



Photo: BLM Nevada

Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative

2017 Online Public Forum Summary Report



Online Public Forum Overview

The Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) hosted an online Public Forum between Jan. 23 and Feb. 8, 2017. The annual Public Forum provides an opportunity to inform and engage the Great Basin community in the work of the Great Basin LCC, while collecting feedback on ideas for future efforts. A kickoff webinar on Jan. 23 provided an overview of the Great Basin LCC and an introduction to the online discussion tools. The 2017 Public Forum gathered input on several topics, including:

- Prioritization of the Great Basin LCC's key objectives
- Ideas for new Steering Committee members
- Rangeland fire prevention and management
- Improving the resiliency of Great Basin forests and woodlands
- Opportunities for partnering with Great Basin tribes
- Future webinar topics and information sharing efforts

This report summarizes key takeaways from responses collected during the Public Forum. The report does not provide a verbatim recount of all comments, and summarized responses may have been stated once or multiple times.

Public Forum Welcome Page

PUBLIC FORUM - Jan. 23 to Feb. 6, 2017 Select Language

Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Welcome Overview In Action Who We Are Rangeland Fires Forests & Woodlands Tribal Partners Info Sharing Feedback Thanks

Welcome

Welcome to the Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) Public Forum. Visit the tabbed stations listed at the top of this page to learn about the work of the Great Basin LCC and provide input on important topics, including:

- Rangeland fire prevention, management and restoration
- Challenges facing Great Basin forests and woodlands
- Future webinar series
- The Great Basin LCC Steering Committee
- Partnership opportunities for Great Basin tribes
- And more!

Tabs with a indicate an opportunity to provide comments. Look for the "Join the Conversation" sections at the bottom of the page.

The feedback and discussions received through the Public Forum will help us plan and prioritize future work. Visit the site as often as you'd like and engage with other Public Forum visitors in comment threads. [Watch the kick-off webinar](#) to learn more about the purpose of the Public Forum.

The Public Forum will close on Wednesday, Feb. 8. A summary of the key findings will be made available soon after.

Thank you for visiting!

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Public Forum Participation by the Numbers



Prioritizing Strategic Goals

Key Goals from the Great Basin LCC Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Great Basin communities develop mutually agreed upon landscape-scale conservation strategies and deliver conservation actions guided by those strategies.

Goal 2: The Great Basin is more resilient to climate change and other landscape-scale stressors because of increased collaboration, optimized conservation investments and efforts aligned to a common vision.

Goal 3: Traditional knowledge and contemporary science are shared and/or integrated, as appropriate, to further Great Basin conservation priorities and land stewardship.

Goal 4: Communication and understanding about science, management and cultural resources are enhanced and this information is accessible and discoverable by the broader conservation community.

The Great Basin LCC Strategic Plan identifies the key goals and objectives that guide our work. Public Forum participants were asked which of these goals and objectives the Great Basin LCC should prioritize.

Feedback on Strategic Goals and Objectives

- Each goal is important, and all the objectives are interrelated. Goals 1 and 2 resonate with many members of the conservation community, but many feel these objectives are informed and supported by the other two key goals.
- Working to make the Great Basin more resilient to climate change and other landscape-scale stressors is crucial. Regional, state and local programs will likely play a much larger role in this work going forward.
- Collaboration, coordination and developing mutually-agreed strategies helps groups avoid working across purposes. Leveraging resources and aligning efforts is also key to ensuring multi-use landscapes are resilient to a wide range of disturbances.
- Communication expertise is needed to foster collaboration among diverse stakeholder groups. It is important to share information about past, current and proposed restoration efforts at the local level with the broader Great Basin conservation community to increase general awareness and reveal opportunities for partnership-building.
- Integrating traditional knowledge and contemporary science can help inform effective, collaborative conservation strategies.
- A landscape-scale approach is necessary for resource management, and the Great Basin LCC can help define this need. Specifically, there is interest in looking at the impacts of livestock grazing at this level.



