



LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION  
COOPERATIVES

THE UPPER MIDWEST AND GREAT LAKES LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE'S

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Catalyzing  
collaborative  
conservation  
into the 2020s



# Identity Statement

2-3

## We are a **community**,

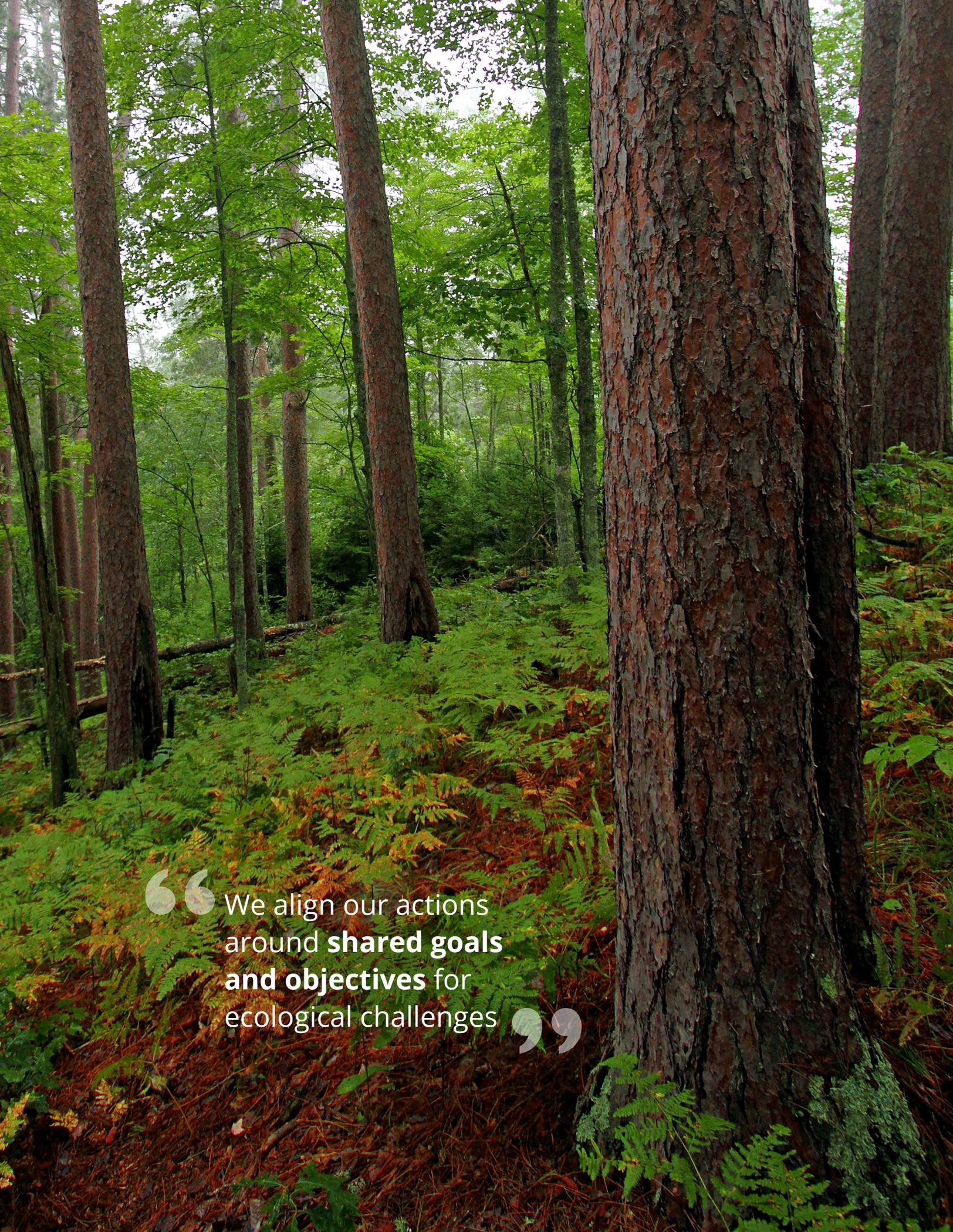
composed of conservation agencies, organizations, and individuals with unique purposes, missions, and mandates, that aligns our actions around shared goals and objectives for ecological challenges that transcend boundaries and jurisdictions in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes geography.

