

Southern Rockies LCC Interim Steering Committee Meeting
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Albuquerque, NM
December 14, 2010, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Meeting Summary

Participants

For a complete list of meeting participants, please see Appendix 1.

Objectives

- Review and revise SRLCC **draft governance document** including consideration of input from the previous day's outreach meetings.
- Review and revise **draft operational plan**.
- Develop an initial strategy for identifying common and priority landscape-scale research and **science needs**.

Outcomes/Agreements

- The group agreed to changes to the draft governance document (see discussion section below for details).
- The group agreed to invitation parameters for the Steering Committee: invite all tribes, state agencies, and Federal agencies as well as some NGOs; encourage each to pick one representative.
- The group agreed to a proposed framework/approach to collecting science needs (see discussion section for an overview of the approach).
- Group discussion emphasized the importance of inclusiveness of all partners.

Action Items/Next Steps

- Revise the draft Governance Document (BOR will incorporate changes from the meeting).
- Prepare a proposed Steering Committee invitation list and invitation letter for the next ISC meeting (BOR and USFWS).
- A subcommittee will prepare a document describing the proposed science needs approach discussed today and clarify how the Operational Plan and Science Needs compilation relates to this approach. (Katrina Grantz will lead this effort).
- Follow up with Western Governors Association regarding the DOI-State MOU (Jonne Hower, BOR).
- Today's participants will be added to the Southern Rockies LCC Interim Steering Committee email list.

Next Meetings

- January 2011: Southern Rockies LCC Interim Scoping Committee meeting (teleconference) to finalize Steering Committee invitations.
- Late February – first Southern Rockies LCC Steering Committee Meeting.
- More tribal outreach in 2011 – individual meetings or larger tribal meeting(s)..

Overview of Discussion

Udall Foundation/USIECR Study on Organization of Existing Standing LCCs

Avra Morgan, BOR, provided an overview of a study by the Udall Foundation/US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution on the structure and governance of other LCCs. Coordinators for six LCCs were interviewed. The report is still being finalized. Findings include:

- Steering Committees are comprised of 13 to 30 members, with approximately half being federal agencies; 4 of 6 LCCs Steering Committees have tribes; 5 of 6 have NGOs.
- Steering Committees make recommendations to funders (e.g., USFWS); funders make decisions of their own discretion, with consideration of the input from the Committees.
- Some chair and vice chairs were state/fed combinations. One LCC is considering a third, tribal co-chair.
- LCCs had various subcommittees (advisory teams, issue-specific committees, geography-based committees; the Great Northern had ecoregional forums).
- Where there was an existing organization already in place, the LCC formed more easily and quickly.
- Recommendation is to keep our Governance Document simple initially.

Southern Rockies Draft Governance Document

Participants reviewed the draft governance document, which outlines the purpose of the LCC and how decisions are made. It will be presented in draft form to the Steering Committee in 2011. The following changes were identified (*with overview of related discussion noted in italics*):

- General changes throughout the document:
 - change “natural resources” to “natural and cultural resources.”
 - *Natural resource management includes socioeconomics.*
 - change “agencies” to “organizations;” change “natural resource management agencies” and “land management agencies” to “resource management agencies or organizations” or “resource management and science agencies or organizations.”
- Function of the Steering Committee – add the following bullets/concepts:
 - Set science priorities and work with Climate Science Centers.
 - Engage all stakeholders involved in natural and cultural resources management.
 - *This includes industry. However, the group also noted that there are feasibility/practicality issues in engaging all stakeholders.*
 - Ensure cross-communication in the national network of LCCs.

- Ensure consistency with DOI Secretary's Plan.
- Steering Committee Composition Criteria:
 - Combine bullets one and three: Jurisdictional responsibility for natural and cultural resource management and actively engaged in addressing natural and cultural resource management issues.
 - Capacity for furthering the ~~purpose~~ mission of the SRLCC.
 - Provide direct links and communication with the science community and other conservation organizations or land managers involved in conservation delivery, particularly those operating at local levels.
 - Add: Represent a diverse set of interests and trust responsibilities.
 - Add: Capability for identifying science needs and for science development and delivery.
- Individual Steering Committee Roles and Responsibilities:
 - Executive and management level representatives of their agency or organization (strike remainder of sentence)
 - *The group discussed whether membership should allow executive/management-level or those with close access. The group discussed that members may not be able to make decisions on the spot, but agreed that the intent is to have high-level decision-makers. Working groups/subcommittees would include more technical expertise.*
 - Add: For federal agencies, facilitate and support federal agencies' individual tribal consultation responsibilities.
 - *The individual agencies have tribal consultation responsibilities; the intent is not to imply that the LCC itself has a consultation responsibility.*
- Add a section providing the option for the Steering Committee to form an Executive Committee depending on size.
- Steering Committee Meetings: The expectation will be 2 face-to-face meetings per year and 4-6 conference calls a year (roughly 2 hours each), and that Steering Committee members would also spend some time in updating and gathering information from their organizations/constituencies/etc. between meetings.