Great Basin LCC Steering Committee Member Suggestions

Public Forum participants were asked to recommend organizations working on issues or in areas that are underrepresented on the Great Basin LCC Steering Committee. Recommended organizations included:

- American Fisheries Society
- Bighorns Unlimited
- California Conservation District
- California Native Plant Society
- California-Nevada Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Association
- Chukars Unlimited
- Ducks Unlimited
- Great Basin Bird Observatory
- Great Basin National Heritage Area
- Great Basin National Park
- Harney County Soil and Water Conservation District
- HawkWatch International
- Humboldt River Basin Water Authority
- Idaho Fish and Game
- Lahontan Audubon Society
- Mule Deer Foundation
- Nevada Cattlemen's Association
- Nevada Conservation District
- Nevada Division of Water Resources
- Nevada Outdoor School
- Oregon Cattleman's Association
- Oregon Hunters Association
- Oregon Natural Desert Association
- Oregon State University
- Point Blue Conservation Science
- Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation
- Society for Range Management
- Society of American Foresters
- Sustainable Northwest
- The Western Section of the Wildlife Society
- Walker Basin Conservancy
- Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- Western Folklife Center



Photo: BLM Nevada

Archeologist at Diana's Punchbowl, Battle Mountain

Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration

The Great Basin LCC has been heavily involved in efforts related to Secretarial Order 3336: Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration. The Public Forum provided information on the science, tools and actions we support as part of the Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy.

The Great Basin LCC helped coordinate the annual Great Basin Consortium Conference in February 2017. This year’s conference focused on the implementation of the Rangeland Fire Science Plan. In preparation for the conference, Public Forum visitors were asked about their familiarity with Secretarial Order 3336 and what topics related to rangeland fire prevention and management most interested them.

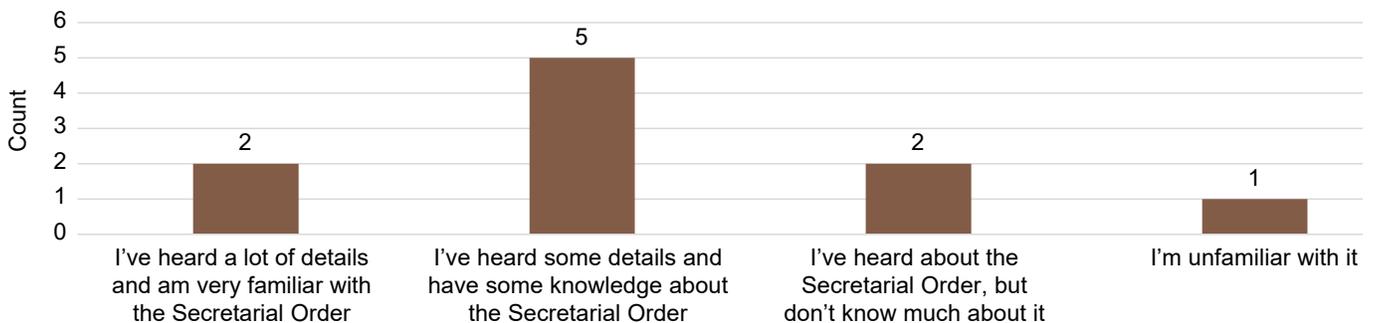
Half of the participants in the Public Forum had heard of Secretarial Order 3336 and knew some details about it. A fifth of visitors were very familiar with the order, and a similar proportion had heard about it but did not know much information.



Photo: BLM Nevada

Controlled burns in Alpine County

How familiar are you with the Rangeland Fire Prevention and Management Secretarial Order?



Concerning topics related to rangeland fire to be discussed at the Great Basin Consortium Conference, Public Forum participants were most interested in restoration and climate change.

Topics of Most Interest Related to Rangeland Fire

Rank	Topic
1	Restoration
2	Climate Change
3	Fire
4	Sagebrush/sage-grouse
5	Invasives

Expanding Resistance and Resilience Efforts to Great Basin Forests and Woodlands

Several Great Basin LCC efforts focus on using resistance and resilience concepts to improve sagebrush conservation. Land managers use our research and tools to make landscapes more resilient to disturbance and resistant to invasive species.

The Great Basin's forests and woodlands, like the sagebrush steppe, also face large threats. The Great Basin LCC is interested in applying resistance and resilience concepts to address these conservation challenges and strengthen the health of these ecosystems. Public Forum visitors were asked what issues are most pressing in Great Basin forests and woodlands and what kinds of efforts the Great Basin LCC could support to proactively address these impacts.

Feedback on Conservation Challenges Facing Great Basin Forests and Woodlands

- Vegetation in Great Basin forests and woodlands has homogenized. Historically, complex and variable fire patterns helped maintain a mix of fire-tolerant trees and denser varieties. Today, this diversity has decreased and fuel loads have grown to exceed historical conditions.
- Greater fuel loads and less diverse vegetation allow wildfire to move more quickly across vegetation zones and into areas that were historically resistant to fire, sometimes reaching the subalpine tree-line.
- Problems are particularly acute in designated wilderness areas and study areas where treatment options may be limited.
- *Ventenata dubia*, an invasive annual grass, is affecting dry forests in the Northwestern Great Basin.

