



California Landscape Conservation Cooperative (CA LCC)
DRAFT Steering Committee Meeting Summary

July 12, 2012
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Participants

Steering Committee Members and Alternates

Diana Craig, Chair, US Forest Service (USFS)
Ellie Cohen, Vice-Chair, PRBO Conservation Science (PRBO)
Whitney Albright, California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
Grant Ballard, PRBO Conservation Science
Michelle Denning, US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)
David Graber, National Park Service (NPS)
Tom Hedt, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Mark Kramer, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Nadine Peterson, California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC)
Michelle Selmon, CA Department of Water Resources (DWR)
Bob Shaffer, Joint Venture Representative
Brad Shaffer, Southwest Climate Science Alliance (SWCSA)
Wayne Spencer, Conservation Biology Institute (CBI)

Other Participants

Beth Huning, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (SFBJV)
Robert Mesta, Sonoran Joint Venture (SJV)
Jim Weigand, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

CA LCC Staff

Debra Schlafmann, Coordinator
Rebecca Fris, Science Coordinator
Karen Thorne, Research Ecologist and USGS Liaison
Mike Ward, Communications Specialist

Consultants

Elizabeth Chornesky, Sustainability Science and Policy
Will Murray, Will Murray Company
Grace Person, Center for Collaborative Policy

Objectives

Evaluate Phase II Summary, and develop a strategic plan framework.

Agenda

- Introduction and establish purpose of the session.
- Identify expected outputs for the day.
- Explain rationale and importance of the strategic plan.
- Review CA LCC identity—mission, guiding principles, and methods.
- Review Phase II interview results.
- Identify strategic imperatives.
- Develop a long-range vision of success for the CA LCC.
- Set five-year goals for the CA LCC.
- Additional Items.

Welcome and Introduction

Debra Schlafmann welcomed the Steering Committee and members of the Strategic Planning Team, and expressed her appreciation for the group's attendance. She introduced Will Murray as the facilitator for the meeting and the next phases of the strategic planning process. Meeting participants briefly introduced themselves, and Debra introduced Karen Thorne, the new CA LCC Research Ecologist and USGS Liaison.

Expected Outputs for the Meeting

Will then reviewed the meeting agenda that included the expected outcomes from the meeting and the schedule of the day. The purpose of the meeting was to develop guidelines and vision for the Strategic Planning Team to develop recommendations for the CA LCC Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) and Will asked the group to share their goals for the process.

The Steering Committee members identified three goals:

- Identify two or three points of agreement.
- Develop a calendar of benchmarks to evaluate progress.
- Feel energized about progress.

Strategic Plan: Rationale and Importance

The primary goal of the meeting is for the Steering Committee to develop goals and a vision statement to direct and guide the Strategic Planning Team as they develop recommendations for the Strategic Plan. Will asked the Steering Committee to think about the kind of role the CA LCC can have to assist with the facilitation of conservation efforts around the state. He also asked the Steering Committee to reflect on how to coordinate resources to achieve the goals of the plan, as strategic plans can provide a framework to evaluate emerging opportunities. He explained that the goals in the plan are to help the Steering Committee evaluate the CA LCC's progress towards achieving its mission.

Will explained that a strategic plan is:

- Driven by the mission.
- Based on context.
- Future-focused.
- Encompasses the entire organization.
- Results-oriented, not activity-oriented.
- Sets direction and speed.
- Provides a unified purpose.
- Coordinates resources.
- Offers a means to judge opportunities.
- Articulates efforts to not implement.
- Gives directions on how to organize to achieve results.
- Provides a way to evaluate effectiveness.

When asked what else should be included in the Strategic Plan, the Steering Committee members offered the following:

- The purpose of the strategic plan is to inspire partners and others.
- The strategic plan will help articulate the importance of Congressional funding for the CA LCC.
- The plan should identify and include potential funding sources.
- Additionally, the strategic plan will provide directionality for conservation actions on the ground.

CA LCC Mission, Guiding Principles and Methods

An organization's mission and guiding principles provide context for the efforts of their Strategic Plan. Will explained that the methods to achieve the desired goals in the plan must serve the organization's mission. He also explained that the guiding principles are a means to ensure implementation efforts remain focused on the shared values that make up the organization's purpose. Debra then reviewed the CA LCC's Mission and Guiding Principles.

