

# LCC Council Charter



LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION  
COOPERATIVES

## Introduction

North American, Pacific, and Caribbean landscapes, islands, and seascapes represent some of the most beautiful and iconic places on earth. These places are vital for our well-being. They support clean water for us to drink, the clean air we breathe, and the food we eat, as well as provide endless recreational opportunities, millions of jobs and billions of dollars to nations' economies. They include the rivers, streams, wetlands, urban environs, forests, grasslands, agricultural landscapes, coasts, and marine areas that sustain our native fish, plants, and wildlife, and provide strong defenses against natural disasters like floods and storms. They are the places that protect and sustain our natural and cultural heritage.

This natural and cultural heritage is increasingly facing serious challenges and impacts. It faces increasing pressure to meet the demands of a growing human population including significant losses and/or fragmentation due to land-use changes. Other impacts to our land, water, and wildlife — like drought, wildfire, contaminants, pollution, invasive species, floods, storms, sea level rise, changing ocean conditions and disease — are magnified by a rapidly changing climate. These threats know no boundaries. For example, in 2005, all 50 states and six U.S. Territories completed comprehensive assessments of wildlife within their jurisdictions and identified 12,000 species that were in serious declines. A recent study from Duke University reported that species are becoming extinct at least 1000 times faster than they did before humans and that the world is very close to another major extinction. We are also losing some of our most important habitats at an alarming rate.

The conservation and sustainable, cultural and natural resource management challenges of the 21st century are more complex than ever before, surpassing even those that President Theodore Roosevelt faced a century ago. Localized issues, like ensuring clean water supplies and recreational opportunities, interact with widespread threats like habitat fragmentation and climate change. These threats have far reaching impacts to humans, fish and wildlife populations, and our natural areas.

These challenges are too large for any single organization to meet alone. It will take a collective effort involving many public and private organizations to deal with today's conservation challenges.

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) provide a forum for organizations and individuals to work together in a new way to address these challenges. This network is working across geographies and jurisdictions at a new regional scale, and is delivering unprecedented regional collaboration.

The LCC Council (the Council) will serve the LCC Network by learning from it and helping to identify the ecological and institutional challenges faced by the LCCs that are appropriate to be addressed across the Network. Serving as a collective voice for the LCC Network, the Council will seek to support changes that can be made throughout the Network to facilitate the work of the individual LCCs. The Council will provide a platform for highlighting LCC successes and challenges and will help strengthen the Network by engaging appropriate new partners. Sustained funding is needed for the LCC Network and the Council will work to ensure that local and regional partnership efforts are supported. To achieve these

goals, the Council will identify high-priority issues, consider a range of solutions, and make recommendations to support the LCC Network.

LCCs combine the collective science, capacity, creativity, and resources of partners and programs to conserve our land, air, and water. This cooperation helps ensure a healthy world for future generations. The Council will help the LCC Network achieve this goal and follow the legacy of President Theodore Roosevelt who said “Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us.”

## Purpose

The purpose of the Council is to support the cooperative conservation and sustainable resource management efforts of the LCC Network, to assist the LCC Network in achieving its goals, to contribute to building a constituency of partners, and to help sustain the LCC initiative.

## Goals

The overall goal of the Council is *to add value* to the LCC initiative *in partnership* with the LCC Network and contribute to its effectiveness and sustainability. The following goals will be realized through development and implementation of strategic and operational plans:

- Serve as advocates for the function, role, and value of the LCC Network;
- Support and add value to LCC Network communication and education initiatives;
- Broaden engagement of LCC partners and collaborators through our networks and relationships, and increase involvement of tribal and indigenous partners;
- Bring a unique, high-level perspective to the LCC Network to enhance strategic development and support innovation;
- Catalyze and encourage the development of best practices, innovative thinking, and solution sharing across the LCC Network;
- Increase participation and funding in the LCC Network from within our constituencies.

## Organizational Structure

### Roles & Responsibilities

*LCC Council:* Serve as advocates for the LCC Network by reporting to governments, organizations, and individuals on the status and accomplishments of the LCCs; engage LCC partners and collaborators; increase involvement of tribal and indigenous partners in the LCC Network; enhance strategic development and support innovation of the LCC Network; catalyze and encourage the development of best practices, innovative thinking, and solution sharing across the LCC Network.

