

# The Right Science in the Right Places

## *Landscape Conservation Cooperatives*

Landscape conservation cooperatives (LCCs) are applied conservation science partnerships between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and other Interior Department bureaus, as well as other federal agencies, states, tribes, NGOs, universities and stakeholders within a geographically defined area.

A centerpiece of the FWS and Interior Department climate change strategies, LCCs 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 FWS and USGS will begin forming eight LCCs across the country. Partner interest could drive the establishment of several additional LCCs in FY2010.

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

*LCCs will comprise a seamless national network supporting landscapes capable of sustaining abundant, diverse and healthy populations of fish, wildlife and plants*

abundant, diverse and healthy populations of fish, wildlife and plants. They will provide a strong link 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 conservation strategies, maintaining and sharing information and data, and improving products as new information becomes available. Shared data platforms serve multiple purposes, including collaborative development of population/habitat models under alternative climate scenarios to inform landscape- and

finer-scale resource management decisions. 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 maps and more information on LCCs, visit: <http://www.fws.gov/science/shc/lcc.html>

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

February 2010

