



GREAT BASIN LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION
COOPERATIVE (GBLCC)

Steering Committee Meeting Summary

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Organization/Agency	Member
U.S. Geological Survey	Sue Phillips, Chair
Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation	Heather Ray
The Nature Conservancy	Bob Unnasch, Vice-chair
Great Basin Coop. Ecosystem Studies Unit	Maureen McCarthy
Great Basin Environmental Program	Stan Johnson
Northwest Climate Science Center	Gus Bisbal
Southwest Climate Science Center	Steve Jackson
Intermountain Bird Observatory	Greg Kaltenecker
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Ted Koch
Friends of Nevada Wilderness	Larry Dwyer*
Trout Unlimited	Helen Neville
PacificCorp	Mark Tallman*

GBLCC STAFF AND FACILITATION TEAM

Rick Kearney, coordinator

Todd Hopkins, science coordinator

Matt Germino, research ecologist

Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues

Liz Mack, EnviroIssues

Bridger Wineman, EnviroIssues*

OTHER ATTENDEES

Nicole DeCrappeo, Northwest Climate Science Center

Terry Rich, Great Basin Bird Observatory

Erik Beever, USGS Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center

*attended virtually via phone and/or webinar

WELCOME AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

Penny Mabie, meeting facilitator, led a round of introductions and reviewed the agenda.

Sue Phillips, Great Basin LCC chair, thanked everyone for joining the meeting and welcomed the new members.

Rick Kearney, Great Basin LCC coordinator, introduced himself and invited the new members to introduce themselves and their organizations.

NEW MEMBERS

Helen Neville introduced Trout Unlimited, a national program with a local office in Boise. Trout Unlimited works to conserve, protect and restore North America's cold water fisheries and their watersheds. Helen's background is in genetics and she works on the conservation program for Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

Larry Dwyer introduced Friends of Nevada Wilderness, an organization that advocates for more wilderness and does stewardship work including trail maintenance and barbed-wire fence removal. Friends of Nevada Wilderness has offices in Reno and Las Vegas. Larry is the treasurer of the Board of Directors and has a PhD in Biochemistry from University of Nevada Reno.

Greg Kaltenecker introduced the Intermountain Bird Observatory which is part of Boise State University in the Department of Biology. The Intermountain Bird Observatory conducts long-term monitoring and research of migratory birds and engages in public outreach, environmental education, professional services and training. Greg is the director.

Steve Jackson introduced the Southwest Climate Science Center. The Center is housed at the University of Arizona and charged with bridging the divide between research and communities of practice. Steve is the director and has an academic background.

Gus Bisbal introduced the Northwest Climate Science Center, one of eight Climate Science Centers in North America. Working in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana the Northwest Climate Science Center is concentrated on actionable science. Gus is the director.

SCIENCE AND TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE (S-TEK) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Todd Hopkins, Great Basin LCC science coordinator, provided an overview of the S-TEK Strategic Plan process and explained how the committee distilled priorities down to those that best align with the Great Basin LCC mission. Todd explained that he would like to focus the discussion on the implementation plan and have the Steering Committee provide feedback on priorities, activities and implementation. The S-TEK working group has developed ecosystem-based categories of the priority topics and created a matrix showing how climate-related drivers intersect the ecoregions. These priorities were presented to the public during the Great Basin LCC Forum. The public feedback was vetted by the committee and incorporated into the plan.

Todd presented the implementation approach for 2015 and gave an overview of the plan for research funding. Maureen McCarthy, a member of the S-TEK working group, explained that they have struggled with getting research at landscape or ecoregional scales and that the Great Basin LCC does not want to duplicate what other agencies are funding. The Steering Committee can help by engaging with their networks and encourage work that pushes the envelope and leverages partnerships. Rick added that the Great Basin LCC has to show that it adds value by working across boundaries and that it is not duplicating existing work.

Next, Todd presented the seven criteria for selecting focal topics. Penny further clarified that these criteria apply to all the Great Basin LCC's S-TEK work, not just funding. Ted Koch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, suggested the Great Basin LCC consider "strategic" as a criteria, especially related to work on invasive species. He pointed out the importance of taking both a proactive and reactive approach to invasive species management. Sue added that this will also be an important factor in the new implementation plans that are part of a recent Secretarial Order #3336 concerning rangeland wildfire prevention, management and restoration —a project that can benefit from the Great Basin LCC's expertise. Maureen pointed out the importance of evaluating work through monitoring which can be difficult to fund.

Helen Neville asked if aquatic invasives were being considered in the S-TEK strategy and implementation. The matrix does not currently show an "x" at the intersection of invasives and the riparian ecosystems. Todd said he would revisit the matrix activity and follow up with Helen.

Bob Unnasch, vice-chair, suggested that instead of chasing issues, the Great Basin LCC should focus on a vision of what they want the Great Basin to be in 50 years. The Great Basin LCC should facilitate and develop that shared vision as opposed to beating down on specific problems. Matt Germino, research ecologist, asked if recent scenario planning efforts will help get to this point. Todd noted that spatially explicit scenario planning is now being used to plan out action for the next 10-20 years. Steve Jackson agreed that scenario planning is a very valuable tool that is also scalable.

Todd moved onto the potential science program activities. Rick pointed out that the fire science community has an interesting model for getting information out of journals and into the fire community, the Fire Science Knowledge Exchange Consortia, and suggested the Great Basin LCC consider their approach. (For more information, see <http://www.gbfiresci.org/>) Todd asked if there were other things the Steering Committee would like to see in the next 3-5 years. Several members pointed out that the GIS summit was a low priority since the GIS community is already very well connected. Todd clarified that the GIS summit is better framed as an assessment and that he would bring the Steering Committee's feedback back to the S-TEK working group.

