

Charter

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Coordinators Team

7/9/12

Preamble

In 2010 a network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs or Cooperatives) was formed across North America, the Pacific Islands, and the Caribbean. Largely emerging out of a Department of the Interior (DOI) initiative and DOI Secretarial Order 3289, the network of LCCs (Network) strove to establish a more effective approach to large-scale conservation of natural and cultural resources. DOI recognized that such an approach required the Cooperatives to be self-directed organizations that could adjust to local conditions; thus, each LCC is governed by a voluntary steering committee with members representing conservation and resource management partners from a wide variety of federal, state, territorial, and international agencies, tribes, indigenous and non-governmental organizations, and others within the Cooperative's geography. While the twenty-two LCC areas provide spatial context for landscape-scale conservation and resource management, and a means for allocating fiscal and human resources, the intention was for these LCCs to function as a seamless international network. Clearly, populations, communities, and ecosystems transcend LCC boundaries and many existing conservation frameworks frequently cross multiple LCCs (e.g., Joint Ventures and National Fish Habitat Partnerships). Only as a Network can the LCCs appropriately support and lead the development of broader-scale approaches to conservation and resource management (including information systems, tool development, and planning).

Collectively, these various interests require the LCCs to establish effective governance at several levels to support, but not constrain, individual LCC conservation and resource management efforts while also leading to efficient regional and Network-wide solutions. These levels of governance range from simple organizational matters to establishment of policy recommendations and guidance that may affect conservation and resource management program development at the most fundamental levels.

Therefore, in furtherance of the LCC Network's "Vision, Mission, Roles, and Guiding Principles" (**see Exhibit A**), the LCC Coordinators as staff representing their respective LCCs have assumed responsibility for providing leadership on operational aspects of Network governance, and other matters as appropriate, while respecting individual LCC steering committee governance authority. The LCC Coordinators further recognize that the Network may need to seek guidance on national or international conservation and resource management policies from other authorities. Lastly, the LCC Coordinators recognize that as a relatively new and evolving endeavor, this governance model will need to evolve as the Network matures.

Purpose

The purpose of this Charter is to establish an LCC Network (Network) governance body to be known as the LCC Coordinators Team (LCT) and to define its role and decision-making procedures in support of the LCC Network's Vision, Mission, Roles, and Guiding Principles.

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It is expected that flexibility will be needed in order to accommodate the innovative and evolving nature of LCCs. As such, this Charter will be reviewed annually for its applicability and effectiveness and will be adjusted as needed. Substantive changes to this Charter must adhere to the decision framework for Cooperative Decisions as described below.

Role

The role of the LCT is to establish the necessary and appropriate levels of consistent communication, collaboration, and other unifying actions across the LCCs to ensure that the Network's vision and mission are being fulfilled.

Such areas of action include but are not limited to the following:

1. Development of performance measures and other metrics for characterization of Network accomplishments and progress.
2. Development of best practices and other standards or operating procedures necessary for trans-LCC or Network-wide conservation actions.
3. Identification and development of inter-LCC and national or international science and data needs.
4. Development and management of national communications tools including reports, updates, newsletters, and workshops, conferences, or other forums for inter-LCC coordination and information dissemination.
5. Development and adoption, or support for the development, of monitoring protocols.

Composition of the LCT and Relationship to Other Groups

LCT

For the purpose of this Charter, the LCT is composed of LCC Coordinators from the twenty-two LCCs and the National LCC Coordinators. By joining together, the LCC Coordinators are representing their individual LCCs in the interests of ensuring an effective Network. It is expected that Coordinators will be affirmatively recognized within their LCCs as fulfilling this role. Other LCC staff, such as the LCC Science Coordinators, and representatives of various Network workgroups or LCC member organizations will provide support as needed and requested. These individuals will be identified on an as needed basis to serve as non-voting members of the LCT.

LCC Network

The LCC Network is composed of the twenty-two individual LCCs and their linkages, including steering committees, staff, partners, and others associated with the LCCs.

