

North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperative Charter Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Date: May 26, 2011

Location: SEATAC Conference Center, Seattle Washington

Meeting Chair: Mike Carrier, North Pacific LCC Coordinator

Facilitator: Dave Allen, former FWS Regional Director

Attendance: See Appendix

LCC Overview

Stephen Zylstra, FWS, Acting Assistant Regional Director-Science Applications, provided an overview of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). Highlights included:

- The LCC is an opportunity to coordinate and leverage scientific resources and build on existing efforts. With the challenges and complexity of managing natural and cultural resources and landscapes, it is important to work in collaboration and with shared capacity.
- Goals and objectives of LCCs are to provide scientific and technical support to managers and partnerships responsible for developing and implementing conservation strategies at landscape scales in a changing climate. It is an opportunity for management needs to drive the science.
- LCCs seek to identify best practices, connect efforts, identify gaps, and avoid duplication through improved conservation planning and design.
- LCCs are non-regulatory and partner agencies and organizations coordinate with each other while working within their existing authorities and jurisdictions.

Discussion:

- A question was raised about how the North Pacific LCC (NPLCC) fits with NOAA's coastal and marine spatial planning and if they are overlapping efforts. It was agreed that we do not want to duplicate efforts and we would look into how the NPLCC can best complement other planning efforts.
- It was noted that the Council on Environmental Quality's National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Adaptation Strategy process is underway (including teams addressing coasts, the marine environment, and other environments) and will be available soon. Attendees agreed that we should use these efforts as baseline information and definitions and not reinvent the wheel.
- A question was raised about how entities can ensure cross-LCC coordination and coordination with the Climate Science Centers (CSCs). For example, Oregon has three LCCs within its borders. It was noted there is a national network that includes all LCC coordinators and they frequently communicate. National LCC teams have been established to address key issues. Steering Committees for the CSCs include coordinators from all the overlapping LCCs. The FWS encourages higher level executive participation from stakeholders so that LCCs and partners in LCCs can better work with multiple LCCs.

Update on Climate Science Centers

Carol Schuler, Interim Director, Pacific Northwest Climate Science Center (NW CSC) and USGS

Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center Director, provided an overview of the NW CSC's progress to date.

- The NW CSC's science agenda is due June 30. A draft will be available for stakeholder review/input soon.
- For this fiscal year, \$500K is available for projects. There was insufficient time for an RFP process. Instead the NW CSC will use existing information and project proposals from other RFPs, including the NPLCC. Review of projects is underway.

Mark Shasby, Interim Alaska Climate Science Center Director and USGS Senior Science Advisor provided an overview.

- The Alaska CSC's Science agenda has been completed.
- They have \$1.2M for projects this fiscal year. Selection of projects is underway. Similar to the NW CSC, a separate RFP was not undertaken. Instead the Alaska CSC is using existing information and other RFPs, including the NPLCC's.

Discussion: A recommendation was made to increase outreach to British Columbia Universities for project selection in the future.

North Pacific LCC Overview

Mike Carrier, North Pacific LCC Coordinator, provided an overview of NPLCC development efforts to date.

- Mike has accepted the position as the FWS, Assistant Regional Director-Fisheries Program and this is his last meeting in the position of NPLCC Coordinator.
- Mary Mahaffy, Interim NPLCC Science Coordinator will serve in the role as Acting Coordinator.
- The beginning of April, the NPLCC received its first direct allocation of about \$1M. Approximately 30% of the funds will be used to cover salaries and overhead expenses for a coordinator, science coordinator, and a student intern or graduate fellow. A total of \$20,000 was set aside to provide travel funds for Steering Committee members that need the assistance this fiscal year to attend meetings. The remainder of the funds will be used to support science projects, science workshops and other planning projects that inform future priorities of the NPLCC partners. Funds are also being reserved to support several regional climate and landscape management workshops that include sessions on the NPLCC.
- An Interim Planning Team, comprised of representatives from key potential stakeholders, convened in January 2011 for a two day workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to draft proposals for the structure, function and governance of the NPLCC. They developed a vision statement, goals and guiding principles for consideration by the charter steering committee.
- During fiscal years 2010 and 2011 prior to the NPLCC receiving dedicated funds, efforts were focused on outreach to potential partners. In addition to providing numerous presentations about the NPLCC at partner meetings, conferences and workshops, stakeholder meetings were held in Washington, Oregon and California. Priorities for the NPLCC were solicited at the stakeholder meetings.

