

Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Synthesis of Boise, Salt Lake City and Reno meetings

June 2010

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), with assistance from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), has the responsibility to organize the Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC), which is one of twenty LCCs being organized by the Department of the Interior (DOI) across the United States. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives are applied conservation science and management partnerships between the DOI bureaus, other Federal agencies, states, tribes, non-governmental organizations, universities, and stakeholders within a geographically defined area. They were established in Secretarial Order No. 3289 on September 14, 2009, in order to better integrate science and management to address climate change and other natural resource landscape-scale issues.

In broad terms, the Great Basin LCC will help link and integrate the DOI's proposed Climate Science Centers with natural resource managers and science users; bring additional DOI resources to bear on landscape-scale issues and opportunities; and help in coordinating a wide range of efforts to respond to climate change, invasive species, wildfires, human development, and other change agents across the Great Basin. Specific objectives and priorities will be determined by the partnership itself. The LCC is not intended to replace existing organizations already accomplishing conservation work in the Great Basin. The purpose is to facilitate, enhance, and expand that work.

In May 2010, the BLM and FWS hosted three informational kick-off meetings for the Great Basin LCC in Boise, Idaho, Salt Lake City, Utah and Reno, Nevada. The purpose of these meetings was to introduce the Great Basin LCC, discuss potential organizational issues, identify membership in an organizational steering committee, and identify next steps to attract and engage additional partners in the Great Basin LCC formation and to move the organizational process forward.

Nearly 100 representatives from State and Federal agencies, NGOs, tribes and other stakeholder groups attended one or more of the Great Basin LCC informational meetings. Meeting summaries were developed and distributed to meeting participants. The following is a synthesis of all three meetings.

Participation in the Great Basin LCC

Participants at each meeting were asked to identify key partners that should be part of the Great Basin LCC. The following categories of key partners were identified:

- Cities
- Conservation Districts
- Corporate/business interests
- County representatives
- Energy interests
- Existing regional partnerships
- Federal agencies
- Group-acknowledged representatives
- Inter-tribal groups
- Irrigation Districts
- Non-governmental organizations
- Private landowners
- State agencies
- Transportation planners

- Tribes
- Universities
- Wildlife Groups
- Wool Growers

A list of existing Great Basin organizations was provided as a handout (see Appendix 1) and participants were asked to identify any groups or organizations that were missing from this list. The following groups were identified as missing:

- Nevada Mining Association
- Pacific Flyway Council – Pacific Flyway Study Committee
- Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Sagebrush Cooperative
- State and regional-level sage-grouse working groups
- Utah Partners for Conservation and Development
- Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- Western Governors Association – Wildlife Council and Climate Adaptation Group
- Western Working Group of Partners in Flight

Potential Functions of the Great Basin LCC

Participants at each meeting discussed the potential functions of the Great Basin LCC. The most predominant theme was the Great Basin LCC's relationship with existing Great Basin organizations. Participants indicated that they would like to see this LCC serve as a larger link to unite the efforts of existing organizations in the entire Great Basin. Specifically, participants indicated that the Great Basin LCC could:

- Facilitate existing organizations getting together
- Coordinate all Great Basin groups to help get a collective picture of the conservation effort, maximize that effort by strategically framing work, and reduce redundancy
- Help organizations identify other organizations within the Great Basin that overlap them in function or geographic location
- Build a communications forum with all of the organizations

Additionally, it was identified that the Great Basin LCC *should*:

- Be built on consensus
- Be a collaborative, coordinated effort amongst all partners
- Be science based
- Provide a service
- Link to a local entity to provide value
- Focus on both the present and long-term
- Provide impetus for coordination
- Provide incentive or means to reimburse people to collaborate
- Provide the linkage between science and what managers need on the ground
- Acknowledge lessons-learned from other LCCs further along in the process

Other ideas that the Great Basin LCC *could* do included:

- Mediate competing science
- Provide role in clarifying research needs
- Convene database with a list of all the Great Basin groups
- Help inform how priorities are set and act as a sounding board
- Increase chances for getting funding with organizations working together
- Have an annual “share fair” or trade fair for all organizations to come together
- Provide an educational role

In addition to the potential functions of the Great Basin LCC, participants at each meeting expressed what they thought the LCC *should not* do.