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Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) will provide focused support to lead the LCT. The EC will include five LCC Coordinators and the LCC National Coordinator and Assistant National Coordinator. The EC members will be selected from the pool of LCT members based on voluntary agreement to serve, and will reflect the organizational and geographical diversity of the Network. In the event that more than five individuals volunteer, the LCT will elect these members by simple majority vote. The LCC National Coordinator is a permanent member of the EC and serves as permanent chair. The LCC Assistant National Coordinator also is a permanent member. Elected EC members are expected to serve at least one year. For continuity's sake, one EC representative is encouraged to voluntarily serve for two consecutive years.

The EC's role is to ensure that the priorities identified by the LCT are carried forward and administrative needs of the LCT (e.g., agenda development, meeting logistics, and work planning) are efficiently addressed. The EC will establish and track progress of workgroups and request assistance from LCC Coordinators or others within the LCC community if needed. The EC will receive recommendations from workgroups and present them to the full LCT for a vote, as appropriate.

LCC Network Staff

Organizations interested in the mission of the LCC Network may choose to assign or dedicate staff to the Network. These Network staff would serve in roles similar to those of the individual LCC staff and would be led by the LCC National Coordinator. Network staff may be required to support the needs of the Network as determined by the LCT.

Workgroups

When the LCT has identified a high-priority issue, action, or product, the EC will form a workgroup to conduct discussions and prepare recommendations for consideration by the LCT, the Network, or others. Workgroups will carry out tasks as assigned by the EC. Workgroups are non-permanent and will disassemble when an issue is resolved or a product completed.

A workgroup's structure will be defined by the knowledge and skill sets needed to complete the task at hand. All workgroups will have a member of the LCT serving as lead. The EC will ask for volunteers and/or invite qualified individuals to serve on a work group. Workgroup members may be recruited from any source. Workgroups will be established via a written document that describes specific tasks, deliverables, time frames, decision processes, and proposed composition. The EC will review all workgroups at least annually for relevancy, progress, and composition.

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Establishment of a Quorum

All decisions, whether by consensus or by vote, require a quorum of LCT members. For a quorum to be established, two-thirds (15) of the LCC Coordinators must be present either in person or via electronic means. LCC Coordinators can designate an alternate or proxy provided that the designation is made in writing to the EC at least 24 hours prior to a scheduled decision.

LCT Decision Making

The types of actions and issues the LCT will address may range from simple administrative matters, such as how to hold meetings, to highly complex matters, such as the hypothetical concept of a nationwide conservation objective. The LCT recognizes that the issues it addresses will have ramifications that vary in their impact upon individual LCCs, the work of the Network, and possibly national or international conservation policy. It is also recognized that the LCT should not act in a way that limits the autonomy of individual LCC Steering Committees nor obligates any organization to an action that is not acceptable to that organization.

The following fundamental tenets will be used in determining decision-making of the LCT:

1. Issues relevant to only one individual LCC or best addressed by an individual LCC Steering Committee will not be addressed by the LCT unless requested by the affected LCC.
2. The LCT will encourage and support regional groupings of LCCs to address issues that are only regionally relevant.
3. The LCT will provide guidance to LCCs on issues where there is a clear agency mandate or Congressional direction that affects LCC funding, reporting, or other action necessary for the continued operation of the LCCs.
4. The LCT will provide protocols and guidance relevant to the overall LCC Network on administrative and operational issues that do not obligate any individual LCC partner to undertake any action.
5. The LCT will seek full engagement and consent of LCC steering committees on issues that will require individual LCCs to substantially modify, develop, or support actions that are necessary to the overall success of the LCC Network but are not characterized as agency mandates or Congressional directions as described in #3.
6. Where appropriate and necessary for the success of the LCC Network mission, the LCT will identify and develop recommendations on national policy or related issues that will be provided to other authoritative bodies for discussion or adoption.

To stay flexible and yet continue to move forward, all issues or actions brought to the attention of the LCT will be characterized into four different decision categories, which are: (1) Organizational, (2)

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Guidance, (3) Cooperative, and (4) Policy. The EC will make a recommendation to the LCT regarding the appropriate decision category for each identified issue or action. The LCT will then confirm the appropriate decision category.

