



**California Landscape
Conservation Cooperative**

Retrospective Analysis

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Prepared by Leigh Goldberg Consulting

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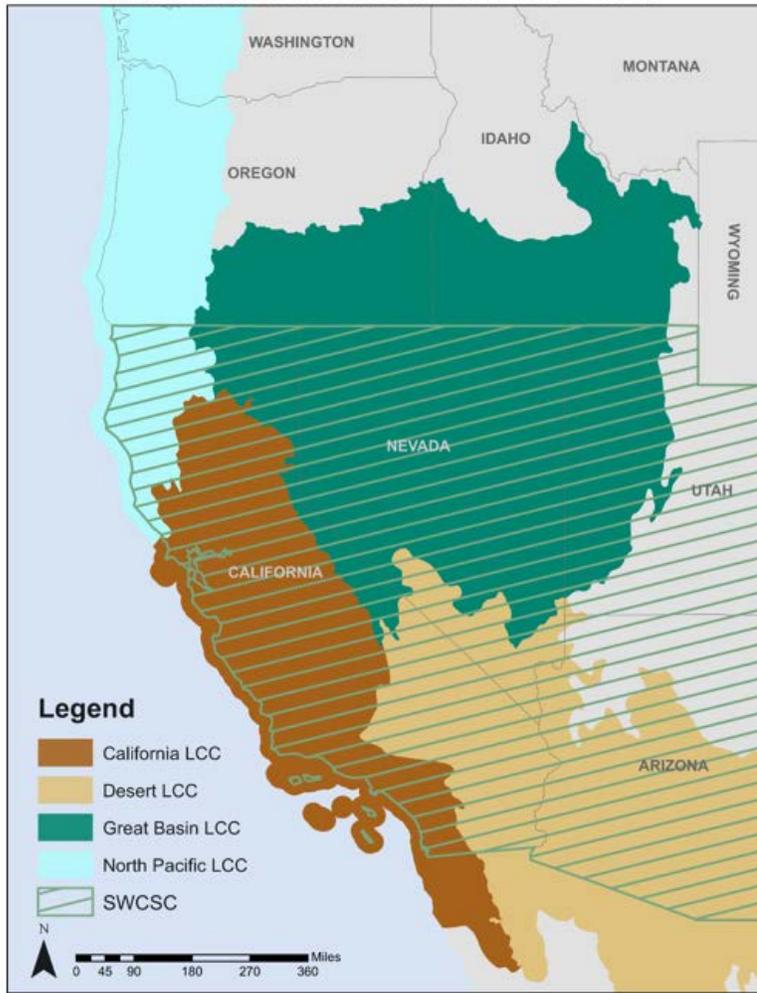
Introduction

The California Landscape Conservation Cooperative (CA LCC) is a statewide network of resource managers, conservation practitioners, and scientists working to improve access to and development of relevant, applied science to address the impacts of climate change within and across ecosystems. Members include federal and state agencies, tribes, universities, and non-governmental organizations. The geographic scope of the CA LCC encompasses over 56 million acres, which have been portioned into seven terrestrial ecoregions and one marine ecoregion. Based out of Sacramento and Petaluma, a staff of five supports the core functions of the CA LCC, namely convenings, trainings, webinars, applied science projects, and the *Climate Commons* digital library. Since 2010, the CA LCC has funded 50 projects contributing just under \$5M towards a total of \$11.5M in project costs.

A Steering Committee serves as the decision-making body of the CA LCC and developed the California Landscape Conservation Cooperative Five-Year Strategic Plan in May 2013. The CA LCC's other guiding documents include the CA LCC Charter and California Landscape Conservation Cooperative Science-Management Framework (December 2013). Receiving base funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the CA LCC's annual budget has been approximately \$1M over the past five years.

The CA LCC is part of a national network of 22 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC Network) which were established in 2009 by the U.S. Department of Interior's Secretary Ken Salazar's Secretarial Order No. 3289. The LCC Network was established to develop shared conservation priorities and science needs among partnering entities and to facilitate collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries – an approach that was deemed necessary in order to address the growing challenges related to climate change. There are three other LCCs operating within the state of California – the Desert LCC, Great Basin LCC, and the North Pacific LCC (see figure below).

Western Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and Southwest Climate Science Center



In the spring of 2017, the President's FY2018 budget request zeroed out funding for the LCC Network creating uncertainty about the future of the 22 LCCs. Congress is still negotiating a finalized budget for FY2018 with a continuing resolution, and it remains unclear what the funding levels will be for the individual LCCs.

As a part of its Five-Year Strategic Plan, the CA LCC Steering Committee identified the need to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the CA LCC. As the CA LCC is nearing the final year of the implementation of its Five-Year Strategic Plan, the CA LCC staff prioritized undertaking an independent evaluation of its work to better understand the CA LCC's value to its members and help inform its future development, structure, and impact. This report documents a Retrospective Analysis of the CA LCC as

it approaches completion of its Five-Year Strategic Plan period. The Retrospective Analysis was conducted by an independent social scientist and partnership consultant, Leigh Goldberg Consulting. This is a locally driven evaluation with oversight by the staff of the CA LCC. The CA LCC's FY2017 operating budget funded this Retrospective Analysis.

