



ISC Meeting Notes for 2/11/13

- VOTING Call on General Project Descriptions to Propose and Prepare as final RFA/RPP or Directed Funds for FY13 Project Funding Consideration

ITEM #1. Three Project Descriptions were approved for FY13 funding solicitation.

These were chosen from the 5 Top (Unranked) Science Needs as recommended by the Integrated Planning Team as drawn from the 20 Top Ranked Science Needs from the various Communities of Practice (experts in Aquatic Resources, Terrestrial Resources, and Human Dimension of Conservation and Resource Management; Climate Change impacts were considered by all three Communities.)

RFP-2013-3

For discussion “Project A”: Review literature, document previous efforts and develop classification system then classify and map cave/karst habitats that occur within the Appalachian LCC boundary.

DECISION: Steering Committee directed Appalachian LCC Staff to proceed in preparation of RFA/RFP for Executive Sub-Committee approval and release.

Key Points of the Discussion:

Rachel Muir – Additional information regarding Project A in terms of Karst classification. In 2008, USGS prepared a national classification of Karst systems. One of the publications looks just at the Appalachian; it is a fairly detailed mapping effort. It characterizes the hydrology and geology of karst landscapes. The missing piece is how those hydrological and geologic features impact biota. We can take Project A and focus it on the existing information we have on physical landscapes and see how those factors influence biota.

Bridgett Costanzo – The Planning Team was familiar with the efforts by the USGS, they thought what had been done was too coarse a scale for many of their uses and didn’t capture cave habitat in a way effective for them for on-the-ground cave management and conservation planning. So what they wanted to do is take what the USGS did and build upon that.

Mike Harris - Is that just collecting survey information for many caves throughout the area or are we talking about field sampling to a variety of caves to relate the structure there.

Bridgett – Might involve fieldwork. There is not a standard classification system for caves and karst and thus there is not a comprehensive mapping effort where they can turn to.

Mark Thurman – Noted in TN there is a diverse and well-connected karst system with high rates of endemism. There is still a need for more information and mapping of the biological and physical features – this information is still needed.

Clyde Thompson – Federal Resources Protection Act – protecting data for “significant” caves. One of the things we wrestle with is how to protect what is left. If you start mapping and dispersing these (informational) resources, the more available this (information) is to certain groups and the more at risk those resources become.

Bridgett Costanzo – Caves/Karst efforts are coming out and consistently saying they don’t have a classification system or a map and white nose syndrome is one of the things they reference as the need to have this information.

David Whitehurst – In the terrestrial classification information we have done in the past, have they not included karst in those?

Bridgett Costanzo – From what I know nothing we have done in the past has touched karst.

– They also don’t include subterranean habitat in ecological systems. So that is an interesting element USFWS has been working with NatureServe. At least identify the system – Florida has done it through the Florida Natural System.

Jean Brennan – Issue of data, data access sharing, we at the LCC is an issue we will have to deal with, our ability to safeguard data can be instituted, but the underlying goal for the LCC in the next few years is to have the foundational materials to do landscape planning and modeling, absent of that information means that our models will be woefully inadequate. The sensitivity of data and access is something we can control, but to have it integrated into a larger modeling effort to inform data decisions is something we need to keep our eye on.

David Whitehurst. – Maintain data sensitivity through some type of process.

Bill Reeves – Approach that Rachel recommended is highly valuable to us. I can think of two systems in TN where surface area over cave footprint is being impacted by human activity on the surface. We don’t have ability to say no you can’t.

Mark Thurman – We have been restricted to Karst planning in TN. If there were trends related to recharge areas, get very site specific, if we can get those common traits within those eco region, characteristic of areas that would be very valuable for resource planning.

Rachel Muir– In places with high concentrations of caves, particularly where groundwater is used for human use, there is pretty good data in that regard. Amount of data already obtained has been a 2 decade effort. It is not an area that the LCC is really positioned to go into simply because of the resource demands. However, relating that information to biological habitat is doable and appropriate to the needs of the organization.

David Whitehurst – More discussion?

Mike Harris – Focusing on biological parts makes more sense to me, how they are serving as habitat for wildlife and if that is what that project can do then it is a good way to go forward.

Bridgett Costanzo – Most classification systems do biological planning, we can recommend that any classification system include biological habitat.
DECISION: Steering Committee directed Appalachian LCC Staff to proceed in preparation of RFA/RFP for Executive Sub-Committee approval and release.