*LCC Council Working Groups:* When the Council has identified a high-priority issue, action, or product, they may form a working group to conduct discussions and prepare recommendations for consideration by the Council. Working groups will carry out tasks as assigned by the Council. Working groups may be

permanent or ad-hoc, and may disassemble when an issue is resolved or a product is completed. Working groups may be established by the Co-Chairs or by vote of the Council.

*Co-Chairs:* The Council will be led by two Co-Chairs elected by the Council Membership. Co-Chairs will serve a two (2) year term, with one Co-Chair rotating out each year and replaced with one representative elected by the Council. One of the initial Co-Chairs will serve a three (3) year term to establish staggered terms.

Co-Chairs hold the following responsibilities:

- Prepare a written meeting agenda for all matters to be addressed by the Council.
- Prepare and issue all notices, including meeting notices, which are required to be given to the Council and public.
- Preside at all meetings of the Council, and unless otherwise directed by the Council, present items of business for consideration by the Council in the order listed on the meeting agenda.
- Appoint working groups as required.
- “Call the vote” when consensus is not achieved.
- Represent the LCC Network to key decision-makers.
- Either Co-Chair can assume leadership role in the absence of the other.

*Executive Committee:* The Council may establish an Executive Committee. At the time the Council chooses to set up an Executive Committee they will elect up to five (5) Council members with broad representation of the Council to serve on the Council’s Executive Committee, which will be guided by the Co-Chairs and established terms of reference. The Co-Chairs also will serve on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will be a liaison among the Council, the National LCC Coordinator, and any Committees or Working Groups between meetings of the full Council.

*Staff:* The National LCC Coordinator and other National LCC staff members will provide staff support as needed for the Council and assist the Chair in finalizing meeting arrangements, tracking votes, documenting meeting discussions, distributing Council notes and products, and identifying opportunities to speak on behalf of the LCC Network. When feasible, the National Staff may assume a leadership role developing critical products and documents.

## **Membership**

### **Selection Criteria and Expectations for Council Members**

The following are characteristics the Council seeks in all members. Individuals selected for the Council will be collectively evaluated relative to these required characteristics:

- Be an active participant and an advocate for the LCC mission.
- Have a commitment and willingness to collaborate.
- Be able to think beyond the boundaries of his/her agency, organization, or tribe.
- Be able to represent a broad array of natural and cultural resources.
- Have decision-making authority/influence within their agency, organization, or tribe.

- Be committed to soliciting input from and reporting back to their agencies, organizations, tribes, and colleagues.
- Have experience in collaborative processes at different scales.
- Be involved with an agency, organization, or tribe that:
  - Is engaged in the LCC initiative.
  - Has resources and/or a mission that aligns with the LCC mission.
  - Has science knowledge/capacity and/or is actively engaged in resource management activities.

The following overarching characteristics are desirable in some of the members to ensure that the Council has these attributes:

- Be able to represent an inclusive perspective that encompasses the geography of the entire LCC Network, and that includes international interests.
- Have science knowledge/communications capacity.

### Participation

Every Council member is expected to attend and actively participate in every meeting, or to send an appropriate alternate verified to the Council Co-Chairs in writing in advance of the meeting for participation in any decisions or votes (i.e., official business). If this expectation is not met for two consecutive meetings, Council membership will be reviewed by Council Co-Chairs.

*Alternates/designees:* The Council will be effective only with consistent and engaged participation. Members should designate alternates who are fully informed, can act on behalf of their member, and can participate consistently.

### Composition

The Council will consist of up to 31 participants as outlined below:

- 7 Federal agency directors
  - The participating federal agencies were selected based on their authority to make natural resource management decisions about large landscapes.
  - Federal agency directors from the Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will hold permanent seats on the council.
- 3 U.S. Federally-Recognized Tribal participants
  - Tribal participants include both tribal leadership as well as participants from tribal organizations. Participation will not be limited to tribal leadership, but can also come from tribal organizations that represent these sovereign tribes.
  - Tribal participation is limited to U.S. federally-recognized Native American Tribes and Alaska Natives.

