

**Appalachian LCC
Interim Steering Committee Meeting Notes
December 8th, 2011**

LCC Operations - Meeting Notes:

David Whitehurst, ISC Chair welcomes folks and commends them for all the hard work to set up governance. Introduction of Wendi Weber, Dave Russ, and Tom Shope who made opening comments for the group. Meeting facilitated by **Chris Burkett** of VA DGIF. A diversity of groups in attendance and it is one of the potential strengths of this group. **Jean Brennan** is the Appalachian LCC Coordinator; **Bridgett Costanzo** is the Science Coordinator; **Megan Nagel** provides Communication Support and recorded these notes.

Wendi Weber: The FWS is committed to this partnership. We are so new and already so far ahead with this LCC. The potential for what we can do and what we have done is huge. We are hearing very strong support for the LCCs so I am very optimistic about the budget.

Dave Russ: USGS is happy to be a participant and are committed to the partnership. As we are reorganizing, LCCs can fit in to our broader planning. Attention has lately been focused on Marcellus and Utica shale issue, putting together our response and planning. Established the CSC in the NE, led by UMass Amherst. Goals to identify and promote the linkages between the LCCs and the plan developed by the CSC and will focus efforts on the highest priority the group comes up with.

Tom Shope: Budget at DOI in CR, but two points. 1) Idea of leveraging. In OSMRE we are small but have a large responsibility, esp. here in the Appalachians. 2) Capability of people to identify on behalf of the office of OSMRE.

Topic 1) ISC vision for AppLCC Roles & Responsibilities

Chris Burkett facilitated a group discussion prompted by the following comments: Looking at the small size of the LCC staffing. Last week we heard a lot of goals related to multi-agency resources and the work we want to do; we should also consider the logistics of what it will take to bring that to bear. What role do you see the LCC playing in that? Coordination? Regional planning? What framework or blueprint do we want to use?

Rachel M: Generalization – we are essentially of 2 types, those that manage and those that do research (plus those that do both); LCC focus on bring these two areas of responsibility together. Opportunity to have platform to share info, avoid duplication, coordinate and work well with one another. Believe we can do this to higher degree through LCC.

Mike H: help us identify how to create a habitat system owned by all partners – enough collective habitat to accomplish goals. Work already done toward this goal even had prelim cost estimates; need to figure out how to have enough habitat in the right places.

Gwen B: Assist us with coordinating; we all have different capacities; agree LCC key function is what Mike Harris has mentioned.

Tom S: I see a big value as consolidating effort of piece-meal function of all of the agencies/partners at the table and establish commonality; partners would still focus on their mission and LCC would help provide information and access to information. Failures happen when get too large to manage.

Thomas M: AppLCC is a team of 3, but the purpose of the collective table is to identify how we put together workgroups to maximize funds to get our outcomes. If it all has to go through Jean it won't work, but need to put together effective workgroups.

Helen R: Struggling with funding to get things done on the ground as well as address climate change. I see that we are focused on the science fund but if we are going to leverage fund from corporate partners and others, how can we tap that resource interested in projects and that speaks the business language?

Clyde T: The model for conservation is to be more than if the LCC existed. What we put into this is something the taxpayer benefits from. The mechanisms for that are in alignment, mutually support each other, and leveraging. Key to that is communication. The process from last week [Science Needs Workshop] and those like it themselves give us opportunities. Jean and the staff can help with innovation and facilitation but a lot of that is up to us. Reaching out to folks outside the LCC is up to us.

Rachel M: Begins the process of multiplying that staff of three and getting it to that community. Once they recognize the LCC as that resource, new ideas can be innovated. Support both politically and in other ways and do good stewardship.

Jerry M: Last week at the National Partners Group that coordinates USGS CSCs. 30-35 folks there, all sectors – particularly industry. The parallels that you are saying and that group said are striking in a few areas. Everyone recognizes the need for science and the number one concern was communication, leveraging, and coordination - "It will be really helpful for us if you guys provide a safe space for people to come together and talk through needs and issues."

Jim S: Looking at a conservation model that people have applied at lots of different partnerships over the years and in the face of cc – what is unique and different? Has there been discussion about that? From an issues standpoint...