RFP-2013-4

For discussion “Project B” - Collect data, model, and map ecosystem services and socio-economic values to quantify and establish thresholds for ecosystem functions.

DECISION: Steering Committee directed Appalachian LCC Staff to proceed in preparation of RFA/RFP for Executive Sub-Committee approval and release.

Key Points of the Discussion:

Mike Harris – How would such an assessment be done?

David Whitehurst – A valid Question – Given the significant socio-economic issues in the Appalachians and the relationship between the environmental /conservation challenges and ecosystem services, this type of research to help illustrate AppLCC importance.

Bridgett Costanzo – noted during COP and IPT calls the suggestion was to start with to collect this information via workshop(s) and then do supporting survey(s). The details will need to be fleshed out by the specific proposal/applications.

DECISION: Steering Committee directed Appalachian LCC Staff to proceed in preparation of RFA/RFP for Executive Sub-Committee approval and release.

Directed Funding, or solicitation as RFP-2013-5*

For discussion “Project E” – [As part of the Science Needs Portfolio to pursue a “Cumulative Impact Assessment,” this Project Description is presented as a (pre-requisite, first step (assessment of pre-existing work)) to...]

Determine effects of stressors (urbanization, energy development, climate change, etc.) on Appalachian ecosystems integrity/functionality and endemic species, conduct a comprehensive status assessment of pre-existing work that would contribute to a landscape-scale threats assessment for Appalachia, and identify knowledge gaps.

DECISION: * A potential research agency/partner was recommended and the Committee was willing to consider pursuing this option if the details could be worked out. Decision to pursue as Directed Funding or Open RFP solicitation rests with the Executive Sub-Committee.

Key Points of the Discussion:

David W – Question to Clyde Thompson (USFS representative on the ISC) – asking if it would be doable and if FS would be able to use existing staff and resources to do this work.

Clyde – would have to defer to Danny Lee of the FW SE Research Station.

Bridgett – had a phone call with Danny prior to this meeting to discuss this proposal. Reports that Danny said his station was “willing and able” to do the work with existing staff and resources, and would use funds to augment the capacity to bring in other University partners as needed.

DECISION: The SE Ecological Threats Assessment Center (USFS SE Research Station) will be contacted to see if the Center is willing to consider pursuing this project. If the details could be worked out, the project proposal will be presented to the Executive Sub-Committee that will then decide to pursue as Directed Funding or to seek other applications via an open RFP solicitation. The funding decision direction rests with the Executive Sub-Committee.

SUMMARY OF FUNDING DECISION:

David Whitehurst - So that leaves us with A, B, and E for funding consideration.

Clyde Thompson – If I take the maximum amount out of all 3, we are still in the range of \$300,000.

David Whitehurst – Is the group comfortable with the staff taking A, B, and E to draft specific recommendations for RFAs.

Rachel Muir – Climate Science Center proposals call for projects in E, so consultation with those 2 climate science centers will be critical in refining E – Southeast and South Central.

DECISION: – Staff will proceed to develop specifics project proposal RFA/RFAs around (discussion ID) project A, B, and E.

ITEM #2. Two Project Descriptions were not approved for consideration for FY13 funding of the 5 Top (Unranked) Science Needs as recommended by the Integrated Planning Team.

For discussion “Project C” - Identify parameters for tracking change in highly vulnerable soils and then establish an integrated long-term soil-mapping/modeling effort for soils. Characterize soil processes and chemistry changes due to changes in temperature and precipitation/moisture (as related to climate change). Examine how nutrient dynamics are influenced by climate change and other stressors – 1) study and document nutrient processes 2) map most vulnerable soils for nutrient imbalances.

DECISION: Steering Committee decided to hold off on funding any projects related to this Top Science Need – citing the fact that there is already an extensive National effort underway (USDA/NRCS, NOAA/NDIS, etc.)

Key Points of the Discussion:

David Whitehurst – (opens discussion on project C)

Bill Reeves – Question on C, I'm not getting a clear picture of where this is going, what is it going to do that NRCS or USGS maps don't already do? What are we going to get out of this?

Bridgett Costanzo – Water and soils are two of the critical parameters for ecosystems and there is going to be significant impact to how soils will function with climate change. As a scientific community, they don't have a tracking system or nothing adopted for long term monitoring for changes in chemistry or the waterways.