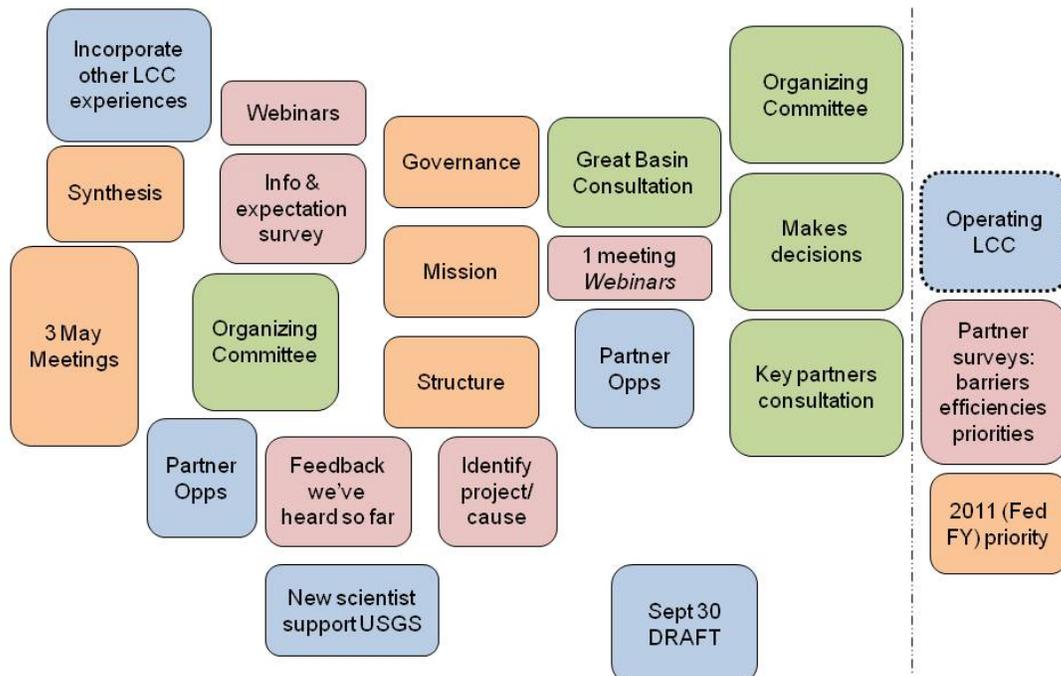
LLCs should not:

- Recreate the wheel
- Become an advocacy group
- Do harm to existing partnerships
- Duplicate efforts of existing partnerships
- Prioritize activities for individual partners/organizations
- Solely be focused on reaction to climate change
- Fund on-the-ground restoration

Organizing the Great Basin LCC

At each meeting, participants discussed how the new Great Basin LCC organization should be formed, including who should be on it, what the focus should be and the schedule. The discussion was initiated at the first meeting in Boise and participants in Salt Lake City and Reno then built upon the ideas from the previous meeting(s). The graphic below represents the process that was developed over the course of the three meetings.

Figure 1. Process to organize the new Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative.



The vision was that an organizing committee, consisting of representatives from each meeting (Boise, Salt Lake City, and Reno) would come together and start developing the basis of how the Great Basin LCC will govern itself. A synthesis would be developed from the outcome of the three May meetings, also incorporating experiences and lessons-learned from other LCCs. Participants suggested surveying partners to find out their expectations of the Great Basin LCC. Information about the LCC would accompany the survey and information would also be provided via webinars. The organizing committee would take the synthesis and the results of the survey to help them draft the governance, mission, and structure of the Great Basin LCC.

The organizing committee would then present their drafts on the governance, mission, and structure to all partners at one large meeting with all three areas coming together (Great Basin Consultation). The results of the Great Basin Consultation would be brought back to partners for review. The organizing committee would make the decision to adopt the draft governance, mission, and structure, with the consultation of key partners.

It was suggested that once the Great Basin LCC is operating, a second survey be conducted to identify barriers, efficiencies and priorities among partners. Additionally, participants thought it was important to identify one major priority for the Great Basin LCC to focus on in fiscal year 2011.

Other ideas relating to the organization and function of the Great Basin LCC included:

- Adjacent LCCs could share some members of steering committees
- Instead of each LCC having one coordinator, each state could have a coordinator to provide support to each LCC in that state

Participants noted that face-to-face meetings are important to reach consensus at critical points but that the Great Basin LCC should have electronic meetings, when possible, for working groups. It was suggested that the Great Basin LCC have a website for participants to find and access key documents and drafts.

Opportunities and Adding Value

Participants' at all three meetings agreed that the Great Basin LCC needs to demonstrate the value it can add to the Great Basin rapidly and create a reason for organizations to participate or engagement in the process will decline quickly. Participants asked what resources the Great Basin LCC could provide that are not already provided by existing organizations. One idea was that the Great Basin LCC could add value by providing access to national resources and science capabilities that may not otherwise be available to Great Basin organizations. Another idea was that LCCs could be a foundation for the future – they could determine what activities are currently underway, what activities are just starting, and help to determine how to efficiently manage time and resources to the full extent. Other questions included:

- What is the relationship between the LCCs and the National Climate Adaptation Strategy?
- Could the LCCs serve as the local representation for the National Climate Adaptation Strategy?
- How would being involved in the Great Basin LCC add value if one is already involved in a different LCC? (for example, Great Northern LCC)

Funding and Staffing the Great Basin LCC

Questions regarding funding and staffing the Great Basin LCC were discussed at all three meetings and it was suggested that underlying assumptions regarding funding be identified. It was noted that agencies and other partners without staff or funds available will have a difficult time participating in this process. Participants asked that funding to help with participation in the Great Basin LCC be considered to make sure that all who want to participate in this process are able. Other questions regarding funding and staffing included:

- Will the collaborators contribute data management or protocols?
- What additional staffing might come out of the Great Basin LCC?
- Where would Great Basin LCC staff reside?
- Is there funding for 2011 for the Great Basin LCC?
- Where does funding fit into the organizational structure?
- Will the role of the partners be to do fundraising or will the federal government provide funds?

National LCC Network

The Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative will be one of the 20 LCCs across the United States. Participants questioned how this network of LCCs will function and work together. It was acknowledged that each LCC is to be a self-directed partnership, but it is yet to be determined the level of control that will be maintained at the national level for consistency among LCCs. Participants asked if the LCCs that are already further along in the organizational process are setting the stage for the rest of the LCCs or if the LCCs will be headed down multiple paths that don't really lead to a strategic landscape approach.