Research Approach

Purpose

The Retrospective Analysis is intended to accomplish the following two objectives:

- To provide an objective analysis of the collaborative conservation efforts by the California LCC that can be used internally by its staff and leadership to inform their strategic learning and continuous improvement of the CA LCC, and
- To examine and assess the following key attributes of the CA LCC:
 - outputs and outcomes
 - perceived member benefits
 - contributions made by CA LCC members
 - value added
 - organizational model.

Methodology

In October and November of 2017, Leigh Goldberg Consulting conducted private individual phone interviews with 21 internal and external stakeholders of the CA LCC, including staff, contractors, Steering Committee members, Science-Management Team members, and award recipients (see Acknowledgements for a list of interviewees). Interviewees were asked to shed light on their direct experiences with the CA LCC since its inception in 2010 by responding to a series of questions asked by the evaluator. Each interview averaged one hour in length. Secondary research was also conducted and included a review of the CA LCC's guiding documents, two websites (*californialcc.org* and *climate.calcommons.org*), and other materials provided by CA LCC staff. This analysis is also informed by a review of recent literature and tools produced on landscape-scale conservation, climate adaptation, translational ecology, network evaluation, and collective impact as well as the evaluator's attendance at the National Forum on Landscape Conservation held November 6 – 8, 2017 in Sheperdstown, West Virginia.

Summary of Findings

This section provides a summary of the research findings based upon the 21 phone interviews and secondary research. Interview responses were compiled and coded and then assessed for level of frequency. From this process, common themes emerged. This section focuses on the following attributes of the CA LCC: outputs, perceived member benefits, contributions made by CA LCC members, value added of the CA LCC, organizational model, and opportunities for greater impact.

Findings Overview

- The consensus of the interviewees is that a state-wide network of resource managers, conservation practitioners, tribes, and scientists is needed in California, and they would like to see the function of the CA LCC continue.
- Most interviewees believe that funding for dedicated staff to facilitate the CA LCC is essential for its impact and sustainability.
- While there are specific projects and products that are highly regarded and valued by interviewees, many of the interview participants would like to see the LCC narrow its strategic focus in order to achieve greater impact.
- Interviewees were enthusiastic to share their ideas for increasing the impact of the CA LCC and were genuinely interested in seeing the CA LCC continue to develop itself.
- Overall, the interviewees perceived the products and outputs of the CA LCC – namely the *Climate Commons* website and in-person meetings, workshops, and trainings – to be high quality and of value to staff.

Outputs of the CA LCC

It is clear that in the past seven years the CA LCC has been using its Five-Year Strategic Plan and Science-Management Framework to guide its work and activities. There have been significant outputs since 2010 in the following areas: annual conferences, in-person workshops and trainings, member meetings, webinars, digital communications and tools, and CA LCC funded projects. The compilation of these outputs and outcomes is represented in the Appendices.

Perceived Member Benefits

Interviewees were asked to share their perceptions of what difference the CA LCC has made to their organizations and to them personally. A few key themes emerged. Having access to a central clearinghouse of climate adaptation science data through *Climate Commons* and a state-wide peer network for information exchange and learning were cited as the biggest perceived benefits. For example, several interviewees identified

gaining a greater understanding of Climate Smart adaptation strategies, decision-making frameworks, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) from their participation in the CA LCC. Here are how some interviewees described their perceptions of CA LCC member benefits:

“The CA LCC is the only group really providing a credible synthesis of climate change information. If Climate Commons went away, it would leave a pretty big vacuum.”

“One of the best values of the CA LCC is the Climate Commons.”

“The workshop on decision-making frameworks several years ago has paid off big time for us, because that’s the process we used for our climate adaptation decision support model.”

“The convening function is key. We need someone whose job it is to bring people together across agencies and sectors so that we aren’t working in silos, but together solving the big challenges we all have in common and thinking about issues we might not otherwise.”

“I always feel inspired when I attend Steering Committee meetings. It reminds me that I’m not alone in trying to address climate change.”

Access to funding for climate adaptation planning and vulnerability assessments – since this funding tends to be limited – was also cited as a benefit of the CA LCC. As one interviewee shared, *“the LCC provided us with seed funding that we were able to do a lot with even after the initial pot was used up. That’s the model we need; the initial boost to get a project started, but not to keep funding us forever. We were able to leverage that funding by applying for additional grants and demonstrating the work we already accomplished in the planning phase.”*

Contributions Made by CA LCC Members

Members’ primary contributions to the CA LCC are matching funds for CA LCC funded projects and staff time to attend in-person and virtual meetings for the Steering Committee, Science-Management Team, and Tribal Team and to communicate and coordinate with CA LCC staff. Funding from matches and in-kind contributions totaled \$5,991,995 during FY 2010 - 2014. Meeting frequency ranges from monthly to quarterly depending on the staff person’s role within the CA LCC. Members have also contributed their time and expertise by presenting webinars hosted by the CA LCC and promoting the webinars through their organization’s communications channels. Members have also

contributed time by serving on the Science-Management Team and reviewing and ranking project proposals.

