



SOUTH ATLANTIC  
LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE



LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION  
COOPERATIVES

2014

# South Atlantic LCC

## Annual Report



Allie Stewart, U.S. FWS



The South Atlantic LCC's 2014 Annual Report—this year of progress and accomplishments—is dedicated to South Atlantic LCC Coordinator, Ken McDermond. Though 2014 was his last year as Coordinator, Ken's vision will continue to guide this Cooperative into the future. Striving to live up to his legacy as a conservation leader can only inspire us to greatness as a community.



# The South Atlantic LCC

## Our Identity

A partnership of federal, state, nonprofit, and private organizations

## Our Vision

A landscape capable of sustaining the nation's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations

## Our Mission

Creating a shared Blueprint for landscape conservation actions that sustain natural and cultural resources

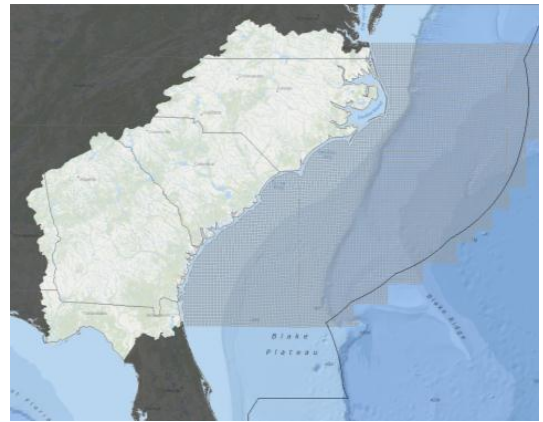
## The Conservation Blueprint

The South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) is all about **the Blueprint**. In conservation, we so often react to negative pressures on natural and cultural resources. Instead, your Cooperative is a place to strive toward positive goals—to decide what we're for, as a community.

We're for **clean water** and swimmable streams. We're for intact **cultural landscapes** surrounding historic places. We're for healthy **fish and wildlife** populations. We're for resilient **coastal communities**. We're for **smart growth** and greenways, **working forests** and farms.

The Blueprint is a **cross-boundary** plan to make this vision a reality. It uses **ecological indicators** to develop **spatially explicit** priorities, identifying where to work and what **conservation actions** to undertake. The Blueprint prepares for future changes like **urbanization** and **sea-level rise** using the best available models.

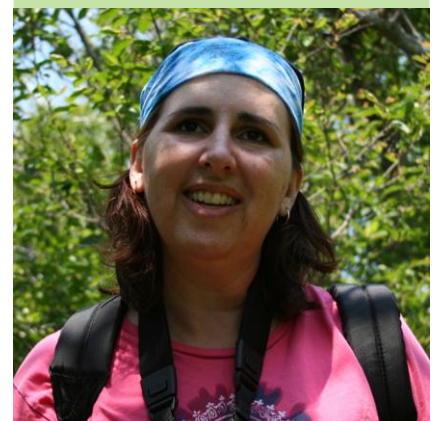
Explore the following pages to see the progress made this year in designing, refining, and implementing the Blueprint.



"The SALCC and LCC Network provide the forum to engage with peers across agency, state and traditional management unit boundaries to move forward with landscape level conservation that will address continued pressures on and emerging threats to cultural and natural resources. I see the SALCC filling a critical coordination role to leverage existing work and develop new science based projects and communication efforts that support landscape level conservation."

**Beth Stys, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

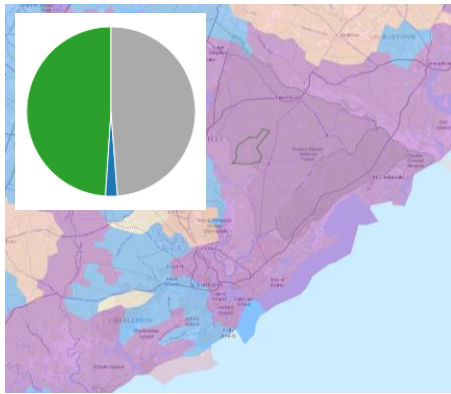
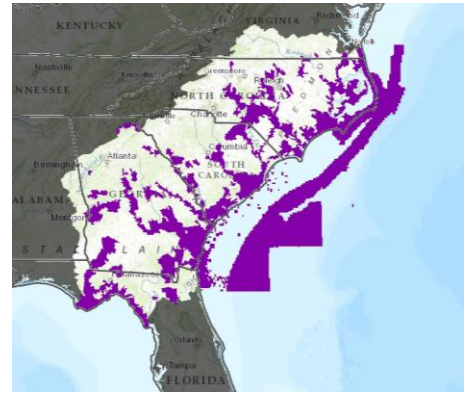
**Steering Committee Chair**



# Developing the Blueprint

## *Blueprint 1.0 Finalized*

Based on input from more than 300 people from 83 organizations, expert-driven Blueprint 1.0 was released this year. Users can view the workshop justifications explaining the importance of each priority area, as well as recommended conservation actions and overlapping partner plans.



