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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Strategic Habitat Conservation

## *Landscape Conservation Cooperatives*

One of the strengths of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is our technical excellence in planning and delivering conservation. Whether on a National Wildlife Refuge, at a National Fish Hatchery, or on some other public or private land, the plans and projects we deliver are widely acclaimed for their quality and effectiveness in addressing conservation challenges.

The conservation challenges of the 21st Century are more complex than ever before. In addition to those we previously confronted at the local level, widespread threats such as drought, climate change and large-scale habitat fragmentation are complicating our efforts to plan and conduct conservation. These complex threats don't just impact isolated places or individual species, but entire landscapes and multiple resources simultaneously.

These challenges are too large for the Service or any single organization to meet alone. It will take a combined effort involving many public and private organizations to deal with the landscape-scale issues facing us all. **Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs)** provide a forum for States, Tribes, Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities and other groups to work together in a new way.

LCCs are applied conservation science partnerships with two main functions. The first is to provide the science and technical expertise needed to support conservation planning at landscape scales – beyond the reach or resources of any one organization. Through the efforts of in-house staff and science-oriented partners, LCCs are generating the tools, methods, and data managers need to design and deliver conservation using the **Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC)** approach. The second function of LCCs is to promote collaboration among their members in defining shared conservation goals. With these goals in mind, partners can identify where and how they will take action, within their own authorities and organizational priorities, to best contribute to the larger conservation effort. LCCs don't place limits on partners; rather, they help partners to see how their activities can "fit" with those of other partners to achieve a bigger and more lasting impact.

The benefits of LCC partnerships don't stop there. The 22 individual LCCs are working together to promote connections among conservation efforts across even wider geographic and political boundaries. Whether it's a shared interest in conserving a species across its entire range or addressing a threat that extends beyond a single region, LCCs band together to deal



*LCCs are forums for partnerships that allow a region's private, state and federal conservation infrastructure to operate as a system rather than as independent entities.*

*Photo: USFWS/Brian Jonkers*

with widespread conservation problems – including those beyond their own borders.

Though relatively new, LCCs already are providing invaluable support to the Service in meeting some of our most intractable conservation challenges. They bring a new level of scientific capability to the table that we and our partners will continue to draw upon as we develop landscape-scale conservation plans and strategies. Equally important, they promote the exchange of plans, coordination of activities, and leveraging of resources among our conservation partners so together we can create landscapes capable of supporting self-sustaining fish and wildlife populations for current and future generations. And, after all, isn't that the bottom line?



*Idaho landscape. Photo: USFWS*

**For more information on the national LCC network, visit:**

**<http://www.doi.gov/lcc/index.cfm>**

**or contact Doug Austen, National LCC Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

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