

## Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative Draft Governance and Operational Charter

January 4, 2011

*This is a draft charter under which the Steering Committee is to be established. The Steering Committee will discuss and finalize a Great Basin LCC Governance and Operation Charter.*

### 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, calls 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 from July 21-23, 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 an informational webinar on September 29, 2010, a Basin-Wide Meeting in Reno, Nevada on October 29, 2010, and a follow-on webinar on November 3, 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. This draft charter has been revised to take into account the feedback received.

### 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, 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.

## **B. Purpose**

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The Great Basin LCC will be a self-directed cooperative that will provide a range of scientific and technical support tools for landscape-scale conservation design to a wide array of managers. These tools will help managers identify and target explicit biological objectives for native species and habitats in the face of climate change and other stressors. 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/or 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 socio-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.

**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.

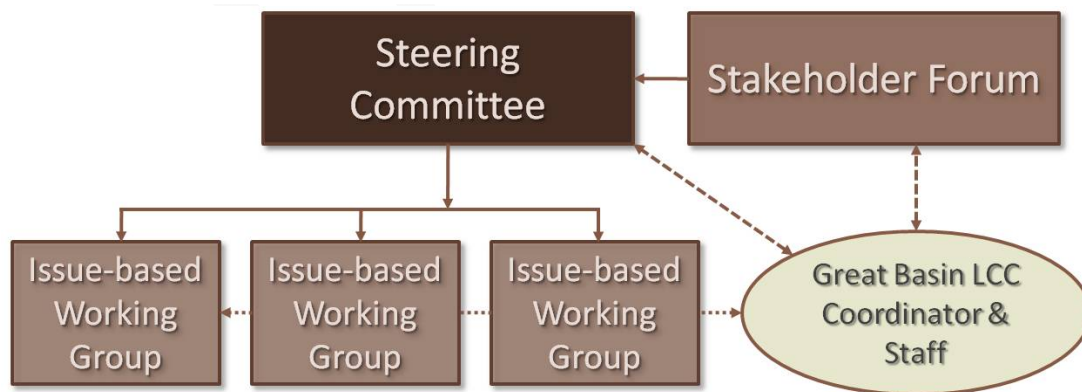
*Objective:* Improve the exchange and availability of scientific information about the Great Basin.

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

**E. Structural Organization**

The basic organization of the Great Basin LCC is comprised of a Steering Committee, Stakeholder 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 Stakeholder Forum, as well as responsible for conveying information, needs and recommendations to the Stakeholder 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.
- **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.
- **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 Stakeholder 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).

### 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.

- 5 State agency representatives (one from each Great Basin state)
- 3 Department of Interior representatives: 1 BLM, 1 USFWS, 1 rotating seat for other agencies

- 3 Department of Agriculture representatives: 1 USFS, 1 NRCS, and 1 rotating seat for other agencies
- 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
- 10 non-governmental organization and private representatives

## **2. 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.

## **3. Stakeholder Forum**

The Stakeholder 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 select non-governmental and private 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.

## **4. 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, Stakeholder 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. Stakeholder 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 Stakeholder 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 Stakeholder Forum will be facilitated by a neutral facilitator.

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