



## Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative

### Governance and Operational Charter July 2014

#### Introduction

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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, called for the establishment of 21 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 in July 2010 to begin drafting these documents.

The draft charter that resulted from the Organizing Committee's work was shared with the broader Great Basin audience through informational webinars and a Basin-Wide Meeting in Reno, Nevada in fall 2010. Participants of the webinars and Basin-Wide meeting were asked to provide feedback and comments to the mission, governance and structure outlined in the charter. The draft charter was revised to take into account the feedback received and was then shared with the Steering Committee at their first meeting in March 2011. Steering Committee members reviewed, revised and adopted the charter at that meeting. This charter reflects the finalized charter, as adopted by the Steering Committee.

## A. Need

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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, Tribes, 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. It is essential that the public and local communities receive clear communication about the intention of the Great Basin LCC and are involved and supportive of its activities.

## B. Purpose

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The Great Basin LCC is a self-directed management-science partnership informing and promoting integrated science, natural resource management and conservation to address impacts of climate change and other stressors within and across ecosystems. Open public access to Great Basin LCC products will promote acceptance and support of the science that supports changes in conservation strategy.

## C. Mission

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The Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative enhances understanding of the effects of changing climate and other natural and human impacts across the region and promotes the coordination of science-based actions to enable human and natural communities to respond and adapt to those conditions.

## D. Goals and Objectives

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**Provide leadership and a framework linking science and management to address shared ecological, climate, and social and economic issues across the basin.**

*Objective:* Develop landscape-level information that can be used to focus conservation programs on the priority elements of the landscape most sensitive to change.

*Objective:* Evaluate and synthesize existing technical information, and identify and support the generation of information needed to fill gaps.

*Objective:* Support the development of scientific information, tools and technical products to inform and augment conservation decisions and actions by natural resource managers.

*Objective:* Coordinate application of geospatial and other information management technologies as necessary to plan, monitor, and evaluate activities and outcomes at various eco-regional scales.

**Focus science and management actions to sustain natural resources in the context of changing environmental conditions.**

*Objective:* Identify and facilitate the development, integration, and application of social and natural scientific information needed to inform water, land, fish, wildlife, and cultural heritage management decisions.

*Objective:* Monitor landscape scale indicators, test scientific assumptions, and evaluate effectiveness of conservation actions to inform adaptive management.

**Enhance collaboration to integrate science and management among Great Basin LCC partners particularly as related to climate change and other landscape scale change agents.**

*Objective:* Support coordination and integration of conservation science and management actions at the landscape scale, leveraging the capabilities of respective agencies/organizations/partnerships, and provide real-time situational awareness of on-going conservation efforts.

**Support the exchange of western and traditional science to further basin conservation priorities and directly benefit tribal issues and circumstances.**

*Objective:* Encourage dialogue on shared conservation goals between indigenous communities, local peoples and other practitioners, informed by best practices for considering traditional knowledges.

*Objective:* Develop models for engagement of tribal membership and traditional practitioners of TEK.

*Objective:* Apply protocols to ensure protection of TEK and strategies.

**Promote communication and education.**

*Objective:* Communicate relevant science and landscape information and Great Basin LCC activities and opportunities to partners, users, and the general public.

*Objective:* Improve the exchange and availability of scientific information about the Great Basin.

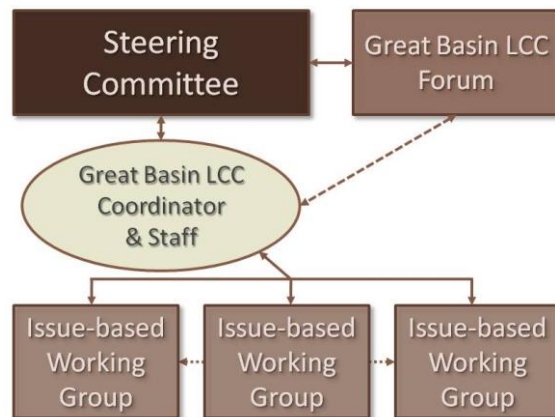
*Objective:* Engage all constituents and local, state, tribal, and regional entities regarding future directions in Great Basin ecosystems and conservation priorities.

