

**Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Work Plan
for the
Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative**

[Draft date: September 23, 2011]

Introduction

The partners of the Desert LCC recognize the need to substantially enhance science and collaboration to adapt to climate change and other stressors on natural and cultural resources. There is a common understanding that no individual entity has the capacity to stand alone in efforts to address this suite of threats to resources. Therefore, the partners agree to identify a common set of priorities and value added activities, including objectives and desired conditions that will define the Desert LCC's success.

This work plan is intended to outline the Desert LCC budget and tasks to be initiated in support of the Desert LCC implementation of its Operations Plan and goals in during fiscal year 2012. The broad goals of the Desert LCC have been identified as:

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.

Collaboration and Communication

Support, facilitate, promote and add value to existing conservation partnerships to enhance the ability of these partnerships to respond to climate change and other stressors and to integrate scientific information into resource management plans and conservation projects.

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.

Outreach and Education

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

Accomplishing the Goals of the Desert LCC

1. Dedicated Personnel

The Bureau of Reclamation and Fish and Wildlife Service have dedicated personnel to provide day to day oversight and coordination to the Desert LCC. Additionally, a facilitator has been hired to assist with meeting facilitation and ongoing outreach and dialogue with the LCC partners through FY12. The coordinators and facilitator will work closely with each other and

with partners to identify priorities and accomplish the goals. Additional staff (i.e. GIS/Data Manager) may be required to accomplish the goals of the LCC.

The LCC Coordinator will:

- Act as the primary point of contact between the Steering Committee and staff
- Organize and accomplish Steering Committee meetings
- Coordinate and chair the Administrative Working Group
- With the Science Coordinator, conduct outreach to existing and potential LCC partners
- With the Science Coordinator, manage the budget, tasks, and schedule outlined in this work plan

The Science Coordinator will:

- Provide oversight and synthesis of all science activities and products
- Conduct specific research or applied science tasks as directed by the Steering Committee
- Track and translate status and results of science and research activities
- Coordinate and chair the Science Working Group
- With the LCC Coordinator, conduct outreach to existing and potential LCC partners
- With the LCC Coordinator, manage the budget, tasks, and schedule outlined in this work plan

2. Description of 2012 Work Tasks

Science Development and Delivery

With Desert LCC direct funding, the Science coordinator working in conjunction with the LCC working groups and sub-committees will:

Strategic Action: Identify regional and LCC-wide science needs of Desert LCC partners

Strategic Action: Compile a broad scale inventory of existing information that can be used to meet science needs

- i. Complete a comprehensive science needs assessment
- ii. Assemble and distribute a broad scale list of available inventories of existing conditions (i.e. areas managed for natural resources, list of priority species and habitats identified by partners, rivers and streams, etc) that could be shared by Desert LCC partners
- iii. Conduct specific research or applied science tasks as directed by the Steering Committee

Using LCC National Funding, the Desert LCC will:

Strategic Action: Identify and/or develop climate change vulnerability assessments for species and ecosystems

- iv. Complete a vulnerability assessment of plant communities and ecosystems in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts and evaluate the vulnerability of each protected area within this region. (Ongoing activity with NaturServe)

Through Interior's WaterSMART program:

- v. Reclamation will complete an operational risk assessment in the Upper Rio Grande River Basin, using the surface water projection information gained through its 2011 West-Wide Climate Risk Assessment activities. The operational risk assessment will use projections of surface water supplies and projections of changes in agricultural demand and reservoir evaporation to identify the impacts on deliveries of water supplies, recreation, hydropower production, and potential ecological effects by utilizing the Upper Rio Grande Simulation Model (URGSiM). Three future time periods will be evaluated: 2020-2029, 2050-2059, and 2090-2099.
- vi. Reclamation will complete the Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study through Reclamation's WaterSMART Basin Study Program. This study includes partnerships and participation by the seven Colorado River Basin States, Non-Governmental Organizations, and tribes. The study will define current and future imbalances in water supply and demand on the Colorado River Basin and the adjacent areas of the Basin States that receive Colorado River water for approximately the next 50 years. Through the study, Reclamation will also work with the study partners to develop and analyze adaptation and mitigation strategies to resolve those imbalances.

