

Governance Document for the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Introduction

The Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) is a self-directed, non-regulatory regional partnership formed and directed by resource management entities as well as interested public and private entities in the Mojave, Sonoran, and Chihuahuan Desert regions of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. The Desert LCC, one of the 21 LCCs created pursuant to Secretarial Order 3289 to address the impacts of climate change on America's water, land and other natural and cultural resources, is focused on acquiring and sharing information to support the development of landscape level strategies for understanding and responding to climate change impacts and other large scale ecosystem stressors such as land use change, invasive species, wildfire and drought.

This Governance Document outlines the mission and goals of the Desert LCC along with its governance structure. The document may be modified, as necessary, by consensus of the Steering Committee. This is one of three foundation documents for the Desert LCC. Separate Operations and Annual Work Plans outline strategies for meeting the goals, key partnerships, monitoring measures, tasks, and timelines.

Mission Statement

Through collaborative partnerships provide scientific and technical support, coordination, and communication to resource managers and the broader Desert LCC community to address climate change and other landscape-scale ecosystem stressors.

Desert LCC Goals

Support, facilitate, promote and add value to landscape scale conservation to build resource resilience in the face of climate change and other ecosystem stressors through the following:

- **Science Development and Delivery**
- **Collaboration and Communication**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**
- **Outreach and Education**

1. Science Development and Delivery

Identify science needs of LCC partners related to climate change and ecosystem stressors at broad spatial scales, and facilitate the development, integration and application of scientific information (including decision support tools) that will inform resource management decisions.

2. Collaboration and Communication

Promote and facilitate collaboration and communication among conservation partnerships and entities to support and add value to their efforts to respond to climate change and other stressors and to integrate scientific information into resource management plans and conservation projects.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Provide expertise and opportunities to enhance and add value to climate change and other monitoring programs of various partners through such activities as coordinated data collection, data analysis and information management, and data dissemination, when such actions are mutually agreed to by the partners involved.

4. Outreach and Education

Provide information and application tools that educate and apprise resource managers and the public about the effects of climate change and ecosystem stressors.

Structure and Participation

Participation in the Desert LCC may include involvement as a Steering Committee member, on a working group, on a sub-committee, or as a partner, as described below. See Appendix 1 – Desert LCC Structure and Participation.

1. Steering Committee

a. Functions of the Steering Committee are to:

- Serve as the executive body for decision making to accomplish the Desert LCC mission.
- Develop vision, goals and priorities of the Desert LCC.
- Provide and promote communication, coordination, and collaboration on Desert LCC activities and functions.
- Provide leadership, direction and guidance to the Desert LCC Coordinator, Science Coordinator and staff.
- Approve the Operational Plan, Governance Document, Annual Work Plans and Reports, coordinated budgets and budget requests, and any other documents relating to the operation of the LCC.
- Identify partners to contribute and participate in the Desert LCC.
- Approve additional Steering committee members.

b. Steering Committee Composition Criteria

Steering Committee representatives shall, collectively, have the following characteristics:

- Jurisdictional responsibility for or actively engaged in natural and/or cultural resources management on a landscape-scale.

- Direct links and communication with other conservation entities or resource managers involved in conservation delivery, particularly those operating at local levels.
- Capacity for furthering the vision and mission of the Desert LCC.
- Represent a diverse set of interests and trust responsibilities.
- Represent the entire geographical scope of the Desert LCC.

c. Individual Steering Committee Member Roles

Individual members of the Desert LCC Steering Committee are executive and management level representatives. Steering Committee members must be able to make decision on behalf of their entities and, as appropriate, commit resources to ensure the successful implementation of LCC priorities. And finally, Steering Committee members must be willing to hear diverse perspectives and be inclusive of others' ideas.

d. Steering Committee Operations

Activities of the Steering Committee will be led by the Chair and Vice Chair.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair

- Serve as points of contact for the LCC and Science Coordinators for communication with the Steering Committee.
- Serve as liaisons to other Steering Committee members to promote effective communication.
- Provide leadership, feedback and direction to the LCC and Science Coordinators in implementing the actions approved by the Steering Committee and in preparing documents or plans for consideration by the Steering Committee.
- Lead and help plan Steering Committee meetings and conference calls, with support from the LCC and Science Coordinators.
- Reach out to other Steering Committee members and LCC Partners to identify support for the LCC, including funding, staff or other resources.

