STRATEGIC PLAN

Catalyzing collaborative conservation into the 2020s
Identity Statement

We are a community, composed of conservation agencies, organizations, and individuals with unique purposes, missions, and mandates, that aligns our actions around shared goals and objectives for ecological challenges that transcend boundaries and jurisdictions in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes geography.

We are dedicated to a collaborative approach that facilitates conservation for sustainable and resilient ecological functions and ecosystem services.

We use a Landscape Conservation process that

- identifies and pursues goals for shared natural resource priorities;
- places past, current, and future conservation actions into broader context via landscape conservation design;
- collectively leverages capacities and resources to make greater impact towards our shared goals and objectives;
- uses evidence- and science-based information to guide our actions; and
- refines our work and strategies by evaluating the outcomes of our collective actions.
We align our actions around **shared goals and objectives** for ecological challenges.
We add value
to solving complex, geographically broad conservation problems in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes region. Our leverage and promise reside in our role as a credible convener that catalyzes a diverse conservation community for identification and pursuit of shared outcomes and goals. By aligning around our shared interests, we leverage our collective capacity, talented and skilled people, and financial resources for more effective conservation. By attracting thought leadership and new expertise we enable creative solutions to conservation problems and shift the implementation paradigm towards collective impact. We are leaders in improving governance and management and build new partnerships to advance our strategies. Through Blue Accounting and other tools, information and data are collated to inform us of our progress and allows for evaluating and managing change.

The Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) geography, part of the broader LCC Network. For more information on the LCC Network and its 22 LCCs, visit www.LCCNetwork.org
We add value to solving complex, geographically broad conservation problems in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes region.
Conservation Strategy

Our conservation approach includes

the identification of challenges to the ecological systems across our community. For those challenges, we use evidence-based outcomes, planning, and landscape design to establish priorities and inform conservation strategy development. To achieve our goals, we leverage our resources and promote actions with the greatest return on investment. We apply the knowledge and information gained from new research and monitoring to adaptively manage in changing and complex ecological and social systems.

The UMGL LCC is dedicated to

meeting complex conservation challenges in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes region. Our landscape conservation approach requires:

- collective impact via strong collaboration by a diverse group of conservation organizations,
- comprehensive internal and external communications, and
- information management and dissemination via Great Lakes Blue Accounting and Inform,
Identify System Challenges

Establish Goals, Plan, & Design

Conservation Strategy Development

Implementation

Evaluation & Learning

Monitoring & Research

Collaboration

Communications

Information Management (Great Lakes Inform)
Operational Strategy

Purpose

This document serves as the guiding document for the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes LCC for the next five years.

Decision Context for Objectives ¹

• What shared natural resource conservation challenges require a collaborative conservation approach?
• What strategies will attain our goals?
• How do we work together to more efficiently and effectively pursue landscapes that sustain natural resources and ecosystem services at desired levels?

¹ Decision Context – addressing these questions provide the foundation for the development of objectives. These questions represent the decisions that are being made and why.

² Strategic Objective – this is the broadest objectives class and is fundamental to the organization. While strategic objectives are fundamental and drive decisions, attaining them is also uncontrollable (i.e., other influences can benefit, or counter progress towards the objective).

³ Ends Objectives – these are fundamental objectives that are controllable and measurable and represent the underlying qualities intended to be enhanced or created.

⁴ Means Objectives – these are the ways of bringing about and pursuing the ends objectives.
Strategic Objective 2

Maximize the number of shared natural resource priorities sustained at desired levels across landscapes in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes region.

We have chosen 4 focal landscape systems and associated challenges, including:

- **aquatic landscapes** with an emphasis on aquatic connectivity between the Great Lakes and their tributaries
- **coastal landscapes** with an emphasis on coastal wetlands
- **forest landscapes** with an emphasis on natural resource based services provided by northern forests, and
- **urban landscapes** with an emphasis on pollinators and monarch butterfly.

We have also focused on State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs). These plans can inform regional fish and wildlife priorities within the focal landscapes, identify additional regional conservation challenges (current emphasis on large grassland complexes, pollinators, and freshwater mussels), and are an important implementation tool for stepping down regional LCC-based products across state boundaries. Working with these and other existing conservation plans are an important part of the process of identifying shared conservation priorities.
Within focal landscapes, identify current and emerging natural resource challenges that transcend political and jurisdictional boundaries. Identify specific priority resources (i.e., conservation targets) impacted by the natural resource challenge and establish shared goals. Identify, organize, and combine scientific- and evidence-based information to articulate:

A. what factors are limiting conservation targets’ ability to reach their goals,
B. where conservation actions would be beneficial,
C. what actions are necessary,
D. how much is needed,
E. what are the implementation costs, and
F. what are the risks to success caused from projected future impacts of landscape and environmental changes.

Fill knowledge and data gaps when they limit our ability to reduce uncertainty and make decisions.

Develop conservation strategies to pursue shared goals for conservation targets. This may include, but should not be limited to development of habitat conservation strategies, best management practices, and sustainable financing plans.

LCC participants, individually or through partnerships, implement and voluntarily take action based on the conservation strategies.

Establish performance metrics and devise process for accounting towards goals.

Progresses towards goals are monitored and evaluated informing adjustments in goals, strategies, actions, and science needs.
Means Objectives for Ends Objective 2

- Focal landscape workgroups and/or collaboratives are guided by steering committee approved charters that describe the landscape issues, vision, mission, workgroup/collaborative purpose, structure and governance, relationship to other related groups, operating principles, and staffing capacity.

- The development of work groups, collaboratives, or teams include representation and perspectives from across the conservation community.

- Communication strategies are developed and implemented to inform participants of past and current activities to maintain collaboration and attract new participants.

- Information, such as the statement of the challenge and context, data, maps, decision support tools, goals and progress, for each natural resource challenge is managed and made available to active participants.

Process Objectives

Companion work plans are being developed with the input from each focus area/landscape work group/collaborative. These work plans identify how each group will pursue the means objectives annually and over time.

Operational Procedures

The composition, responsibilities, procedures and relationship between the steering committee, the work groups/collaboratives, and LCC staff is described in the Upper Midwest & Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative Operational Procedures document.
Steering Committee Member Organizations

Federal Agencies
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Environmental Protection Agency
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Park Service
United States Fish and Wildlife Service – Regions 3 and 5
United States Forest Service
United States Geological Survey
United States Geological Survey Northeast Climate Science Center

State and Provincial Agencies
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Non-governmental Organizations
Ducks Unlimited
The Nature Conservancy

Partnerships
Chicago Wilderness
Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership
Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture

Commissions, Councils, and Foundations
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Great Lakes Commission
Great Lakes Fishery Commission
Intertribal Agriculture Council
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Recommended Citation

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For More Information go to: www.GreatLakesLCC.org
To contact LCC staff see directory at: https://greatlakeslcc.org/staff