Steering Committee Composition

Discussion:

- The group discussed the importance of a workable size and not forming a new bureaucracy. On the other hand, it is important to be inclusive.
- With respect to allocation of tribal seats within the Steering Committee, one tribe cannot speak for another tribe; during the tribal outreach meeting on December 13, 2010, it was suggested that a consensus process with tribal caucuses could be viable. On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that tribes are sovereign nations; inviting one and excluding another is not appropriate
- Similarly, one state agency cannot speak for another; the group discussed having State Governors appoint their representatives, or inviting multiple agencies (copying all on the same letter), and encouraging them to pick one or two representatives.

- Federal agencies have multiple regions and divisions (e.g., USDA Forest Service has research and management branches); recommend one seat per agency with the option to have a second if needed. NRCS and NOAA should also be included.

Agreements:

- All tribes will be invited to the Steering Committee.
- State agencies will be invited, with the recommendation that 1 to 2 agencies from each state be represented.
- Federal agencies will be encouraged to send one representative.
- Some NGOs will be invited (to be determined).
- Invitation letters will also describe opportunities for participation beyond the Steering Committee (e.g., through subcommittees).
- Depending on the size of the Steering Committee, an Executive Committee may be needed; this would be determined by the Steering Committee.

Next Steps

- Prepare a draft Steering Committee invitation list and invitation letter for the next meeting.

Draft Operational Plan

Katrina Grantz, BOR, provided an overview of the draft Operational Plan, which describes LCC goals and objectives and how they will be met. Steps include: assess existing conditions, assess existing science needs, look at potential stressors and impacts and develop potential adaptation strategies, and monitor and evaluate.

The term “Operational Plan” comes from the DOI Secretarial Order, although some group members noted that this document is more of an implementation strategy.

The group decided not to discuss specifics of what should go in the Operational Plan vs. the Governance Document; the important thing is that the components are somewhere, and that potential Steering Committee members have information on what the LCC is and what it is going to do for partners, what is expected from partners, who is on the Steering Committee, and what the Steering Committee is going to do.

There was concern that the science needs portion of the Operational Plan is getting too far ahead of the process as the Steering Committee has not been formed and the Science Coordinator has not been hired.

Science Needs

Kate Kitchell, USGS, presented a proposed approach to assessing science needs. She described the goals for today’s meeting and a proposed approach to science needs:

1. Initiate process for collective science priorities → science plan.
 - a. Basis for RFP/FOA

2. Discuss expectations/objectives of the science strategy/plan/process.
3. Discuss key steps to develop priorities and plan.
4. Initiate interim Science Committee to implement steps and develop initial priorities to recommend to Steering Committee.

Proposed Approach:

1. Goals/outcome/scope – Landscape scale stressors; climate change emphasis; adaptive management feedback.
2. Key steps in approach – the basis for priorities and plan (the Science Committee implements this):
 - a. What we have:
 - i. Inventory existing research and capacity (e.g., UCR/Recovery Plans)
 - ii. Identify existing documents that articulate science needs
 - b. What we need:
 - i. Compile unmet needs
 - ii. Prioritize (using criteria)
 - iii. Recommendations for how/who to meet the needs (this includes how to deliver the needs to those on the ground and get feedback)
3. Initiate Committee members → lead (capacity for doing this is relatively limited; have to be realistic, but start down the road)

The group brainstormed desired outcomes of the science needs process:

- Basic foundational information across the LCC.
- Accumulation of information → synthesize data in a usable and understandable form; virtual data sharing.
- Evaluate existing information for major gaps; direct science toward these gaps; make the science user friendly for those in the field.
- Develop consensus on ecological response and habitat models on which to base impacts/use as a foundation for determining vulnerability.
- Understanding of short- and long-term implications of future drought on management.
- Assessment of range and extent of invasive species.
- Assessment of critical thresholds to predict when there will be significant changes in dominant vegetation types – what are the tipping points related to temperature and precipitation?
- Question/issue-driven objectives are needed: What do we want the landscape to look like? Don't put the science ahead of the management questions.
- What are the co-occurring stressors? Climate, urbanization, etc.
- Establish baseline conditions.
- Feedback strategy for short- and long-term adaptive management.
- Full utilization of parallel efforts (e.g., REAs).
- Science for future planning of diverse organizations (including smaller organizations).
- Information on drivers (changes in physical conditions).
- Translate expected change/magnitude over time into language that is meaningful to managers.
- Facilitate information sharing- don't be duplicative of what is already happening.

- Improve “best available data” and support its maintenance:
 - Fill the data gaps.
 - Improve data quality.
 - e.g., data for habitat assessments, springs, protected areas, corridors.
- Geospatial database:
 - Others have started this but have lacked resources to complete. For example:
 - National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII – USGS)
 - Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)
 - Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiatives

Discussion of Approach:

- The group agreed that the general approach makes sense.
- There was concern expressed over the timing of implementation of this approach:
 - Forming a subcommittee/moving forward with science needs prior to the Steering Committee being formed and prior to selection of the Science Coordinator suggests that the process is moving forward without being inclusive of all partners.
 - It is the purview of the Steering Committee to determine its approach and science priorities.
 - A subcommittee could identify existing documents and inventory existing research, but should not determine and prioritize unmet needs before the Steering Committee is seated.
 - BOR has a draft Funding Opportunity Announcement that it hopes to post in early 2011.

Next Steps:

- A subcommittee will prepare a document describing the proposed science needs approach discussed today and clarify how the Operational Plan and Science Needs compilation relates to this approach.
 - Katrina Grantz will lead/organize this effort.
 - Volunteers: Dwight Atkinson (EPA), Sam Cushman (USFS), Kate Kitchell (USGS), Katrina Grantz (BOR), Pam Benjamin (NPS), Jonne Hower (BOR), Warren Day (USGS), Josh Avey (AZ DGF), Jeremy Mikrut (BOR)

General Discussion

- Participants expressed concern about the process moving forward without being inclusive of all partners. People are still finding out about the process and are joining meetings for the first time. There is interest in learning more, but attendance at this meeting does not signal buy-in on the part of a particular agency, State, or tribe.
- Especially in the context of the economic downturn, states and tribes are underfunded and cannot commit to participating in subcommittees right now.
 - There is interest in participating in the Science Committee but not necessarily in preparing and reviewing the draft Governance Documents.
 - States are involved in several LCCs and need to prioritize which to be more involved in.

- Department of Interior has made a commitment to States that LCCs will provide support through the Western Governors Association (WGA) for a decision support system (there is an MOU).
 - Jonne Hower at BOR offered to follow up with WGA on this.

Appendix 1 – Meeting Participants

Linda Anania (BLM)
Dwight Atkinson (EPA)
Pam Benjamin (NPS)
John Bradford (USDA Forest Service)
David Busch (USGS - Pacific Southwest Area)
Sam Cushman (USDA Forest Service)
LeRoy Daugherty (NM State University)
WarrenDay (USGS)
Jody Erikson (The Keystone Center)
Katrina Grantz (BOR)
Jonne Hower (BOR)
Clayton (Honyumptewa) (DNR- Hopi Tribe)
Kevin M Johnson (USFWS)
Joe Jojola (BIA)
Kate Kitchell (USGS)
Sabrina Long (NNDWR-WMB)
John Longworth (NM Office of the State Engineer)
Jeffery J Lukas (CU - Western Water Assessment)
Avra Morgan (BOR)
Mark Nelson (Wyoming Game and Fish Dept.)
Brent Newman (LWCB)
Fred Noack (USDA Forest Service Intermountain Region)
Rosemary Pendleton (USDA Forest Service)
Sharon Rose (USFWS)
Tom Schreiner (CO-DOW)
Sabra Schwartz (AZ GFD)
Julie Shapiro (The Keystone Center)
Teresa Showa (NNDWR-WMB)
Brenda Smith (USFWS-AZ)
Verlin Smith (BLM)
Greg Watson (USFWS-CO)
Matthew Wunder (NM Dept. of Game and Fish)