Mission Statement

The CA LCC is a management-science partnership working to address the impacts of climate change and other stressors within and across ecosystems by promoting integrated science, natural resource management and conservation.

Guiding Principles

The CA LCC –

1. Strengthens existing partnerships by providing new science capacity to help them address their priority conservation needs. The CA LCC does not replace or supplant existing conservation partnerships.

2. Provides enhanced scientific capabilities to help conservation delivery in consideration of climate change. The CA LCC is not a vehicle for conservation delivery.
3. Provides agencies with additional science information and tools to help them address issues impacting management of wildlife and associated ecosystems. The CA LCC does not supersede federal, state, local and tribal natural resource management authorities.
4. Supports and enhances cooperation across ownership and management boundaries. The CA LCC does not own or manage property, nor seeks to influence ownership conditions.
5. Solicits input and participation from their agency/organization and provides their management, technical staff, colleagues, and/or constituents updates and progress of the CA LCC.

Phase II Interview Results

Debra described the phased assessment process used to gather information for the Strategic Plan. The first phase interviews were with Partner organizations. The results were that the Partners expressed a need and requested support for facilitated communication among conservation groups, resource managers, and scientists. The Phase I Report is available on the CA LCC website.

The second phase of the strategic planning process was to interview resource managers to determine their conservation objectives and science needs. Debra explained there was a very broad range of interview responses, and that was in part due to the diversity of the managers surveyed. A theme from the first phase of interviews arose in the second phase, as there were similar requests for a data clearinghouse, but no explicit common conservation objectives for species or issues emerged. Additionally, she noted that resource managers do not yet fully engage in adaptive management techniques, but they expressed the desire to do so. Overall, it is clear that managers have diverse and specific needs and face immediate threats.

Phase II Findings Key Points

1. Resource Managers requested more facilitated interactions between scientists and managers.
2. Resource Managers want help to make sense of the science and how to use the information.
3. Managers' concerns are immediate.
4. Managers want and need assistance to develop cross-jurisdictional strategies.
5. There are many local issues.
6. There is still some confusion about what the CA LCC is and can do.
7. Adaptive management isn't really occurring.
8. Environmental change is occurring.

Phase II Report Highlights

Question #6 – What important things can the CA LCC do to help refine the conservation objectives?

- Respondents recognize that groups and organizations need to work together.
 - This can take the form of cross-jurisdictional coordination, as people want help to develop strategies to work with groups across the landscape.

Question #8 – What changes have you seen on the landscape?

- Respondents noted abiotic changes, such as changes in the snowpack or snowline, urbanization, temperature, water quality and quantity, increased fire intensity, etc. Many respondents also mentioned biotic changes, such as insect outbreaks, invasive species proliferation, changes to salmon populations, locational habitat changes, etc.

Question #9 – Have the changes on the ground affected your conservation actions?

- Respondents have not greatly changed their management actions in response to the changes.
- Also, respondent's daily responsibilities are all consuming, and thus they are not able to plan long-term actions to mitigate potential changes.

Question #12 – What information about landscape-scale environmental changes (e.g., atmospheric, urbanization, invasive species) would help you design your management strategies and actions?

- Both Resource Managers and Steering Committee Members requested:
 - Improved availability and application of biophysical models and biophysical data.
 - Models and research that match the scale of conservation management (e.g. downscaled climate data, sociological and demographic data about coastal land use).
 - Information about ecological and hydrological conditions (e.g. baseline species conditions, species adaptability, invasives, habitat status, vulnerability assessments, precipitation variability, fish genetics, species relationships).
- Resource Managers specifically requested:
 - Management effects models and information (e.g. carbon sequestration, “no regrets” strategies, sensitivity of decisions, site recovery viability, and user impacts).
 - Land use impacts and management (e.g. fire impacts, development, and private lands use).

Question #13 – What resources (e.g. scientific information/tools) do you use to inform your management decisions? What level of detail, precision, and accuracy do you need?

- Managers and leaders use existing research and reports to support their decisions, and access the information through usual outreach methods.
- Also, respondents recognize there are additional tools available but lack the resources (financial, time, staff) they need to access, interpret, and use relevant methods and tools.

Steering Committee Member Comments

The Steering Committee members had the following comments in response to the Phase II findings.