Through Interior's Rapid Ecoregional Assessment program:

- vii. BLM will complete Rapid Ecoregional Assessments for the Sonoran Desert and the Mojave Basin and Range. These studies include partnerships and participation by four southwest States, federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. The REAs will define key conservation elements and change agents and conflicts between each. The landscape level change agents include: climate change, fire, invasive species and development for the current scenario and the years 2025 and 2060. Conservation element vulnerability to climate change will be addressed. The BLM Data Management Plan and Information Platform (portal housing GIS data layers) will be shared with the Desert LCC.

Strategic Action: Identify and/or develop new science products that will fill gaps in the science needs

Strategic Action: Identify and leverage the development of climate change adaptation strategies

Strategic Action: Identify and leverage the development of decision support tools that would benefit partners

With Desert LCC direct funding, based on science priorities identified by the Steering Committee:

- viii. Reclamation will develop a Funding Opportunity Announcement to fund non-Federal entities for applied science projects to analyze the impacts of landscape-scale stressors, potential adaptation strategies, and the development of decision support tools within the Desert LCC.
- ix. Reclamation and FWS will use financial assistance agreements to fund Federal government entities for applied science projects to analyze the impacts of landscape-scale stressors, potential adaptation strategies, and the development of decision support tools within the Desert LCC.

Collaboration and Communication

Strategic Action: Collaborate and provide a forum for communication among partners and partner organizations.

With Desert LCC direct funding:

- x. The Science and LCC Coordinators will work with the Steering Committee to finalize the Operations Plan, outlining the specific objectives and desired conditions for the Desert LCC over the next five years. The Operations Plan will be reviewed and modified, as appropriate and will be a guideline for developing future annual work plans.
- xi. The Science and LCC Coordinators will continue to conduct outreach to both existing and potential LCC partners.
- xii. The Science and LCC Coordinators will continue to build upon existing LCC partnerships.
- xiii. The Desert LCC will sponsor or support partnership workshops specific to one or more of the deserts and/or the Colorado River (including Southern Rockies partners in the latter).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Strategic Action: Incorporate current information from existing monitoring programs into Desert LCC plans and operations.

- xiv. The Science Coordinator will provide current results of one or more relevant monitoring programs to the Steering Committee at each of the bi-annual Steering Committee meetings.

Outreach and Education

Strategic Action: Develop a suite of communication tools to education resource managers and the public about the effects of climate change and adaptation strategies:

With Desert LCC direct funding, the LCC and Science coordinator will develop a mechanism for sharing existing and new science and information through the following administrative tools:

- xv. Website development and updates

- xvi. Communications Plan (including information sharing and educational tools)
- xvii. Data Management/Data Portal

3. Funding – FY12

Support for the Desert LCC is expected to come in the form of specific funding and in-kind services from many sources. In addition to Reclamation and FWS, other LCC partners are also expected to provide dedicated staff time and cost shared funding for Desert LCC priorities.

Desert LCC – FY2012 Annual Work Plan			
Funding	Source	Task/Scope	Schedule
Personnel			
1 FTE	Reclamation	Desert LCC Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Working Group • Communications Plan • Manage Work Plan Schedule and Budget 	FY12
1 FTE	FWS	Desert LCC Science Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Working Group • Comprehensive science needs assessment • Data management portal • List of available inventories • Monitoring summary 	FY12
\$ 12,300	FWS	GIS/Data Management support	FY12
Direct Funding			
\$100,000	?	Updated Website, Communications Plan, Data Management	March 2012
?	?	Sponsor and support partnership workshops	FY12
\$150,000	National LCC	Mojave and Sonoran Desert ecosystem vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategies for protected areas.	October 2012
\$200,000 (additional FY12 funding tbd)	Reclamation/ WaterSMART	Upper Rio Grande River Basin Operational Risk Assessment	January 2012
\$3,500,000 Reclamation \$1,000,000 partners(total cost)	Reclamation/ WaterSMART	Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study	July 2012
Financial Assistance			
\$1,000,000	Reclamation	Non-Federal applied science projects to analyze the impacts of landscape scale stressors and potential adaptation strategies.	March 2012
	Reclamation	Federal applied science projects to analyze the impacts of landscape scale stressors and potential adaptation strategies.	March 2012

\$319,000	BIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide funding to tribes to participate in LCC activities.• Development of Vulnerability Assessments and Action Plans.• Participate in Climate Change Workshops and other related meetings.	
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