

# The Right Science in the Right Places

## *Landscape Conservation Cooperatives*

Landscape conservation cooperatives (LCCs) are conservation-science partnerships between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and other federal agencies, states, tribes, NGOs, universities and stakeholders within a geographically defined area. They inform resource management decisions to address landscape-scale stressors including habitat fragmentation, genetic isolation, spread of invasive species, and water scarcity—all of which are accelerated by climate change.

With an initial federal investment of \$25 million in FY2010, the Service and USGS will begin forming eight LCCs across the country in the following geographic areas: Pacific Islands, Great Plains, Plains and Prairie Potholes, South Atlantic, North Atlantic, Great Northern, California and Arctic.

LCCs provide scientific and technical support for conservation at “landscape” scales—the entire range of an identified priority species or groups of species. They support biological planning, conservation design, prioritizing and coordinating research, and designing species inventory and monitoring programs. LCCs also have a role in helping partners identify common goals and priorities to target the right science in the right places for efficient and effective conservation. By functioning as a network of interdependent units rather than independent entities, LCC partnerships can accomplish a conservation mission no single agency or organization can accomplish alone.

Collectively, LCCs will comprise a seamless national network supporting landscapes capable of sustaining abundant, diverse and healthy populations of fish, wildlife and plants. They will provide a strong link

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between science and conservation delivery without duplicating existing partnerships or creating burdensome and unnecessary bureaucracy. Rather than create a new conservation infrastructure from the ground up, LCCs build upon explicit biological management priorities and objectives, and science available from existing partnerships, such as fish habitat partnerships, migratory bird joint ventures and flyway councils, as well as species- and geographic-based partnerships.

LCCs support adaptive resource management by evaluating implementation of conservation strategies, maintaining and sharing information and data, and improving products as new information becomes available. Shared data platforms serve multiple purposes, including the collaborative development of population/habitat models under alternative climate scenarios to inform spatially explicit decision support for all partners. Decision-support systems and products developed by LCCs not only help determine the most effective conservation actions to support shared priorities, but also provide tools to

compare and contrast the implications of management alternatives.

In the face of accelerated climate change and other 21st-century conservation challenges, LCCs will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of scientific information and conservation actions and support necessary adjustments as new information becomes available. This iterative process of information sharing will help scientists and resource managers deal with uncertainties on the landscape and provide tools to compare and contrast the implications of management alternatives.

For more information on LCCs and the Service’s landscape conservation work with partners, visit <http://www.fws.gov/science/shc/index.html>

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
<http://www.fws.gov>

**December 2009**