Wendi W: Opportunity to bring the various JVs together at the same table and use that landscape scale and look at how they can compliment each other. And how even we at the FWS can shift our priorities and resources to compliment that. Look at limiting factors, not just cc, in a more cohesive way. What do we all bring together that can address those as one landscape, not loosing site of the great individual work.

David W: Structured ourselves to recognize those existing partnerships and make sure they are at the table. Research gather, strategic planning as a whole but what makes this unique is the unique resource base, energy issues that face this landscape, and the opportunities to actually forget new opportunities to address these challenges and allow energy development. How do we embrace that and bring people together to maintain the landscape and address needs? What HR said earlier – we have the opp. To engage the industry on this landscape to bring those folks together and work cooperatively with us.

Rachel M: This region is the most diverse temperate zone in the world. Have a truly unique place regarding the diversity of biological resources. That makes this area so important to protect but also so challenges, and also because we have so much regarding supplying natural resources.

Jean B: The issue of the LCC concept is one I am committed to as a climate scientist with an expertise in adaptation. Keeping that vision of projections of our challenge, if we don't support the most immediate, resilience, put in place our future options they will be lost and they are being lost now. The immediacy of using this vehicle, the LCC, is the first time where at the highest level, multiple agencies agree that we must be more effective and efficient and must commit jointly to these activities. The new conservation paradigm.

Bill R: The concept of bringing partners, partnerships, industry and addressing biodiversity. Ex. Specific site level – Clinch-Powell rivers.

Chris B: Hearing a lot of common themes. We've got this LCC and what are your expectations of staff. There are multiple agencies working in the Clinch, so where does the LCC fit into that or do they?

Mike H: This is an example of what we don't want to have, fix something that is already broken. This petition of 404 species that will have to be reviewed in the SE. How do we get ahead of T&E species. Part of the idea of SWGS and SWAPS, how do we take care of these? Something that can attract industry because this will affect their operations. LCC work from the front end to figure out where the best spots for that are.

David W: LCC can help figure out the right approach to get these other businesses to come to the table and invite an atmosphere that they can respond to. How do we bring those types of industries so that they can see the possibilities to help mitigate or get out in front of problems?

Lisa MI: Central pivot of a large irrigation circle: a convener for conversations and identifying who's missing from a broad level. As you get further from the center, you get into the specifics and the projects. By having those relationships at the center, you are better able to work collaboratively on those projects.

Doug S: A common currency and working together towards some common goals. We talk about working together but I'm not sure we know how to do that. The LCC can help us figure out the pathways to make that possible, working together on a much broader scale. The FHPs don't even know how to work together. Need to identify common goals to work together.

Chris B: Pathways and common currencies – what might that mean? Northeast states contribute money together and then identify science that needs to be done. Create a regional mechanism to identify issues and then meet them.

Doug S: RCNS are community specific at a broad biological scale, but the LCC needs to work more towards integrating all biological communities.

Thomas M: Not just the dialogue, but what is the catalyst for to get things done? The LCC can focus on the increased certainty into their decision-making process and returns on investments. Establishing common goals is the common currency, is the purpose. It brings a lot more certainty than we have now. Knowing the playing field is a big relief – then you can get the game on.

Chris B: What would the operations look like?

Thomas M: Industry wants to know WHERE conservation community is really interested – priority areas– what is the service to provide? Then that gives some certainty.

Thomas M – Not just dialog but what is catalyst to go beyond? Focus increased certainty; how we maximize returns of ecosystem services, conservation, industry outcomes. That establishes platform for common

goals. We are all making decisions now within our own entity. Industry wants to know WHERE? Needs to see stakeholder group agree on that. TNC alone not enough saying "WHERE" Could then sequence actions. Paul Johansen – need to be clear on why we're bringing people together to talk; major role of LCC is to address SNs and I have not heard that yet; get scientists to work together at larger scales; see that as major role. Lastly, cut-to-chase – funding! Need LCC seed money to partner. Putting stuff on ground is not LCC role, but providing info, prescribing design and science is role. Don't leave science out of this discussion. Mccray – Concerns. LCC in unique position to pool money. OMB is aware of problem of partnering at larger, big money scales –but still a barrier to bringing funds from one agency to another. Even transferring \$10K is difficult!

