

Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative
~ Interim Structure and Governance~
2nd Draft Sept. 15, 2010

Introduction

- The Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative (UMGL LCC) is a self-directed, non-regulatory alliance that provides shared scientific and technical support for conservation efforts seeking landscapes that sustain priority fish, wildlife, and plant species. The LCC will also, as appropriate, cover other key considerations, such as cultural resources. By taking into account landscape perspectives via an adaptive management framework, LCC products will help inform and assist decision makers and conservation deliverers. Specifically, the LCC will describe desired landscapes necessary to sustain high priority fish, wildlife, and plant species,
- support and conduct 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.

The UMGL LCC recognizes the variety of missions and objectives across the conservation community, but also the need to work interdependently on the potential impacts of large-scale landscape level stressors, on the resources each are charged to protect.

Core Assumptions

- Contemporary stressors to fish and wildlife and plants are broad based and numerous, including habitat fragmentation, invasive species, contaminants, etc.
- Global changes in ecosystem processes, such as climate change, add an overarching threat to fish and wildlife resources and interact with existing limiting factors at local and regional scales.
- Current conservation strategies, programs and organizations do not fully account for the kind of accelerating and unavoidable changes in the environment that will occur with climate change.
- Because uncertainties about the specific local and regional impacts of existing threats and climate change make conservation planning and implementation challenging, successful long-term natural resource management and conservation require adaptive management strategies that incorporate models of future change.

Biological Scope

All terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and their constituent species that are native to landscapes and waters of the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes are fertile ground for conservation planning and decision support tools, and as a result, potential LCC deliberation. Collaborative work must result in effective application and efficient and effective conservation delivery.

Operational Scope

The operational scope of the UMGL LCC is to provide scientific and technical support for landscape-scale conservation in an adaptive management framework, by supporting: 1) biological planning, 2) conservation design, 3) prioritization and coordination of research, and 4) inventory and monitoring program design for shared priority resources. These will be accomplished by a core LCC staff working at the direction of a steering committee, and interacting at multiple levels with the technical and executive staffs of the member organizations.

Overall Structure

The UMGL LCC is governed by a Steering Committee. A Technical Committee provides administrative and logistical support and may establish *ad hoc* subcommittees or working groups.

Steering Committee

Membership and Organization

1. The Steering Committee consists of representatives from agencies and organizations that collectively have the following characteristics:
 - a. jurisdictional responsibility for natural resource management
 - b. ability to impact landscapes via programs and activities
 - c. significant capacity for furthering the LCC's purpose
 - d. provide direct links and communication with other entities and landowners 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 Upper Midwest and Great Lakes region. The composition may expand to other entities, as needed and appropriate.

2. Membership is by invitation from the Steering Committee. Removal of members is determined by a majority vote. Charter members are listed in Table 1.
3. Activities of the Steering Committee are administered by a Chair and Co-Chair. The interim Chair is the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Midwest Region. Both positions are elected by the Steering Committee for a two-year term.
4. Steering Committee members that are unable to attend a meeting or teleconference, must delegate an individual with full decision-making authority. A current Steering Committee member from another organization cannot serve as the alternate, or carry the proxy for the absent member.

Responsibilities

The Steering Committee 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 LCC's goals and objectives.
4. Reviews prioritized projects and related activities recommended by the Technical Committee for development and dissemination.
5. Identifies funding opportunities and other available resources (e.g., staff, in-kind services) for supporting priority projects and activities.

Procedures

The Steering Committee will meet at least twice per year (meetings may be “virtual”). The Chair may call additional meetings. The committee will conduct other business by e-mail, teleconference, and web conference. Meetings will normally be scheduled each fall, following the end of the fiscal year, and spring. This allows the Steering Committee to review the LCC's progress, approve project funding, and help formulate annual work plans. The LCC Coordinator will serve as the liaison between the Technical Committee and the Steering Committee, assist the Chair and Co-Chair, ensure open communication across the LCC community, and maintain records and status of operations.

Steering Committee decisions and recommendations are normally reached through consensus. If necessary, issues will be decided by a two thirds vote. Further, 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 kept and distributed as official minutes. The minutes will be adopted following review and approval by all Steering Committee members.

Technical Committee

Membership and Organization

1. The LCC Coordinator and LCC Science Coordinator co-chair the Technical Committee.
2. Steering Committee members may appoint one member from their respective organizations to serve on the Technical Committee. Additional members may be appointed by mutual agreement of the LCC and Science Coordinators.
3. Technical Committee members should be knowledgeable about landscape perspectives relating to conservation and climate change.

Responsibilities

1. Formulates and facilitates a transparent process for the identification and prioritization of shared landscape conservation science needs and recommends priority projects and activities to the Steering Committee to meet those needs.
2. Provides recommendations to the Steering Committee on coordination, planning, staffing and science activities for the UMGL 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 UMGL LCC.
5. Maintains regular, clear and transparent communication with and among existing conservation partnerships, other interested or contributory organizations, and the LCC network.

Procedures

The Technical Committee will meet at least twice per year or as determined necessary by the co-chairs. 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. 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 of members or alternates present. 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 co-chairs (or designee), and distributed to all Technical Committee members for review and adoption as official minutes. The LCC Science Coordinator will maintain the files, track deadlines, and ensure recommendations are brought forward to the LCC Coordinator and Steering Committee in a timely manner.

Staffing

The UMGL LCC initially will have a dedicated Coordinator and Science Coordinator. These positions will be initially 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 UMGL LCC's capability for additional products and services.