However, the administration and staffing of the CA LCC was solely funded by the USFWS, and members did not contribute resources to the administration of the CA LCC. This raises a few questions: 1) were member organizations asked to help fund the capacity of the CA LCC, 2) did the Five-Year Strategic Plan identify a business model, and 3) if member organizations are expected to help fund the administration capacity of the CA LCC in the future, what is the appropriate level of financial contribution by members?

Value Added of the CA LCC

In assessing the value added of any entity, it is important to understand its organizational model and strategic focus. Currently the CA LCC is operating under several organizational models – as a strategic partnership (a science-management partnership), as a project team (Central Valley Landscape Conservation Project), and as a statewide network. Because of its multidimensional role, it becomes much more challenging to evaluate the CA LCC.

As the Partner Relations Continuum framework illustrates below, there are many different types of partnerships with varying degrees of interdependency, investment, and engagement. A strategic partnership is a special type of partnership that exists when there is an intentional, interdependent collaboration between two or more entities designed to achieve specific goals. This type of partnership requires ongoing investment by all partners, structures, systems, and skills for ensuring a productive inter-organizational relationship.¹ A network is a “decentralized member-driven platform of relationships” that forms around a common purpose or need and “evolves its capabilities and underlying structure of connectivity.”² A strategic partnership has greater levels of interdependency than a network and thus greater levels of investment by the partners. Determining the value added of a network is inherently more challenging and complex to measure than the value added of a strategic partnership or project team, in part because the results and impact of a network tends to be more emergent in nature. The value added of a network can be determined by assessing a combination of indicators: outputs, perceived network benefits by the members, and impact.

¹ <http://conservationimpact-nonprofitimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/PartnerRelationsContinuum.pdf>

² *Framing Paper: The State of Network Evaluation*, Network Impact and Center for Evaluation Innovation, July 2014.

As the Partner Relations Continuum framework illustrates, the location of a partnership along the continuum matters because there are varying degrees of involvement, connection, and investment.³ Importantly, the CA LCC has been functioning at multiple points simultaneously along the Partner Relations Continuum as a strategic partnership, as a project team, and as a statewide network.

³ <http://conservationimpact-nonprofitimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/PartnerRelationsContinuum.pdf>

Partner Relations Continuum



	Independent	Interdependent	Dependent	
	Mutual interests; separate goals	Work together on some goals	Goals developed and monitored together	One set of goals
Structure	Informal, unstructured, low connection	Some structure around a particular common issue	Defined, explicit structure to support common efforts, high connection	Formal, highly structured, high connection
Environment	Totally separate working environments	Likely maintain separate environments and identities, with some overlap	Shared environment influences success	Culture and environment merge / meld
Collaboration	Exchange of information	Work together on discreet projects or tasks	Synergistic and complementary skills and assets	Fully integrated systems and operations
Success	Success is independent of other	Success (or failure) is shared on team components	Success depends on other	Success and failure is fully shared
Example	Associations Networks	Project teams Coalitions	Strategic partners	Joint ventures

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The location of a partnership along the continuum matters because it defines the type of working relationship and the extent of involvement and connection.

Additionally, evaluating the achievement of the LCC's three objectives (as defined in its Five-Year Strategic Plan) is another element of determining the value added of the CA LCC. Based upon the findings of the Retrospective Analysis, the CA LCC should consider assessing whether the goals and strategies identified in the Five-Year Strategic Plan were the right goals and strategies to pursue with respect three things: 1) the ultimate difference it must make (long-term impact), 2) the unique role it is best positioned to fulfill (e.g., state-wide convener and science translator), and 3) the LCC's staff capacity and financial resources.

In light of the above, this report suggests that the most important metric for determining the value added of the CA LCC is the perceived benefits identified by participating members. Interview findings indicate that there are some components of the CA LCC that are more highly valued than others by its members. The two most frequently identified benefits by CA LCC members are:

- 1) having access to a central clearinghouse of climate adaptation science data through *Climate Commons*, and
- 2) a state-wide peer network for information exchange, best practice sharing, and staying abreast of tools and resources that can improve decision-making and climate adaptation planning.