- **Who Selects:** Review and selection will be the responsibility of the LCC Council.
- 1 Indigenous participant
  - Participant will be drawn from First Nations, Pacific Islanders, Caribbean peoples, Native Hawaiians, as well as other indigenous peoples within the geography of the LCCs.
  - **Who Selects:** Review and selection is the responsibility of the LCC Council.
- 4 State agency directors
  - State agencies will be nominated by each of the four respective regional fish and wildlife associations.
  - Target participants are U.S. state agency directors.
  - **Who Selects:** Each regional state fish and wildlife association’s executive committee (i.e., Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) will review and select its respective participant.
- 4 NGO participants
  - **Who Selects:** Review and selection is the responsibility of the LCC Council.
- 1 LCC participant
  - The LCC participant could be a steering committee member or LCC staff member, and will be selected by the LCC Coordinators Team (LCT). The LCC participant should have the ability to speak for broader LCC issues. In addition, attendance at meetings from the LCT Executive Committee is expected.
  - **Who Selects:** The LCT will recommend an individual for participation. If the LCT cannot reach consensus, then their list of recommendations will be forwarded to the LCT Executive Committee for final selection.
- 2 “Major partnership” (MP) participants
  - MP participants will include participants from major partnerships such as Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, Fish Habitat Action Partnerships, and other relevant partnerships.
  - **Who Selects:** Future Major Partnerships included will be determined by the LCC Council. The included Major Partnership participant will be selected by that Major Partnership (e.g., the Fish Habitat Partnership participant will be selected by the National Fish Habitat Partnership).
- 4 International participants
  - International seats will be filled from all nations participating in the LCC initiative, as defined by the geography of the LCCs. A minimum of one participant from Canada and one from Mexico will be included in these four seats.
  - **Who Selects:** Review and selection is the responsibility of the Council. LCC staff and strategy team members can reach out to international conservation entities such as the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation Management, the North American Free Trade Agreement’s Commission for Environmental Cooperation, Caribbean Foresters, and other international conservation organizations within the LCC geography to seek participation.

- 5 “At Large” participants
  - Up to an additional five member seats are designated as “at large” and will be filled at a future date by the Council.
 

“At large” participants may come from organizations and interests not currently represented, such as U.S. territories, commonwealths, local governments, private landowners, industry, the philanthropic community, and other federal agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Geological Survey.
- In addition to the above-designated voting members the Council actively invites participation from other strategic partners as appropriate. Absence of people formally on the Council does not diminish their role or importance in the LCC Network.
- Though they will not be voting members, other partners involved in landscape-scale conservation are encouraged to attend and participate in the LCC Council. There is a direct tie between the LCCs, the Climate Science Centers, and the Climate Hubs and attendance by an appropriate National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center participant and an appropriate Climate Hub participant is encouraged.

## Terms

*Initial term lengths:* The Council’s first participants will be selected for either a 3-year or 2-year term to initiate a staggered term rotation. After the first 3-year terms are served, all terms will be two years in length.

*Initial term durations are as follows:*

- Federal agencies – Permanent members
- Tribal participants – two 3-year terms and one 2-year term
- Indigenous participant—2-year term
- State agencies – two 3-year terms and two 2-year terms
- NGO participants – two 3-year terms and two 2-year terms
- LCC participant – 2-year term
- Major Partnership participant – 2-year terms
- International participants—two 3-year terms and two 2-year terms
- “At large” seats – 2-year terms

*Term limits:* Term limits apply to all members except federal agency participants, who have standing seats. Following initial term lengths, non-federal participants will be subject to a two consecutive term limit.

## Decision-Making

The Council's decision-making process will consist of the following elements:

*Quorum:* Two-thirds of the Council must be present for decision-making to occur.

