

**Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative (DLCC)
Steering Committee Conference Call
June 21, 2012**

**9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Mountain Daylight Time
(8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Pacific Daylight and Mountain Standard (Arizona) Time)**

Meeting Summary – Final

Participants

Please see Appendix A for a list of participants.

Objectives

- Finalize science need priorities for comprehensive assessment and review Science Working Group's proposed next steps for meeting these needs
- Review, refine as necessary, and finalize GIS/Spatial Data Working Group needs statement for a data portal
- Updates on: Administrative Working Group, Office of Inspector General Audit, 2012 BOR FOA, Southwest Climate Science Center, National LCC, neighboring LCCs, DLCC Communications Plan

Outcomes and Consensus Agreements

- The Steering Committee supported the Science Working Group moving forward with the current list of science priorities (from the Comprehensive Assessment), knowing future processes may cause some priorities to evolve over time and also with the caveat of that the second bullet under water and aquatic resources needs to be revised before it is finalized;
- The Steering Committee agreed to have the Science Working Group move forward and further develop the roundtable concept for further vetting and refining science need priorities and developing strategies and outputs;
- The Steering Committee agreed to a process by which the Science Coordinator will work with the Science Working Group to identify and propose new members, and the Science Coordinator will notify the Steering Committee of proposed additions by email with an opportunity for comment; the Governance Document will be updated to reflect this process; and
- The Steering Committee supported the overall concept of a data portal and a data steward that could potentially be shared, at least initially, with another LCC. Further details will be determined in the future– including the selection of the data portal and the identification and potential sharing of a data steward.

Action Items and Next Steps

- In the Science Working Group next steps for science priorities, remove the word “monitoring” as it does not need to be mentioned;
- Revise the bullet #2 under water to accurately reflect its meaning. John Longworth, Paul Miller, and Avra Morgan will work together to create new language;
- Mark Kaib will continue a discussion with the Science Working Group to further refine the roundtable concept that can be used to vet priority science projects; roundtables can be conducted this year and can help identify projects for future funding opportunities; the Steering Committee will be engaged in the process along the way;

- Mark Kaib and Genevieve Johnson will circulate to the Steering Committee for feedback the current composition and proposed additions to the Science Working Group;
- John Longworth and Genevieve Johnson will develop proposed update language for the governance document in regards to procedures for the addition of working group members;
- Tom Owens will propose to the Steering Committee recommendations for a new lead for the GIS/Data Working Group; and
- All feedback on the GIS Working Group recommendations – including the criteria for the data portal the portals to be vetted against the criteria –is due on June 28, 2012; if there are no significant issues, all minor changes will be incorporated and the document will be considered finalized; the group will move forward and vet the options against the criteria.
- Genevieve Johnson will send out the National LCC funding announcements via email; it is located at grants.gov as well.

Next Meeting

- Genevieve Johnson will schedule an August Steering Committee meeting to review Administrative Working Group recommendations.
- The next in person Steering Committee meeting will be held October 10-11 in El Paso, Texas.

Detailed Meeting Overview

I. Introductions, Agenda Review

- Opening remarks were given by Larry Voyles, Chair of the DLCC; he thanked the group for its continued diligence and commitment.
- The facilitator reviewed the agenda, time given to agenda items, and spoke of keeping the focus on the agenda items requiring agreements, rather than updates.

II. Finalize science needs priorities for the comprehensive assessment and review next steps for meeting these needs (Mark Kaib-acting Science Coordinator until the end of July)

- Overview of revisions to priorities (based on Steering Committee feedback)
 - The feedback provided by the Steering Committee prompted the Science Working Group to make some changes to the document including refining the four overarching categories; the water category was expanded to include all aquatic resources and priorities and the culture category needs more social sciences included as well.
 - It is important to acknowledge that the tiered list will need further assessment to develop a more strategic plan to achieve the long term science delivery goals. It is the goal of the Science Working Group to achieve this in next year.
 - The next steps for the science priorities are as follows:
 1. Identify existing information that has addressed or is addressing science priorities.
 2. Identify science projects that are currently underway that address science needs.
 3. Identify opportunities to facilitate science efforts across agencies and organizations.
 4. Provide funding opportunities that are targeted to meet specific science priorities.

5. Collaborate with the Southwest Climate Science Center and address science needs through long-term monitoring programs.
 6. Re-evaluate science priorities annually and revisit list of priorities every three to five years.
- In order to achieve these next steps, a progression of scoping processes will need to be developed. The summary is below:
 - Working toward better framing of the science needs and possibly using a scoping process as well. Mark Sogge has time and staff to dedicate to a roundtable process, which will help target science products and delivery, for example:
 - Identifying and sharing science that already exists
 - Creating literature reviews with management implications;
 - Continuing to moving forward with workshops and webinars;
 - Creating synthesis or technical reports on a body of science that helps answer a priority science need; and
 - Gathering new science and science gaps that have been identified.
 - While the Steering Committee considers approval, it is important to consider work will continue as a strategic plan is created.
- Comments/Questions
 - *In the 6 steps outlined above, is #5 implying a more environmental or shared duty between LCC and the Climate Science Centers to make sure the needs are current?* As the USGS Climate Science Center ramping up, interaction and collaboration will occur. The DLCC will do more applied science and collaborate not only with the Climate Science Centers but also the SW Joint Fire Science Consortium and other partners. The idea is to push the more theoretical sciences to collaborating organizations and give the DLCC an opportunity to do applied science with the actual managers on the ground.
 - *Also in #5, does monitoring need to be mentioned?* No it does not.

