Welcome to the LCC Network Lookout...

We're pleased to share with you the LCC Network Lookout, our updated e-newsletter highlighting the latest stories from the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and partners.

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Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) are a network of 22 public-private partnerships across the continent and Pacific and Caribbean islands dedicated to establishing a common conservation vision to ensure the sustainability of land, water, wildlife and cultural resources, and developing shared science and management capacity to achieve that vision.

Learn more at lccnetwork.org
Updates from Across the LCC Network

Gulf Coast Vulnerability Assessment Team Receives FWS Transformational Science Award

On March 17, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe presented the core team that produced the Gulf Coast Vulnerability Assessment with the inaugural Sam D. Hamilton Award for Transformational Conservation Science.

The GCVA was an initiative of the Gulf Coast Prairie, Gulf Coastal Plains & Ozarks, South Atlantic and Peninsular Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) in collaborative coordination with more than 50 partners to evaluate the potential impacts of climate, sea level rise, and urbanization on four Gulf Coast ecosystems and 11 associated species.

Learn more

Caribbean LCC Work Included in Puerto Rico Governor's State of the Commonwealth Address

On February 29, the Governor of Puerto Rico, Alejandro García Padilla, gave his last State of the Commonwealth Address and included the results of a multi-agency and organization team under the Caribbean LCC. The Protected Areas Conservation Action Team is focused on providing information and guidance in support of protected areas systems in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

In December of last year, the team discovered that there were more lands protected in Puerto Rico than previously thought. The details of this work will be released shortly in partnership with the Puerto Rico Dept. of Natural and Environmental Resources.

Read the Governor's remarks in Spanish

Follow the Caribbean LCC on Twitter @Caribbean_LCC and on facebook.

Update on Addressing the National Academy of Sciences' Recommendations
The LCC Network continues to move forward in developing an action plan to address the recommendations in the National Academy of Sciences Review of the LCCs. In the coming months, the Network will seek input from partners and LCC steering committee members about improving performance measures, enhancing the landscape conservation design process, and advancing collaborative conservation across LCCs and the LCC Network. Thank you in advance for your engagement as we collectively move forward on our trajectory of continual improvement.

Follow the LCC Network on Twitter @LandscapeCC and on facebook/NationalLCCNetwork. #WeLoveLandscapes

The Latest in Landscape Conservation Design

Coarse, Fine & Connected: The Gulf Coast Prairie LCC Approach to Landscape Conservation Design

Landscape Conservation Design is a bridge between biological planning and conservation delivery because it helps people and organizations agree on priorities and focus on achieving results in a way that maximizes return on investment.

The approach of the Gulf Coast Prairie LCC to its Landscape Conservation Design is two-pronged -- coarse filter and fine filter. The coarse filter design will be a representation of where broadly defined habitats are most aggregated or disaggregated, measured as a percentage of habitat within catchments (i.e. subwatershed areas of variable size). This is also another way of measuring habitat connectivity. The fine filter design uses focal species to identify conservation priorities.

Learn more about the Gulf Coast Prairie LCC's process

How to Bake a Conservation Blueprint Cake

The Gulf Coastal Plains & Ozarks LCC (GCPO) shares a slice of its "Cake Analogy" on how the LCC is developing its Conservation Blueprint to provide a flexible framework for designing sustainable landscapes. The LCC's Integrated Science Agenda is the "recipe" and the Ecological Assessments are the "ingredients" that represent the LCC's current knowledge base.

Since February, the GCPO LCC has hosted seven in-
person workshops to garner feedback on the draft Blueprint. The LCC is currently taking online comments on draft habitat focal systems.

Read more about the GCPO Conservation Blueprint

Super-computing the Appalachian Mountains and Western River Basins

Over the last couple years, the Appalachian LCC has supported the development of its science-based, regional-scale Landscape Conservation Design or "Conservation Blueprint." The Appalachian Blueprint is unique in the power of the modeling efforts that generated the initial Phase I products.

A research team at Clemson University used super-computing technology to identify connected and focal landscapes, critical corridors, and key areas that most likely offer resiliency and represent ecologically significant habitats for species and natural resources.

Learn more about the Appalachian Blueprint

Conserving the Great Lakes' Coastal Wetlands

There are more miles of coastline along the five Great Lakes than along either the Pacific Coast, the Gulf Coast, or the Atlantic Coast - so restoring and enhancing these wetlands is no small feat.

The Upper Midwest & Great Lakes LCC is bringing together partners to determine what's next for coastal wetlands conservation from Saginaw Bay of Lake Huron to Western Lake Erie.