Organizational Model

Several interviewees acknowledged that the organizational model of the LCC has been fraught with challenges from the beginning and has hamstrung the effectiveness of the CA LCC. The CA LCC, like many of the LCCs around North America, was founded and funded by a federal agency, the USFWS. Some interviewees expressed the limitations of this approach in that it is challenging to create a sustainable business model when a network is not envisioned and cultivated by the local members themselves. As one interviewee stated, *"if the LCCs were setup in a different way, we could be more effective. If the state had a little money and each partner had some money, everyone would have some skin in the game to come to the table."*

A few interviewees suggested that the LCC become more like a public-private partnership that would benefit from private sector funding as well as public funding. A diversified funding model would support the CA LCC's long-term sustainability as well as increase partner buy-in and engagement.

Funding levels from USFWS was another challenge for the CA LCC cited by interviewees. Rather than beginning conservatively, demonstrating success, and then

growing slowly over time, the CA LCC received its highest level of funding (\$2M) during the first two years of its inception and then its funder scaled down funding to half that budget within four years. This is in part due to the fact that the CA LCC was one of the first LCCs to be launched. As more LCCs came online, there was less funding available for each individual LCC. It appears that this dramatic shift in funding created an atmosphere of funding uncertainty from year to year, which made operations planning difficult.

Opportunities for Greater Impact

Interviewees were enthusiastic to share their ideas for increasing the impact of the CA LCC and were genuinely interested in seeing and helping the CA LCC continue to evolve.

Clarify CA LCC Purpose

The mission statement of the CA LCC is *“a science-management partnership created to inform and promote integrated science, natural resource management, and conservation to address impacts of climate change and other stressors within and across ecosystems.”* In interviewing members of the Steering Committee, it became apparent that interviewees did not share a common understanding of the CA LCC’s mission. Interviewees were asked how they describe the CA LCC when they are speaking to a peer at their organization. Their responses ranged in focus from landscape-scale conservation and climate adaptation planning to matchmaking between scientists and resource managers. Below are examples of some responses:

“A cooperative partnership between federal agencies and partners that has a focus on landscape-level land management.”

“The Principle group for convening climate change adaptation in California.”

“A Department of Interior funded partnership to bring together natural resource managers and scientists to tackle the big issues of our time.”

“A federal initiative that tries to bring climate science to land managers.”

“Like a joint venture but with a climate change adaptation focus.”

“They collect and synthesize science to make it useable for land managers.”

“It’s hard to describe them in an elevator pitch.”

“They still suffer from an identity crisis. They need better definition of who and what they are.”

It is conceivable for the CA LCC to be playing a role in all of these realms; however, some interviewees suggested that the CA LCC could benefit from having a clear, focused primary purpose.

Broader Participation

As described in the CA LCC Science-Management Framework (December 2013), the CA LCC’s intention was to fund projects in seven terrestrial ecoregions and one marine ecoregion including the North Coast, Bay Delta, Central Valley, Sierra Nevada, Central Coast, South Coast, Baja California in Mexico, and the Pacific Ocean coastline. Primary audiences identified in the Science-Management Framework included scientists and resource managers at federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, Joint Ventures, Fish Habitat Partnerships, USGS Climate Science Centers, and other scientific institutions. Some interviewees acknowledged the disconnect between the northern and southern parts of the state with respect to Steering Committee member make-up as well as broader geographic distribution of CA LCC funded projects, as envisioned. There was also a recognition that the CA LCC had recently started to bridge this gap with its financial support of the Climate Science Alliance – South Coast based in San Diego.



The eight ecoregions of the CA LCC geographic scope.

A number of interviewees would like to see broader participation in the CA LCC in several key ways:

1. Broader geographic representation in terms of Steering Committee membership to ensure it represents regions from every part of the state,
2. Private sector engagement in terms of membership and financial investment,
3. Better relationships with local resource managers; and
4. Deeper and broader engagement with tribes.

Several interviewees believe that if ensuring that the tools of the LCC get implemented locally, then they need stronger relationships with resource managers who are more deeply connected with local landscapes such as national forests, and not just regional level managers. They also believed that these relationships were important to authenticate the LCC's assertion of being a locally driven, bottom-up initiative as described by LCC staff and leadership and that by prioritizing their relationships in Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area, there would continue to be a disconnect with locally based field staff. As one interviewee explained, *"The disconnect we feel in California is that most state or regional offices of agencies are either in Sacramento or the Bay Area and that tends to account for much of the LCC's leadership participation."*

Increase Member Outreach

Interviewees would like to see more member outreach by LCC staff. One interview expressed that “the value of the CA LCC needs to be better understood by a broader audience within the agencies and member organizations. We need to go beyond the group of individuals who serve on committees so that the CA LCC is making a bigger impact.” Others suggested having an annual calendar with speaking opportunities at members’ organizations could build greater awareness. Doing a “road show” was identified by several interviewees as something staff always talked about doing but never had the capacity to implement. As one interviewee shared, *“some members try to find opportunities to talk about the CA LCC within their agencies, but it would really make a big difference to see LCC staff show up, listen, and share.”*

