



**GREAT BASIN LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE  
(Great Basin LCC)**

# Steering Committee Meeting Summary

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## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Organization/Agency	Member
Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada	Bill Campbell, Chair
California Department of Fish and Game	Armand Gonzales, Vice-Chair*
Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office	Joe Adamski
Intermountain Bird Observatory	Jay Carlisle*
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Bill Dunkelberger
Friends of Nevada Wilderness	Larry Dwyer
Great Basin Research and Management Partnership	Deb Finch
Bureau of Land Management	Raul Morales
The Nature Conservancy	Liz Munn
Trout Unlimited	Helen Neville*
Nevada Department of Wildlife	Jennifer Newmark
U.S. Geological Survey	Sue Phillips
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Carolyn Swed
The Nature Conservancy	Bob Unnasch
California Tahoe Conservancy	Patrick Wright

## GREAT BASIN LCC STAFF AND FACILITATION TEAM

Rick Kearney, Coordinator  
 Matt Germino, Research Ecologist  
 John Tull, Science Coordinator  
 Liz Mack, EnviroIssues  
 Sarah Sanborn, EnviroIssues

## ADDITIONAL GUESTS

Jim Lyons, Yale University  
 Larry Rabin, US Fish and Wildlife Service\*

\*Attended via phone

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## WELCOME AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

Rick Kearney, Great Basin LCC Coordinator, welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. Rick said the goals for the meeting are to select new Steering Committee representatives, hear feedback from the Steering Committee Assessment and Public Forum, and use this feedback to determine key work and priorities for 2017.

Rick announced executive leadership team transitions and thanked Bob Unnasch for three years of service. Steering Committee members confirmed Armand Gonzales as the new vice-chair. Bill Campbell rotated into the chair position and Maureen McCarthy is now the past chair.

## STEERING COMMITTEE BUSINESS

### New Members

The Steering Committee confirmed three new members:

- Julie Malvitz, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Shaun Clements, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Joe Adamski, Bureau of Land Management Idaho State Office (non-decisional member)

### Action Item Review

Rick provided updates on action items from the December 2016 Steering Committee meeting

- Rick thanked the Steering Committee for sharing events their organizations are hosting that the Great Basin LCC should publicize or opportunities for staff to present about Great Basin LCC work.
- Jay Carlisle, Intermountain Bird Observatory is still working to connect with Maureen about how the Great Basin LCC could support work on flood irrigation and energy issues.
- Maureen was not present to provide an update on her efforts to discuss collaboration with the tribal representative from the Desert LCC.
- Rick reminded members of the various materials made over the past year that discuss the work of the Great Basin LCC. He suggested creating additional materials for Steering Committee members to bring with them to events or meetings as a 2017 Work Plan item.
- Rick continued discussions around producing a video focused on consumptive users in the Great Basin.

Steering Committee members stressed the importance of showing the Great Basin LCC's relevancy. Members agreed to continue strategizing how to do this, as well as engage the National LCC. Rick explained that the National LCC coordinator prepared a comprehensive set of communication tools and outreach materials for individual LCCs that may be helpful when advocating for the Great Basin LCC and mentioned that the National LCC will conduct a series of briefings with the new senior leadership at the Department of the Interior.

Bill Campbell noted it would be useful to develop a one-pager that includes a list of Great Basin LCC accomplishments and future goals.

Rick commented on the uniqueness of the Great Basin LCC from other LCCs in that the Great Basin LCC does not primarily focus on climate change. The Great Basin LCC also puts an emphasis on addressing

threats to priority habitats such as rangeland fire and invasive species. He added that the Great Basin LCC should effectively communicate these actions to decision makers in Washington, D.C.

Larry Dwyer, Friends of Nevada Wildlife, asked if the Great Basin LCC has capacity to develop materials for non-federal participants to use when talking about the Great Basin LCC's priorities to decision makers. Rick suggested producing materials about the work of the Great Basin LCC that are informative, but cautioned against developing materials that could be perceived as lobbying.

## GBLCC ASSESSMENT AND PUBLIC FORUM FEEDBACK

### Great Basin LCC Assessment

Liz Mack, EnviroIssues, thanked those who participated in the Steering Committee assessment and presented highlights and feedback.

Liz reviewed the objectives of the assessment, including: to gather Steering Committee members' feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the Great Basin LCC, identify barriers to participation/engagement for Steering Committee members, and gather insight into ways to increase participation and improve the Great Basin LCC.

