



**Great Plains LCC Steering Committee Meeting Synopsis**  
**Fort Robinson State Park, Crawford, NE**  
**June 21-22, 2011**

Steering Committee Present: Bob Bettger, Doug Burger, Gary Davis, Warren Day, Jim Douglas, Wade Free, Matt Hogan, Brandon Houck, Dave Mehlman, Ross Melinchuk, Leon Redman, Michael Reynolds, Steve Riley, Keith Sexson, Benjamin Tuggle, Melanie Woolever

GPLCC Staff Present: James Broska, Mike Carter, Ty Guthrie, Dana Roth

Meeting Objectives

- To update participants on existing work.
- To finalize and adopt a mission statement.
- To finalize and adopt the charter – address outstanding items.
- To identify priority issues and/or research questions on which the LCC will work together.
- To develop a strategy/action plan to address the priority issues/questions – timeframe, needs, approaches/tools to accomplish, and how to utilize the partnerships to leverage resources.

Outcomes:

- The Steering Committee finalized the mission statement and adopted the charter.
- A list of priorities was developed.
- A landscape design approach for the GPLCC was suggested and is being fleshed out for consideration.
- A list of criteria and expectations were established for the next GPLCC coordinator.
- The Steering Committee was updated on some on-going activities.
- The issue of the Science Committee's size and configuration was finalized

Next Meetings:

- Landscape design webinar will be at the end of August/first week in September for broader group of potential agency users to review the vision/report.
- Steering Committee meeting will be January 24-26, in San Angelo, TX (exact location TBD).

**Chairman's Welcome (*Benjamin Tuggle, USFWS*)**

Following a historical talk on Fort Robinson, Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, USFWS Southwest Region, provided opening remarks and thanked the State of Nebraska for providing the meeting space. Dr. Tuggle highlighted the timely response by the Steering Committee in expediting project proposals when funding was given in the middle of the fiscal year. This, he said, sends a clear message to Washington about the GPLCC's ability to complete projects. Dr. Tuggle also talked about the relationship between the Playa Lakes Joint Venture and the Great Plains LCC and thanked Mike Carter for stepping in and assisting with standing up the LCC.

### **GPLCC Mission statement**

The Steering Committee was divided into two groups and each was asked to create a mission statement. The Steering Committee brainstormed that the statement was to be active, positive, timely, informative and inclusive of all involved parties. From the two group's suggested mission statements the Steering Committee created one single one, utilizing the best from each. The group agreed upon the following mission statement:

*"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 Charter**

The Steering Committee reviewed the outstanding charter issues, suggested language and agreed upon the final charter. The major topics of conversation centered around where and how to include cultural resources, the size and composition of the various committees, working groups and point of contacts list and the process for making decisions.

### **PLJV and LCC Roles**

The Steering Committee discussed the unique roles for both the GPLCC and PLJV and how they could help each other accomplish their goals. The PLJV was recognized for doing a great job of standing up the LCC, putting many of the tough issues behind us.

### **Priority Issues and Research Questions**

The Steering Committee discussed "priority issues" and "research questions" for the GPLCC and came to consensus on 11 issue categories to prioritize in the short-term. Criteria for short-term was described as having a sense of urgency, needing base-line study, having a good chance for success, being easily funded and having leverage opportunity. The Steering Committee then prioritized the issues based on the short-term criteria, clarified the issues, and identified potential project areas.

- *Energy:* The energy small group broke the issue into wind, oil and gas and new technologies. They agreed that the transmission lines should be taken as a lumped category for all energy generation technology.
- *Lesser Prairie-Chicken:* The Lesser Prairie-Chicken small group broke the issue into conservation, data and dispersal of species.
- *Data:* The data small group felt that the LCC needed full data assessment and wanted to explore a national fee database. They also discussed the USGS data portal.
- *Habitat:* The habitat group felt they had a catch-all list of topics which suggested to them an overarching vision for the GP LCC based on landscape level planning rather than piecemeal approaches

### **Landscape Design**

A new direction for the GPLCC that determines the overarching vision for the landscape first and then builds toward that vision by undertaking projects within the four prioritized issue categories was proposed. It was suggested that the group start the landscape design planning with the mapping of wind energy and potential transmission lines, corridors for Lesser Prairie-Chicken and four other previously identified species (in science priorities document). Then combine the maps, identify hurdles, determine biological outcomes, and design the landscape that the GPLCC would like to see. It was pointed out that the planning would involve education and public communication. He also mentioned that The Nature Conservancy, BLM and others have done similar landscape level

planning at this level. Although there was some hesitation and concerns, the group generally endorsed the idea.

### **Program Coordinator**

The group discussed the future coordinator selection process and criteria. Dr. Benjamin Tuggle thanked Mike Carter and the PLJV for the work that they've done thus far for the GPLCC. He stated that the next coordinator does not need to be a Fish and Wildlife employee; the coordinator could be housed and potentially selected out of one of the state agencies while FWS will pay their salary.

### **Coordinator Selection Process**

The coordinator position could be a 2-year contract as one possibility. If it is possible to house the coordinator in a partner's office there would be a cooperative agreement between the partner and FWS; the coordinator could be a partner employee not a FWS employee and will have to meet LCC performance measures.

### **Workgroups**

- *Data Management:* The purpose of the data management work group is to 1) complete a full data assessment of the data that currently exists and data that needs to be gathered; 2) evaluate the possibility of a national fee access database; and 3) discuss the suitability of the USGS data portal to the GP LCC.
- *Operational Plan:* The operational plan still needs to be drafted. It would include performance measures and how the LCC intends to operate to identify and achieve short- and long-term goals/vision.

### **GPLCC Updates**

- GPLCC Status and Progress Update (*Mike Carter, GPLCC Coordinator*)
- RFP Projects Funded in 2010 and 2011 (*James Broska, GPLCC Science Coordinator*)
- GIS Community Survey (*Ty Guthrie, GIS Analyst for GPLCC*)
- USGS Contributed Positions (*Dave Hamilton, USGS*)
- Climate Science Center (*Warren Day, USGS*)
- Science Priorities (*James Broska*)
- Science partnership Progress (*Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Nebraska and The Nature Conservancy*)