Be More Strategic

A number of interviewees perceived the activities and funded projects of the LCC to be more opportunistic than strategic. As one interviewee observed, *“we have tended to fund random or one-off research issues that don’t seem to follow a strategic pattern. We have funded a bird project here and an alpine project there. I think we can be more strategic in how we approach science projects so that over time, they are all adding up to a bigger impact.”* Another interviewee stated, *“we need to ensure that the projects that get funded are directly advancing the priorities of the LCC. If we narrow our priorities, it will be much more apparent which projects are aligned with our strategic focus.”* One interviewee suggested having greater alignment between the CA LCC’s strategic objectives, long-term outcomes and impact, and annual metrics. Others recommended having a narrower focus in terms of funding criteria for LCC-funded science awards, while others suggested funding processes to increase integration between existing management plans rather than funding the creation of new plans. Some interviewees would prefer to see LCC staff prioritize their time differently in order to have greater impact. For example, some interviewees would prefer to see LCC staff focus more of their time managing a portfolio of programs and activities across the CA LCC’s full geographic scope rather than be so closely involved in the Central Valley Landscape Conservation Project. One interviewee shared that *“it’s hard for a small staff to be all things to everyone.”*

Leverage Relationship with Southwest Climate Science Center

Mirroring the findings of *The National Academies of Sciences A Review of the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives* (2016), a number of interviewees would like to see a stronger partnership with the Southwest Climate Science Center.⁴ This could ensure that priorities are aligned and funding decisions impacting California-based

⁴ <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/21829/a-review-of-the-landscape-conservation-cooperatives>

projects are made jointly. They also suggested that there is still a need to more explicitly communicate about the areas of shared synergy and more clearly delineate the unique roles of each entity. As one interviewee shared, *“many people have been confused about their different roles, including members of Congress. It’s been a source of angst from the beginning when both entities were stood up. I think the two groups have improved their coordination, but there is great opportunity for deeper partnership.”* Several interviewees commented that the October 2016 meeting at Asilomar Conference Grounds was an important advancement in the partnership between the four LCCs who work in California and the Southwest Climate Science Center. This meeting was the first time that staff and leadership from all five entities convened in person to learn more about each other’s work and discuss collective priorities across the western region. According to some interviewees, the meeting participants made progress at beginning to identify potential activities that would foster increased coordination and efficiency such as jointly developing a science needs assessment framework that could be implemented by all of the entities.

Expand and Elevate Climate Commons

Several interviewees stressed the value and need for synthesizing and translating climate adaptation science to resource managers so that it is actionable. As one interviewee explained, *“the science the field has generated hasn’t been effectively used for a number of reasons. The research is not always applicable to the users (the resource managers), or resource managers don’t fully understand how to apply the research to their decision making. There is also the time factor. Oftentimes, by the time research is peer reviewed and published, it’s too late for it to be applied. Resource managers can’t wait a year for data.”* This divide between science and policymaking is a fundamental, pervasive problem in the country. Importantly, the 22 LCCs were envisioned and stood up to bridge this gap and overcome this problem. Other interviewees commented on the systemic disconnect and culture divide between resource managers and scientists that has been pervasive. *“The incentive structure for scientists and the culture itself needs to fundamentally change. Ecology tends to be a very academic field. How are we going to cultivate a workforce that produces more actionable science?”*

According to several interviewees, the CA LCC is well positioned to fill the critical gap between climate adaptation science and resource management decision making. Many interviewees believe that the *Climate Commons* is one of the greatest value adds of the CA LCC as there is no other central clearing house of climate adaptation science specifically designed for decision makers and resource managers in the state. Several interviewees identified the need to elevate its usefulness by populating the site more

broadly and consistently and more widely publicizing its content. A few interviewees suggested that it would be utilized by more resource managers if more of them knew about it and how it could directly benefit them and be applied to their work. Some suggested leveraging CA LCC members' social media accounts and websites to spotlight CA LCC project results and other useful data points available on *Climate Commons*. Interviewees generally agreed that there is genuine potential to expand and elevate *Climate Commons* for greater impact.