Discussion: Coordination between Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Pacific Northwest Region and the BIA in Alaska for its tribes/villages was briefly discussed. Coordination is occurring with

Alaska BIA counterpart, but it was recognized that it needs to be reinforced. Connection to the Alaska Council was recommended.

Structure and Operation of NPLCC

Purpose, goals and objectives of the LCC:

- The steering committee was asked to discuss the Interim Planning Team's draft proposal for purpose and organization. The goal was to adopt a proposed mission statement, goals and guiding principles for the NPLCC (the proposal was circulated for review prior to the meeting).
- Several Steering Committee members recommended that the group adopt bylaws which would include adopting a draft working guidance document, with the flexibility to amend the purpose, goals and objectives document and adopt a more formal structure and operational rules at a later time.
- It was also noted that one of the purposes of this meeting was to come to agreement on membership.
- The State of Alaska representative, Doug Vincent-Lang (ADFG), indicated that the State has not yet agreed to participate in the steering committee pending the governance questions and suggested that all decisions be tabled pending the outcome of the following proposals: 1) The Steering Committee should not include representatives from nongovernmental organizations; 2) Decision-making should occur with 100% unanimous consent; and 3) The LCC should be divided into Northern and Southern subcomponents or separate entities with Alaska divided from the rest of the NPLCC. The State of Alaska representative also recommended that half of the funding should be given to the northern portion of the NPLCC since Alaska encompasses half the land area.
- In the discussion that followed, several meeting participants said they were not comfortable with excluding nongovernmental organizations.
- Concerns were raised that 100% unanimous consent on all issues would mean that one person could stop something that everyone else was in favor of. One participant said he serves on a team that has addressed some very contentious issues. For this team, in order to move forward with their actions, a motion passes if no more than three members disagree. When a final vote is taken, the names of anyone not agreeing are recorded along with their concerns.

Science versus policy interface:

- There was a short discussion by the group on the need for further defining the roles of the LCC in the draft purpose and organization document.
- Most meeting participants seemed to agree that the LCC's work should stay focused on science—providing information and tools that inform decisions and policy, not proposing or making policy decisions. One FWS representative added that national guidance clearly states that LCCs do not make policy decisions. Instead, partnering agencies and governments can use the information to inform the decisions they have the authority to make.

Defining the LCC's coastal/marine ecosystems focus:

- There was a short discussion on the potential intersection with NOAA's coastal and marine spatial planning efforts. It was agreed that it is important to coordinate closely to avoid any unintended overlap and seek out opportunities to support both LCCs and coastal marine spatial planning efforts.

- There appeared to be consensus that the NPLCC focus on more land/coastal/nearshore science rather than open ocean/seascape based science. Many expressed the need to keep the open ocean-based issues separate. Some suggested using the term “nearshore ecosystems” for the LCC’s ocean activities.

NGO, partnership and local government involvement:

- There was a short discussion, but no resolution on whether the Steering Committee should include NGOs, partnerships and/or local governments.
- Mike Carrier shared that adding NGOs or partnerships to the Steering Committee was recommended in many of the written comments received on the Interim Planning Team’s draft proposal for purpose and organization.
- Comments were provided regarding recognition of the challenges that come with so many different federal and academic efforts for coastal and ocean science and management.

Proposed Motion (tabled, not voted upon):

- Barry Smith (CWS) recommended the Steering Committee vote on the following proposal: “The NPLCC recognizes the draft proposed guidance document to generally represent the purpose, goals and objective of the LCC as an agreement in concept – and we also agree that the draft proposal be reviewed in the next few months and finalized at the next Steering Committee meeting this Fall.”
- An objection was made to voting on this proposal and it was tabled.

Governance Issues

Steering Committee governance:

- The LCC will operate as a self-directed group. It was recognized that the Steering Committee will govern the LCC, and will not make management decisions for any of the partners or others associated with the LCC.
- A proposal was made by Doug Vincent-Lang (ADFG) for an absolute consensus model (decisions require approval of all members). The issue was not brought to a vote, but no supporting statements were made by others in the group.
- The group appeared to favor a majority consensus model, but this was not clearly defined (e.g., simple majority, two-thirds majority, or some other measure). It was agreed there is a need to explicitly define what a quorum is.
- It was noted that participation in the NPLCC is voluntary and is primarily about coordination because we must work collectively to achieve results on a landscape level. Ultimately, to define the problems and how to achieve the best outcomes. For the NPLCC, it is important to look at what each partner is doing and look for ways we could do it more efficiently with the highest value. We all have our own roles and responsibilities, but we should look for new ways we can work together.
- It was noted that we should define the unique partner niches addressed by the LCC and report it to Congress and the public.
- It was noted that it is important to identify roles and composition of the Steering Committee versus the roles of other players. A process is needed to define the final Steering Committee membership.