Bob questioned if the tribes were interested in engaging in this work. Heather Ray, Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation, noted that the resources and ability to engage is the biggest challenge

for tribes, but she thinks the tribes would see value in this discussion if they could come to the table. Rick added that engaging tribes is a high priority for him.

LCC 5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Penny provided an overview of the strategic planning process for the Steering Committee. The staff and Executive Committee will be forming a working group to develop the strategic plan between Steering Committee meetings. Penny invited anyone who is interested in strategic planning to join the working group.

Next, Penny presented a series of discussion questions about the future of the Great Basin LCC, below are the questions and responses received:

- What would it look like, in five years, if the Great Basin LCC was “providing leadership and a framework linking science and management to address shared ecological, climate, and social and economic issues across the basin?”
 - The LCC has defined “shared issues” to inform what the Great Basin should look like.
 - The LCC is working towards achieving these shared issues.
 - LCC hears significantly less complaint from managers that science isn’t available because the LCC is helping make that connection.
 - The LCC is a “node” for info/tools available to answer questions.
 - The LCC is integrated into annual planning and implementation of partners, initiatives, etc.
 - Agencies and partners clearly see the value of the LCC.
- In five years’ time, what kinds of things might the Great Basin LCC have done “to focus science and management actions to sustain natural resources in the context of changing environmental conditions?”
 - The LCC has facilitated change for the better and has a forward looking plan
 - The LCC has made connections between science, management and the public.
 - The LCC has used scenario planning to help develop a framework for dealing with an uncertain future.
 - The LCC has helped to facilitate emphasis and funding for monitoring.
 - The LCC is facilitating/making the maximum use of available data.
 - The LCC has applied some science to water usage in Eastern Nevada.
 - The LCC has addressed energy development.
 - Citizen scientists help provide data.
- What is the Great Basin LCC already doing well? What can we build on and take advantage of in the next five years?
 - Science projects and process to choose the projects.
 - Funding of specific projects.
 - Leadership in consortium events.
 - Support for invasive species and fire work.
 - Engaging the NGO community.

- Five years from now, what will the Great Basin LCC have accomplished? What will the Great Basin LCC be known for? What obstacles will we have overcome?
 - All funded research projects are completed and productive and successfully communicated.
 - The LCC will have a measurable impact on sage grouse habitat conservation.
 - The LCC will have facilitated a strategic approach across the landscape and over time to address invasive species and fire.
 - Obstacle – relationship with states.

Penny ended by asking the Steering Committee to send any additional thoughts to Rick.

2015 WORK PLAN

Rick quickly walked through the highlights of the 2015 work plan. There were no comments or questions. EnviroIssues will resend the work plan for any final comments.

FY2013 SCIENCE PLAN UPDATE

Dr. Erik Beever of the USGS Northern Rocky Mountain station presented an overview of his research on the characterization of montane ecosystems, their microclimates, and wildlife distribution and abundance across the hydrographic Great Basin.

Dr. Beever explained that historically there has been a lack of weather data for high elevation mountain regions in the Great Basin. These high elevations are home to pikas, a very detectable species that is known to migrate upslope when faced with climate change. His research team has 21 years of pika records and is examining what combination of factors are responsible for changes in pika distribution. The team has placed 300 sensors in 20 mountain ranges to collect temperature and relative humidity data. They are also using high resolution photos (including color and thermal infrared) to collect additional pika data. These data are being used to model pika distribution. The team is also assessing whether plant chemistry is mediating pika distributional changes and looking more broadly at the species adaptive capacity.

Dr. Beever then asked the Steering Committee if there were other questions they would like to see his team work on given the data he has collected. They responded:

- The role of temperature versus precipitation
- Areas that are not at risk
- Is there anyone doing genetic work on pikas, especially related to assisted translocation?
 - Pikas have very low heterozygosity and don't seem to have the same behavioral plasticity in the Great Basin as in other regions.

TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Rick presented an overview of the proposed Tribal Engagement Plan and asked for feedback. Heather said she has passed the plan to some of her tribal members who are still reviewing it, but she thinks it's a good idea to reach out to the tribes through consultants. She also

mentioned that convening a conference call could be a big challenge. Maureen expressed interest in assisting with the process. She suggested that the plan may require individuals to go out and meet with tribal members in person. She also suggested attending tribal meetings of other steering committees and organizations. Rick asked the Steering Committee members to let him know of any opportunities to engage with tribal members.

STEERING COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Penny presented the new Great Basin LCC website and asked Steering Committee members to keep the LCC informed of events happening in the region.

Penny reminded the Steering Committee that they need to select a new vice-chair. She opened the floor for nominations. Ted nominated Maureen and she expressed willingness to serve. The Steering Committee approved by consensus Maureen's selection as vice-chair.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Envirolssues** will send out the Strategic Planning process outline.
- **Envirolssues** will send out the 2015 work plan.
- **Todd** will look into aquatic invasives in the S-TEK strategy and circle-back with Helen.
- **Steering Committee members** will send Rick any additional thoughts about the five year vision for the Great Basin LCC.
- **Steering Committee members** will inform Rick of any upcoming opportunities to engage with tribal communities.
- **Steering Committee members** will send Envirolssues any upcoming events that should be added to the website.