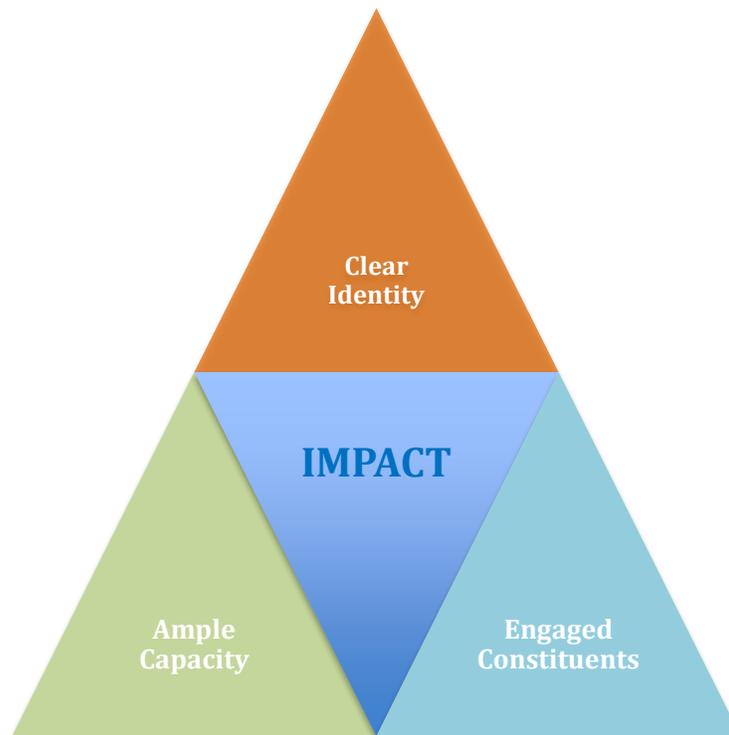
Analysis

Using the Integrated Strategy for Impact framework (see figure below), the following is an analysis of the three core components of the CA LCC necessary for achieving impact. This analysis is intended to spotlight where key opportunities exist in its organizational system to increase the CA LCC's impact.

A systems approach to organizational impact:

When an organization or network has a clear focus and identify, an engaged constituency, and ample capacity to deliver on its mission, it is well positioned to achieve impact

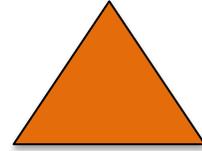
Integrated Strategy for Impact⁵



- **Identity:** That which defines the organization's or network's reason for being – why, what, and how it does what it does (e.g., mission, vision, values, role, goals, programs, projects, etc.)
- **Constituents:** Those people who are necessary to the success of the organization and to meet strategic goals; also called stakeholders, those who have a stake in the organization's work and outcomes (e.g., members, partners, funders, etc.)
- **Capacity:** More than just funding; includes systems, structure, staffing, competencies, culture, etc. (must align with identity and constituents for sustainable impact)
- **Impact:** The visible, felt difference that an organization or network makes

⁵ <http://conservationimpact-nonprofitimpact.com/>

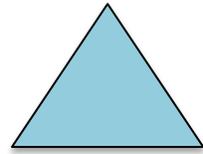
Identity



The CA LCC's mission, focus, and identity remains unclear in the market place due to several key reasons:

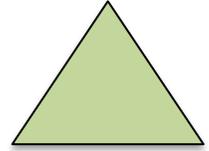
- The perceived mission and focus of the CA LCC by members of the Steering Committee and Science-Management Team lacks alignment.
- Those most active in the CA LCC serve as ambassadors and messengers on behalf of the CA LCC. If they lack alignment in their understanding and core messaging about the CA LCC, that creates disparate messages and a lack of common understanding in the marketplace.
- Members of the Steering Committee and Science-Management Team appear to lack a common vision for the CA LCC.
- The CA LCC is part of a national LCC Network that has its own branding and messaging. In addition, the CA LCC is one of four LCCs operating within the state, and each has its own mission, branding, and messaging. While the 22 LCCs in North America share the same name and broad focus, they have diverse missions and messaging. This disconnect makes it challenging to effectively leverage branding and messaging happening at the national and regional levels as well within the state by the four LCCs operating in California.
- The Climate Science Centers and LCCs were stood up at the same time by the Department of Interior. They were intended to be complementary entities; however, the distinct roles between the CA LCC and the Southwest Climate Science Center has remained unclear.
- The CA LCC has played several roles making its distinct, unique role in the marketplace challenging to decipher. The CA LCC staff serve as a convener of a state-wide network, a funder and grantmaker of applied science projects, a matchmaker between resource managers and scientists, a project manager and funder of a place-based landscape conservation design (LCD) project in the Central Valley, and an online provider of climate adaptation science data.
- The CA LCC's name – California Landscape Conservation Cooperative – implies a focus on advancing landscape-scale conservation throughout the state of California; however, one of its signature products is the *Climate Commons* digital library, which is focused on providing the best available climate adaptation science to resource managers. While there are of course important links between landscape-scale conservation and climate adaptation, this distinction confuses the perceived mission of the LCC.

Constituents



- Most of the participants of the CA LCC believe there is an important role for the CA LCC to play within the state and expressed their desire to see the CA LCC narrow its focus and develop a sustainable business model.
- While the CA LCC has an opportunity to broaden and deepen its participation, the CA LCC has been successful in engaging its key audiences of resource managers and applied scientists based upon their participation and engagement in convenings, workshops, project meetings, webinars, and digital communications tools such as the *Climate Commons* website and bi-weekly newsletter.
- There is a tension between the CA LCC wanting to be responsive to local Steering Committee members made up of state, federal, and nongovernmental organizations and the simultaneous expectation for the work of the LCC to directly advance the priorities of its founder and funder, the USFWS.
- There remains an opportunity to further delineate the roles of the Southwest Climate Science Center and the CA LCC. This will strengthen their partnership, leverage their collective funding for applied science, and generate increased understanding by both entities' constituents in the state and region.
- A tension continues to exist between some of the Joint Ventures operating in California and the CA LCC, particularly pertaining to the competition for Steering Committee membership, as many of the same organizations participate in both networks.
- CA LCC membership would benefit from better understanding the CA LCC's intentions to engage with Baja California, Mexico, which is currently identified in its geographic scope.

