

Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative 2011 Status Report

The Desert LCC was very productive in 2011. As the year draws to a close, we would like to take this opportunity to update the Desert LCC partners on the status of this first official year of activities. At a kick-off meeting in April, a Steering Committee was established and foundational concepts for the LCC were proposed. The results of a rapid Science Needs Assessment were presented and initial science priorities and funding opportunities were discussed. A second Steering Committee meeting was convened in September with the purpose of refining and prioritizing the work of the LCC.

Steering Committee

Larry Voyles, Director of Arizona Department of Game and Fish, was selected by the Steering Committee to be the first chair and will serve in this capacity for one year. Duane Pool, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, was selected to be the vice-chair for 2012. The Steering Committee consists of 28 members representing federal and state agencies, tribes, and non-governmental organizations (see table at end of this update).

Working Groups

Four Working Groups have been established under the leadership of the LCC and Science Coordinators to serve as Desert LCC “think tanks” to develop strategic concepts and analyze issues and other operative needs as identified by the Steering Committee.

The **Science Working Group** has the primary responsibility for coordinating input on science and information needs and initiatives and recommending priority needs to the Steering Committee. This group is currently developing a Comprehensive Science Needs Assessment for the Desert LCC and will be working with the Steering Committee to set priorities from a list of collated science needs. The **Administrative Working Group** has the primary responsibility for proposing revisions to the Desert LCC Governance Document and Operations Plan, as necessary, and for developing the Annual Work Plan and Annual Report. The **Tribal Working Group** will take the lead on outreach and coordination with the 27 Desert LCC Tribal communities and support the other standing working groups with specific tribal interests and perspectives. The **GIS and Data Management Working Group** has the primary responsibility for identifying existing resources of GIS mapping and other data, and for developing a strategy for making data accessible to Desert LCC stakeholders.

Science

In September, 2011, the Bureau of Reclamation awarded more than \$900,000 in funding to support seven science projects in the Desert LCC. Those projects include:

ABOR - Northern Arizona University	Predicting Effects of Climate Change on Riparian Obligate Species in the Southwestern United States
Kansas State University	Metacommunity Dynamics of Gila River Fishes
Sky Island Alliance	Springs and Seeps Inventory, Assessment and Management Planning Project

Texas Tech University	Resource Management in a Changing Climate: Understanding the Relationships between Water Quality and Golden Alga Distribution in the Pecos River, New Mexico and Texas
University of Arizona	Utility Guide to Rainwater/Stormwater Harvesting as an Adaptive Response to Climate Change
University of Texas at Austin	Fish Data Compilation and Climate Change Assessment for Desert LCC Fishes
World Wildlife Fund	Remote Acquisition of High Quality Topography (LIDAR) and Multispectral Imagery Data for the Rio Grande through the Big Bend National Park: A Critical Need for Climate Change Mitigation Planning

In support of Desert LCC science needs, the Bureau of Reclamation is assessing climate impacts to water supplies across the west through the West-Wide Climate Risk Assessments and specific Basin Studies. The Fish and Wildlife Service, in collaboration with NatureServe, is conducting a climate vulnerability assessment of plant communities in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts. The Steering Committee has called upon its partners to identify other projects that could be used to meet Desert LCC science needs and has received several proposals that could be carried out collaboratively by partners working together.

Administration

The Administrative Working Group has developed three foundational documents for the Desert LCC. The Operations Plan outlines the long-term (5 year) strategic direction for Desert LCC, the Governance Document outlines the mission, goals, structure and decision making process, and the Annual Work Plan outlines specific tasks and funding for the ensuing year and metrics and timelines for monitoring the effectiveness of the Desert LCC. The first two, the Operations Plan and the Governance Document, were adopted by the Steering Committee in January 2012, and the third, the Annual Work Plan, currently in draft format, will be refined over the next few months to incorporate resources throughout the LCC and focus on accomplishing science projects identified by the Science Working Group and the Steering Committee.

In addition to the foundational documents, the Administrative Working Group is reviewing communication methods and continued outreach needs and is developing an effective communication plan to enhance outreach to and engagement of DLCC partners.

Tribal

Several tribes are currently on the Steering Committee, and there is also representation of cultural resources and traditional ecological knowledge on the Science and Administrative Working Groups. The Tribal Working Group is focused on continued outreach to tribes specifically focused on input into science needs and potential science projects.

GIS and Data Management

This GIS and Data Management Working Group was formed in late 2011, and will initially focus on data collection, storage and dissemination. It is working with Desert LCC Partners in reviewing options for options portals.

As we look toward next year, the Desert LCC Steering Committee has identified the following priorities:

Priorities for 2012

1. Science: Initiate projects that meet the identified science needs for 2012.
2. Science: Conduct a comprehensive science needs assessment to establish science priorities beyond 2012.
3. Partnership: Facilitate partnering opportunities.
4. Outreach: Provide opportunities to engage Tribal and other potential LCC partners.
5. Capacity: Develop and implement a communications plan, including a data portal.

Participating in the Desert LCC

Thanks for your continued interest in the Desert LCC. Please contact Avra Morgan, Interim Coordinator (aomorgan@usbr.gov) or Christina Vojta, Science Coordinator (Christina.Vojta@fws.gov) with questions, suggestions, or to become more involved in Desert LCC activities.

Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative
Steering Committee Members and Alternates

Agency/Organization	Member	Alternate
Arizona Game and Fish	Larry Voyles (Chair)	Josh Avey
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Amy Heuslein	
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Sharon Pinto	Mary Catherine Manuelito
Bureau of Land Management	Julie Decker	James Weigand
Bureau of Reclamation	Lorri Gray	Terry Fulp
California Association of Four Wheel Drive Club	John Stewart	
California Fish and Game	Armand Gonzales	Whitney Albright
Cocopah Indian Tribe	Jill McCormick	
Colorado River Indian Tribes	Grant Buma	Johnny Hill
Colorado River Indian Tribes	TBD	
Department of Defense	Fon Duke	
Fish and Wildlife Service	Benjamin Tuggle	Dana Roth
Fort McDowell Nation	Carol Klopatek	
Gila River Indian Tribe	Margaret Cook	
Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE)	Eduardo Peters	Margarita Caso
National Park Service	Martha Lee	Ray Sauvajot
Native American Land Conservancy	Sean Milanovich	Kurt Russo
Natural Resources Conservation Service	TBD	
Nevada Department of Wildlife	Laura Richards	Chris Tomlinson
New Mexico Office of the State Engineer	John Longworth	Mike Johnson
Rio Grande Joint Venture	Mary Gustafson	
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory	Duane Pool (Vice-Chair)	
Sky Island Alliance	Louise Misztal	Jenny Neeley
Sonoran Joint Venture	Robert Mesta	Geoffrey Geupel
Texas Park and Wildlife	Scott Boruff	Ruben Cantu Jeff Raasch
The Nature Conservancy - Mexico	Rosario Alvarez-Gutierrez	Laura Paulson
U.S. Forest Service	Dave Stewart	Christine Dawe
U.S. Geological Survey	Mark Sogge	Tom Owens