehurst (Virginia) moved to accept the minutes. Ray Whittemore (Ducks Unlimited) seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with no discussion. Andrew Milliken (North Atlantic LCC) articulated that the most important thing to accomplish on the call was to agree on the direction of the technical committee to set the stage for the April meeting and selection of priority science needs.

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Review progress on action items from November meeting (Handout 3)

Andrew Milliken asked partners to refer to Handout 3 for a complete list of action items and their status. Andrew highlighted that comments from the November 17, 2010 meeting and additional email comments were incorporated into the mission and vision statement. Next, he thanked Steve Fuller for helping a group of six volunteers to plan the June 2011 Northeast Regional Conservation Workshop. Additional staff for the workshop will include a NOAA staff member (Helen McMillan) on detail to the LCC. Regarding the incorporation of marine issues into the North Atlantic LCC – Andrew reminded partners that EPA Region III staff member Tai-ming Chang is on a detail to LCCs and is very involved with marine issues at the national and regional level. Other action items that have been completed: the revised North Atlantic, Great Lakes, and Appalachian boundary map has gone out to those LCCs for review; Andrew is working on the next face-to-face steering committee in April at NEAFWA with a conference planner; the Steering Committee representation (Handout 4) has been mostly finalized. The steering committee representation list should be reviewed by each organization.

Steering Committee representation and leadership

Ken Elowe started the discussion by saying that the steering committee articulated at the November 17, 2010 meeting that they would like a vice-chair position to start soon because they are evolving as an organization that wants leadership in terms of an executive committee. Elowe asked for 3-5 volunteers to sit on a nominations committee. The nominations committee would look at potential vice chairs. Ken requested that the committee not nominate someone from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) because thought the partnership is facilitated by the Service, it would be more helpful to have some leadership that is not Service oriented. Ken asked for immediate volunteers and Rachel Muir from USGS said a person, yet to be determined from that agency would sit on the nominating committee. Ken said he would also accept volunteers via email.

Draft vision and mission statement (Handout 5)

Ken asked the Steering Committee to consider what it is that the LCC wants to accomplish. The revised mission and vision reflects both that question and the comments received over the past two months. The mission and vision is a working document, but the goal is to have something that can be used to convey to others what it is that the North Atlantic LCC does. Ken asked others if the document accomplishes that or if it misses the mark – what needs to be different?

Gwen Brewer (Maryland) suggested that the draft goals research section that the statement really focuses on testing assumptions and future planning. Gwen asked that maybe the LCC consider adding something about planning to do more effective implementation because while ecological planning provides a scientific basis, it's not the same thing as real research that leads to effective conservation. Andrew asked that Gwen please send any suggested language change along. Rachel Muir (USGS) noted that in her opinion, the LCC had so far done a good job capturing directly applied science vs. broad science and research vs. monitoring. Ken Elowe followed that comment by saying that at most meetings, we should come back to this discussion to make sure the vision and mission still accurately represents the LCC.

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John O'Leary (Massachusetts) suggested that we should not use the word forum because it is not strong enough and earlier the steering committee agreed to create common goals and agreements – forum indicates that the LCC is only about discussions. Ken stated that this was a good point – it would be great if the committee could decide on common goals to speak with one voice to those on the group making decisions. Dick Barringer (University of Southern Maine – New England Governors) noted that the New England Governors, from his perspective, have asked the LCC to identify common goals and issues in each of the five areas in which they are engaged. The governors are expecting this to be much more of a partnership than forum. The group agreed to replace “forum” with “partnership” in the vision and mission document.

Review of Technical Committee nominations (Handouts 7 and 8)

Referring to Handout 8, Andrew Milliken asked the steering committee to look at the make-up of the technical committee. The intent of the technical committee is to work on the synthesis of our science needs, monitor projects, and ensure that North Atlantic LCC actions fit into an overall conservation framework and vision. The committee should be made up of different jurisdictions, geographic areas, taxonomic areas, specialists, managers and scientists. Not looking for a one to one representation with the Steering Committee (as discussed in November). A request for nominations was sent out and the resulting list of nominations by organization is reflected in Handout 7.