Capacity



- The USFWS has been the sole funder of the administration of the CA LCC providing funding since 2010 for staff and science delivery projects.
- Three full-time staff operate out of an office on Sacramento State University's campus; two part-time data management contractors, who joined in 2012, office out of Point Blue Conservation Science's headquarters in Petaluma.
- CA LCC members contributed matching funds for CA LCC funded projects and staff time to attend in-person and virtual meetings for the Steering Committee, Science-Management Team, and Tribal Team and to communicate and coordinate with CA LCC staff.
- The CA LCC has created myriad pathways to advance its work (see Appendices: CA LCC Outputs), which has diffused its impact.

Conclusion

The CA LCC has achieved significant outputs and outcomes (see Appendices: CA LCC Outputs) since its inception in 2010. Specifically, the CA LCC has:

- Cultivated a growing community of resource managers, scientists, and conservation practitioners who are learning new pathways and tools for integrating climate smart strategies into their local and regional planning,
- Increased relationships between resource managers and scientists and advanced decision support tools through awarding 50 applied science projects,
- Built the first online clearinghouse of climate adaptation science data specifically designed to empower resource managers and conservation practitioners in California,
- Increased awareness of the need to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into conservation land management planning, and
- Laid critical groundwork in developing systems, performance metrics, and communications tools that have the potential to be further developed for increased application and effectiveness.

Despite myriad challenges, tensions, and uncertainties, the CA LCC has been successful in staying committed to advancing its work through its products, projects, and programs. The impact of the CA LCC has been most significantly hindered by its identity issues in the marketplace and its need for fewer roles and priorities. It is best positioned to fulfill the niche of 1) convener of a statewide network of resource managers, tribes,

and scientists needing to stay informed of each other's work and identify opportunities for collaboration, 2) synthesizer and translator of climate adaptation science data in California. As the CA LCC hones its role and narrows its focus, it has the potential to leverage its significant work over the past seven years and quickly increase its impact in the state.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and analysis of this Retrospective Analysis, the following five recommendations are provided to CA LCC leadership and staff to help focus their collective attention for greater impact and align expectations for the scope and scale of the CA LCC.

- **Revisit the central collective need of the Steering Committee and the mission of the CA LCC in order to clarify the difference it must make and what unique role it is best positioned to fulfill.** Create a common vision that all CA LCC members can subscribe to and invest in. Make decisions about what the CA LCC must stop doing in order to sharpen its focus and increase its impact. Clarify the nexus between climate smart and working at the landscape-scale as it relates to the CA LCC's reason for being. Ensure that the CA LCC's need, goals, and metrics all squarely align with each other.
- **It is essential that all members of the CA LCC understand its unique niche relative to other complementary networks,** initiatives, and members operating in the state and for those entities to clearly understand and speak to the role and value of the CA LCC. Continue to examine related networks and conduct a comparative analysis of complementary networks and initiatives operating in the state. Identify who is most important to engage and align with such as the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. In addition, the CA LCC should revisit the nature of its relationships with its three members, the Southwest Climate Science Center (USGS), the Western Ecological Research Center (USGS), and the California Climate Hub (USDA) to further identify opportunities for resource sharing, greater leverage, and impact.
- **Conduct an evaluation of the Climate Commons website** to determine how the site is being utilized, specific areas of value, as well as how users are finding the site. Based upon that evaluation, develop a plan to build

Climate Commons 2.0 and include a communications and outreach action plan to increase its visibility (e.g., search engine optimization, referring websites, etc.) An assessment of complementary online resources hosted by other entities such as the state's Cal-Adapt tool should also be conducted to determine opportunities for synergy and greater impact.

- **Build a sustainable business model for the CA LCC, which includes diversified funding sources.** Especially seek opportunities to leverage USFWS funding through sister federal agency sources, state funding sources, the private sector, and CA LCC member contributions.
- **Create a communications and outreach plan to identify goals, customized messages for prioritized audiences, key messengers, communications strategies, and metrics of success.** Unify CA LCC messaging to create a shared vocabulary about the purpose and value add of the CA LCC among CA LCC staff and members. Examples of success metrics include a consistent use of “we” by CA LCC members when referencing the CA LCC, a shared vocabulary describing the CA LCC by all members and staff, invitations by members for CA LCC staff to present at a member organization's board meeting or staff meeting, and requests for stories or information to be included in member organizations' communications materials, etc.