Ellen Mecray – On soil moisture there is another national effort with the USDA. We have a soil network with USDA and long term soil network with climate, they are not connected and there is not nearly enough monitoring. We are desperate for more soil moisture sensors, a technology that is up and coming.

Mike Harris - Are we talking about long term monitoring, funding operation of stations for a decade or more?

Bridgett Costanzo – Identify the parameters that need to be tracked, develop a model and monitoring scheme methodology.

Mike Harris – It seems we can defer to USDA and use our limited resources elsewhere.

Mike Piccirilli – This seems to be the most expensive project on the list. I don't see a strong relationship with the LCC that another information organization can't do.

Rachel Muir – There was a wealth of information done with soils, some of those issues have been addressed a lot coming from power plants, leaching. Concern is with temperature change and moisture vulnerability, principally in the Appalachians. We have a body of work from a couple of decades ago but haven't done much since. I think the LCC can provide what are the measures in managing our forests and wildlife that depend on them and streams and rivers based on the changes in soil. That would have to be in consultation with NRCS and NOAA because they are far ahead on doing that work than most of the membership on the LCCs.

Ellen Mecray – At the same time, I think the LCC helps provide the direction and the driver on why they should come to us because right now they are focusing on the Missouri River. They could at least call attention to and describe all the vulnerability.

Clyde Thompson– I would be ok to “park this one” and go with the others.

David Whitehurst – [Without objection] we will not pursue this project for further funding consideration.

DECISION: Steering Committee decided to hold off on funding any projects related to this Top Science Need – citing the fact that there is already an extensive National effort underway (USDA/NRCS, NOAA/NDIS, etc.)

For discussion “Project D” - Determine the effects of energy development and resource extraction (gas, coal, wind) with focus on how (energy) sitings affect the physical landscape; effects of fragmentation, connectivity and sedimentation rates. Create an interactive GIS-based decision support tool to support reduction of environmental impacts of resource extraction sitings.

DECISION: Steering Committee decided to hold off on funding any projects related to this Top Science Need – citing the fact that there is already larger, better funded, and more extensive National effort underway (as well as more focused state-efforts).

Key Points of the Discussion:

Clyde Thompson – recognize this is an important concept, but it’s questionable (i.e., can’t move on that at this time.)

Rachel Muir – There already exists two larger, national efforts (USGS and DOE) on this related to hydro-fracing.

Mike Harris – Why put our limited money into a national effort (that is already funded)?

Rachel Muir – Agrees but notes it would be helpful for the AppLCC to provide some information (i.e., make sure the needs of the LCC are addressed) within these larger projects.

David Whitehurst – asked Bridgett if she would be able to (reengage) the members of the COP that recommended this project to draft a letter that could go out from the AppLCC to those national level efforts that outlines their concerns (i.e., to provide input now into those established efforts.)

Bridgett Costanzo – confirmed that she thought she would be able to do this and reengage the COP.

Ginny Kreitler – Noted other work -- of the Academy of Natural Science looking at PA River Basins to determine the (siting) density and biological and chemical indicators to determine thresholds and document changes in the aquatic environments.

David Whitehurst – asked if the Members were comfortable “parking” this project without further consideration. [Hearing no objections]...the project will not go forward for further funding consideration.

DECISION: Steering Committee decided to hold off on funding any projects related to this Top Science Need – citing the fact that there is already larger, better funded, and more extensive National effort underway (as well as more focused state-efforts).

ITEM #3. Additional Decisions Made by Steering Committee

Overhead Cost: Decided on limiting level of overhead costs to 17.5% and integrate into RFA/RPP before announcement goes out.

DECISION: WMI noting their IC policy to accept 15% but able to increase if applicant demonstrates significant contributions/leverage on the project. AppLCC will cap allowable IC for this round of RFAs/RFPs at 17.5%, no exceptions.

Key Points of the Discussion:

David Whitehurst – Feedback from the members on this. Issues developed in the past so more guidance is needed on what we are going to allow and what we are not going to allow.

Bridgett Costanzo – We didn't articulate this last year, so need to come to a decision that doesn't allow that.

Pat Ruble – Think during that first round of projects that we did used policy that WMI had, we had policy indicating that 15% would be the allowable indirect cost we would be willing to accept.