Issues or action items brought forward to the LCT for a decision or recommendation will be presented to the LCCs with enough lead time for LCT members to review and consult with their respective steering committees, as needed.

The LCT will strive to make all decisions by consensus. For the LCT, consensus is defined as general agreement, which means that members present or represented at the time a decision is made either agree with or at least do not oppose the decision.

In the event consensus cannot be reached, a 2/3-majority will decide, depending on the nature of the decision. For voting purposes, each LCT member has one vote. This vote may be cast by an alternate or proxy identified on a case-by-case basis by the LCT member.

Decision Types:

1. Organizational Decisions: Organizational decisions are those that address the normal operational functions of LCCs as a Network and include but are not limited to: voting about LCT leadership; logistics; meeting dates and times; agenda revisions; schedules; and communications. Organizational decisions do not impose changes on individual LCCs but are items that can improve collaboration and coordination across LCCs in order to help meet the purpose, goals, and priorities of the Network. These are decisions for which the LCT is the fully authorized body.

Decision method:

If consensus cannot be reached, all organizational decisions and recommendations will be made by a 2/3-majority vote by the affected members to complete and memorialize the action. Those with dissenting votes will go on record, along with the reason for their dissent.

2. Guidance Decisions: These are actions or issues that stem from national or international programmatic mandates, Congressional directives, specific guidance tied directly to funding, or other authoritative sources that require compliance by the LCC network in order to ensure continued operational support. As such, guidance decisions are generally translations or interpretations of directives provided to the LCC from the authoritative source.

Decision method:

If consensus cannot be reached, all guidance decisions and recommendations will be made by a 2/3-majority vote by the affected members to complete and memorialize the action. Those with dissenting votes will go on record, along with the reason for their dissent.

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3. Cooperative Decisions: Cooperative decisions include matters such as the identification of national or international science needs, advisory issues such as the development of best practices, or other coordinated efforts necessary to ensure an efficient and effective LCC Network. Individual LCCs are not required, but will be encouraged, to support or adopt cooperative decisions. Cooperative decisions do not impose changes on individual LCCs; rather, they are decisions designed to improve collaboration and coordination across LCCs in support of the Network's purpose, goals, and priorities.

Decision method:

If consensus cannot be reached, all guidance decisions and recommendations will be made by a 2/3-majority vote by the affected members to complete and memorialize the action. Those with dissenting votes will go on record, along with the reason for their dissent.

4. Policy Decisions and Recommendations: These are decisions and recommendations that further the support of the purpose, goals, and priorities of LCCs through development or modifications of national policy or other official mandates. The LCT recognizes that authority to make changes to policy or other official mandates rests with the responsible nation, state, territory, commonwealth, province, federal agency, or other authority, acting individually or collectively. It is anticipated that the recommendations developed through this decision process will be provided to other bodies for consideration. Policy decisions and recommendations will be vetted by each individual LCC steering committee.

Decision method:

As policy decisions may be far reaching and precedent setting, it is the LCT's desire to seek consensus of the LCC Steering Committees and LCT. If consensus cannot be reached, the issue will be assigned to a workgroup to refine or develop an alternative for future decision making.

Timeliness of Decisions

The LCT recognizes the need to make collective decisions swiftly to progress with the mission and purpose of LCCs and the LCC Network. The LCT will decide on the appropriate length of time for review and consensus decision or vote depending on the category and the complexity of each item, taking into consideration the twenty-two individual LCCs are at different stages of development that may limit their ability to engage in Network decisions. The LCT will strive to move forward in a manner that is efficient and effective to further the goals of the LCC Network and Community while honoring the self-directed nature of the individual LCCs.

Exhibit A.

Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Network

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Preamble

The Landscape Conservation Cooperative Network¹ (LCC Network or Network) desires to establish a unifying agenda for furthering the conservation of natural and cultural resources in the 21st Century;

The Network is striving to establish an organizational framework and approach for pursuing opportunities to inform natural and cultural resource conservation and sustainable² 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 stressors³ 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.

¹ 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).

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

³ 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.

Exhibit A.

Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Network

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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.