Rick B: If this group can define this large scale, design that landscape you want for conservation purposes that are important to this group. That can drive in so many ways the fixes. Over the past few months, we've had two different meetings with transportation organizations that, if we can define these landscapes, want to tie their work into what we are doing. Energy is another huge one that could tie in that way.

Paul J: We need a reason to bring other partners to the table. The LCC has a clear role to provide the tools to reach out and market to industry. I'm concerned about where the conversation has gone so far. I think it is good to bring people together, but need to be clear about why. Another major role is the science needs – that is the hook. Need a mechanism to bring scientists together to work on those systems wide challenges. Third part is funding. There are way that we can leverage funding that the LCC can use as seed money to partner with industry money and state funds to get some serious science done. Putting stuff on the ground is not the role of the LCC, science is.

Ellen M: The LCC is in a unique position to pool money, but not from federal agencies. It is very challenging. There is still a bureaucratic barrier to transferring money between agencies. Uncertainty/uncertainty...

Thomas M: If TNC is going to make investments into the future, what are the feasibility factors and who's going to be there with me? A lot of us spend a lot of time doing that.

Dave R: Working with the shale gas companies, they are showing an increased interest in working with us for PR and to address/save costs down the road. Looking at that carefully to see how we can do this.

Helen R: Need to also be thinking about politicians and make sure that we have a good story to share with folks. Trying to make decisions about funding – we need to make sure we show what our value is and need to show it to folks.

- Facilitating shared values, common synergy to move forward and communicating those values to the public
- Venue to deliver the science to the partners who need it, LCC articulates that science providers are getting them the science they need
- Translation: translate the science to the managers, the public

Chris B: Thought to think about - Keeping our eye on the federal budget and conversations in DC. There is a continuing and growing notion that "helps us understand why we need to be funding you?" At some point the LCC will be asked to demonstrate its accomplishments, what might be appropriate measures that the LCC could use? Better to identify beforehand to collect information as we go along.

Pat R: Congress is not going to be looking specifically at the Appalachian LCC, but the entire program. Do the conversation we are having this morning going to happen at a higher level? It needs to because States with 2/3/4 LCCs with diff. visions and modes of operations it's going to complicate my life.

Wendi W: Ken Elowe is not with us today because this week they are meeting to figure out some of that coordination between and within LCCs, recognizing that struggle. We've all been asked by our Director, at least within DOI, talk about the national LCC network, but show examples of success on a specific level.

Chris B: The North Atlantic LCC is set up how they want to operate, the South Atlantic has a since of where they want to go and how they want to work, but at some point, do we take one or the other? Do we take bits and pieces?

Ellen M: The South Atlantic LCC did an outside assessment and did interviews with every steering committee, what they wanted how it blended with their day jobs; it's a huge opportunity to piggy back on the results of that work. It might be something we want to do.

Rachel M: The USGS provides support for all three of those LCCs is we are looking at how the projects we do compliment all three. The CSCs are to meet the need of multiple LCCs, JVs, FHPs, that is one nexus where that goes one. It is incumbent on the leadership of the LCC to work together and the CSCs to make sure there is no repetition of science.

Jerry M: In the SE, we are right where we want to be. Between 15-17 USGS science centers. One of the things we are doing is meeting with our LCCs and science centers to talk about what is going one, who is doing what relative to the themes at our CSCs. Don't yet have the specific awareness of our specific capacity. We are growing in this capability to do this regional coordination and science together.

Chris B: Another comment made during break – the term “translation” or “translating science needs” as part of the effort to support management activities with provided science. What does that translation term mean?

Clyde T: The notion is that we need to make sure we communicate in the language of the audience, not just in our own and louder. Ex. Restoration that creates jobs that's how I heard translation – the idea that we can get so passionate that we forget other folks don't relate.

Jean B: Beyond the partnership to deliver the science tool, we have to deliver a way for managers to use that tool, that science. The platform we make those available has to ensure that translation, that use of that science. We can model anything and print it out but you as a manger have to identify the key variables for your resource. Another part of the translation is needing managers to understand that they are not the passive receiver but the client that requests that relevant information needed to manage that resource.

