

Plains and Prairie Potholes Landscape Conservation Cooperative Structure and Governance

Introduction

The Plains and Prairie Potholes LCC (PPP LCC) is a broad-based, regional partnership of Federal, State, Tribal, Canadian and Non-government organizations working to conserve, and protect natural and cultural resources, including fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats, and broad ecosystems within the northern Great Plains and Prairie Pothole Region. The PPP LCC recognizes that all agency partners within the PPP LCC will have different missions and conservation objectives, but all are affected by large-scale, landscape level stressors, such as climate change. In the face of broad-scale environmental challenges the goal of the PPP LCC will be to provide applied science and decision support to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of conservation delivery for shared conservation priorities. Specifically, the PPP LCC will:

- support biological planning and conservation design,
- prioritize and coordinate applied research that informs conservation delivery,
- support the design of inventory and monitoring programs, and
- support the development of scientific analysis that informs and empowers land managers to link actions at project sites to outcomes on broader scales.

Overall Structure

The PPP LCC is governed by a Steering Committee that is administratively and logistically supported by a Technical Committee appointed by the Steering Committee. The Technical Committee may establish *ad hoc* Subcommittees to assist with specific issues to facilitate decision making by the Steering Committee. For example, *ad hoc* subcommittees representing each of the sub-regions (Prairie Pothole, Rivers and Riparian Corridors, and Northern Great Plains) within the PPP LCC may be created.

Steering Committee

Membership and Organization

1. PPP LCC Steering Committee consists of representatives from agencies and organizations that collectively have the following characteristics:
 - a. jurisdictional responsibility for natural resource management
 - b. significant capacity for furthering the purpose of the PPP LCC
 - c. addressing significant natural resource management issues
 - d. provide direct links and communication with other conservation organizations or land managers involved in conservation delivery at local levels

The composition of the Steering Committee includes senior leadership from Federal, State and Provincial agencies, Tribes, and Non-Governmental Organizations with large-scale resource management activities in the Plains and Prairie Pothole region. Steering Committee members represent as high an administrative level as possible in order to commit financial, staff, or other resources.

2. Additional membership on the Steering Committee, if needed, will be accommodated by invitation from the Steering Committee. Additional members must be approved by a majority vote of current Steering committee members.
3. Removal of Steering Committee members is determined by the majority vote of the Steering Committee.
4. Activities of the Steering Committee are administered by a Chair and Co-Chair. The Chair is the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Midwest Region. The Co-Chair is elected by the Steering Committee for a two-year term.
5. Steering Committee members that are unable to attend a meeting or teleconference, must delegate an individual from their organization with full decision-making authority. A current Steering Committee member cannot serve as the alternate, or carry the proxy for the absent member.

Responsibilities

The Steering Committee of the PPP LCC has the following responsibilities:

1. Serves as the executive body for decision making
2. Provides guidance on policy and develops operational and strategic plans.
3. Promotes cooperation, coordination, consolidation of information, and collaboration among partner organizations to support the goals and objectives of the PPP LCC.
4. Prioritizes projects and related activities recommended by the Technical Committee for implementation and funding.
5. Identifies funding opportunities and other available resources (e.g., staff, in-kind services) for supporting PPP LCC priority projects and activities.

Procedures

The Steering Committee will meet at least twice per year (meetings may be "virtual"). Additional meetings may be called by the Chair, and additional business will be conducted by e-mail, teleconference and web conference. Meetings will normally be scheduled each fall, following the end of the Federal fiscal year, and spring. This allows the Steering Committee to review the LCC's progress, approve project funding and help formulate annual work plans. Formal meetings will be announced at least one month in advance and will require that a written agenda be distributed at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC Coordinator will serve as the liaison between the Technical Committee and the Steering Committee, assist the Chair and Co-Chair coordinating, administering, and facilitating Steering Committee meetings, ensure information is communicated to all members, and will maintain Steering Committee records.

Steering Committee decisions and recommendations will normally be reached through consensus and every effort will be made to reach consensus by discussing issues thoroughly. The PPP LCC Coordinator will provide the Steering Committee with critical information in the form of written briefing statements, reports, and/or oral presentations. This information will include the recommendations that the Technical Committee has made, including any viable alternatives they may have explored. If necessary, issues will be resolved by vote carried by a simple majority. A quorum of voting members of the Steering Committee or their alternates is necessary for a vote. All Steering Committee discussions and decisions will be documented by the PPP LCC Coordinator (or designee) and kept as official minutes to be distributed to all members within

two weeks of each meeting. The minutes will be adopted following review and approval by all Steering Committee members. The PPP LCC Coordinator will maintain all Steering Committee files, track deadlines, and ensure decisions are implemented.

Technical Committee

Membership and Organization

1. The PPP LCC Coordinator will chair the Technical Committee.
2. One Technical Committee team member will be appointed from each of the entities represented on the Steering Committee. Additional members may be appointed by PPP LCC Coordinator with approval of the Chair and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee.
3. Technical Committee members should be knowledgeable about landscape scale conservation and climate change to make informed recommendations on priority projects and activities for the Steering Committee's consideration.

Responsibilities

1. Facilitates a blind peer review process to rank proposals for Steering Committee decisions. Guidance on ranking factors is provided to peer reviewers by the Technical Committee after approval by the Steering Committee. The Technical Committee then uses a common set of final ranking factors to evaluate project proposals.
2. Provides recommendations to the Steering Committee on coordination, planning, staffing and science activities for the PPP LCC.
3. Develops appropriate mechanisms for communicating with and receiving input from organizations not represented on the Steering Committee regarding science needs and capacity for science delivery.
4. Establishes *ad-hoc* Subcommittees to carry out the purpose and function of the PPP LCC.
5. Maintains regular, clear and transparent communication with and among existing conservation partnerships, other LCCs and the Department of Interior's Climate Science Center.

Procedures

The Technical Committee will meet at least twice per year or as determined necessary by the LCC Coordinators. Any member who cannot attend, or otherwise participate in a meeting may assign an alternate. The Steering Committee will be notified of the time, place and agenda of Technical Committee meetings, and such meetings will be open to all Steering Committee executives. Conference calls or on-line conferencing may be used in lieu of face-to-face meetings if jointly determined to be useful and prudent.

Technical Committee decisions and recommendations will normally be reached through consensus. If necessary, issues will be resolved by a vote carried by a simple majority. A quorum of voting members of the Technical Committee or their alternates is necessary for a vote. A current Technical Committee member cannot serve as an alternate for an absent member, or carry the proxy for the absent member.

All Technical Committee discussions and recommendations will be documented by the PPP LCC Coordinator (or designee), and distributed to all Technical Committee members for review and

adoption as official minutes. The PPP LCC Coordinator will maintain the files, track deadlines, and ensure recommendations are brought forward to the PPP LCC Coordinator and Steering Committee in a timely manner.

Staffing

The PPP LCC initially will have a dedicated coordinator. This position will be funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The coordinator serves as the LCC's operations manager with direction from the Steering Committee. Additional staff capacity will be added strategically over time to enhance the PPP LCC's capability for additional products and services.