- Resource managers sometimes need to acquire additional information to identify challenges in their resource areas, and what potential mitigation options are available to address those issues.
- There needs to be a clear understanding between resource managers and scientists about the product that will come out of research.
- The issue that managers need to know about is how the landscape will respond to the climate changes.
- Critical questions to ask include: what do managers need to know, and how well are the research institutions setup to disseminate relevant information. Particularly, the CA LCC should reflect on how to:
 - 1) Identify the important science and conservation questions to ask.
 - 2) Evaluate how well scientists answer such questions.
- Should the CA LCC's role be to provide information that managers' request, or to disseminate information that scientists develop?
- The CA LCC needs to engage the stakeholders to build the conversation and develop trust.
- The Steering Committee needs to be cognizant of selecting a too broad range of conservation priorities that ultimately do not meet Partners or resource managers' needs.
- The CA LCC can help assess the breadth of resource managers' needs and facilitate the available resources to help the managers meet their immediate needs.
 - The challenge is how to help managers begin to understand the issue of climate and how to adapt their actions.
- A Steering Committee member expressed surprise and concern that the resource managers have not incorporated more changes in their actions and thus fully engage in adaptive management.
 - One Steering Committee member wondered if it may be a perception issue as managers may incorporate new information into their decisions, but did not articulate such changes as adaptive management.
 - Another member noted that process and content must work together. The CA LCC can help managers reflect on the processes they use to make decisions and the assumptions inherent in those methods.
- Another challenge is organizational cultures that require legal parameters (laws, mandates, regulations, and processes) be paramount in decision making processes. The question becomes whether the CA LCC can help change the paradigm.

Strategic Imperatives

Will asked the Steering Committee to think about and identify the strategic imperatives critical to the success of the CA LCC fulfilling its mission. The Steering Committee developed the following as a list of essential elements to support the CA LCC's mission:

- 1) Show the value of the CA LCC.
- 2) Inform managers about proactively managing for climate change considerations.
- 3) Engage resource managers and the scientific community; listening is part of the engagement process.
- 4) Be transparent.
- 5) Look forward.
- 6) Identify and prioritize conservation science needs.
- 7) Model solution for the present into the future.
- 8) Coordinate through existing partnerships or linkages to make connections with resource managers.
- 9) Be realistic, and keep the organization lean.
- 10) Synthesize and deliver scientific information to provide relevant tools that managers will use.
- 11) Establish relevance of LCC as a hub of activity and communicate it.
- 12) Initiatives reflect building capacity in resource managers.
- 13) Look at conservation needs and solutions at landscape scale.
- 14) Engage managers and the scientific community.
- 15) Inspire creativity.
- 16) Make a difference above and beyond; develop new work.
- 17) Have a consistent message about the purpose and function of the CA LCC.
- 18) Facilitate, make it happen, and help others to be self-sufficient.
- 19) Promote coordinated actions across jurisdictions.
- 20) Encourage coordination between natural and built environment.
- 21) Articulate the benefit of resource conservation – particularly the importance of why people should care.

Next Will asked the Steering Committee to select the top imperatives from the full list. The Steering Committee selected:

- Synthesize and serve and deliver scientific information and provide relevant tools.
- Show value of the LCC.
- Engage managers and scientific community, listening is part of engagement.
- ID and prioritize conservation science needs.

CA LCC Long-Range Vision

As part of the process to give the Strategic Planning Team guidance as they develop recommendations for the Strategic Plan, Will requested that the Steering Committee develop two vision statements. A vision statement is a vivid, detailed, specific picture of the world in the future. Specifically, the CA LCC's Vision Statements will reflect the Steering Committee's vision of the CA LCC's success in 20 and 100 years. The statements may include issues and elements that the CA LCC can influence, as well as a description of the structure and features of the CA