Chair and Vice Chair of the Steering Committee – The Steering Committee shall select a Chair and Vice Chair. The first Chair and Vice Chair will serve in that position for one year. Each year following, the Vice Chair will succeed the Chair and a new Vice Chair will be selected for a two year term (one year as Vice Chair and a one year as Chair). If the Vice Chair is unable to serve a second year as Chair, a new Chair will also be selected. Reasonable effort will be made to rotate the Chair and Vice Chair positions among federal, tribal, state, and non-governmental organizations.

The Steering Committee will accept nominations for the Vice Chair and Chair (as necessary) positions. Nominations will be shared with the Steering Committee for review prior to the Steering Committee meeting. Selection will be made by consensus at the fall meeting each year.

Primary and Alternate Steering Committee Members – Each Steering Committee member may name one primary and, in order to maintain the integrity of consensus based decision making, an alternate representative or designated staff authorized to represent the entity on Desert LCC matters. See Appendix 1 - Steering Committee Members and Alternates.

Steering Committee Membership - The Desert LCC Steering Committee consists of representatives from federal, tribal, state, and non-governmental organizations that work on landscape conservation in the area encompassed by the Desert LCC. New members may be added to the existing Steering Committee through the following process.

- Requests for new membership will be submitted to the Desert LCC Coordinator by the entity or sponsor and will be accompanied by a written statement outlining the entities contributions and qualifications to participate on the Steering Committee.
- All requests for membership will be provided to existing members for review in advance of a Steering Committee meeting.
- New members will make a brief presentation of interest at a Steering Committee meeting.
- New members may be approved by consensus of the Steering Committee.

e. Meetings and Communication

The Steering Committee will meet at least twice per year (meetings may be “virtual”). Additional meetings may be called by the Chair and Vice Chair, and additional business may be conducted by e-mail, teleconference and web conference. In general, Steering Committee meetings will be scheduled in the fall and spring of each year.

Effective communication among the Steering Committee and the wider LCC community is vital to the success of the Desert LCC. Interpretation services at meetings and written information may be provided in both English and Spanish, as determined appropriate by the Steering Committee.

Steering Committee decisions and recommendations will be reached through consensus and every effort will be made to reach consensus by discussing issues thoroughly. In advance of a Steering Committee decision, an informational briefing will be sent to all members for review.

Consensus for the Desert LCC is defined as a proposed solution or decision that participants can support or abide by and to which they do not formally object. In order to ensure productive Steering Committee meetings, participants agree to make decisions by consensus of all members present at the time of decision; members should make every effort to attend meetings in person, send a alternate, or designate a proxy (Chair, Vice Chair or coordinators) to effectively convey

their preferences. If consensus cannot be reached, the Steering Committee will identify a mechanism for conflict resolution.

2. Working Groups

The Desert LCC Working Groups for Administration, Tribal, Science, and GIS and Data Management are standing working teams, with the Administrative and Tribal Working Groups under the leadership and coordination of the LCC Coordinator and the Science and GIS and Data Management Working Groups under the leadership and coordination of the Science Coordinator. Working Group participation is based on recommendation from the Steering Committee but with explicit approval from the respective parent entity. The Working Groups develop foundational concepts, governance and operational documents, and provide specific recommendations to the Steering Committee on such tasks as the Annual Work Plan, Operations Plan and other formative and operative needs. The Working Groups also serve as Desert LCC “think tanks” to develop strategic concepts and analyze issues and other operative needs as identified by the Steering Committee under the leadership of the Coordinators.

The Administrative Working Group has the primary responsibility for proposing revisions to the Desert LCC Governance Document and Operations Plan, as necessary, and for developing the Annual Work Plan and Annual Report.

The Tribal Working Group will take the lead on outreach and coordination with the 27 Desert LCC Tribal communities and support the other standing working groups with specific tribal interest and perspective.