Action Item: Monitoring does not need to be mentioned in next step #5 and revisions will reflect its removal.

- The group had a discussion on what the second bullet under water was trying to communicate and discussed what was meant by the term “water policy” and examples of what the science need might examine. Examples could include:
 - Water management looking at different policies, adaptations, and mitigations which will impact natural resources;
 - An ongoing effort in a large-scale study looking at alternatives for long-term water supply;
 - The implications of change on policy on a myriad of topics including climate change; and
 - An opportunity to look at existing water policy and impacts that are not fully understood.

Action Item: Revise the bullet to accurately reflect its meaning. John Longworth, Paul Miller, and Avra Morgan will work together to create new language.

- Finalization of list of priority science needs

Agreement: The Steering Committee supported the Science Working Group moving forward with the current list of science priorities (from the Comprehensive Assessment), knowing future processes may cause some priorities to evolve over time and also with the caveat of that the second bullet under water and aquatic resources needs to be revised before it is finalized;

- Review proposed next steps for meeting these science needs – Science Working Group recommendations and activities: Roundtable concept
 - The Steering Committee discussed the following the possibility of a joint meeting with the Science Working Group which would give an opportunity to discuss some of the concepts;
 - Roundtables could be used to bring together scientists and managers to...
 - Further vet a few priority science projects and to ready them for next year;
 - Build on the projects funded this year in the context of the science plan;
 - Provide the foundation for the DLCC to exemplify the landscape conservation in its geographical area;
 - Tighten the concept of further scoping out of the comprehensive assessment needs;
 - Determine how to narrow down and flesh out projects (Science Working Group).
 - Comments/Questions
 - *In what format would the output from the Round Table be and what decision processes do you see it enriching?* The Round Table would produce a brief summary report of gaps, strategies to fill the gaps, and to answer questions specific to management applications and recommend science delivery options. The hope is the Round Table identifying some projects that fit well with the DLCC and others which would be portioned out to other agencies.
 - *Will the Round Table take more generalized research topics to specific projects?* Yes, the intent is to narrow the general topics, organize into different types of research (short, long, applied, etc.) and then work strategically to achieve it by being able to have researchers bid on the projects. The outcome will be a more tangible product that organizations can wrap their hands around.
 - *How would the Round Table be populated and what do the meetings look like?* Both in person and conference call options are on the table and the type of meeting may be dependent on the complexity of the issue. Meetings face to face are of immense value especially at the beginning of the process but there are budgets and travel restrictions to consider as well. The Round Table will also need to be flexible and accommodating to partners in Mexico. See the group being a small group, 10-12 researchers and managers with expertise on the topic at hand.

Agreement/Action Item: Mark Kaib will continue a discussion with the Science Working Group to further refine the roundtable concept that can be used to vet priority science projects; roundtables can be conducted this year and can help identify projects for future funding opportunities; the Steering Committee will be engaged in the process along the way.

- The Steering Committee also discussed options for how working group succession should be handled, including the level of flexibility and responsibility to be given to the Science Coordinator and Science Working Group vs. the Steering Committee.

Agreement: The Steering Committee agreed to a process by which the Science Coordinator will work with the Science Working Group to identify and propose new members, and the Science Coordinator will notify the Steering Committee of proposed additions by email with an opportunity for comment; the Governance Document will be updated to reflect this process.

Action Items:

- Mark Kaib and Genevieve Johnson will circulate current composition and proposed additions to the Steering Committee for feedback; and
- John Longworth and Genevieve Johnson will update the governance in regards to working group membership procedures.

III. Review, refine, and finalize data portal needs statement (Tom Owens)

The group reviewed the data portal needs statement.

- Discussion of data portal needs and recommendation for revisions to needs statement
 - The recommendations are as follows:
 - Use an existing data portal as the base and move forward from there;
 - Consider the idea of hiring a data steward. The SRLCC is going to hire a data steward and would like to share that person with the DLCC until it is necessary for each LCC to employ their own.
 - Create a “data management best practices” for the LCCs
 - Minimize local storage as much as possible; consider using links rather than having to actually store the data.
 - Comments/Questions
 - *Would part of the data steward’s role be to start to identify the data sets, categorize them, and provide a seamless transition or is it just an administrative role?* It would be someone able to put together a logical database for the DLCC. The option for seamless crosswalks to share information with the SRLCC would also be very beneficial.
 - *What is the time frame to make a decision on the shared data steward?* SRLCC is having a Steering Committee call in the next couple weeks. They will be presented with a few options including the shared data steward. They will have a better idea after the meeting and the DLCC could wait to see what their decision is.
 - *Will the data steward encounter issues working with the our Mexican counterparts; are their agency limitations?* While BOR is unable to fund in Mexico, having someone to assimilate data in a database would not impact funding.
 - *Would the data steward also have GIS skills?* Yes.
 - A member cautioned the group to not overlook the idea of having a data steward specific to the DLCC rather than shared. It was suggested that a shared steward could be a way to start.
 - Feedback on the requirements and functions-allowing to move forward with a recommendation for a data portal.
 - Members felt it would be beneficial to have the opportunity to share the recommendations with others in their organization with more appropriate expertise.
 - The group requested further time to review the data portal request.
 - Tom Owens will be taking another job with the USGS and his involvement in the working group will come to an end.
 - A new leader for the working group will need to be identified.
 - The current working group has excellent expertise and they are all good candidates; it is important to consider time and commitment.

