

Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Your Invitation...

Land managers concerned with conservation of water and natural resources are faced with increasing management challenges such as land-use conversion, sensitive species protection and recovery, invasive species, water scarcity, and a range of other complex issues—all of which are amplified by climate change. In response, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) are partnering to develop the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC).

This effort represents a broader vision of conservation that includes working with partners across landscapes to ensure that science capacity is in place so that we can successfully address these 21st-century conservation challenges. We are in the process of reaching out to resource managers and others within the Desert LCC and invite you to contact us (contacts provided below) if you are interested in participating.

What is an LCC?

In 2010, the Department of Interior developed a plan for a coordinated, science-based response to climate change impacts on our land, water, and wildlife resources. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) are the applied science branch of this strategy. Each LCC will function in a specific geographic area, and will form a national and ultimately international network. Each LCC is a management-science partnership.

For the Desert LCC, the initial partnership will be between Reclamation, the Service, other federal agencies, states, tribes, non-government organizations (NGO's), universities, and other entities that will provide science and critical tools to inform, protect and conserve landscapes and water resources necessary to meet the complementary trust responsibilities of the partners involved. Outreach to our Mexican partners will come later; after the LCC is established in the United States. In time, the LCC will be a self-directed partnership managed by a steering committee comprised of government representatives (federal, state, Mexican, tribal, and local), as well as NGO's who are prepared to contribute to the effort.



Sonoran Desert habitat, Arizona.
Photograph by Mima Falk, USFWS

How will the LCC Help?

The LCC will facilitate the delivery of applied science to inform resource management decisions that address climate change and other regional scale stressors (e.g., drought). The LCC will help inform resource managers regarding potential impacts of climate change as the partners develop adaptation strategies for resources in the Desert LCC. The LCC will facilitate an on-going dialog between scientists and land managers to create a mechanism for informed conservation planning, effective conservation delivery, adaptive monitoring to evaluate the effects of management actions, and modify actions, if needed.

Geography of the Desert LCC

The LCC encompasses portions of five states as well as portions of at least ten states in Northern Mexico. The area is topographically complex, including three different deserts (Mojave, Sonoran, and Chihuahuan), grasslands and valley bottoms, and isolated mountain ranges known as the "Sky Islands." Elevations range from near sea level to over 10,000 ft. The richness of the topography supports equally diverse species composition and

habitat for native plants, fish and wildlife species, including many endemic species that are extremely susceptible to climate change impacts.

The LCC also includes several large river systems, including the lower Colorado, Gila, Rio Grande, San Pedro, and Verde Rivers. The Colorado River Basin is one of the most critical sources of water in the West.

Resource Management Issues

The LCC will develop science capacity to support resolving resource management issues identified by the steering committee. Examples of resource management issues include:

- The effect of long-term drought on the composition, abundance, and distribution of species.
- The effect of reduced water availability on vegetation, wildlife and human populations.
- The effects of soil dryness and increasing air temperature makes the southwest more susceptible to wildfires.
- Effects of warming on insect outbreaks and increasing tree mortality.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Bureau of Reclamation

Benefits of participating in an LCC

The benefit of participating within the Desert LCC is to leverage the contributions of each of the partners with those contributed by your entity. This will ensure a flow of science information and resources across the management interests within the Desert LCC region. In this way, LCCs will aggregate capacity, create synergies, and reduce duplication of efforts.

Next steps for the Desert LCC

During FY 2010, Reclamation and the Service will reach out to other Federal

land managers, States, Tribes, and non-governmental organizations to establish the Desert LCC with the primary goals of:

- Developing a shared conservation vision for the Desert LCC
- Determining threats to priority resources, habitats, species, and science needs
- Identifying existing resource and science partnerships relevant to the LCC



Lower Colorado River Habitat.
Photograph Courtesy of Bureau of Reclamation



Your invitation to join the Desert LCC

The Desert LCC will take advantage of and build upon existing planning efforts and collaborate with partners who have already established strong working relationships with a focus on resource management within the Desert LCC.

If you are interested in participating in the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative, please join us!

For Further Information, Contact

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