

Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Governance and Operational Charter

DRAFT

October 8, 2010

Introduction

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) are applied science and management partnerships between Interior Department bureaus and others involved in natural resource management and conservation. Secretarial Order No. 3289, issued on September 14, 2009 by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, calls for the establishment of about 20 LCCs nationwide to better integrate science and management to address climate change and related issues.

The Bureau of Land Management, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, held a series of kick-off meetings for the Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) in May 2010. At this series of meetings, an Organizing Committee was formed to draft the mission, governance and structure of the Great Basin LCC. The Organizing Committee, made up of representatives from the Great Basin Research and Management Partnership, Great Basin Environmental Program, Defenders of Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Nature Conservancy, Utah Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, met in Boise from July 21-23, 2010 to begin drafting these documents. This draft charter is the result of the Organizing Committee's work and at their request, this document includes descriptions of the key discussions that took place to reach consensus about various sections in this draft Charter.

A. Need

We live in an era of monumental conservation challenges, including the loss and fragmentation of habitats, genetic isolation, invasive species, unnatural wildfire and water scarcity. The effects of rapidly changing climate will exacerbate many of these threats. In these circumstances, it is imperative that natural resource management agencies, science providers, conservation organizations and other stakeholders work together to understand the impacts of climate change and other stressors, and determine how best to address these challenges.

B. Purpose

The Great Basin LCC will be a self-directed partnership that will provide a range of scientific and technical support tools for landscape-scale conservation design to a wide array of managers. These

tools will help managers identify and target explicit biological objectives for native species and habitats in the face of climate change and other stressors. Open public access to Great Basin LCC products will promote acceptance and support of the science that supports changes in conservation strategy.

C. Mission

The Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative serves as a hub to enhance understanding of the effects of climate change and other natural and human disturbances across the region and promotes coordinated science-based actions to enable human and natural communities to respond and/or adapt to those conditions.

The GBLCC accomplishes this mission by providing leadership and a framework linking science and management to address shared priority ecological and socio-economic issues through:

- Fostering a forum for participation and coordination
- Facilitating communication and outreach
- Supporting and coordinating research and monitoring
- Providing access to data, tools and technical expertise

Mission statement development

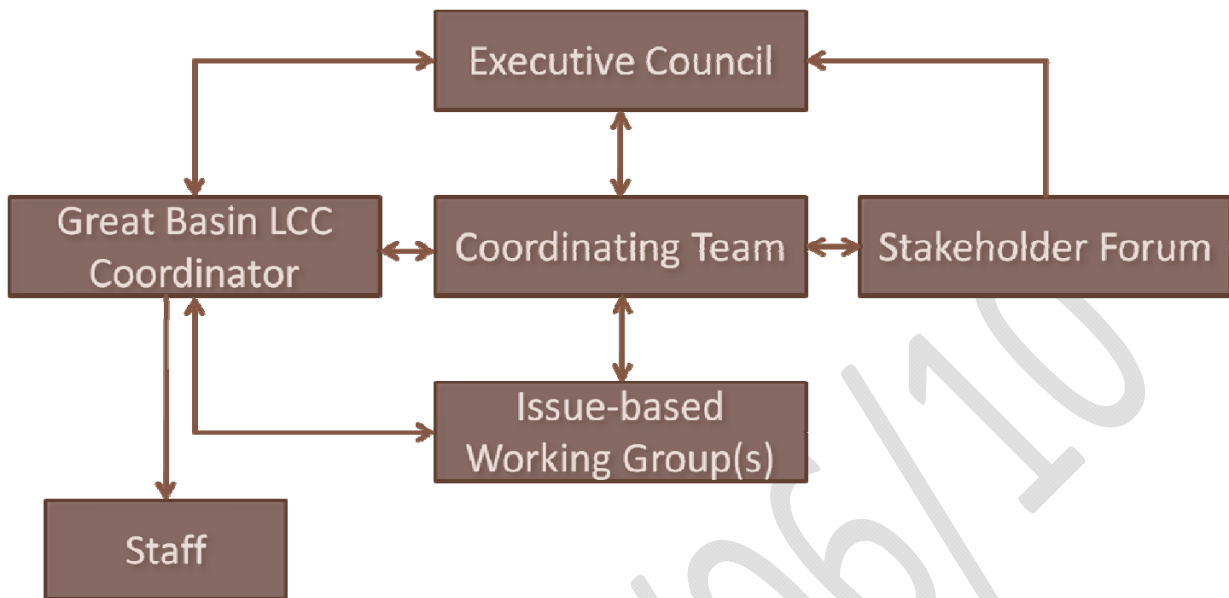
Organizing Committee members began the development of the mission statement by identifying the key elements they believed should be present in the Great Basin LCC mission: resilience, alliance, climate change and other stressors or change agents, cooperation, coordination, analytical tools, land and people/human and natural communities and gateway/pathway/hub/clearinghouse. The specific wording of the last element was discussed at length, and Organizing Committee members agreed to the term “hub” because they believed it best described their view of how the LCC would function with other existing organizations.

