

Arctic Landscape Conservation Cooperative Charter

1. Purpose of this Charter

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

2. Purpose of the Arctic LCC

LCCs in Alaska are unique among LCCs elsewhere in that the senior executives from the State, Federal and non-federal agencies already convene to discuss climate change issues in the Alaska Climate Change Executive Roundtable (ACCER). ACCER is charged with facilitating coordination among the LCCs that occur within Alaska, DOI's Climate Science Center for Alaska, the Alaska Sub-Cabinet on Climate Change, and NOAA's Climate Service for Alaska. The existence of ACCER provides the opportunity for some statewide oversight of the LCCs primarily through the ACCER Statewide Coordinating Group.

The Arctic LCC is 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 at the time this charter was drafted describes LCCs as "...applied conservation science partnerships focused on a defined geographic area that inform on-the-ground strategic conservation efforts at landscape scales." LCC partners include DOI agencies, other federal agencies, states, Native and tribal entities, non-governmental organizations, universities and others.

LCC national guidance states that LCCs shall integrate DOI science and management expertise with that of their cooperating organizations, providing information and best management practices to support strategic climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts on both public and private lands within and outside the United States. LCCs shall accomplish this by providing coordinated scientific and technical support to meet the goals identified by partner organizations.

Techniques used to achieve LCC goals may include, but are not limited to: pursuit of outside grant monies; leveraging existing funds available from participating entities and outside granting organizations; finding and creating synergistic relationships among various partner entities working in the Arctic that create operational efficiencies; having LCC core staff and staff from participating organizations work directly on tasks; making LCC project funds, as approved by the Arctic LCC Steering Committee (as defined in section 5), available through cooperative grants, cooperative agreements, direct acquisition of services and/or tribal grants; hiring staff to carry out certain LCC-related tasks; and implementing a formal or informal request for project proposals.

Conservation goals of the Arctic LCC are contained in the Arctic LCC goals document. The most recent goals and objectives of the Arctic LCC are attached as an appendix to this charter. This appendix will be replaced as LCC goals and objectives change.

3. Mission Statement

The mission of the Arctic LCC is to identify and provide information needed to conserve natural and cultural resources in the face of landscape scale stressors, focusing on climate change, through a multidisciplinary program that supports coordinated actions among management agencies, conservation organizations, communities, and other stakeholders.

4. Scope of the Arctic LCC

The scope of this program is defined by the nature of the Arctic LCC goals and objectives (see Appendix 1; Arctic LCC Goals document).

5. LCC Composition and Staffing

LCCs are comprised of the following constituent parts: Steering Committee, a partnership-at-large, an LCC core staff, and technical working groups, as defined below.

The Steering Committee shall be comprised of the designated representatives of agencies and entities participating in the Arctic LCC with an emphasis on field level managers responsible for management and conservation of land and natural resources in the Arctic. Participation in the Arctic LCC Steering Committee is limited to governmental members pending resolution of Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) concerns. Contingent upon resolution of FACA concerns, this Steering Committee may choose, by consensus, to extend membership to individual non-governmental entities for the purpose of broadening representation to a more diverse group of resource management interests.

Entities holding a seat on the Arctic LCC Steering Committee may be represented by no more than two members. Steering Committee members may designate an alternate representative to an Steering Committee meeting, provided the alternate has been provided with the information, and vested with the authority to speak for, and make decisions on behalf of, the organizational entity being represented.

The Steering Committee shall select a Chair and a Vice chair. The Chair will serve for one year, and will be succeeded by the Vice chair. Both positions shall alternate between a federal and a non-federal entity such that whenever the Chair is an individual from a federal agency, the vice chair will be from a non-federal entity, and whenever the Chair is from a non-federal entity, the Vice chair will be from a federal agency. Selection of the initial Chair and Vice chair shall be made by consensus. Thereafter, selection of the Vice chair shall be made by consensus. In the event that an individual is unable to serve for the two-year term as Vice chair and Chair, a replacement will be selected by consensus to complete that individuals term from an appropriate federal or non-federal entity.

A partnership-at-large will be formed, comprised of representatives from any organizational entity with the capacity to further the purpose of the LCC. Organizational entities holding a partnership-at-large seat shall: 1) have natural or cultural resource conservation and management capacity in the geographic area; or 2) provide scientific information that can meaningfully inform management decisions related to this LCC.