Liz reviewed the key sections and findings of the assessments, including:

- **Attitudes towards the Great Basin LCC:** Survey participants feel the Great Basin LCC members show dedication to making this collaboration work, organization leadership is strong, one group couldn't do this work alone and the Great Basin LCC is taking on the right work at the right place. Funding is a concern and some had questions about whether needed organizations are missing from the table.
- **Engagement and participation:** Some expressed dissatisfaction with member engagement during and between meetings. Some barriers to participation include schedule conflicts, lack of clarity on role/responsibilities, not enough time and lack of travel funds.
- **Member roles:** The assessment indicates participants agree the Steering Committee provides advice, guidance and ideas on the strategic direction and work of the Great Basin LCC and brings unique and diverse perspectives. Some expressed a lack of clarity of their role and concern that the committee is currently serving as an oversight board and not engaging in collaboration.
- **Benefits of membership:** Some members remained uncertain of membership benefits and how the Great Basin LCC enhances collective actions. However, most members see a benefit from their membership, including:
  - Learning about and contributing to the Great Basin LCC decisions
  - Learning about conservation efforts and needs in the region
  - Hearing various perspectives
  - Finding commonalities with the Great Basin LCC
- **Achievements:** Members indicated the most pride toward completing the Strategic Plan, partnerships the Great Basin LCC has developed, the Public Forum and support for tribal climate adaptation.
- **Meeting logistics:** Most members expressed satisfaction with the current approach (mix of in-person and virtual), but agreed that engagement increases with in-person meetings. The survey respondents recognized that in-person meetings may not be feasible or affordable.
- **Facilitation and meeting structure:** Most indicated satisfaction with facilitation, support from staff and Executive Leadership. Members appreciate the good communication, respectfulness

and professionalism of the group. Some indicated more clarity is needed around the decision-making process and next steps after discussion.

- **New members:** Participants submitted a number of new member suggestions which will be reviewed.
- **Information sharing:** Most Steering Committee members share information about the Great Basin LCC a few times a month or a few times each year.
- **Discussion:** Assessment results identified areas for improvement or concern, including:
  - Committee member engagement and participation
  - Understanding the Steering Committee's role within the Great Basin LCC
  - Understanding how the Great Basin LCC affects collective action in the region

Rick recalled that when the Great Basin LCC was first established, it used its limited amount of funding to support partnerships rather than the development of new science. This created a culture of entrepreneurship, collaboration and engagement with existing science projects. When resources did become available, the Great Basin LCC submitted proposals for new science and to support traditional knowledge programs. He added that the Great Basin LCC still needs to anticipate new requirements before they are needed. Rick asked Steering Committee members how the Great Basin LCC could better serve their affiliated groups.

Jim Lyons asked how the Great Basin LCC is funded. Rick replied that the LCC gets \$1.3 million per year from the Bureau of Land Management's Soil, Water and Air program. This amount supports the Great Basin LCC Coordinator, contractors and science efforts. The Great Basin LCC also receives \$300K per year from the Fish and Wildlife Service to support the science coordinator, his travel and science. The Great Basin LCC has been successful in receiving federal year-end funding.

Raul Morales asked if the LCC receives private funds. Rick said there has been discussion of creating a 501(c)(3) arm of the Great Basin LCC which could receive private funding in the future.

Rick suggested the Great Basin LCC should continue outreach and improve the diversity of the Great Basin LCC. Steering Committee members discussed whether its charter should be updated to target the public as a key audience. Rick noted one role of Steering Committee members is to be a spokesperson for the Great Basin LCC.

Sue Phillips shared that when the Great Basin LCC was first formed, there were many stakeholders who showed up initially but did not return for follow up meetings. The Great Basin LCC has been building back up with a different set of stakeholders and is now more defined than in the first stages of development. Sue asked if it would be worth going back to some original stakeholders to see if they might have interest again now that the Great Basin LCC is better defined and has products and outcomes to share. An early barrier to diversity within the Steering Committee may have been a lack of definition within the Great Basin LCC.

Bill Campbell noted it would be beneficial if the Great Basin LCC provided some financial support for tribes, particularly for travel, to engage rural tribal communities.

Rick reviewed vacant seats on the Steering Committee to identify gaps in representation. Empty seats include:

- Five tribal seats, three tribal members have not been very active recently
- State of Idaho seat

- Four vacant NGO seats

Larry Rabin acknowledged many Steering Committee members have limited bandwidth. Rick asked members if, given their time constraints, there is anything the Great Basin LCC could do to make it easier for members to obtain and use the information generated by the Great Basin LCC. Members agreed many feel challenged to keep up with the information, but webinars are particularly helpful.

Raul commented that the Steering Committee relies heavily on the Great Basin LCC to make things relevant to folks on the ground. It is a challenge to get people physically doing the work to pick up the new information and implement it. Raul asked how the Great Basin LCC can focus on making information relevant, get people to change routines out in the field.