Jerry M: As scientists we can be really good at predicting process. Some of our stakeholders don't need it. One of the translation challenges is to come up with outcomes that really mean something to the stakeholders. So translating stakeholder needs into endpoints we can then use as scientists is not insignificant.

Wendi W: Recommends “Don't be such a Scientist” by Randy Olsen. Tenured professor at UNH talks about connecting with different audiences.

Mike H: Measure for projects done under the SWG program, but didn't address the whole program. But to agree with what JM said, we on the management side need to do a better job of presenting our real needs to the researcher. Want to make sure the science helps us manage the resource.

Sherry M: Something along the lines of the tools developed, but there has to be the translation piece or helping to take the tool and turn it into something actionable for managers.

- 1) Identify need
- 2) Translate resulting science into a usable tool
- 3) Monitor the implementation and accomplishments of the tool "on-the-ground."

Danny L: When we are developing a research program, we challenge you to develop clear objectives: What is it that you are creating? Who is your audience? How are you going to make it usable?

Paul J: We need an operations plan, a map for how we get there. Once we figure out that part, then we get to accomplishment measures.

[Note: the Development and Operations Plan is in draft form and has been distributed to the ISC]

Jerry M: Dave and Rachel have colleagues at PRC that use SDM to help structure a hierarchy of objectives from very specific endpoints. Might be helpful to have someone come talk to the ISC to come talk about this.

Jean B: The issue of the operations plan: early on the FWS was trying to launch the LCCs and had guidance for the ops plan. We used that original draft started under SM and BEC has been working on it to: identify your science and management capacity. We are at the point to write the last chapter which is: Where do you want to go? What is your operational plan? What are your measurements of success? We need to hear from you in order to start that work to reflect your vision as a community what you want to achieve to write that last chapter.

David W: The document is a DRAFT. We all need to review it, but the staff in the meantime needs to write that last chapter (ops plan/work plan). It will take this process to help us all identify what this is and what it is not. Don't want to lose the momentum. Need to work outside of ourselves and bring other partners in. Transportation planners want to look ahead and know where the valuable resources are and we should be able to provide that for them. Need to know what that resources, the extent of that resource, what valuable cultural resources are associated with that. We need to be the go to place for folks seeking that type of information. That in turn will enlarge the partnership and allow us to meet the objectives we've set for ourselves. How do you get that information? Need to find ways to provide the tools to make that possible.

Jerry M: The barriers are much more process oriented than they are related to creating new science information. They have to do with sharing information and coming to a shared understanding of knowledge gaps. I wonder if the largest challenges aren't process related.

Tom S: I agree with the last two comments. A lot of these information tools or data sets exist. Folks are communicating, there are organizations working on the same issues. I struggle with the collective we. We being the Appalachian LCC? There is not a collective common thread yet. What is unique, what does this group add? How do we not detract from work already being done?

Chris B: We have a lot of information regarding the priority science needs and major themes: 1) science, 2)translation, 3)collaboration/outreach. Out of the needs, do any of them jump out at you

folks as being a critical need as something we want to push on? How detailed does the plan need to be?

Paul J: Do we all agree on those three major themes? Then step down, how are we going to do this? What are our strategies and who is going to do it? Not done by staff, it will be done by partners. How to measure is the next staff after we get the plan done.

Thomas M: We came up with a lot of needs, but all of the discussion seemed to get bogged down at the same point. The need to resolve the science issue and the need for translational tool. "To create a connected and resilient network." Need for science and to make the science useful.

Bridgett C: Much of what was done at the workshop could lead directly to an annual plan. Hearing broader goals:

- 1) Collaboration among and between organizations
 - Identify the science capability among partner agencies
 - Becoming aware of the political barriers
 - Identify endpoints
 - Identify knowledge gaps
 - Identify leveraging possibilities
- 2) Mechanism to translate and disseminate quality tools
- 3) Coordinating funding and leveraging
- 4) Sponsoring support of the science needs identified at the workshop
- 5) Beyond the Appalachian LCC boundary, how we fit into the national view

Chris B: Question to group - Is this what you think you see the LCC doing?