Diane Pavek (National Park Service) suggested adding expertise in the human dimensions and social science. Rachel Muir suggested a specialist in zoonotic diseases. Doug Bliss (Canadian Wildlife Service) will put forward some Canadian names for the committee after consulting with the provinces. Of the specialists on the technical committee, there is an observed gap in taxonomic focus linking protected area landscape conservation and population dynamics. However, Andrew noted that Mitch Hartley, Steve Walker and Rachel Muir all have some of that as a part of their background because this will be an important focus for the committee. Rachel noted that everyone is trying to bring the expertise of their full agencies to bear, but the expectation is that each agency can reach into our own expertise to help the LCC as needed also.

The technical committee will also look at science capacity across the LCC. Elowe is having some of the discussions with the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program in Hadley regarding what is happening in the states that can be made accessible to the LCCs – hopefully this can be developed through continued conversations with that program. This gets them involved in the shorter term until TRACS gets up and going.

Andrew also brought up the need for an assessment of existing capacity so that when hiring decisions need to be made in the next year or two there are hiring targets or we know what gaps to fill.

David Whitehurst observed that the technical team does not have much representation from the southern end of the LCC but it will be hard to staff everything because they have several LCCs and JVs – they are just running out of people. Rick Harris (National Park Service) suggested Dr. Roman from URI-Naragansett and also observed that there are a number of CESUs that can help facilitate things.

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Gwen Brewer suggested that plants and plant communities not be overlooked. Andrew suggested that perhaps the right Heritage program or NatureServe person could fill that role but in the mean time, we move forward with this group and evolve as we need to. He went on to ask that if anybody had thoughts after the meeting, to call him. Rachel agreed to be the technical committee liaison to the steering committee to ensure that they are working in concert. She suggested that a CV be collected from each of the folks on the technical committee to share with the steering committee to see the gaps that still need to be filled.

Discussion of Science Needs Request and process for selecting projects (Handout 9)

Andrew Milliken asked that people review Handout 9 – the revised science needs request. It was sent out on January 5 to the North Atlantic LCC email contact list, existing partnerships, and other key contacts within the region, including USFWS. Andrew highlighted the second paragraph of the request because it really focuses on what the LCC is trying to collect: applied research that is getting at questions and decisions on how to best sustain resources and systems. This puts the burden on the technical committee to review the submitted needs, think through what steps haven't happened yet, and present priority needs to the steering committee in April. Andrew added that this is a first cut of an ongoing process but the immediate use will be to evaluate how to prioritize funds in FY11 and staffing decisions in partner agencies.

Rachel Muir shared that LCC science coordinators and coordinators are meeting at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in February to look at common science priorities between four LCCs and three fish habitat partnerships. They will be look for common themes and share them with all four of the LCCs that overlap. This is a good step toward sharing our resources effectively and establishing a forum for culling those in the future.

This first round of collection is for unmet needs and projects that are partially underway and ongoing that can support the articulated North Atlantic LCC components and needs. The North Atlantic LCC is under a new deadline for obligating money due to a conversion in the USFWS fiscal system. Contracting that normally takes place in July and August are being backed up to June - which means the North Atlantic LCC has to make some decisions in April to make selections and choose PIs and obligate funds by June. This process will also result in a synthesis of immediate needs and projects for the workshop in June. Coming out of the workshop, we can agree on future steps forward for funding over the long term.

Ken Elowe pointed out that if this information can be collected, it will guide the steering committee in making decisions about where and how they would like to move forward and what they want to accomplish. The workshop in June will get at that on a technical level and the steering committee will need to be a part of that process. Andrew added that articulating science needs without a framework is not ideal but the goals and components are a good starting place.

The Appalachian LCC is not in the same place yet - they have a coordinator, interim steering committee, draft operations plan, but it is not yet funded. The North Atlantic LCC is working with them to coordinate databases for inputting science needs.

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Rachel noted that USGS doesn't yet have funding for support for the Appalachian LCC, but as an agency is taking the approach that they are supporting all three LCCs and looking at commonalities.