The Organizing Committee discussed the phrases “natural and human disturbances” and “human and natural communities” acknowledging that humans are natural but concluding these phrases adequately portrayed the idea that the Great Basin LCC would also address the human element.

D. Structural Organization

The basic organization of the Great Basin LCC is comprised of an Executive Council, Coordinating Team and the Great Basin LCC staff, including a Coordinator. Also included in the organization is the Stakeholder Forum and Issue-based Working Groups, which are more flexible and responsive in representation. See Figure 1 below for a schematic diagram of the organizational structure. Descriptions of each portion of the organization follow.

Figure 1. Organizational structure of the Great Basin LCC



1. Executive Council

The Executive Council includes executive-level representation from federal, state, tribal, non-governmental organizations and the research community that work on landscape conservation. The Executive Council is the decision-making body and provides oversight to the Great Basin LCC. Executive Council members act as ambassadors for the Great Basin LCC, promoting the organization in their respective organizations and activities, and provide guidance to the Coordinating Team. Members of the Executive Council must bring commitment from their respective organizations, which may include financial resources, technical expertise, personnel or advocacy.

a. Terms

- **Federal** representatives will hold a permanent seat on the Executive Council, but the representative may rotate amongst people in the organization. Members may be reappointed at the agencies' discretion.
- **State** representatives will be appointed by the governor for a three-year term. At the end of the term, the Great Basin LCC will prompt the state to select a new representative or the governor may reappoint the current representative.
- **Tribal** representatives will hold a three-year term on a staggered rotation. Members will be selected based on an expression of interest from their tribal entity.

- **NGO and research community** representation will hold a three-year term on a staggered rotation. Members will be selected based on an expression of interest from their organization.

b. Interim Executive Council Members

The following organizations will be represented on the interim Executive Council. The Executive Council has the flexibility and authority to invite additional members.

- 1 Bureau of Land Management representative
- 1 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative
- 1 U.S. Geological Survey representative
- 1 U.S. Forest Service representative
- 1 Natural Resource Conservation Service representative
- 5 State agency representatives
- 5 Tribal representatives
- 2 non-governmental conservation organization representatives
- 2 non-governmental commodity/industry organizations representatives
- 2 research community representatives

Executive Council discussion

Organizing Committee members discussed whether to call the overarching body of the Great Basin LCC the “Executive Council” or “Steering Committee”. Members reached consensus to use the term Executive Council because they felt it sounded more inviting and fit their role in counseling the Coordination Team and stakeholders.

The Organizing Committee recognized that representation from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Park Service on the interim Executive Council may be missing. The Organizing Committee questioned if there is an imbalance of representation between management and science. The Organizing Committee decided on this formation in part because they were hesitant to make the Executive Council too large. Another discussion item was whether the Intermountain West Joint Venture should be shown as an independent body on the Executive Council. The recommendation was that they would initially fill one of the positions in the NGO category and be one of the members of the Interim Executive Council. The group discussed how and when the Executive Council would be identified and decided to make recommendations on some of the organizations to be on the Interim Executive Council. These recommendations included The Nature Conservancy and Intermountain West Joint Venture to fill the two NGO conservation organization slots; University of Nevada – Reno and Utah State to fill the two research community slots; and Public Lands Council of National Cattlemen Association and either Nevada or Utah Power to fill the two NGO commodity/industry organization lots.

