



CHARTER

Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative
Steering Committee

Approved June 23, 2011

This Charter provides for mission, organization scope, steering committee composition and responsibilities, and other topics in order to frame the governance structure of the Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative (GPLCC). During the formative stages of the GPLCC, an Action Plan (GPLCC Action Plan 2009) was drafted that developed early governance structure as well as priority habitats, species, research questions, and suggested staffing and direction for the LCC. This Charter replaces the governance sections of the 2009 GPLCC Action Plan.

Mission

The mission of the Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative is to lead the development, facilitation and integration of science and management to ensure strategic natural resource conservation on the Great Plains.

GPLCC Scope

Operational: As framed by the operational goals for the Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) program, the operational scope of the GPLCC is to provide applied scientific and technical support for landscape-scale conservation in an adaptive management framework by supporting 1) prioritization and coordination of research, 2) biological planning, 3) conservation design, and 4) inventory and monitoring including evaluation of conservation program design and implementation.

Biological: The biological scope includes all terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and their constituent species found in the geographic scope of the LCC.

Conservation Programs: The GPLCC will work to provide relevant science to inform conservation activities prioritized by Steering Committee members and cooperators.

Geographic Scope: The geographic focus of the GPLCC is the geographic areas of the shortgrass (18) and mid-grass (19) bird conservation regions (BCRs) where they overlap the states of Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas.

Cultural: A cultural resource is an aspect of a cultural system that is valued or significantly representative of a culture, or that contains significant information about a culture. The GPLCC is sensitive to cultural resources in our region; our work may inform and/or be informed by conservation approaches associated with cultural resources. Our work is conducted for the people of the Great Plains and those who depend on products and environmental services found in and emanating from this region. Examples may include activities that address landscape level cultural resources, such as vernacular landscapes (e.g., the “dust bowl”) and ethnographic landscapes (e.g., tribal lands).

Performance Measures: The Department of Interior established numerous Performance Measures that help assess the effectiveness of its programs, including the Science Applications program under which LCCs fall. Since many of these Performance Measures are directly related

to expenditures of funds to address priority species and their habitats, it is essential that the funds expended by the GPLCC address these Performance Measures.

GPLCC Members and Cooperators

Members: The GPLCC partnership is represented by a Steering Committee that provides leadership and direction. Membership is open to any entity whose mission or legislative authority can contribute to the mission of the GPLCC within the identified scope listed above. All Steering Committee Member agencies and organizations are expected to commit time, energy and resources to executing an agreed upon collaborative programmatic plan of applied science and conservation in the region, and where appropriate, coordinate their otherwise independent actions for the benefit of the larger partnership. Member organizations shall appoint individuals to represent their organization on the Steering Committee.

Cooperators: A Cooperator is any person or entity that wishes to collaborate with the GPLCC to advance the partnership's goals and objectives. A person, organization or agency shall be a Cooperator by virtue of being identified in any project or proposal or being a party to any management agreement implemented or developed with the specific intent of advancing the goals, objectives, and conservation strategies of the GPLCC. Cooperators will be non-voting and are not expected to routinely participate in Steering Committee meetings but may participate at any time.

Steering Committee

Roles and Responsibilities: Recognizing that the commitment of Member agencies and organizations is voluntary and relative to their mission, authorities, and budgetary capabilities, all Steering Committee members are expected to participate regularly and fully in advancing the goals and objectives of the GPLCC. Further, all Steering Committee representatives are expected to represent their agency or organization at an administrative and policy level on matters pertaining to the goals of the GPLCC. Steering Committee Member representatives alone have the right to vote.

Officers: There shall be two officers, Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson will organize and conduct the business meetings of the Steering Committee. The Vice-Chairperson shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson. Officers will be elected annually, at the winter meeting, and serve for a term of two years. The Chairperson shall be elected in odd calendar years while the Vice-Chairperson shall be elected in even calendar years with vacancies filled at the next scheduled Steering Committee meeting or virtual meeting.

Adding New Members: New Steering Committee Members will be considered by the Steering Committee at any meeting or virtual meeting. To be considered, petitioning organizations must submit a written request to the Chairperson 60 days in advance of the meeting. The request from the agency or organization should: 1) document their interest in participating and their willingness and ability to further the GPLCC's mission and 2) identify the individual and alternate that would be representing the agency or organization. Acceptance of membership will be determined by the Steering Committee at the next scheduled meeting or virtual meeting.