The Science Working Group has the primary responsibility for coordinating input on science and information needs and initiatives and recommending priority needs to the Steering Committee.

The GIS and Data Management Working Group has the primary responsibility for identifying existing resources of GIS mapping and other data, and for developing a strategy for making data accessible to Desert LCC stakeholders.

The Steering Committee may establish sub-committees to assist with specific issues to facilitate decision making by the Steering Committee. For example, sub-committees may represent geographic regions (Mojave Desert, Chihuahuan Desert, Sonoran Desert, Mexico, and Colorado and Rio Grande Rivers) or be issue-specific (communications, partnerships, etc). The sub-committees and their functions will be described in the Annual Work Plan.

3. Partners

The Desert LCC is a collaborative effort that brings together resource managers, stakeholders, communities and others engaged in or supporting natural and cultural resource conservation within its geographical boundaries. Partners may include anyone interested in participating in the Desert LCC (i.e. Steering Committee, working group, and sub-committee members and those who would like to be involved but do not chose to participate on a formalized committee.)

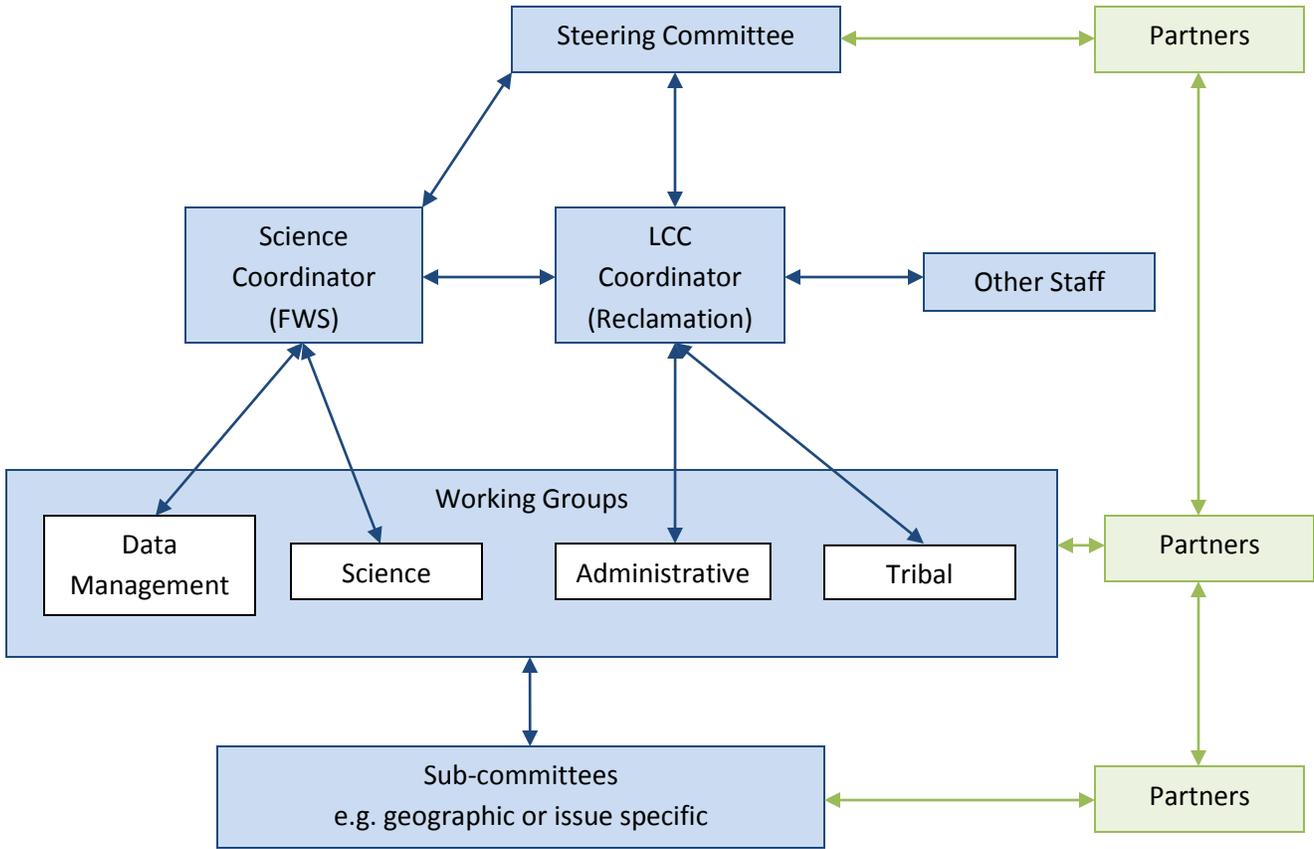
4. Dedicated Personnel

LCC Coordinator – The Bureau of Reclamation agrees to dedicate a permanent employee to serve as the Desert LCC Coordinator. The LCC Coordinator works directly with the Steering Committee Chair to communicate with and receive direction from the Steering Committee. The LCC Coordinator is the primary point of contact between the Steering Committee and staff. Additionally, the LCC Coordinator implements, facilitates, and communicates Desert LCC vision and Steering Committee direction among the staff; and, at the direction of the Steering Committee, oversees the development and function of the Administrative and Tribal Working Groups and any sub-committees. The Desert LCC Coordinator communicates and collaborates with adjacent LCC Coordinators to address transboundary issues that may arise during Desert LCC activities. LCCs adjacent to the Desert LCC include: California; Great Basin; Great Plains; Gulf Coast Prairie; and Southern Rockies LCCs.