## 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.

A photograph of a forest with tall trees and a dense fern understory. The trees are tall and thin, with a thick layer of green ferns covering the ground. The lighting is soft, suggesting a misty or overcast day. The text is overlaid on the lower left portion of the image.

“ We align our actions  
around **shared goals**  
and **objectives** for  
ecological challenges ”



# Value Proposition

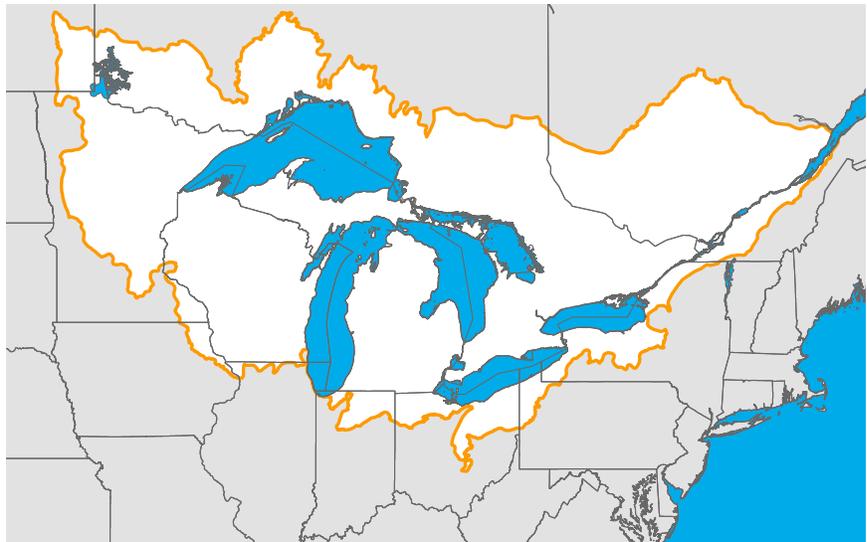
4-5

UMGL LCC STRATEGIC PLAN

## 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](http://www.LCCNetwork.org)



“ We add value to **solving complex, geographically broad conservation problems** in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes region. ”





