

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Science Priority Projects for FY2010:

Sustainable Landscapes

The Northeast Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has been working with regional partners to develop the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NALCC). The NALCC is a science resource and delivery partnership that provides the tools and resources required to plan, design and implement on-the-ground conservation. These LCC partnerships consist of federal agencies, states, tribes and non-governmental organizations. The Northeast Region has been working with the NALCC partners to synthesize regional science priority needs. In the future, the fully functioning NALCC steering committee will provide recommendations to fund the projects that best address identified science priority needs.

In fiscal year 2010, the Northeast Region received \$920,000 to fund regional science projects that address those identified science priority needs. Guided by previously identified regional science priority needs, the Service has identified *Designing Sustainable Landscapes in the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative* as one of three projects that meet some of those needs and will be funded in fiscal year 2010.

Lead Investigators:

University of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Vermont, Vermont Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit



Mao Teng Lin/USFWS

Wetlands at Chincoteague NWR

Research Partners:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, U.S. Geological Survey, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station, Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Amount of funding:

\$400,000 in fiscal year 2010

Project Description:

Designing Sustainable Landscapes in the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative is a pilot project that will develop a set of decision-support tools (DSTs) that will allow managers to evaluate the effects of conservation and management actions on our ability to sustain wildlife populations into the future.

DSTs will include maps and models of how habitats and species will be affected by the changing environment, including climate change and urban growth. The expected outcomes of the project include an estimate of the current condition, distribution and capacity of species' habitats, as well as a projection of future landscape conditions under a range of management scenarios to incorporate



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Example of a possible project tool



the potential effects of climate change such as sea-level rise and changes in vegetation. Another project outcome is a set of species/habitat models that will allow managers to link population management strategies to current habitat conditions and future changes. These and other DSTs will allow the policy makers and the conservation community to assess where, which and how much conservation effort is needed for species and habitats. The project will help managers identify the most important and effective conservation strategies for sustaining wildlife populations in the NALCC area. \$400,000 will be used to fund this three-year collaborative project.

For the first phase of this project, initial maps and models will be available at the end of the first year. A similar project is underway in the South Atlantic LCC, and once these two projects are completed, conservation managers will be able to evaluate population sustainability for all habitats from Maine to Florida.

If you have any questions regarding this project or the NALCC, please email the NALCC at northeast_lcc@fws.gov or visit our website at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/climatechange/lcc>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

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Fall colors at Silvio O. Conte NFWR in Hadley, MA

James Weilver/USFWS