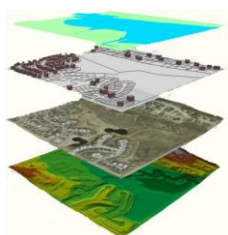
## *Simple Blueprint Viewer Released*

Blueprint 1.0 was first accessible on the Conservation Planning Atlas for advanced users who want to overlay additional datasets. A [new simple viewer](#) makes it easier to filter the Blueprint and explore areas of interest. This web interface provides information on partnership opportunities, land cover projections, and conservation status.

# Refining the Blueprint

## *Indicator Testing and Revision Complete*

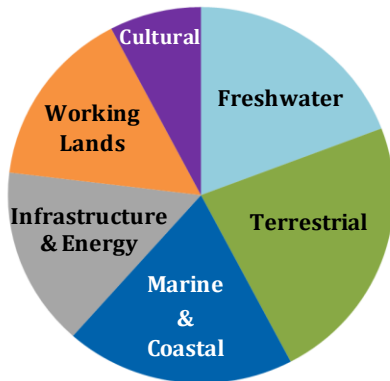
All natural and cultural ecosystem indicators were rigorously tested according to ecological and practical criteria. More than 200 people from at least 50 organizations were involved in selecting, testing, revising, and providing data. Only indicators that could be modeled with existing data and accurately reflected other components of the ecosystem made the cut. New indicators were added to replace any that failed testing. GIS layers for all indicators are available on the [Conservation Planning Atlas](#). Data-driven Blueprint 2.0 will rely primarily on this final set of indicators.



## *Funding New Science*

The South Atlantic LCC funded two new science projects this year. One, a collaboration across all Natural Heritage Programs in the region, improves the Blueprint's coverage of rare and threatened species. Another Duke project more explicitly links conservation actions to the ecological indicators to better measure the tangible impact of conservation efforts.

# Implementing the Blueprint



## *Working with Users*

The User Team consists of 40 conservation practitioners across the geography committed to using the Blueprint. Interviewing 35 members face-to-face provided insights about how to focus future efforts to improve the Blueprint.

## *Building Success Stories*

Individuals from state, non-profit, and federal agencies have already begun using the Blueprint to inform conservation decisions—for topics ranging from public lands planning, to local open space land acquisition, to conserving the military mission footprint. The Steering Committee intends the Blueprint to become a "gold standard" for conservation investment, and it's already headed in the right direction!

## *Spreading the Word*

Generating awareness of the Blueprint and how to use it is an integral part of implementation. Select presentations given this year by South Atlantic staff include:

- DOI National Climate & Energy Task Force
- Conference on Ecological & Ecosystem Restoration
- SE Regional Partnership for Planning & Sustainability
- SC Heritage Trust Advisory Board
- National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation
- Cape Fear Arch
- U.S. FWS Ecological Services - Asheville

South Atlantic staff also held small-group trainings with other organizations, including the South Carolina and Georgia Departments of Natural Resources and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



Gary Peebles, U.S. FWS

### **Mark Cantrell, U.S. FWS**

#### **Fish and Wildlife Biologist**

Mark typically focuses his fish passage and hydrologic barrier removal efforts in pristine watersheds. But, the convergence of three different landscape-scale plans—the Conservation Blueprint, a U.S. FWS Fisheries strategic watershed plan, and an American Rivers dam removal prioritization tool—recently steered him to less pristine Piedmont basins like parts of the Cape Fear and Yadkin-Pee Dee, where restoration opportunities abound for migratory fishes.





# Creating a Community

## *Cultivating a Conservation Forum*

As part of a commitment to transparency and cultivating an active community of practice, your Cooperative has maintained a monthly online newsletter, Third Thursday web forum, and Triangle Climate and Landscape Researchers' Brown Bag lunch seminar. The NC State Climate Office, the South Atlantic LCC, the Southeast Climate Science Center, and the Southeast Regional Climate Hub now rotate hosting the Brown Bag to recruit more diverse speakers and reach broader audiences.



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## Part of a Broader Network

### *Integrating with the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS)*

The South Atlantic LCC is coordinating with neighboring LCCs to create an integrated set of conservation priorities across the Southeast region by Fall 2016. An update was presented to state directors with the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies this year. The next version of the Blueprint will soon take the first step toward the SECAS Blueprint by integrating with Peninsular Florida LCC's spatial priorities.



Mr. TinDC/Flickr

*Setting a course  
for a sustainable  
landscape.*

## Steering Committee



## Partnership Committee



## Cultural Committee



## South Atlantic LCC 2014 Annual Report

South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative

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