



# PLAINS & PRAIRIE POTHOLES

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## LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE

# Charter

## Purpose

The Plains and Prairie Pothole Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) Charter references the authorities that allow for the creation of this LCC, defines the membership and roles of the LCC constituent parts, specifies the Charter Review Process, clarifies the governance of the LCC, and outlines its operational guidelines.

## Establishment Authority

The Plains and Prairie Potholes LCC is one of 22 LCCs being established across the country (Figure 1). Collectively, these LCCs will form a national LCC network. The LCC was formed in response to, and under the authority of, Section 3(c) of Secretarial Order 3289 (September 14, 2009): “Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America’s Water, Land, and other Natural and Cultural Resources”. Current guidance describes the LCCs as “...applied conservation science partnerships focused on a defined geographic area that informs on-the-ground strategic conservation efforts at landscape scales.” LCC partners include federal, state and tribal agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Specific authority for day to day operations of the LCC is found in the Governance Document approved by the Steering Committee in July 2010.

## Fundamental Objective of the LCC

The fundamental objective of the LCC is to “*increase conservation delivery by reducing scientific uncertainty related to landscape level stressors which are important to our partnership*”. Existing stressors such as energy development, conversion of native prairie, and wetland drainage may impact the health and productivity of shared natural resources in the PPP LCC landscape. Accelerating climate change will magnify the impacts of these stressors. We will meet this fundamental objective by leveraging partner expertise to promote coordination, dissemination and development of applied science that will support landscape level conservation.

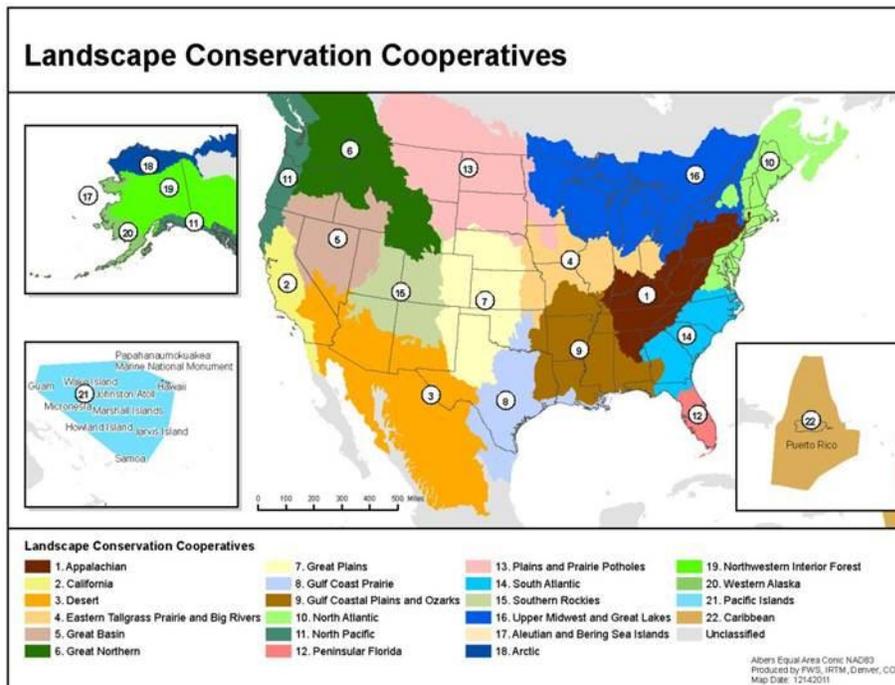


Figure 1. Geographic Extent of National LCC Network

## Guiding Principles

The LCC will operate under the following guiding principles:

- Respect each participating organization's unique mandates and jurisdiction
- Add value by capitalizing on scientific capacity of partners, avoiding redundancies, and leveraging resources
- Focus on solving biological, physical and sociological problems that will provide management relevant information for the partnership to promote scientifically sound, outcome-based, adaptive management
- Promote scientifically sound, out-come based adaptive management strategies to landscape level stressors that benefit the LCC conservation community
- Respect social, political and legal limitations while promoting solutions to landscape-level stressors (climate and others) that benefit the LCC conservation community
- Be transparent in operations and ensure access to the LCC process and products

## Our Goals

- Promote communications to enhance understanding regarding the effects of climate change and other landscape level stressors on fish and wildlife resources in the LCC

- Support coordination and collaboration among partners to improve efficiencies in their common science and information activities
- Identify and support research, data collection, analysis and sharing outcome based adaptive management strategies that address common information needs of land and water management decision makers
- Enable synthesis of information at landscape and larger spatial scales
- Enhance resource management across and beyond the LCC.
- Ensure that information products have applied conservation value for resource managers within the LCC and across LCCs

## Geographic Scope of the LCC

The LCC (Figure 2) is managed as one unit, but we have created three distinct geographic components to facilitate a clearer understanding of the complexity inherent to this large geography (Rivers/riparian corridors, prairie pothole region, and northern Great Plains). While our borders exist on a map, our purpose extends beyond these borders to the network of LCCs across North America. Close coordination with these entities and neighboring LCCs is imperative to ensure appropriate coordination on shared conservation interests.

