

Background

The Appalachian region is one of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet. Recognized with U.N. World Heritage site and as a Man and the Biosphere project, the region is considered one of the important biodiversity hotspots in the world (Appendix A). As populations grow in a changing climate, stressors such as the growth of the energy industry are increasingly putting the Appalachian region's natural heritage at risk.

The Appalachian Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) was formed in 2009 as a broad-based partnership to provide the science necessary to do strategic conservation of our natural resources across a geographic area that spans six states and several federally recognized Tribes. The Appalachian LCC is one of 22 other LCCs that form a national, cooperative framework for addressing conservation challenges that are too big for any single organization to handle on their own. Facilitated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), LCCs are being implemented in a staged process. In 2010, eight LCCs were funded and directed to be implemented. The Appalachian LCC was not one of those eight. In 2011, three more LCCs will be funded. The Appalachian LCC is currently being considered as one of the LCCs that will be funded in 2011.

In the meantime, the Appalachian LCC has secured funding to hire an Appalachian LCC Coordinator to begin the work of forming the Appalachian LCC partnership. This communications plan is meant to aid the development of the Appalachian LCC and to help expand the partnership base.

Communications Goals

What are the communication goals for 2011? What are the most important things to accomplish?

Key Audiences

Communications efforts will target several broad and targeted audiences in an effort to meet the Appalachian LCCs Communications Goals.

Broad Audiences

Who are the broad audiences? Why are they important? How will we reach them?

Targeted Audiences

Who are the targeted audiences? Why are they important? How will we reach them?

Messages

What is the Appalachian LCC's message? What is the most important thing to express?

Challenges

Resources

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has committed to staffing a part-time communications coordinator position for the Appalachian LCC. The communications coordinator is responsible for all materials and outreach to date regarding the Appalachian LCC. Moving forward, the communications coordinator is working with the Appalachian LCC Coordinator to identify possible position descriptions for interns to support communications and outreach work.

Action Plan

What are the communications goals and corresponding action items?

Goal 1:

Action Items:

1.

Action Plan + Deliverables

Key to Audience Descriptions:

X = Audience 1

Lead = Person responsible for tracking and completing the deliverable.

See Appendix B for the Action Plan deliverables.

Timing

The Appalachian LCC should use a staged approach in their specific outreach efforts and take advantage of collaborations with partners, special events, and other opportunities as appropriate.

Recommendation:

1. Engage in a prioritization of the Action Plan deliverables to create a calendar for outreach expectations throughout the year.

Evaluation

In calendar year 2011, it is important for the Appalachian LCC to be able to track the effectiveness of messaging and communications with their target audiences.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct several studies throughout the year to evaluate partners attitudes toward the North Atlantic LCC and inreach efforts.
2. Use Web analytics tools to track Website use by partners and the public.