*Note:* When talking about science, the Great Basin LCC is referring to evidence-based knowledge gained through observation and experimentation that can be transferred from one region in the Great Basin to the next.

## E. Structural Organization

The basic organization of the Great Basin LCC is comprised of a Steering Committee, Great Basin LCC Forum, Issue-based Working Groups and the Great Basin LCC staff, including a Coordinator. 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. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee includes representation from federal, state, tribal, non-governmental organizations, the private community, and the Great Basin Consortium organizations that work on landscape conservation. The Steering Committee 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, including priority setting, outreach and LCC Coordinator evaluation input. The Steering Committee establishes the Issue-based Working Groups and a Steering Committee member will chair each working group. The Steering Committee is responsible for acting on input from the Forum, as well as responsible for conveying information, needs and recommendations to the Forum and interested parties. Members of the Steering Committee coordinate with their respective organizations, and may bring additional resources to the Great Basin LCC, which may include financial resources, technical expertise, personnel or advocacy.

#### a. Terms

- **Federal** representatives will hold a permanent seat on the Steering Committee, but the representative may rotate amongst people in the organization. Members

may be reappointed at the agencies' discretion and will hold up to a three-year term.

- **State** representatives will be appointed by the individual states 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 state may reappoint the current representative.
- A **Local government** representative will initially be selected at the Forum and subsequently selected by Steering Committee members. Representatives will hold a three-year term.
- **Tribal** representatives will hold a three-year term on a staggered rotation. Tribes will select their representatives.
- **NGO and private community** representatives will hold a three-year term on a staggered rotation. Representatives will be selected at the Forum.
- **Great Basin Consortiums** will be represented by the chair of each of the three organizations: Great Basin Research and Management Partnership (GBRMP), Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (GBCESU), and Great Basin Environmental Program (GBEP) and will hold a three-year term.

*Note: It is recognized that organizations naturally have turnover and seats may not rotate according to the above schedule. The intent is for individuals representing organizations serve on the Steering Committee for up to three years.*

#### **b. Steering Committee Members**

The following organizations will be represented on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee has the flexibility and authority to invite additional members.

- 3 Department of Interior representatives: 1 BLM, 1 USFWS, 1 rotating seat for other agencies (DOI will determine agency and rotation)
- 3 Department of Agriculture representatives: 1 USFS, 1 NRCS, and 1 rotating seat for other agencies (USDA will determine agency and rotation)
- 5 State agency representatives (one from each Great Basin state)
- 1 Local government representative
- 5 Tribal representatives
- 1 Great Basin Research and Management Partnership (GBRMP) representative
- 1 Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (GBCESU) representative
- 1 Great Basin Environmental Program (GBEP) representative
- 9 non-governmental organization and private representatives

### **c. Characteristics**

The following are characteristics the GBLCC seeks in its Steering Committee representatives.

- Be an active participant and an advocate for the GB LCC mission.
- Have a commitment and willingness to collaborate.
- Be able to think beyond the boundaries of his/her agency, Tribe or organization.
- Be able to represent natural and/or cultural resource issues.
- Have decision-making authority/influence within their agency, Tribe or organization.
- Be committed to soliciting input from and reporting back to their agencies, Tribes, organizations, and colleagues.
- Bring the capacity to fully participate in the work of the Steering Committee.
- Be involved with an agency, Tribe or organization that:
  - Has resources and/or a mission that aligns with the GBLCC.
  - Has science/knowledge capacity and/or is actively engaged in resource management activities.