Read the full story

Columbia Coast Blueprint Website

The North Pacific LCC recently launched a new website for its multi-partner Landscape Conservation Design project for the Lower Columbia River and outer coast of Oregon and Washington. The project, titled Columbia Coast Blueprint, will seek to achieve a network of healthy, connected, ecosystems and working landscapes capable of providing a full suite of ecosystem services that can absorb, respond, and adapt to climatic changes and other key stressors through the use of collaborative, science-based strategies.
Exciting New Tools & Resources

In a Warming World, Can Alaska & Canada’s Scientists See the Forest for the Trees?

In the vast forests of Alaska and northwest Canada, on-the-ground research is a precious commodity. Scientists are trying to systematically measure change in a region that is famously hard to measure. Their proposed Northwest Boreal LCC Coordinated Monitoring System would establish a common protocol to track five to 10 vital environmental indicators over time. This would make possible a broader understanding of change and help individual agencies manage public lands.

Read the four-part article about Northwest Boreal landscape conservation

Science in the Stream & More from the North Atlantic LCC

Science in the Stream
A new Fish Habitat Decision Support tool removes some of the guesswork from aquatic restoration in the Northeast by allowing users to establish and rank conservation priorities, predict how species like brook trout will fare under various management scenarios, and evaluate long-term benefits of restoration projects in the context of climate change. The tool was developed by Downstream Strategies with support from the North Atlantic LCC, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other partners. Learn more

Vernal Pool Data Cooperative
Funded by a Priority Science Grant from the North Atlantic LCC, the Vernal Pool Data Cooperative (VPDC) project was established to help advance vernal pool conservation in the North Atlantic region by improving knowledge of vernal pool distribution. The approach: pool information. The online database contains nearly 60,000 vernal pool locations in eight states and two Canadian provinces. Learn more

What Lies Beneath Northeast Lakes and Ponds
The Nature Conservancy released the Northeast Lakes and Ponds Classification System developed with guidance from a committee of experts from 10 states and the Environmental Protection Agency and supported by the North Atlantic LCC. The North Atlantic LCC will host a webinar on the Northeast Lakes and Ponds Classification System on May 19. Learn more
Science Delivery Workshop at NEAFWA with the Appalachian LCC
At the recent Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies conference, the North Atlantic and Appalachian LCCs partnered to host a hands-on workshop designed to introduce biological and GIS staff from state agencies to new information and tools from the North Atlantic and Appalachian LCCs. Attended by close to 30 partners, the goal of the workshop was to share the best available regional science with those who can use it to address a range of large-scale conservation priorities.  View the workshop agenda

How Does Your Desert Flow

To help sustain the ecosystems of streams and rivers in arid environments, managers need to know how the quantity, quality, and timing of water flows impact the habitats and species they manage.

To help managers locate information about how much water is needed to maintain riparian and aquatic species, the Desert LCC funded the Desert Flows Database, which compiles more than 400 peer-reviewed articles, reports, and book chapters from across the watersheds that touch the Sonoran, Chihuahua, and Mojave Deserts. There are also 83 studies in the database that include human aspects and values for water flows.

A 45-minute webinar on how to use the database is available via the Desert LCC YouTube channel.

Check out the Desert Flows Database
Follow the Desert LCC on facebook/desertlcc.

Western Alaskan Forecast Calls for Scattered Berries and Partially Visible Moose

When decision makers in western Alaska discuss their priority concerns of how climate changes will impact key species and resources, they frequently mention moose, caribou, waterbirds, vegetation, fire, and/or permafrost. So it wasn't surprising when the Steering Committee of the Western Alaska LCC decided to fund projects addressing each of these topics as part of the LCC's FY16 and FY17 program on Terrestrial Systems.

Three of the seven projects the LCC selected for funding in FY16 address climate change impacts on moose or caribou habitats. The LCC is also funding work to get LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) data for a large area of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and supporting the development of a Berry Outlook tool - a modeling and monitoring framework for tracking and forecasting changes in berries in the
New Study Explores Consequences of Projected Climate Changes in Temperature and Rainfall for Puerto Rico

A Caribbean LCC (CLCC) research team published the results of a study in the Journal of Applied Meteorology and Climatology that explores the implications of various climate change projections and presents maps of potential future temperature and rainfall scenarios for Puerto Rico that indicate substantial changes.

The study results show temperatures increasing from 4.6 °C to 9 °C (8 °F to 16 °F), and rainfall decreasing up to 50% by the end of the century. Consequences of the temperature rise could include increasing energy demands for cooling, increasing likelihood of drought and shifts in ecological life zones.