Agreement: The Steering Committee supported the overall concept of a data portal and a data steward that could potentially be shared, at least initially, with another LCC. Further details will be determined in the future– including the selection of the data portal and the identification and potential sharing of a data steward.

Action Items:

- Tom Owens will propose to the Steering Committee recommendations for a new lead for the GIS/Data Working Group; and
- All feedback on the GIS Working Group recommendations – including the criteria for the data portal the portals to be vetted against the criteria –is due on June 28, 2012; if there are no significant issues, all minor changes will be incorporated and the document will be considered finalized; the group will move forward and vet the options against the criteria.

IV. Administrative Working Group Update (Genevieve Johnson)

Genevieve Johnson gave an update on development of recommendations for DLCC participation and Steering Committee size/structure.

- The Administrative Working Group is working hard on the size and structure and is coming up with recommendations for the Steering Committee to review; they will be available later this summer. Genevieve will schedule a call in August to review the recommendations and gather Steering Committee input. The hope is to devote enough time to the effort this summer so as not to take up additional time in the fall face to face meeting.
- The Administrative Working Group does have many Steering Committee members participating. As they move forward, they are developing consensus recommendation.

V. Brief updates on other activities

- Office of Inspector General Audit (Avra Morgan)

The audit was to determine if climate change dollars were being spent appropriately. DLCC was one of a selection of LCCs to be audited; emphasis was on how it is appropriating financial assistance, whether the groups are adhering to financial assistance requirements (e.g., have a fair process, maintain the use of criteria, etc.). The initial feedback was very positive for the DLCC. A written report is expected in the fall; further updates will be given at that time.

- 2012 BOR FOA and Interagency Agreement Process (Avra Morgan)
 - The Funding Opportunity Announcement and Interagency Agreement request are open for a few more days. There have been lots of calls and plenty of interest. Some members of the Steering Committee are serving on the application review committees.
 - A further update will be given at the next meeting as to how the process went and information on the level of requests.
 - Final decisions will be made before the end of the fiscal year – hopefully in August.
- Southwest Climate Science Center Update (Dave Busch)
 - The funding announcement was circulated by Genevieve.
 - There was significant LCC involvement in the science panels who worked with scientists to craft a set of research teams to identify priorities. The CSC is grateful for the help to get through those and ended up with 6 or 7 projects to be funded.
 - There is work being done to help build the SWCSC institutionally within the local science communities. Approximately 1.2 million dollars has been allocated or is in an agreement processes.
 - Please contact Dave Busch with any questions.
- National LCC Discussions (Genevieve Johnson)

There is a funding opportunity at the national level. They are looking for projects that cross LCC boundaries.

Action Item: Genevieve Johnson will send out the announcement via email; it is located at grants.gov as well.

- Updates from neighbor LCCs (Genevieve Johnson)
 - Preliminary discussions taking place with SRLCC to share data steward.
 - Continued work through Climate Science Centers to further leverage resources across LCCs.
 - Other LCCs have put out FOAs and funded project.
- DLCC Communications Plan (Genevieve Johnson)

The document is still in process and the goal is to have something to review at the fall meeting. The coordinators are starting to discuss how to tie together communications, data, and science delivery discussions.

Appendix A: Desert LCC Steering Committee Conference Call Attendance, June 21, 2012, Las Vegas, Nevada

Steering Committee Members and Alternates

Scott Boruff, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Fon Duke, US Department of Defense (Desert Managers Group)
Deb Finch, US Forest Service
Armand Gonzalez, California Fish and Game
John Longworth, New Mexico Office of the State Engineer
Andrea Martinez-Balleste, INE
Robert Mesta, Sonoran Joint Venture
Leslie Meyers, Bureau of Reclamation
Tom Owens, US Geological Survey
Duane Pool, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory
Laura Richards, Nevada Department of Wildlife
Dana Roth, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Russell Scofield, Desert Managers Group
Dave Stewart, US Forest Service
Larry Voyles, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Coordinators

Genevieve Johnson, Bureau of Reclamation
Mark Kaib, Fish and Wildlife Service (Acting Science Coordinator)
Avra Morgan, Bureau of Reclamation

Additional Attendees

Dave Busch, SW Climate Science Center
Gerry Hillier, QuadState Local Governments Authority
Paul Miller, Bureau of Reclamation

Facilitators:

Julie Shapiro, The Keystone Center
Niki Koszalka, The Keystone Center