### **d. Filling Steering Committee Vacancies**

- Federal representatives are appointed and reappointed at the agencies' discretion. The GBLCC Coordinator will coordinate with USDA and DOI to fill vacant seats.
- State representative seat vacancies will be filled by coordination between GBLCC Staff and the Steering Committee, and each state. Invitation letters will be sent to state governors.
- Local government representative vacancies will be filled by soliciting statements of interest from the basin-wide community and the Steering Committee will make their selection based on best match with characteristics in Section 1.c. Formal invitations from the Steering Committee Chair will be extended to the local government representative upon affirmation by the Steering Committee.
- Tribal vacancies will be filled by soliciting interest from the basin-wide tribal community including tribal councils and other representative tribal organizations. Upon expressed interest, a formal invitation letter from the Steering Committee Chair will be sent to the Tribal Council or organization leadership. When filling vacancies, the Steering Committee may consider geographic diversity across the Great Basin.

- NGO and private organization vacancies will be filled by announcing the vacancy(ies) to the Great Basin community and soliciting interest. The Steering Committee will work with the Forum to make selections based on the best match with the characteristics in Section 1.c. and may consider geographic diversity across the Great Basin. Formal invitations from the Steering Committee Chair will be extended to the NGO and private representatives upon affirmation by the Steering Committee.
- Great Basin Consortium seat vacancies will be filled by the new Chair or representative authority as determined by the Consortium organization.

**e. Steering Committee meeting attendance**

All Steering Committee members (or their designated alternate) are expected to participate in the majority of Steering Committee meetings, conference calls, or other forums in which discussion and/or decision-making occurs.

If a Steering Committee member or alternate is not present for two consecutive meetings, the LCC Coordinator will contact the member to determine their organization's interest in continuing to hold their seat on the Steering Committee and remind the member that three consecutive absences could result in the organization losing that seat.

If a Steering Committee member or alternate is not present at three consecutive meetings, at the discretion of the Steering Committee, the LCC Coordinator will contact the designated organization member and its leadership and advise that their seat will be reassigned to another organization.

If an organization loses its seat due to lack of attendance, and that organization's circumstances change and interest in participation reemerges, they are encouraged to contact the Steering Committee to express their renewed interest in participating. The Steering Committee will consider reinstating the organization on the Steering Committee in light of current Steering Committee membership balance, the status of current members' terms and other considerations.

**f. Issue-based Working Groups**

Issue-based Working Groups will be established by the Steering Committee 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 will be chaired by a Steering Committee 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.

**g. Forum**

The Forum is an annual meeting organized by the Steering Committee and Great Basin LCC staff that is open to all partners and stakeholders in the Great Basin. The purpose of the Forum is to provide recommendations to the Steering Committee on the composition and allocation of the non-governmental and private entity representatives for the Steering Committee, 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 Working Group members.

**h. 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 Steering Committee, Forum and Issue-based Working Groups, 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 Climate Science Centers (CSCs) and serve as the “go-to” contact for all members of the Great Basin LCC and the public. The Coordinator will report to the Steering Committee. Other staff will report to the Coordinator.



## **F. Decision Making and Operations**

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### **1. Steering Committee**

#### **a. Decision-making**

Decision-making related to the operation of the LCC 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 Steering Committee 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 Steering Committee. The Chair will be the primary point of contact for the Great Basin LCC Coordinator. The Steering Committee 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.

### **2. Issue-based Working Groups**

#### **a. Decision- making**

Decision-making related to the operation of the working group should be made via consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the issue should be elevated to the Steering Committee.

#### **b. Operations**

Issue-based Working Groups will be formed on an ad hoc basis and will meet as needed. Meetings may be held in-person, via conference call, video conference or electronically. Meetings will be facilitated by a Steering Committee member serving as Chair. The Chair will be the primary point of contact for the Great Basin LCC Coordinator.

### **3. Forum**

#### **a. Decision- making**

Decision-making related to the selection of NGO and private Steering Committee members will be done by majority vote of members present at the meeting (including electronically).

**b. Operations**

The Forum will be held minimally once per year. It will be organized and coordinated by the Steering Committee and will rotate locations (including, but not limited to Reno, Boise and Salt Lake City). Meetings will be held in-person and there will also be the option for participants to participate electronically (via webinar or video-conference). The Forum will be facilitated by a neutral facilitator.