View and download the full publication, data, maps, and spatial layers using the CLCC Interactive Map

Read the press release

Climate Change Vulnerability in the Appalachians

Funded through an Appalachian LCC grant, climate change vulnerability assessments for 41 species and three habitats in the Appalachians are now available.

In addition, principal investigators from NatureServe compiled the results of 700 species assessments previously completed by other researchers as well as assessments on several habitats.

View the assessments

2015 Annual Reports from the LCCs

The South Atlantic LCC released its 2015 Annual Report highlighting the major
accomplishments of the past year, including Blueprint 2.0, the Simple Viewer, the State of the South Atlantic, and many exciting success stories where members of the cooperative used the Blueprint to help bring new conservation dollars to the region.

View the South Atlantic LCC's Report

Follow the South Atlantic LCC on facebook.

In 2015, the North Atlantic LCC redoubled its efforts to deliver science to decision makers. The North Atlantic LCC's newly released annual report highlights how this information is being used to address conservation needs across the region in the words of partners. Last year, the LCC reached an exciting stage in its evolution, transitioning from an incubator for applied science motivated by landscape-level conservation challenges, to a partner network for delivering the resulting information and tools to the people who are addressing these challenges on the ground.

View the North Atlantic LCC's Report

Meetings & Conferences

April Meeting of the LCC Council

The LCC Council will hold its next meeting on April 25-26 in Austin, TX. The LCC Network thanks the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and LCC Council member Jeff Raasch for their hospitality.

Additional meeting details will be made available on the LCC Council webpage.

Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation: All Lands, All Hands

The motto "all lands, all hands" rang true at this year's Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation conference held in Salt Lake City, UT. Organized by the Great Basin LCC and several other groups, the conference brought together more than 500 managers, scientists, academics, private land owners, and others to address how to sustain healthy sagebrush ecosystems across geographic and political boundaries.

Read more

Follow the Great Basin LCC on facebook/GreatBasinLandscapeConservationCooperative.
Appalachian LCC
The Appalachian LCC added two new members to the team, Ginny Kreitler and Mary Davis, to engage local partners and highlight opportunities for collaborative conservation actions across the Tennessee River Basin and in the Western Alleghany forest area and the Susquehanna River watershed.

Arctic LCC
We wish David Payer, Arctic LCC Science Coordinator and Acting Coordinator, all the best as he moves into his new role with the National Park Service. Josh Bradley, Data Manager for the Arctic LCC, is stepping up to serve as Acting Science Coordinator and Nathan Hawkaluk will serve as the Acting Arctic LCC Coordinator through May.

Caribbean LCC
We thank Bill Gould of the U.S. Forest Service for his leadership as the Caribbean LCC Coordinator. The Caribbean LCC Steering Committee has evolved to the point that there is a need for a full time coordinator so recruitment is underway. Bill will continue to work as the Director of the USDA Caribbean Climate Hub. Brent Murry will serve as the Interim LCC Coordinator.

Northwest Boreal LCC
The Northwest Boreal LCC welcomed Ben Matheson as its new GIS and Science Communications Specialist to bring the region's science to life. Aimee Rockhill is the Acting Science Coordinator for the Northwest Boreal LCC.

LCC Network
The LCC Network thanks Kathryn Nuessly for spending time assisting the LCC Network office with developing important communications materials during her two-month detail. Laurel Hill will join the Network office in late April for a four-month detail and will focus on the collaborative conservation goal of the LCC Network Strategic Plan and recommendations from the recent National Academy of Sciences review of LCCs.

Upcoming Events & Webinars

- 4/13-4/15 Caribbean & South Atlantic LCCs: Southeast & Caribbean Climate Community of Practice Workshop; Tybee Island, GA
- 4/14 Great Northern LCC Webinar: Sharing the Balance of Stewardship -- the Blackfoot Drought Response Plan 1pm (MDT)
- 4/20 Alaska LCCs Webinar: Diagnosing the Drivers of Rain on Snow Events in Alaska Using Dynamical Downscaling Noon-1pm (AKDT)
- 4/21 South Atlantic LCC Third Thursday Web Forum: Climate-resilient Biodiversity Hotspots 11am-Noon (EDT)
● 4/21 Desert LCC Webinar in Spanish: Navegando la plataforma DataBasin - Un tour guiado 12:30-1:30pm (PDT)

● 5/3-5/5: Climate Change Science and Communication in the Pacific West; The General's Residence, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA

Check out more events on lccnetwork.org/events

Please send your LCC news and events to Laura MacLean, LCC Network Communications Manager, at laura_maclean@fws.gov