# Conservation Strategy

6-7

UMGL LCC STRATEGIC PLAN

## 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.

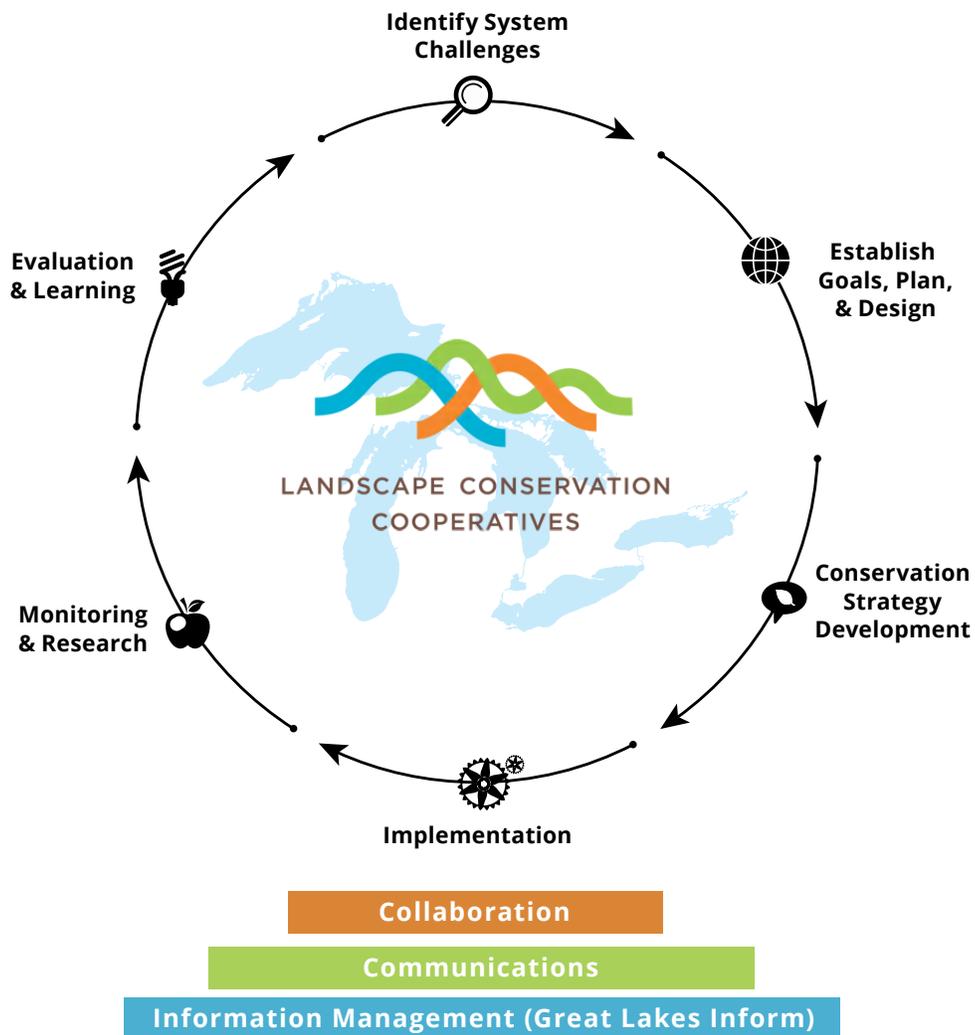
## The **UMGL LCC** is dedicated to

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,



[LEFT] Monarch © Michael Jeffords; [RIGHT] Fisheries biologists Mark Luehring and Josh Schloesser with a Lake Sturgeon ©USFWS Midwest





# 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<sup>1</sup>

- 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?

---

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

<sup>2</sup> **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).

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

<sup>4</sup> **Means Objectives** – these are the ways of bringing about and pursuing the ends objectives.



Swale at Illinois Beach State Park, IL © Christopher Benda

## Strategic Objective <sup>2</sup>

**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.



-  Identify System Challenges
  -  Establish Goals, Plan, & Design
  -  Conservation Strategy Development
  -  Implementation
  -  Monitoring & Research
  -  Evaluation & Learning
- 
-  Collaboration
  -  Communications
  -  Information Management (Great Lakes Inform)

## Ends Objectives<sup>3</sup>

1. Devise and implement conservation strategies that pursue shared goals for natural resource priorities.
2. Create and maintain a high-functioning organizational culture.

## Means Objectives<sup>4</sup> for Ends Objective 1

-  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.



Pine Marten © USFWS; Gray Treefrog and Wood Ducks © Michael Jeffords and Susan Post

## Means Objectives<sup>4</sup> 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

UMGL LCC. 2016. The Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative's Strategic Plan. (<https://greatlakeslcc.org/resource/upper-midwest-and-great-lakes-lcc-strategic-plan>)

## Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the Strategic Planning Subcommittee for their diligence and commitment to receiving and representing the ideas of the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative's membership into the plan. Subcommittee members included Ann Pierce, Bradly Potter, Dan Puddister, Dennis McGrath, Heather Stirratt, John Rogner, and Mark Davis. We thank Danielle Ruffatto for the plan layout and composition.

For More Information go to: [www.GreatLakesLCC.org](http://www.GreatLakesLCC.org)  
To contact LCC staff see directory at: <https://greatlakeslcc.org/staff>