The Federal Advisory Council Act (FACA) may have an influence on the composition of the Executive Council – these discussions are currently taking place. The decision on the

final composition of the Executive Council will be decided once this body is convened and the charter will be revised accordingly.

2. Coordinating Team

The Coordinating Team includes representation from federal, state, tribal, non-governmental organizations and the research community that work on landscape conservation. The Coordinating Team of the Great Basin LCC is responsible for the operational management of the organization and for developing the work plan that provides direction for the Great Basin LCC's actions. The Coordinating Team conveys information, needs and recommendations to the Executive Council. The Coordinating Team establishes and provides oversight of the Issue-based Working Groups and manages the Stakeholder Forum. The Coordinating Team is responsible for providing clear communication to the stakeholders and public.

a. Terms

Representatives on the Coordinating Team will have indefinite terms; however, lack of participation will put the representative group in the seat at risk. The Coordinating Team determines the minimum level of participation required to retain the seat. The Coordinating Team may make additions or changes to the Coordinating Team membership with Executive Council approval.

b. Interim Coordinating Team Members

- 6 Department of Interior agency representatives
- 5 State agencies representatives (1 from each state)
- 2 U.S. Forest Service representatives (1 research, 1 management)
- 1 Natural Resources Conservation Service representative
- 1 Agricultural Research Service representative
- 5 Tribal representatives
- 1 Great Basin Research and Management Partnership representative
- 1 Great Basin Environmental Program representative
- 1 Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit representative
- 1 Intermountain West Joint Venture representative
- 1 agricultural producer group representative (group to be determined)
- 1 mining or energy group representative (group to be determined)
- 1 recreation or sportsmen group representative (group to be determined)
- 3 non-governmental conservation organizations representatives (groups to be determined)

- 1 state-level county association representative (group to be determined)
- 1 Climate Science Center representative

Coordinating Team discussion

Organizing Committee members discussed two options for this coordinating body. The first was to have a “Coordinating Committee” that would be open to all partner and stakeholder participation. The other option discussed was to create a “Coordinating Team,” consisting of high-level managers, and in addition, creating a separate “Stakeholder Forum”, which would be open to everyone. The collective group decided on the latter option agreeing that it would be more efficient to have a more structured Coordinating Committee/Team and a separate Stakeholder Forum. Participants also discussed whether to use the term “committee” or “team” and decided that “team” makes it sound more like a team effort and implies more of an obligation.

Regarding the initial Coordinating Team members, the Organizing Committee agreed to bring the initial group together and let them decide if there are additional organizations or stakeholders missing. They agreed that an organization that represents an entire state’s local government would be a valuable addition. The Organizing Committee mentioned their concern with turnover and keeping a consist group on the Coordinating Team.

3. Issue-based Working Groups

Issue-based Working Groups will be established by the Coordinating Team as needed. Membership of the groups will be ad hoc and members may include representatives from federal, state, tribal, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the research community. Each Working Group must have at least one Coordinating Team member. Working Groups will be solution-oriented and will deliver products, including proposals, technical reports and recommendations for filling data gaps. A recommended Working Group that may be longer term would focus specifically on data and information management.

4. Stakeholder Forum

The Stakeholder Forum is an annual meeting organized by the Coordinating Team that is open to all partners and stakeholders in the Great Basin. The purpose of the Forum is to report Great Basin LCC accomplishments and progress to a broad representation of partners and stakeholders, and to receive their feedback and input. The Forum is an opportunity to identify potential priorities, issues, concerns and needs for the Great Basin LCC. The Forum promotes and enables political support for the organization. The Forum provides an opportunity for outreach and education and may be a source of new Coordinating Team or Working Group members.

5. Staff

The Great Basin LCC Coordinator will be the main staff member of the Great Basin LCC, though eventually, there will be other staff assisting the Coordinator. The Coordinator will perform the day-to-day operations of the Great Basin LCC, track funding and budgets, and report Great Basin LCC accomplishments. The Coordinator will support the Executive Council and the Coordinating Team, including supporting meetings by providing both planning support and resources. The Coordinator will build relationships with all of the committees and provide a vital coordination role. Additionally, the Coordinator will coordinate with other LCCs and serve as the “go-to” contact for all members of the Great Basin LCC and the public. The Coordinator will report *either* to the Executive Council or the Coordinating Team (see discussion below). Other staff will report to the Coordinator.