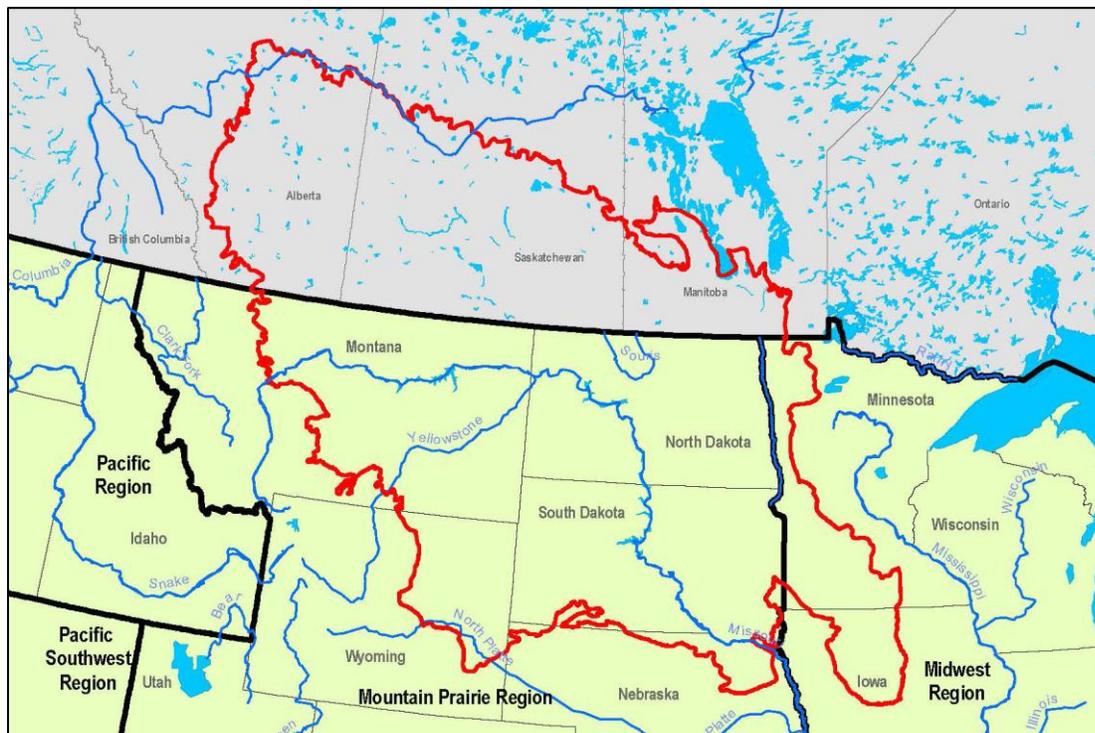


Figure 2. Geographic scope of the Plains and Prairie Potholes LCC

## LCC Composition and Staffing

LCCs are comprised of the following groups: Steering Committee, Technical Committee, working groups or teams and core staff.

**Steering Committee:** The membership of the LCC is comprised of representatives of State, Federal, Tribal and non-governmental entities with an emphasis on executives from within the agency/organization. Our Steering Committee is co-chaired. One of the two co-chairs will be selected by the members of the Steering Committee and the other will be the Regional Director of the Midwest Region – FWS.

**Technical Committee:** Each Steering Committee member may appoint one member to a technical committee. The technical committee will work to identify and prioritize the science needs of the partnership and facilitate a process for funding projects to reduce uncertainty associated with these needs.

**Core Staff:** The LCC core staff is comprised of a coordinator and science coordinator as the minimum staffing level. In addition, the USGS has provided a landscape ecologist to assist the LCC. Other staffing needs may evolve in response to the wishes of the Steering Committee (such as GIS modeler, ecologist, and communications specialist) and positions can reside within any organizations represented on the Steering Committee. Hiring authority resides with the entity funding the position.

**LCC Workgroups or Teams:** Working groups may be established and comprised of individuals from organizations who are members of the LCC, have management responsibilities, science capacities or that have skills that can meaningfully inform management decisions related to the LCC. Technical working groups shall be formed by the Steering Committee or core staff to address a specific LCC need. In addition, the partnership and core staff can request that the Steering Committee establish additional technical working groups.