Science Coordinator – The Fish and Wildlife Service agrees to dedicate a permanent employee to serve as the Desert LCC Science Coordinator. The Science Coordinator works in coordination with the LCC Coordinator and provides oversight and synthesis of Desert LCC science activities, products, and needs. The Science Coordinator provides leadership on all science-related issues and tracks and translates status and results of relevant science and research activities among the Desert LCC staff and users. The Science Coordinator oversees the development and function of the Science and GIS and Data Management Working Groups and any sub-committees. The Desert LCC Science Coordinator communicates and collaborates with adjacent LCC Science Coordinators to address transboundary issues that may arise during Desert LCC activities.

Additional staff support and duties and responsibilities will be determined by the Steering Committee.

Appendix 1
Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative
Structure and Participation



Appendix 2

Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative Steering Committee Members and Alternates

Agency/Organization	Member	Alternate
Arizona Game and Fish	Larry Voyles (Chair)	Josh Avey
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Amy Heuslein	
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Sharon Pinto	Mary Catherine Manuelito
Bureau of Land Management	Julie Decker	James Weigand
Bureau of Reclamation	Lorri Gray	Terry Fulp
California Association of Four Wheel Drive Club	John Stewart	
California Fish and Game	Armand Gonzales	Whitney Albright
Cocopah Indian Tribe	Jill McCormick	
Colorado River Indian Tribes	Grant Buma	Johnny Hill
Colorado River Indian Tribes	TBD	
Department of Defense	Fon Duke	
Fish and Wildlife Service	Benjamin Tuggle	Dana Roth
Fort McDowell Nation	Carol Klopatek	
Gila River Indian Tribe	Margaret Cook	
Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE)	Eduardo Peters	Margarita Caso
National Park Service	Martha Lee	Ray Sauvajot
Native American Land Conservancy	Sean Milanovich	Kurt Russo
Natural Resources Conservation Service	TBD	
Nevada Department of Wildlife	Laura Richards	Chris Tomlinson
New Mexico Office of the State Engineer	John Longworth	Mike Johnson
Rio Grande Joint Venture	Mary Gustafson	
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory	Duane Pool (Vice-Chair)	
Sky Island Alliance	Louise Misztal	Jenny Neeley
Sonoran Joint Venture	Robert Mesta	Geoffrey Geupel
Texas Park and Wildlife	Scott Boruff	Ruben Cantu Jeff Raasch
The Nature Conservancy - Mexico	Rosario Alvarez-Gutierrez	Laura Paulson
U.S. Forest Service	Dave Stewart	Christine Dawe
U.S. Geological Survey	Mark Sogge	Tom Owens