Great Basin LCC Staff discussion

Organizing Committee members deliberated whether the Coordinator should report to the Executive Council or to the Coordinating Team. The group did not come to consensus on which entity the Coordinator would report to and decided to present both options to the broader Great Basin stakeholder group for their input.

Members who believed that the Coordinator should report to the Executive Council thought that the Executive Council would provide more autonomy. They were concerned about conflicts of interest if the Coordinating Team was evaluating the Coordinator and also were concerned about having more than 30 individuals overseeing the Coordinator.

Members who thought the Coordinator should report to the Coordinating Team did not believe members on the Executive Council would have time to provide oversight because they are higher-level executives. They said that because the Coordinator is performing work at the coordinating level, the supervision should be at that same level. It was discussed that technically, the Coordinator will be under someone in the funding agency, so that agency could perform the evaluation based on feedback from the Coordinating Team.

E. Decision Making and Operations

1. Executive Council

a. Decision-making

Decision-making is done via consensus, and when that is not possible, consensus of 75 percent will be reached with a minority report. A quorum is not needed to make decisions – decisions will be made by members present at the meeting (including electronically).

b. Operations

The Executive Council will have in-person meetings once or twice a year. Meetings should also be live with a conference call-in number and possibly video-conference, Go-to-Meeting or Webinar. The Great Basin LCC may consider providing money for travel assistance for members unable to travel. Meetings will be led by a Chair, elected by the Executive Council. The Chair will be the primary point of contact for the Great Basin LCC Coordinator. The Executive Council will also include a Vice-Chair, who will then become Chair, and the Past Chair. After the initial election of a Chair, a new Vice-Chair will be elected every two years.

Discussion of Executive Council decision-making and operations

The Organizing Committee identified the options for decision-making as: by consensus, having one decision-maker, by vote or by consensus with a minority report (that will or will not block the decision). Members observed that to achieve consensus, Executive Council members must be committed to the group and understand the art of consensus. The Organizing Committee questioned what percentage constituted a consensus and agreed on 75 percent of members present and that a quorum was not necessary. The Organizing Committee understood that this is a voluntary organization and if decisive decisions that people do not agree with are made, then membership is going to drop off.

The option of one decision-maker was not considered as a realistic option by the Organizing Committee. They briefly discussed the option of voting but agreed that when there is majority voting, there is almost always a minority and by this method there is no effort to reach a compromise.

The Organizing Committee reasoned that consensus with a minority report that will not block the decision allows you to go back in time and look at what happened and see what the issues were. Members agreed that a minority report is not a desirable outcome but is acceptable if consensus is not possible. They did not like the idea of having a minority report as a quick default.

2. Coordinating Team

a. Decision-making

Decision-making should be made via consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the issue should be elevated to the Executive Council. The Coordinating Team has the authority to revise Great Basin LCC by-laws with the approval of the Executive Council. The Coordinating Team has the authority to establish working groups, and makes tactical, pragmatic decisions about how to get things done.

b. Operations

The Coordinating Team will have quarterly meetings, at minimum, with the option to hold some of the quarterly meetings via conference call, video conference or

electronically. The Coordinating Team may convene more meetings and/or conference calls, video-conferences or Webinars, as needed. Meetings will be facilitated by a Chair, elected by the Coordinating Team. The Chair will be the primary point of contact for the Great Basin LCC Coordinator. The Coordinating Team will also include a Vice-Chair, who will then become Chair, and the Past Chair. After the initial election of a Chair, a new Vice-Chair will be elected every two years.

Coordinating Team decision-making and operations discussion

The Organizing Committee discussed whether or not the Coordinator should be Chair of the Coordinating Team and reached consensus that they should not be the Chair, especially if the Coordinator reports to the Coordinating Team. Members pointed out that while the Coordinator has resources to chair the meeting, it is a considerable amount of work and they have enough on their plate already.

Organizing Committee members considered the idea of creating a committee of five to eight elected members within the Coordinating Team to be the decision-making body. Some members raised the concern that everyone may not be represented on this smaller committee and preferred not to formalize the decision-making process.