The LCC core staff (core staff) shall be comprised of a coordinator and science coordinator. Staffing can evolve in response to the wishes of the Steering Committee, and positions can reside within any organizational entity represented on the Steering Committee.

Technical working groups may be comprised of individuals from organizational entities with natural or cultural resource conservation and management responsibilities or science capacities in the geographic area or that have skills that can meaningfully inform management decisions related to this LCC. The members of technical working groups shall have expertise appropriate to that working group. Technical working groups shall be formed by the Steering Committee or core staff to address any LCC need. In addition, the partnership-at-large and core staff can request that the Steering Committee establish additional technical working group(s).

6. Roles of LCC Committees, Groups, and Staff

The Arctic LCC Steering Committee, partnership-at-large, core staff, and technical working groups shall fulfill the roles as described below:

The Steering Committee shall represent their organizational entity's views on issues and represent the science needs, interests, and capabilities of their organization. Because some LCC participating 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 Steering Committee meetings, decisions may also be made via teleconference, web conference, or other forms of electronic communication, provided a quorum is in participation.

Members of the partnership-at-large shall: 1) attend partnership-at-large meetings convened by the core staff, as needed, to provide information and input to the core staff relative to conservation goals; 2) contribute to the fulfilling of priority science needs and conservation objectives, and 3) seek opportunities to leverage funding, and to share information among the cooperative members. The partnership-at-large members may be invited to participate in technical working groups according to their expertise and organization's mission.

The core staff shall provide support to all constituent parts of the LCC. They shall convene Partners-At-Large meetings, at intervals to be determined by the Steering Committee, to collaboratively identify conservation goals and identify priority science needs that are essential to fulfilling the conservation goals of the LCC. They shall provide relevant 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, analyses, and scientific tools required for conservation design and resource management decisions. Finally, core staff shall coordinate with, communicate activities to, and leverage funding with other partnerships.

The LCC Coordinator shall serve as the leader, manager, and supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Arctic LCC support office for the Arctic LCC. This shall include, but is not limited to: supervision of FWS LCC staff; development, administration, and oversight of program budgets and funding; maintenance of administrative and fiscal records; documentation and conveyance of Arctic LCC activities and accomplishments; coordination with LCC member entities and other interested parties. 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, non-member organizational entities. The Coordinator shall seek external funding opportunities and other available resources that could support Arctic LCC activities and projects. Finally, the Coordinator shall serve as facilitator for the meetings.

The LCC Science Coordinator shall work with the Steering Committee and others to identify science needs relative to, but not always limited to, the Arctic LCC. The LCC Science Coordinator shall serve as the leader, manager and coordinator for Arctic LCC scientific issues, activities, and programs. These duties include, but are not limited to: designing inventory and monitoring programs; coordination, review, technical support, and administration of projects implemented largely with Arctic LCC funds; managing and integrating scientific data; facilitating information exchange and feedback among scientists within and outside the Arctic LCC; presenting scientific results and recommendations at regulatory and professional meetings; and conducting public outreach and communications relative to science and technology issues and accomplishments. The Science Coordinator shall serve as the main scientific advisor to the Steering Committee.

Technical working groups shall provide recommendations for fulfilling priority science needs and conservation objectives to the core staff and shall report progress to the core staff. Technical working groups may also designate a representative to report directly to the Steering Committee. Technical working groups shall report on their progress at the request of the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee may disband or change the composition of technical working groups that it deems to be inactive.

Upon authorization by the Steering Committee, the core staff may engage technical working groups in facets of LCC planning and implementation. Each technical working group shall have a Chair appointed by consensus of the technical working group. The Chair shall coordinate all phases of the group's work to the core staff, and, if requested, have a representative of the group provide the Steering Committee with a written or oral report of activities and products.

7. Steering Committee Meetings

The Chair of the Steering Committee shall preside over the Steering Committee meetings. In the event that the Chair is absent, the Vice chair shall preside over the meeting. Steering Committee meetings must have either the Chair or Vice Chair in attendance, or the Chair or Vice chair must ensure another Steering Committee member is prepared to lead the meeting. Meetings must have a quorum to engage in decision-making. A quorum shall be equal to two-thirds of the number of member agencies on the Steering Committee. All organizations with representation on the Steering Committee are expected to send their representative or a designated alternate to each Steering Committee meeting.

Amendments and revisions to this charter will be made by consensus of the Arctic LCC Steering Committee at such times that they deem appropriate.