Ideas for Great Basin LCC Efforts to Address These Challenges

- Apply mechanical or prescription fire treatments in mid-elevation vegetation zones to restore forest resiliency.
- Use traditional ecological knowledge to inform forest restoration efforts, particularly around the use of fire to restore ecosystems.
- Ensure the health and function of riparian areas and wetlands to improve resilience to variations in precipitation.
- Encourage broader monitoring of guild wildlife species to assess woodland condition.
- Address conifer incursion, particularly the spread of pinyon-juniper into aspen, mountain mahogany and other communities.
- Ensure fuel treatments do not adversely affect water quality of streams or other aquatic systems. Identify and assess the restoration needs of priority springs in mountain blocks.
- Further explore the role of beaver in riparian and wetland management strategies, including encouraging states to apply models to identify where beaver populations would be most viable and supporting potential reintroduction projects in Great Basin National Park or other areas.



Photos courtesy of BLM Nevada

Tribal Partnerships

The Great Basin LCC encourages the sharing and integration of traditional knowledge and contemporary science, as appropriate, to further Great Basin conservation priorities and land stewardship. The Public Forum provided an overview of recent efforts conducted by the Great Basin LCC in partnership with regional tribes. This included hosting tribal climate adaptation trainings, building tribal capacity for climate change vulnerability assessments and supporting several traditional knowledge research projects. Visitors were asked what ideas they had for further collaboration between the Great Basin LCC and tribes in the Great Basin.

Feedback on Collaboration Between the Great Basin LCC and Tribes in the Great Basin:

- The Great Basin LCC could collaborate with tribes and the Online Nevada Encyclopedia to sensitively document traditional knowledge and make this information more accessible.
- Opportunities exist for collaboration with tribal partners on projects related to the recovery of Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Information Sharing

The Great Basin LCC aims to increase communication and understanding about science, management and cultural resources by making research, data and event information accessible to the broader conservation community. The Public Forum included an anonymous survey, which asked visitors about their information sharing preferences, habits and ideas for future webinar topics.

Key Highlights from the Information Sharing Survey

- Most respondents (90 percent) visit the Great Basin LCC website a few times a year; 10 percent visit a few times a month.
- People most frequently visit the website to find webinars and publications; 40 percent visit looking for latest news updates, event information and contact details.
- About 40 percent of respondents read all or almost all Great Basin LCC emails they receive; 60 percent read about half.

2017 Webinar Series Topic Suggestions

- Update on water resources in the Great Basin based on recent precipitation levels
- History of the Argenta Marsh along the Humboldt River
- How management of the Great Basin may be affected by the recent administration change
- Review of projects applying the sage-grouse conservation credit system
- Presentation of results from Sada and Lutz (2016) “Environmental Characteristics of Great Basin and Mojave Desert Spring Systems” report
- Update on the use of beavers to improve water storage and riparian conditions in small streams
- General interest in updates from Great Basin LCC funded research projects



Reflecting and Looking Ahead: Results from the Feedback Survey

The Public Forum concluded with a questionnaire that asked visitors to evaluate how the Great Basin LCC is doing and how we can improve our work. Most respondents felt the Great Basin LCC is fulfilling its mission, promoting a landscape-scale approach to conservation challenges, fostering coordination and collaboration around conservation goals, and enhancing information sharing. There was less agreement about whether the Great Basin LCC represents a diverse cross section of groups working on conservation issues in the region, whether the Great Basin LCC is a leader in the conservation community and if the partnership has the resources and ability to achieve what we set out to do.

Suggestions for Improving Reach and Impact:

- Seek opportunities to engage youth.
- Continue the webinar series to provide opportunities for information sharing without the cost and time of physically attending meetings.
- Increase coordination with state level organizations and resources.
- Focus on listening to the concerns of those affected by conservation policies.
- Expand focus from fuels related projects and integrate aquatic resource needs and issues to allow for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to conservation.
- Address the need to produce locally appropriate native seed for restoration projects.
- Work with organizations like the Western Regional Partnership and continue looking for ways to leverage resources to accomplish shared goals.

The input gathered through the 2017 Public Forum indicates several opportunities, lessons and recommendations for the Great Basin LCC to consider. The insights offered will help us continue to achieve our vision: Great Basin landscapes that sustain natural and cultural resources, now and in the future. Moving forward, the Great Basin LCC Steering Committee will use the collected feedback to set work priorities. We thank those who participated in the Public Forum and encourage the public to stay involved.