Wendi W: Made-up anecdote: If this group decided, based on last week's discussion, a need to look at additional GIS capability. Where are the core areas important to contiguous habitat? Need to better understand where those habitats are and crucial corridors for connectivity. Need those maps. Collaborate on what we need to make a good decision, then comes down to Clinch-Powell being a place that needs extra focus: USGS keeps their gauging station, industries looking at BMPs in that area, FWS targets funding there – but we'd be doing it cohesively, without redundancy and with an eye on how this fits into the larger landscape. Making stronger, better management decisions and then being able to tell our story and how it was done.

Bridgett C: We have a good start on the portfolio that represents that coming together to identify common science needs.

Bill R: I think WW summarized that really well. That was exactly what I was thinking when I previously brought up the Clinch-Powell. The LCC could also serve as a weather vein for climate change and the LCC could be the source for that information, that downscaling. We know where we are now, but now in 10, 20 or 30. Also with natural gas, transportation response, all these factors that are going to take natural resources down one more notch. Forecasters of impending doom if you will.

Jim S: Suggestion – look at Bridgett's topics compared to the three bullets and synthesize them to a point that they are useful for an ops plan. Of those items, there is clear direction for science needs. But there are others like translation and communications that direction is still needed.

David W: The ex. that WW put forth is probably what we are all looking for. The consensus seem toward those three bullets, then get into the research needs, then check back in later this afternoon.

But they need to first see what staff can do with the input that we've given them – have we captured it, are we on the right track from what we heard?

Rick B: At the large level we have the mission/vision to design successful landscapes for all taxa and the processes that support them. The things that we've talked about related to the attributes of how you want to operate. But the big charge falls to how you begin to design that landscape: where should we start working and point our efforts?

Clyde T: I think the structure is there, but I'm thinking I would take those three bullets, put BEC under that first topic, and then fit the others where they fit best. A little bit later, when fine tune the science stuff from last week that is a good start for the ops plan.

Cal D: It hasn't been clear to me, besides the M/V what are goals should be. Until we got to this summary that BEC provided, I was rather confused about which path we were on. This organization should function like a hand, but we've so far created a hand that functions together and so far this looks more like an octopus. We need to figure out how to bring all these groups together.

Discussion Decision:

LCC staff will review all feedback gathered during this session and use it to fine-tune the final draft of the Operations Plan, which will be presented to the ISC for final review in late spring and a vote a next in-person meeting. Currently ISC members are being asked to provide information regarding research and management capacity. *[A summary information needs handout was distributed and briefly discussed (posted on AppLCC website in ISC Group); email follow-up by LCC staff will occur in January.]*

Topic 2) Discussion regarding adopting Science Needs

Facilitated by David Whitehurst, Chair:

- 1) Let us know if you need further explanation of science needs
- 2) Need to identify the top 3-5 to focus our attention

DW: These research areas being broad may be what we want to focus our operations on for the next 5 years. The workgroup is going to share what they worked on last week.

[Jean Brennan, LCC Coordinator, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the outcomes of the Conservation Priorities Science Needs Workshop.]

- The Science Needs Portfolio is a working document, it will evolve as identified needs evolve
- An LCC project – guidance for decision making was drafted by the workshop planning team and ISC, is the basis for identifying pertinent needs for the LCC.
- Now we are going to go through the top five ranked needs.

Jean B: Many projects can be funded under a need. The issue how do we get to what proposal, projects and steps do we fund. How do we pose the research question that gets at those needs? We would like some direction on how to move funds this year.

[Please refer to workshop summary documents posted on the AppLCC website for information regarding the Portfolio of Science Needs and recommendations for top science needs resulting as outcomes from the workshop]

Jim S: What kind of criteria or rating process has been used or should be used.

*Refer to guidance in the synthesis report during the course of the discussion.

Lisa MI: This conversation should also be used to guide decision making for FY12 funds. That is coming up very quickly.

Jean B: Important to note that these are broad science needs under which multiple studies/projects could be funded in pursuit of filling the broader need.

Thomas M: My concerns are not that there wasn't a lot of good open work, but that this is too broad. I'm not sure what everyone understands what was meant by the science need.

David W: Do we need to combine a couple of these needs? Do we have the right top five...

*GIS working group is a foundational need and should be considered by this group, but probably isn't a "science" need

Chris B: So does this then become a set priority that the LCC needs to begin working on, rather than a need that we fund?