*Decision-Making Process:* The Council will seek consensus for all decisions. This implies thoroughly exploring issues and working actively and constructively to find mutual agreement. If full consensus is not possible, then the Council will move to the decision-making model as outlined below:

- In the absence of consensus, a teleconference or in-person meeting is needed to make decisions. Email conversations may only be used to make decisions where consensus exists.
- If a quorum has been reached, agreement must come from 75% of the number of participants present.
- Minority opinions and concerns will be recorded so that they may be revisited when and where relevant.

*Meetings:* The Council will meet quarterly (two in-person meetings and two web/conference call meetings), particularly as the Council is becoming established. The Council may elect to meet more or less frequently as needed. The Council may reduce the number of in-person meetings to once per year if travel restrictions or funding is a barrier to achieving quorum. Decision-making as noted above can occur via email or conference calls between quarterly meetings if actively facilitated by the Co-Chairs.

**Charter approved by consensus by LCC Council on June 18, 2014 in Arlington, VA. Revised by consensus of LCC Council on July 7, 2015 to include up to 5 "At Large" members rather than 2. Revised by consensus of LCC Council on Sept. 21, 2015 to increase the number of federal members from 6 to 7 to include Bureau of Reclamation.**



LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION  
COOPERATIVES

## Appendix: Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles of the LCC Network

This appendix presents the mission, vision, and guiding principles of the LCC Network. The following text was copied directly from the LCC Coordinators Team charter.

### Preamble

The Landscape Conservation Cooperative Network<sup>1</sup> (LCC Network or Network) desires to establish a unifying agenda for furthering the conservation of natural and cultural resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;

The Network is striving to establish an organizational framework and approach for pursuing opportunities to inform natural and cultural resource conservation and sustainable<sup>2</sup> resource management in the face of unprecedented challenges facing these resources;

We recognize that the need to understand the science of global climate change, and mount an integrated response for adapting to this threat, is a foundational principle for the establishment of LCCs and the Network;

We recognize that, in addition to climate change, there are a variety of other landscape-scale stressors<sup>3</sup> that require mutual understanding and effective responses to conserve the natural and cultural resources within the Network's geography;

We recognize that a functioning Network will require pursuit of certain fundamental approaches by each LCC;

We recognize that it is important that each LCC have flexibility to adapt to local conditions; the intent of this document is not to prescribe how things are done by individual LCCs, but to identify the anticipated responsibilities each LCC will need to fulfill in support of the Network vision.

Therefore, the twenty-two Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, in coordination with their steering committees have adopted this document to unify the individual Cooperatives into a Network.

### Vision

Landscapes capable of sustaining natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

---

<sup>1</sup> The LCC Network is composed of the twenty-two individual LCCs and their linkages (i.e., steering committees, staff, partners and others associated with the LCCs).

<sup>2</sup> The use of the terms sustainable, sustaining, and sustainability do not intend to imply maintenance of status quo.

<sup>3</sup> This term is used in the context of broad spatial scales that may encompass coastal or marine systems, freshwater systems, and terrestrial systems, depending on the scope defined by the individual LCCs.

## **Mission**

### ***A network of cooperatives depends on LCCs to:***

- Develop and provide integrated science-based information about the implications of climate change and other stressors for the sustainability of natural and cultural resources;
- Develop shared, landscape-level, conservation objectives and inform conservation strategies that are based on a shared scientific understanding about the landscape, including the implications of current and future environmental stressors;
- Facilitate the exchange of applied science in the implementation of conservation strategies and products developed by the Cooperative or their partners;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of LCC conservation strategies in meeting shared objectives;
- Develop appropriate linkages that connect LCCs to ensure an effective network.

## **Guiding Principles**

- Consider and respect each participating organization's unique mandates and jurisdictions.
- Add value to landscape-scale conservation by integrating across LCCs and other partnerships and organizations to identify and fill gaps and avoid redundancies.
- Conduct open and frequent communications within the LCC network and among vested stakeholders and be transparent in deliberations and decision-making.
- Focus on developing shared landscape-level priorities that lead to strategies that can be implemented.
- Develop and rely upon best available science.
- Develop explicit linkages and approaches to ensure products are available in a form that is usable by partners delivering conservation.
- Use a scientifically objective adaptive management approach in fulfilling the mission.