- Language is needed to clearly define the roles for NPLCC partners not serving on the Steering Committee. Technical work groups or committees were also mentioned as an option to involve other partners not serving on the steering committee.

NGO Involvement and FACA Considerations:

- Mike Carrier stated that the DOI Solicitor’s Office determined there are no FACA considerations due to the nature of the LCC’s work. The products of the LCC will not determine actions of federal agencies—the products are informational only. (There is a DOI memorandum available that articulates this ruling—contact Mary Mahaffy to obtain a copy.) Therefore, NGO/local governments/State involvement is permitted in LCCs without a FACA process.
- Some participants in the group also mentioned that the agencies should consider the value-added that NGOs would bring to the Steering Committee. It was noted that a lot of the cutting edge science is coming from NGOs.
- Three sample criteria to evaluate which NGOs may be involved in the NPLCC were presented to the group: 1) NGOs that represent multiple groups; 2) NGOs active in climate change; and 3) NGOs with landscape-level reach.
- Some voiced concern that the LCC should not put itself in the position of deciding which groups warrant Steering Committee membership. The Joint Venture governance model, that includes NGOs, was raised and will be shared as an example for consideration as this issue is defined. **(Note: follow up item for Tasha Sargent, Pacific Coast Joint Venture – provide sample of the Joint Venture governance model)**

Represented Entities:

- It was discussed that the Steering Committee should be balanced between entities that provide and produce science products, and those entities that need science products for fish and wildlife and natural resources management.
- Tribal participation was recognized as important. Terry Williams (Tulalip Tribe) noted that David Hayes, the Deputy Secretary of the Interior, recognized the need to consult government-to-government in LCCs.

Geography of the NPLCC

- Geo-political relationship issues in the NPLCC were discussed. It was noted that many ecoregions are found within the NPLCC boundary with a diversity of conservation partners.
- The Alaska Climate Change Executive Roundtable provides oversight to ensure integration and coordination of the five LCCs, the USGS’s Climate Science Center, and NOAA’s Science Center in Alaska. The subgroup, the Climate Change Coordinating Council (C4), coordinates all the LCCs in Alaska.
- Doug Vincent-Lang proposed to subdivide the NPLCC into two units within the LCC (north/south—Gulf of Alaska watersheds; all other ecosystems to the south). He proposed to further discuss new LCC boundaries, and said he would take the lead to develop a formal proposal. The proposal for the group to pursue a boundary change was tabled.
- It was noted that there is a national process for formal LCC boundary changes; however, this group can decide to create subcomponents within the existing NPLCC boundaries. Bird

ecological units and freshwater ecoregions initially drove the specific boundaries, with some adjustments for other considerations.

- It was noted that there are benefits to keeping the entire North Pacific geographic area as a whole: for example, this allows science questions/products for the entire coastal temperate rainforest. Some commented that the science questions should drive the work, not geopolitical boundaries. For example, the Klamath Basin ecosystem is located within four LCCs—they face similar challenges, but also these provide opportunities to learn from many groups.

FY2011 NPLCC Funded Science Projects

- Mary Mahaffy reported on the selection of science projects. Projects were solicited that will provide foundational baseline information across the geographic extent of the NPLCC and will serve us in the future with our planning efforts and implementation of conservation goals.
- Because of the late notification of our funding (first week in April) and strict contracting deadlines due to the USFWS changing to a new financial system, only six weeks were available for the project solicitation and review process. Since the NPLCC is now a funded LCC, next year we will be able to begin the proposal solicitation process earlier and the Steering Committee will have time to be involved in the project selection.
- The NPLCC RFP was modeled after the RFPs from other nearby LCCs. It was open for two weeks and posted on grants.gov. To facilitate review in a short time period and avoid conflict of interest by reviewers, four categories were established to separate the different proposals: Coastal/Marine, Freshwater, and Forest Ecosystems and Cross-Ecosystems (applicants were asked to select one of the categories when submitting their proposals).
- 23 reviewers were lined up (with a minimum of 4 reviewers per category).
- 126 proposals were received for a total of \$10.4M. The ad hoc Science Advisory Team (an interagency team from across the NPLCC geographic range) selected the projects to be funded.
- Approximately \$625,000 will be spent on eight science projects, plus \$25,000 to support a student intern to do a synthesis of existing climate change research, and \$30,000 to support three science workshops within the NPLCC that will facilitate science planning and priority setting (NW Climate Science Workshop in Seattle, WildLinks in Vancouver, and the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center's Science Workshop in Juneau).