Thomas M: Are these top five are reflective of the top needs absolutely. But what is our process for simplifying and moving forward. We are charged with making this workable.

David W: Let's just clarify what we need, and then identify groups within here to come up with alternatives. Next steps: Develop workgroups to turn these in to RFPs. Our progress has been slow and deliberate, however, by parking the money we are running out of time to obligate that money. We are trying to go through a deliberative process to spend this money.

Bridgett C: We have the broader objectives and then the more specific ones. The workshop and listening session were to ask what the science needs. The fact that these are broader is a function of people aware that at some point this meant money. People were concerned that if they were too specific. You can refine them back again, but to set them aside would be a mistake.

Paul J: We take the top five, get comfortable with them, and then step it down to identify some specific projects. We rely on the expertise we received last week and go forth. I don't think we should ignore what they said, can we refine it and make it better, yes.

Proposal from Clyde T:

David W: Chair recognizes – Accept the recommendations of the top five ranked needs as written to be carried forward to the workgroups to be further developed.

Seconded by Dave D

David W: One of the first things within these workgroups, what are the top three things we need to do in this area? Then narrow it down and start looking at proposals...

Dave D: Moving from the motion toward the expenditure of the \$600k, which isn't a lot of money. Rather than have a bunch of people develop an RFP. Why don't we narrow down what we want and then shop that to folks who might meet that need. "This is what we mean by #3, please come contract this for us."

Lisa MI: What are we trying to achieve with the \$600k. We can't achieve all five with this small pot of money. But if we want to achieve something and demonstrate success.

David W: Motion we are voting for?

Yes: all present No: 1

Motion carries. Now, how would the group like to proceed with tasking the workgroup?

Paul J: Process wise, we charge staff who was there to pick and choose who they need to work with to go back and flesh these five priorities out. And then develop a request from them for a series of proposals to be considered for funding. Give staff the flexibility to work with whomever they need to work with and suggest a really quick turn around and bring it back to the ISC for approval by email.

Jean B: The needs are nested within the thematic working group and would preferentially draw from that community. But if your staff wasn't there, this is an open invitation for them.

Doug S: What is the charge to the workgroup? We have to provide them with some sense. I'd rather have them go straight to identifying projects, not word-smithing. We need to develop the specific charge to those workgroups.

Lisa MI: When does this ~\$600k need to be obligated by?

Rick B: By the end of March should be moving money out to whomever.

Re: the working groups – if ISC members would like to be involved, coordinate with Jean.

Clyde T: Don't need to require folks, but if you have the interest you certainly have permission. Jean would select the workgroup and ISC is now volunteering themselves or 1 staff person to work on a particular workgroup.

Rank 1 –Ellen Mecray, Dave Day, Rachel Muir

Rank 2 - TNC (Thomas Minney), Paul Johansen

Rank 3 – Todd Fearer

Rank 4 – Mike Harris, NOAA (Ellen Mecray)

Rank 5 – Lisa Mendelson-ielmini, Thomas Minney, Ellen Mecray

David W: We have made progress. How quickly do these people need to report back to us in written form, so that we can schedule a conference call to discuss this and make decisions. We do have an executive sub-committee – would you prefer for them or a conference call with information give to you before hand to vote on this issue?

Discussion Decision:

Timeline is no later than the end of January for project description development.

- LCC Staff would develop and lead the workgroups, including the ISC people who nominated themselves and their staff, to get these projects back to the ISC by the first week of February.
- Vendor decisions by the end of March.
- Need to schedule the conference call in the first two weeks of February.

DW: It's a good target, if we have to slip a little bit we will.

PR: Also ask the workgroups to suggest potential vendors and contractors that we can immediately go to.

RB: It's already been obligated, but we need to provide deliverables. By the end of March, goal is to have an executed contract with a vendor.

DD: The FWTDC in NEAFWA puts together a list similar, I suggest we start with that.

JB: We used the format that several other LCCs use to draw their proposals

PR: Asking for recommendations of several vendors as well as work some folks who have the applicable expertise.

Discussion Decision: Maximum of 3 one-page project proposals to go to ISC for review by the first week of February, for vote second week of February via conference call. Then that gives contracting 5 weeks to get done before the end of March.