Considerations

The CA LCC may wish to reflect on three considerations as potential options for the future.

- Consider identifying a nonprofit partner with a state-wide presence to serve as co-facilitator of the CA LCC. A nonprofit partner can help infuse the culture of the CA LCC with necessary flexibility and nimbleness in order to be responsive and adapt to changing conditions. A nonprofit partner can also support the community face of the CA LCC and bring additional private philanthropy relationships.
- In order to support CA LCC staff in implementing the recommendations identified above, consider identifying key training opportunities to cultivate the

necessary partnership and community collaboration core competencies⁶ of CA LCC staff. Honing expertise and skills in business planning, fundraising, and strategic communications could be particularly advantageous to staff in their abilities to implement the report recommendations.

- The national LCC Network should consider conducting a review of the most relevant, multi-sector partnerships that have been successful in 1) leveraging federal funding from the Department of Interior and 2) generating considerable conservation, community, and economic impact at a local or regional scale. Identify the key ingredients of success that were common to all and consider how those lessons learned can be applied to all of the LCCs in the national Network. The CA LCC should consider conducting a similar review of successful partnership models with a proven track record in California.

⁶ There are 22 partnership and community collaboration competencies as defined by the Office of Personnel Management. Learn more at <http://www.partnership-academy.net/about-us/the-22-competencies/>.

CA LCC Outputs – Convening

Annual Conferences	In-Person Workshops and Trainings	Member Meetings	Webinars	Digital Communications & Tools
<p>FY 2014: Southwest Climate Summit, Sacramento</p> <p>FY 2016: Joint Western LCC/SWCSC Gathering Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove</p> <p>FY 2017: Natural Areas Conference University of California, Davis</p> <p>Average attendance = ~200 people</p>	<p>FY 2011: 2 workshops (feedback on LCC focus) and 1 Open House</p> <p>FY 2013: 1 workshop (Scientists and Managers workshop)</p> <p>FY 2014: Hosted 3 workshops (2 Climate Smart; 1 Traditional Ecological Knowledge)</p> <p>FY 2015: Hosted 2 Climate Smart workshops</p> <p>FY 2016: Hosted 4 workshops (Climate Smart, Tribal Adaptation)</p> <p>FY 2017: Hosted 3 workshops (Climate Smart, Sea Level Rise, Tribal Adaptation)</p> <p>Average attendance = ~30-100 people</p>	<p>Steering Committee: 39 virtual and in-person convenings between 2010 – May 2016ⁱ</p> <p>Average attendance = ~20 - 25 people</p> <p>Two days in person/year on average and bi-monthly virtual meetings</p> <p>Tribal Team: Monthly conference calls since March 2015</p> <p>Average Attendance = ~7 – 10 people</p> <p>Science Management Team: Ad-hoc virtual meetings to review project proposals</p>	<p>Hosted 62 webinars between May 2012 and October 2017</p> <p>Average Attendance = ~50 people</p>	<p>Bi-Weekly Newsletters: Total opted-in subscribers = ~1,772</p> <p>Average open rates = 20 – 30%</p> <p>Network Website (californialcc.org) Number of unique web views during last year = ~524</p> <p>Climate Commons Digital Library (climate.calcommons.org) Number of unique web views during last year = ~1,716</p> <p>400 logins; accounts for over 20% of website use; <i>(to download and use data, login is required; no login is required to read articles and review information)</i></p>

ⁱ Steering Committee meetings ceased in May of 2017 following the Department of Interior's order to conduct a review of all external boards and commissions.

CA LCC Outputs – Science Delivery

CA LCC Funded Projects	Project Focus	Project Outputs
<p>Total number of applications received and reviewed = 159</p> <p>Total number of projects awarded = 50 projects over 7 Years</p> <p>Total Funding Awarded (2010 – 2016) = \$4,957,000</p> <p>Total Leveraged Funding from Matches/In-kind = \$5,991,995 (FY 2010-2014; no data available for 2015-2016)</p>	<p>Species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General (including all species or habitats): 10 • Birds/Waterfowl: 14 • Plants (Rare and Invasive): 4 • Aquatic Species: 2 • Small Mammals: 2 <p>Habitat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California-wide: 12 • Wetlands: 6 • Forest/Chaparral: 5 • Grasslands/Uplands: 4 • Meadow: 2 • Coastal/Marine: 1 • Riparian: 1 <p>Eco-region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Coast: 3 • Central Valley: 13 • Sierra Nevada: 8 • Bay-Delta: 9 • Central Coast: 1 • Southern Coast: 5 	<p>Peer-Reviewed Publications: 24</p> <p>Articles and News Stories: 10</p> <p>Reports/Planning Documents: 15</p> <p>Outreach/Training Documents: 26</p> <p>Decision-Tools: 8</p> <p>Geospatial Datalayers and Maps: 44</p> <p>Non-Geographic Datasets: 4</p>