Annual Work Plan and Science Plan

- The LCC will formulate an annual work plan and a science plan within the next year. The plans will require defining strategic outcomes that the NPLCC will accomplish and an evaluation/accountability processes.
- There was discussion of the need to first develop a synthesis document with existing programs and projects; and a list of key information needs from users.
- Mary Mahaffy will share ideas and plans from other LCCs.
- The upcoming science workshops were seen as useful steps in undertaking these needs.
- It was noted that the Pacific Northwest Climate Decision Support Consortium (one of NOAA's Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments, RISA, projects) recently conducted a survey of key management needs related to climate change and other stressors and research priorities. It is mentioned that it is important to work closely with them.

- To address this need of preparing an Annual Work Plan and Science Plan, Mary will work with other members of the ad hoc Science Advisory Team and the contractors assisting with the Framing Workshop.
- A draft Annual Work Plan can be expected in 6 months and the Science Plan by the end of the fiscal year

ACTIONS

Action 1 – Framing Workshop

Proposal:

- Mary Mahaffy recommended we use an **issue and science framing process** via a 2-day workshop followed by a 1-day Steering Committee meeting to help the Steering Committee coalesce; to guide governance proposals (committees, work teams, including geographic considerations); help integrate science and policy, assist in the development of an annual work plan and to support science planning.
- This process would assist in answering important questions such as: How to organize?, Where to focus efforts and resources?, Who are the decision makers? What are the types of decisions being made (defining the components - management objectives, alternatives, uncertainties)?, What applied science activities should it be actively supporting and funding and in what time frames? This structured decision making process will lead to informed, structured governance recommendations and provides an agreement/coalescing on themes and focus.
- Mary noted that this emulates a process used by the Western Alaska LCC. They started with a framing workshop with the Steering Committee and followed it with a larger science workshop with a broad group of experts and partners.
- It was noted that this process will be useful to the continued discussion of geographic scope, and whether subcommittees or other substructures will be adopted. A recommendation was made to let the questions drive the organizational structure.

Decision:

- The group discussed the proposal and seemed to agree to proceed with the framing workshop (no objections were raised); A formal vote was not conducted.
- **Timeframe** - late summer/early fall

Assignments:

- No assignments were made.
- Mary will work with the consultants that coordinated the workshop in Alaska.

Action 2 – New Activities

Proposals:

- 1) Develop a **synthesis presentation** so that everyone on the Steering Committee has baseline knowledge of other climate change adaptation and landscape level conservation efforts in the NPLCC geographic area.
- 2) Develop an **integrated project development processes** such as one joint RFP for DOI (CSC and LCCs in larger geo-areas) as well as non-DOI entities such as the US Forest Service.

Decision:

- No objections were raised; a formal vote was not conducted

Assignments:

- No assignments were made or timeframe given
- Mary Mahaffy will work with members of the ad hoc Science Advisory Team on these proposed actions.

Action 3 – Draft Charter

Proposal:

- Establish a subcommittee to develop and finalize the purpose, goals and objectives document and to develop a draft charter for governance and membership issues.

Decision:

- This proposal was adopted by the group with verbal concurrence; a formal vote was not conducted.

Assignments:

- Volunteers were requested to assist Mary Mahaffy with drafting the charter. Mike Goldstein and Tasha Sargent offered to help. Others who are interested in helping were asked to contact Mary Mahaffy.
- **Timeframe** - Provide recommendations in 3-4 months; and/or in advance of framing workshop.

Summary of Follow Up Items:

- The Joint Venture governance model was raised and will be shared as an example to consider how to expand the NPLCC steering committee. Assignment: Tasha Sargent, Pacific Coast Joint Venture
- Before the next meeting, Mary Mahaffy will provide regular updates on NPLCC actions/progress.
- Mary will send out information and a doodle poll to schedule the next meeting which will be the framing workshop.

Next Meeting: Fall 2011, Date and location TBD

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