## Roles and Responsibilities of LCC Committees, Groups, Staff

The-LCC Steering Committee, Technical Committee, core staff and working groups shall fulfill the roles described below:

**Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee members shall represent their agency's or organization's views on issues and represent the science needs, interest and capabilities of their agency or organization. Because participating agencies or organizations are programmatically diverse, there is the expectation that Steering Committee members will represent all of the programs within their organization. They shall work with the core staff to establish broad conservation goals, set priorities, facilitate key activities of the LCC, leverage funding across participating entities to accomplish priority tasks, and provide operational oversight of the LCC.

The Steering Committee shall make a good faith effort to seek consensus in reaching all decisions. Consensus shall be defined as concurrence without serious objection. While most decisions shall be made during face-to-face Steering Committee meetings, decisions may also be

make via teleconference, web conference, or other forms of electronic communication, provided a quorum is in participation.

**Technical Committee:** The role of the Technical Committee is to provide scientific input to the activities of the LCC within their area of expertise. The LCC core staff will seek participation and will coordinate this group as needed. The Technical Committee will work to identify the science needs of the partnership and will facilitate project solicitation and project reviews. Members of the Technical Committee shall keep informed of the LCC activities through the LCC website and through conference calls, webinars and meetings called by the LCC.

**Core Staff:** The Core staff shall provide support to all constituent parts of the LCC. They shall convene meetings, conference calls, webinars with the Steering and Technical Committees and the general public as needed. They shall organize opportunities for input from LCC committees on processes and products, and shall organize and establish workgroups to address specific topics identified by the Steering Committee. They shall provide information to the Steering Committee and seek to fulfill information requests made by the Steering Committee and its members. They shall facilitate communication between scientists and resource managers and provide a forum for continuous exchange. The core staff shall assemble, translate and deliver scientific data, analysis, and scientific tools required for conservation design and resource management decisions. Finally, staff shall coordinate with, communicate activities to, and seek opportunities to leverage funding with other partnerships and neighboring LCCs.

**LCC Coordinator:** The Coordinator shall serve as the leader, manager, and supervisor of the LCC. This shall include, but is not limited to: direct supervision of the LCC staff hired within the Coordinator's agency; work with staff from partner agencies/organizations regarding development, administration, and coordination of the LCC. The Coordinator shall assist the Steering Committee in preparing for, and conducting, their meetings. The Coordinator shall assist in development of methods to communicate with, and receive input from, the technical and Steering Committees. The Coordinator shall seek external funding opportunities and other available resources that could support the LCC activities and projects. The Coordinator shall serve as a facilitator for the meetings of the LCC. The Coordinator also serves as a member of the LCC national network and represents the LCC in national forums.

**LCC Science Coordinator:** The Science Coordinator shall work with the Steering and Technical Committees and others to identify and address science needs relative to, but not always limited to the LCC. The Science Coordinator shall serve as a leader, manager, and coordinator for the LCC science issues, activities, and programs. These duties include, but are not limited to: assisting in the design of scientific strategies and implementation approaches for Steering Committee consideration, assistance with inventory and monitoring programs, project development, coordination, review, technical support and project administration. The science coordinator shall facilitate information exchange and feedback among scientists with and outside the LCC and present results and recommendations at various meetings across the LCC. The Science Coordinator also serves as a member of the LCC national network and represents the LCC on science topics and process in national forums.

**Research Ecologist:** The Research Ecologist shall work with the Coordinator and Science Coordinator in translating, disseminating and addressing science needs identified by the Technical and Steering Committees. As a member of the Technical Committee, the Research

Ecologist will also provide technical assistance in the form project reviews and workshops to facilitate science needs. Additionally, the Research Ecologist will work with the Science Coordinator and provide assistance with inventory and monitoring programs, project development, coordination and technical support. The Research Ecologist will also provide technical assistance to other LCCs when needed. The Research Ecologist shall be housed in the USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center.

### **Steering Committee Meetings**

The co-chairs of the Steering Committee shall preside over the Steering Committee meetings. In the event that one of the chairs is absent, the other shall preside over the meeting. Meetings will be called by the co-chairs as needed and must have a quorum to engage in decision-making. The presence of a simple majority (i.e. >50%) of the participating entities on the Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum. All organizations with representation on the Steering Committee are expected to send their representative (or alternate) to each Steering Committee meeting. The LCC cannot provide funds to support Steering Committee travel. However, meetings will have an option to attend via teleconference.

Amendments and revisions to this charter will be made by consensus of the LCC Steering Committee at such times as they deem appropriate. At a minimum, this charter will be reviewed by the LCC Steering Committee every five years.