Update on Boundary (Handout 10)

Referring to Handout 10, Milliken stated that the revised boundary map had been sent to the Upper Midwest- Great Lakes and Appalachian LCCs for consideration and noted that the North Atlantic LCC was now a continuous unit between the Adirondacks, Champlain and Hudson Valleys and the rest of the LCC. Due to questions regarding how the states were affected by the boundary changes, Andrew committed to adding state and provincial boundaries to the map and redistributing the map to the steering committee. As to the decision process for changing boundaries, Milliken understands that it might be as simple as the LCCs agreeing on the boundary changes, but will continue to look into whether or not the decision has to be approved at a national level.

Review and discussion of communications tools, team and draft plan (Handout 11)

Referring to Handout 11, Megan Nagel presented the list of communications contacts provided by the steering committee. Thanking everyone for the information, she asked each steering committee member to review the list and email her if they have additional contacts. The communications contacts will be the point of contact for image and information requests, questions regarding how each organization would like to be represented, and for reviewing LCC communications materials including a draft communications plan.

Megan also shared an update regarding the SharePoint pilot project. The national pilot project, Phase 1, has come to an end. The team developed a set of recommendations based on LCC experiences with the technology. The number one problem was the prohibitive log-in process. The recommendation was to find a way to make this process easier, or the LCCs would not want to use the technology. While this issue is being sorted out, the North Atlantic LCC will continue to use SharePoint for several groups and teams that have developed (e.g. the Science and Technical Team).

Discuss agenda for next Steering Committee meeting (Handout 12)

Referencing Dick Barringer's earlier comment regarding the New England Governors' expectations, Ken Elowe made the point that all of the steering committee's organizations have expectations that the LCC be value added. At the April meeting, Elowe would like for the steering committee to get in depth about what it is that we expect from LCCs and expect to accomplish. These goals can then guide the regional workshop in June, and what we work on first. Ken observed that the group had wrestled with some of those same things in the RCN process and it would be good to use face-to-face time to delve into that part of the subject.

Dick Barringer articulated the question that has been driving his work with the governors: How can a regional perspective on these issues add value and bring leverage to what they are trying to do themselves? He thinks that would maximize the support he is trying to leverage from the governors' delegation. Andrew Milliken also thinks that will be one of the things that we use to

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cull the science needs to orient around the things that couldn't be done or wouldn't be efficient to do individually.

Additionally, it will be important to look at the regional climate partnerships – there is a lot going on. There are marine partnerships, agencies (NOAA) and organizations like NESCAUM working on climate issues. The steering committee needs to discuss these various partnerships, thinking through what the LCCs role is in relation to the regional climate partnerships and find a way to streamline their steering committees into or with LCCs. Andrew suggested a discussion of this topic at the April meeting.

The science team's recommendations and prioritization scheme will be shared with the steering committee before the April meeting.

The April meeting will take place the Wednesday, April 20th immediately following the NEAFA Conference in the same hotel (Radisson Hotel in Manchester, NH).

Call was adjourned.

District of Columbia Department of the Environment	Bryan King
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	Steve Walker
Maryland Department of Natural Resources	Gwen Brewer
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	John O'Leary
New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife	Larry Herrighty
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission	Dave Day
Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries	David Whitehurst
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Ken Elowe
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Andrew Milliken
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Rick Bennett
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Mike Slattery
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Megan Nagel
U.S. Geological Survey	Rachel Muir
U.S. Geological Survey	Graham Smith
U.S. Geological Survey	Mary Ratnaswamy
U.S. Geological Survey	Bob Lent
National Park Service	Rick Harris
National Park Service	Mary Foley
National Park Service	Diane Pavek
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Tai-Ming Chang
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Ralph Abele
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Anne Kuhn
U.S. Forest Service	Tom Wagner
U.S. Forest Service	Bill Dower

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Environment Canada Canadian Wildlife Service	Doug Bliss
Ducks Unlimited	Ray Whittemore
National Wildlife Federation	George Gay
The Nature Conservancy	Lise Hanners
Trust for Public Lands	Jad Daley
Wildlife Management Institute	Scot Williamson
Wildlife Management Institute	Steve Fuller
New England Governors' Association	Dick Barringer