LCC. The Steering Committee formed two groups to discuss and create the 20-year and 100-year Vision Statement.

100-Year Vision

- Because of our work, in 100 years, California's developed and natural habitats will still support resilient and interconnected ecosystems, thriving and diverse wildlife populations and vital ecosystem services for California residents. California will still be Earth's premier place to live – providing unparalleled economic, cultural, and conservation values.
- Society shares a common acceptance of coexistence with the environment, a moral awareness of the value of the environment. There is shared support and responsibility for sustaining biodiversity and environmental stewardship. People accept, value and promote high quality science and the role of science in decision making. Science itself is far more collaborative (not just within universities and other institutions; includes a broad cross-section of society), transparent, applied, and resulting knowledge is shared broadly.
- Collaborative institutionalized processes/policies are in place for adaptive response to environmental stressors. There is greater/enhanced agility/responsiveness. People are comfortable dealing with uncertainty.
- Things are working so well that society has shifted to the point where the LCC is no longer necessary!
- We are so successful that our model is replicated and implemented worldwide (so that people don't have to come to California to reap the benefits of our work!).
- The human population of California is in harmony with the capacity of the natural environment to sustain it.

20-Year Vision

- Through the CA LCC's applied science and facilitation of joint efforts, notable conservation has occurred throughout the CA LCC so that ecosystem benefit and functions effectively for species and people.
- Fewer species become extinct, and more habitats remain intact.
- There are coordinated conservation efforts across jurisdictions.
- Regional subgroups exist and function well.
- Resource managers engage in adaptive management.
- Independent policy partnerships exist.
- There are sustainable funding sources for the CA LCC.
- Informatics and advanced technology and reporting systems exist to support the CA LCC's efforts.
- There is a forum to identify resource managers' needs.
- Organizational communication assists groups to work more collaboratively.
- There are coordinated grant-making processes that distribute information effectively.
- There is a change in the culture of the scientific universities.
- The CA LCC uses advanced technology to achieve its mission.

CA LCC's Five-Year Goals

Will asked the Steering Committee to use the four strategic imperatives identified earlier to develop five-year goals for the CA LCC. These goals may be a result or product, must have some measurable or detectable feature, and be achievable and realistic to meet the 20-year vision. The five-year goals for each of the four strategic imperatives are:

Scientific Information and Relevant Tools

80% of the natural resource managers in California access scientific information/tools/syntheses/recommendations through the CA LCC, and report back to the CA LCC how they apply the information in their work.

Show Value

By prioritizing science needs and engaging more than 80% of scientists and natural resource managers, the CA LCC launches three to five key landscape-scale conservation projects that address environmental change.

Identify and Prioritize Needs

Develop a living five-year science plan by February 2013 to identify and prioritize the science needs of resource managers throughout the CA LCC.

Engage Managers

The goal is to have a greater number of, and more effective regional and local adaptive management collaborations, that involve active engagement between scientists and managers where scientists focus on critical managers' key questions, and the managers use the tools supplied by the scientists, and these key questions will be reflected in the CA LCC funding priorities.

Additional Items

The Steering Committee discussed Congressional interest in and funding for the CA LCC. Debra shared that the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) strongly supports continued funding for the CA LCCs, and that the CA LCC anticipates the same level of funding for its efforts in the near-term. She pointed out that the Office of Management and Budget has become familiar with the CA LCC efforts, and that Congress has started to have more awareness of the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) and has provided positive feedback on the efforts.

There is concern that the purpose and roles of the Climate Science Centers (CSC) and the LCCs are not explicit, which may lead to lack of Congressional support due to the perception of redundancy. There was a short discussion on the role of the CA LCC and the role of the Climate Science Centers. A few Steering Committee members noted that the role of the Climate Science Center is to conduct research and to develop science; that the role of the CA LCC is to bring environmental change science and tools to managers and to help facilitate ongoing conversations around the science. One Steering Committee member said that Climate Science Centers will need guidance from the CA LCC about the kinds of science to develop.

Another Steering Committee member offered that the CA LCC is more relevant in a budget-constrained world given it is an efficient means to facilitate conservation action, and that the strategic plan is an excellent place to make that case. Will suggested that the strategic planning process could be used to develop a few strategies to address changing financial environments, or to develop prioritized strategies that identify several funding scenarios.

Next Steps

Will shared that the next steps in the strategic planning process include the Strategic Planning Team's review and acceptance of a charter, which outlines the group's purpose, the products to bring back to the Steering Committee, and planning timeline. Debra also shared that the next Steering Committee meeting will be in October.

Debra and Will thanked the group for their work. In closing, Diana Craig expressed her enthusiasm for the 100-year vision and the five-year science plan goal, and her appreciation for the group's commitment to the planning process and to the CA LCC.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.