Bridgett Costanzo – Applicants tended to think 10-15% was acceptable.

Pat Ruble – We need to indicate that right up front.

Mike Harris - Would you consider 17.5% – that is a standard agreed upon rate that many organizations are using that is still significantly less than most universities.

Mike LaVoie. – I do know 15-17% rate is relatively low and that would be a good rate if we put it in right up front. Everyone is comfortable with that.

Rachel Muir – That would exclude all universities.

Mike Harris – All universities within the Coop. Ecological Services Units (CESUs) have those same rates.

Rachel Muir – For any subcontractor and NGO would be out of their range. Most rates for universities are anywhere between 30-55%.

Jean Brennan – University people said if you just put it in writing, this is the rate the university will accept.

Bridgett Costanzo – The South Atlantic LCC Steering Committee has allowed 0% overhead and they still fund projects.

David Whitehurst – That is what we do with ours and haven't had any issues.

Bridgett Costanzo – We were told that if it is in our RFA announcement and clearly stated then they can accept it.

David Whitehurst – 17.5% is that what we are comfortable with in regards to advertise? Is anyone objecting with it? Then we will go with 17.5%.

DECISION: WMI (the organization that will implement any contract or sub-grant of AppLCC funds) noting their IC policy to accept 15% but able to increase if applicant demonstrates significant contributions/leverage on the project. AppLCC will cap allowable IC for this round of RFAs/RFPs at 17.5% (i.e., which would accept the pre-negotiated rates of 17.5% as covered under CESU (federal-university) agreements).

Data Sharing: Staff will draft agreement allowing the Appalachian LCC to put in some parameters on data sharing requirements to be incorporated into the RFAs.

DECISION: Staff to draft a data sharing requirement to include in this round of RFA/RPSs and the draft to be sent out to entire Steering Committee for review of the language prior to release of solicitations.

Key Points of the Discussion:

Jean Brenna – Proposal would be that if the Steering Committee would allow a Data Sharing Policy for solicitation, we would include that. To get approval to address issue of requiring data sharing be uploaded into our Cloud Server, etc, and protection of sensitive data sets. Draft something for this solicitation that does not draft entire LCC policy.

Karen Waldrop – So you would put together some sort of guidelines that we can look at.

Jean Brennan – We control access to the data, for EBTJV and SARP for example -- our ability to manage that is what we are building. If our goal is to model across the landscape, not having the data hampers that effort.

David Whitehurst – So without objections, staff will draft data sharing agreement and send it out to entire Steering Committee.

DECISION: Staff to draft a data sharing requirement to include in this round of RFA/RPSs and the draft to be sent out to entire Steering Committee for review of the language prior to release of solicitations.

Match: Match will not be a requirement but viewed favorably if an application has match.

DECISION: Applications that demonstrate a match will be granted priority points based on match level but a match is not a criteria for application.

Key Points of the Discussion:

David Whitehurst – Match, do we want to make this a requirement?

Mike Piccirilli – I'd say make similar to our competitive grants where you get priority points if you have higher match, additional match, if there is match it should be viewed favorably.

Rachel Muir: Should not be a requirement but a criterion.

David Whitehurst – I think that is the way the group feels we should have a match through criteria.

DECISION: Applications that demonstrate a match will be granted priority points based on match level but a match is not a criterion for application.

Presentation: Decided to state in the solicitation that PIs would participate in presentations regarding projects and training if the project has an application to Steering Committee.

DECISION: All applicants are required to provide an annual in-person presentation or webinar report to the ISC, to be recorded and posted on the web site, and any

materials or tools developed under LCC funding are similarly required to provide a web-based video training presentation.

David Whitehurst: Ok, outreach/presentations and training to provide to Steering Committee. Are you comfortable putting that in as appropriate? Ok, think we have consensus on that one.

DECISION: All applicants are required to provide an annual in-person presentation or webinar report to the ISC, to be recorded and posted on the web site, and any materials or tools developed under LCC funding are similarly required to provide a web-based video training presentation.

REMINDER: Next face to face meeting will be in April

- April 22nd - -(1/2 day on the 22nd- for the Executive Sub-Comm)
- April 23rd-24th -- otherwise Full SC (all-day sessions 23rd & 24th) in Blacksburg.

It will be a working session for the Work Groups that are implementing and charting a way forward on our work plan.