



Madrean Watersheds Landscape Conservation Design

Progress Update #1
June 2017

Background

The Madrean Watersheds area was selected as one of three Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) Landscape Conservation Design pilot areas in early 2016. Landscape Conservation Design (LCD) is a process and a guide to action that identifies, develops and strengthens large-scale collaborative relationships. It produces information and tools needed by partners to meet common conservation goals by identifying important social values, resources, and stressors across a geography that transcends jurisdictional boundaries. The process leverages existing resource management efforts to identify potential actions and target locations where partners can apply their management tools to meet common conservation objectives. The design includes a map of current ecosystem conditions, priority locations for enhanced management, restoration, or conservation, and potential adaptation strategies and actions that can be applied in priority ecosystems identified by managers and stakeholders.

The Madrean Watersheds area covers approximately 18 million hectares across four states in the U.S. and Mexico (see map at https://desertlcc.org/geographical_area/madrean-watersheds). This unique and diverse area contains some of Mexico's last standing remnants of temperate old growth forests, the best-preserved cienegas in any North American grassland, one of the largest black tail prairie dog colony complexes found anywhere, the few remaining herds of Mexican pronghorn, and reintroduced Mexican wolves on both sides of the border. At the heart of this geography, the San Pedro River Watershed is one of the most significant intact major riparian corridors in the Desert LCC, and the last major undammed river in the southwestern US.

Mission

The following mission statement was developed with initial input from partners at the September 2016 Tucson workshop, and later completed by the Coordinating Team (see below).

The Transboundary Madrean Watersheds Initiative is a large landscape, international effort to maintain and enhance the interconnected system of mountains, grasslands, deserts and

WHAT MANAGERS NEED

In July 2016, a group of land managers in the Madrean region gathered for a discussion on management challenges and opportunities, and their recommendations for how to make the LCD process most useful to their own work. Here is what they said they need:

- ✓ Efficient ways to assess current management actions
- ✓ Opportunities for shared learning with other managers and partners
- ✓ A way to raise the national profile of the Madrean/Sky Island region
- ✓ A toolbox of adaptation strategies
- ✓ On the ground projects and outcomes
- ✓ An efficient way to prioritize management actions and locations for maximum impact

waters that supports species diversity, promotes healthy watersheds, and maintains the overall ecosystem integrity that enriches the lives of human communities.

Who's involved

A wide array of partners have participated in the effort so far. Many of these gathered in Tucson last year, including representatives from state and federal agencies, universities, and NGOs.

The Coordinating Team provides guidance and information to develop the LCD. These key partners (see <http://www.desertlcc.org/group/madrealn-watersheds-coordinating-team>) conduct outreach and participate in regular meetings to ensure the Landscape Conservation Design meets on-the-ground management needs.

Recent accomplishments and activities

August 2015: More than 90 partners from across the Desert LCC gathered for an LCD workshop in Tucson, Arizona. A large breakout group discussion focused on Madrealn key resources, values and stressors.

VISION STATEMENT

The following vision statement was developed with input from participants at the September 2016 workshop, and later finalized by the Madrealn Coordinating Team.

Biodiversity - Transboundary Madrealn watersheds are a haven for the unique diversity of native and endemic species.

Connectivity - Enhanced linkages connect the diverse life zones of Sky Island ecosystems, from valley bottoms to mountain tops, from southern Sonora to the Gila River in Arizona, enabling persistence of migratory wildlife and allowing for the possible future shift of species and ecosystems in a changing climate.

Socio-Ecological Services - Healthy watersheds, functioning ecosystems and cultural resources deliver highly valued benefits to human communities.

May 2016: A bi-lingual kick-off webinar introduced Madrealn area partners to the LCD process and key aspects of the pilot area geography (see <https://desertlcc.org/resource/landscape-conservation-design-madrealn-watersheds-pilot-area-landscape>)

July 2016: Land managers in the Madrealn area gathered for a focus group to discuss key management challenges and opportunities, and how to make the LCD process most applicable to managers' on-the-ground work (see side bar page 1).

September 2016: Madrealn LCD workshop in Tucson, Arizona. This two-day workshop was attended by 93 participants from 48 different agencies and organizations (view workshop summary at <https://desertlcc.org/resource/madrealn-watersheds-conservation-design-workshop-report-september-21-22-2016>). The workshop produced landscape goals and objectives for the pilot area, a vision statement, key focal resources, an assessment of high-impact pressures and recommended actions focused

on conservation of springs, streams, and grasslands.

Summer/Fall 2016: Partners shared information from existing plans and management efforts. These were catalogued and are being uploaded to ScienceBase for easy access and sharing.

Spring 2017: Partners began a list of possible indicators for the Madrean LCD. When complete, this list will include indicators for different ecosystems as well as indicators that represent landscape connectivity and biodiversity. This initial list will continue to be developed by the Coordinating Team and partners.

Upcoming activities

Stakeholder Forum: A **Stakeholder Forum is being developed** to represent the many diverse stakeholders and interests in the area. Forum members will receive periodic briefings on progress and provide targeted feedback and input for the Landscape Conservation Design. If you are interested in joining the Stakeholder Forum, please sign up (<https://desertlcc.org/issue/landscape-conservation-planning-and-design>).

Indicators: The Coordinating Team will work with technical and resource experts to **select key ecosystem indicators** that can be used to assess current ecosystem conditions and provide new information on where and how best to implement conservation actions and climate adaptation strategies. The Stakeholder Forum will be invited to help rank indicators for inclusion in the LCD analysis. Through the fall and winter of 2017, the Coordinating Team will also develop a process to select indicators that also represent social and economic values.

Outreach and engagement: **Outreach will continue** with key groups identified by the Coordinating Team. If your group would like to receive a presentation or host a discussion, please contact Colleen Whitaker (colleen@swdresources.com).