Meetings: The Steering Committee will have at least two meetings and two virtual meetings (conference calls, webinars, etc) per year. Steering Committee Members are expected to be in attendance or represented by an alternate at all such meetings. Steering Committee Members are allowed excused absences from meetings or virtual meetings if advance notice is supplied to the Chairperson. Meetings of the Steering Committee shall be scheduled with 30 days notice and are open to Cooperators, GPLCC staff, invitees of Steering Committee, members of subcommittees or teams, and any other interested party. Virtual meetings of the Steering Committee shall be scheduled with 30 days notice and are open to Cooperators, GPLCC staff, invitees of Steering Committee members, members of subcommittees or working groups, and any other interested party. Additional meetings or virtual meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chairperson in consultation with the Steering Committee. Decisions made at virtual meetings shall have the force of a meeting as long as conditions of this Charter are met.

Attendance: If a Member misses two consecutive meetings without notice to the Steering Committee Chairman, a letter will be sent by the Chairperson to the organization inquiring as to their interest in remaining on the Steering Committee. In the event that a third consecutive meeting is missed without notice being given to the Chairperson, the organization will be placed on inactive status until such time as the organization recommits to participate by submitting a letter of request following the procedures outlined in Adding New Members.

Proxies and Alternates: Proxies in the form of allowing one Member to hold and exercise a vote for an absent member are not allowed. However, Members may be represented by an Alternate from the same agency or organization who may exercise all the privileges of voting, discussion, and participation in the proceedings to which all Members are entitled.

Quorum: There will be no official business conducted by the Steering Committee via a meeting or virtual meeting without attendance of at least a simple majority of Members and Members represented by Alternates.

Decision Making: The GPLCC Steering Committee will make every attempt to reach decisions by consensus, with consensus defined as views or opinions that are generally shared but may not be unanimous and there is no strong dissention among Steering Committee Members. In situations where consensus is not achieved and the topic is LCC operations or logistics, the Steering Committee may decide to vote. In situations where the topic is scientific, decisions will be made only by consensus. Organizations that have more than one member on the Steering Committee shall be entitled to one vote per organization. Members who declare or are shown to have a conflict of interest on a vote shall recuse themselves. A motion will pass by a simple majority vote of Committee Members present at the meeting, so long as a quorum is met.

Committees and Workgroups

The Steering Committee may call for and maintain standing or ad hoc subcommittees or teams at their discretion. New standing subcommittees or teams will be accommodated through amendments to this Charter and shall specify purpose, deliverables, method of appointment, and composition in meeting minutes. *Ad hoc* workgroups may be designated by the Steering Committee and do not require an amendment to the Charter. The Steering Committee will specify purpose, deliverables, method of appointment, and composition in meeting minutes. Each subcommittee and team will have a chairperson appointed by consensus of the participating members, unless one is appointed by the Steering Committee. Subcommittee and team chairpersons will carry out tasks and present reports of the group's activities and products as requested by Steering Committee.

Science Committee: The Science Committee is a standing committee composed of representatives from Steering Committee agencies and organizations appointed by the Steering Committee. Its membership includes and is chaired by the GPLCC Science Coordinator. It shall consist of 10 or more individuals with broad scientific/technical expertise and also maintain a representative mix of agencies and organizations on the Steering Committee. Further, the Science Committee should be composed of scientists familiar with applied science issues and conservation delivery activities common in the mid- and southern Great Plains. The Science Committee functions to analyze, synthesize, interpret and prioritize science issues within the GPLCC and present these to the Steering Committee. The Science Committee makes recommendations on science priorities, science activities and research funding to the GPLCC Steering Committee. The Science Committee also supports the Science Coordinator and shall be expected to engage in duties that may include but are not limited to 1) conducting GPLCC science needs assessments; 2) identifying and maintaining GPLCC science priorities; 3) developing and critiquing conservation plans, research priorities, and monitoring and inventory designs; 4) evaluating conservation delivery strategies and activities; 5) reviewing proposals for science funding initiatives; and 6) responding to requests from the GPLCC Steering Committee. It is anticipated that most work will be completed via e-mail, conference calls, and webinars.

Science Point of Contacts: The GPLCC Science Coordinator shall maintain a Science Point of Contacts (POC) list consisting of members appointed by the Steering Committee and/or recruited by the Science Coordinator. The Science POC list is led and managed by the GPLCC Science Coordinator with members functioning to provide their agencies'/organizations' views on important GPLCC science priorities, processes and products. As such, the Science POC does not function as a GPLCC working group but rather as a sounding board or simply a point of contact for the Science Coordinator relative to science perspectives within Steering Committee agencies and organizations. The group shall strive to represent broad taxonomic, scientific and technical disciplines. The Science POCs conduct their input primarily via e-mail, conference calls and webinars.

Amendments

These bylaws may be altered, amended or added to by a two-thirds vote of the Steering Committee at a meeting or virtual meeting provided a written notice of proposed changes is provided to all Members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.