Armand Gonzales, Steering Committee vice-chair, noted that often the choice of participation is weighed between what the LCC can provide to participants and other demands. Showing what the LCC can provide may be a key to encourage participation.

Sue suggested the Great Basin LCC should be clearer with potential Steering Committee members about what influence they will have. It is appealing to be able to influence what the Great Basin LCC does, how it spends its money and what it produces.

Jennifer Newmark, Nevada Department of Wildlife, acknowledged there are many regional planning efforts that can be difficult to manage. She added it could help to be clear about how people can incorporate Great Basin LCC work or information into their everyday work. Landscape science initiatives are good, but there should be more focus on how to implement the information on the ground.

Carolyn Swed, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, reported there is a need to create awareness that the Great Basin LCC is at the point where it has information tangible enough to implement. Rick asked the Steering Committee for suggestions on how to get information into a form that is useable and valuable.

Highlights from this discussion include:

- Patrick Wright, California Tahoe Conservancy, noted the abundance of models and planning efforts. Every agency has their own model or framework for doing assessments. The Great Basin LCC can help coordinate the different efforts and help them be applied. A possibility is to hold a series of workshops on integrating science into policy and a regulatory framework for agencies to work together smoothly.
- Armand suggested that the Great Basin LCC can be the link between the science and managers. Managers do not have time to interpret high volumes of new science, so it will be important to show them how a new tool or model will simplify their work.
- Deb Finch, Great Basin Research and Management Partnership, stressed Steering Committee members should help distribute Great Basin LCC products and materials to their networks. The Great Basin LCC can link groups and help host workshops or webinars about how to tackle conservation efforts at a landscape scale. The burden of making these workshops or tools should not be only on the shoulders of the Great Basin LCC staff.
- The website can be a tool to show how projects and conservation efforts fit together.

Rick acknowledged the Great Basin LCC is picking up on the tension that exists between local projects and regional efforts. The LCCs were originally created to promote multi-agency communication and coordination of work. The Great Basin LCC is doing unprecedented work but struggling to relate the

work to individual agencies. It is the responsibility of individual members to look at neighboring agencies and see how their work may be connected.

### **Public Forum**

Liz reviewed the Great Basin LCC Public Forum that was available from Jan. 23 – Feb. 8, 2017 with the objective of allowing members of the public to give guidance and feedback to the Great Basin LCC. Liz pointed out the forum was extended by two days to allow additional time for participants to give feedback. Key topics of the Public Forum included:

- A brief overview of the Great Basin LCC
- Great Basin LCC supported projects and collaborations
- Steering Committee membership
- Rangeland fire prevention and management
- Expanding resistance and resilience work to forests and woodlands
- Working with tribal partners
- Information sharing

Liz presented key pieces of feedback based on the total of ninety-six comments that were submitted in the Public Forum. Forum participants were asked to provide feedback on the following topics:

- Priorities for conservation work in the Great Basin
- Work related to Secretarial Order 3336
- Potential non-governmental organizations and tribal representatives to join the Steering Committee
- Topics for future webinars
- The public's perception of the Great Basin LCC

Rick asked the Steering Committee who, out of the groups suggested during the Public Forum, the Great Basin LCC should prioritize connecting with. He noted many of the suggested groups are highly localized and may not be able to represent the larger region. Rick added it would also be beneficial to avoid too much overlap with existing Steering Committee members.

Bill Campbell stressed showing the benefit of membership to tribes to encourage their involvement. Rick asked members for examples of what may attract and retain tribal members. Bill responded that water is a large issue and priority for tribes. For example, the Goshute and Duckwater tribes are highly engaged in fighting for water rights and protection. Anything the Great Basin LCC can offer related to water pollution protection may be appealing.

Rick noted there has been tribal participation in the Great Basin LCC webinars. It may be appealing for tribes to develop a webinar on traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), perhaps on forest management. Rick noted it took many years for the Forest Service to learn how to effectively manage for fire. There is a strong interest in seeking tribal knowledge on controlled burns. The California LCC is sponsoring a presentation by the Upper Mono River Tribe on that topic.

Rick asked Steering Committee members for additional suggestions of groups and stakeholders to invite to participate in the Great Basin LCC. Many groups were suggested and discussed, including:

- Nevada Conservation League
- Great Basin Institute
- Nevada Mining Association

- Backcountry Horsemen
- Cattlemen Association
- Outdoor Riders Association
- Great Basin Historic Cultural Society
- Agriculture groups
- Nevada recreational groups
- National Forest Foundation
- Summit Lake Tribe
- Inter-Mountain Mining Association
- Mule Deer Foundation
- Native American Fish and Wildlife Association
- Nevada Cattlemen's Association

Carolyn noted the importance of demonstrating the relevancy of the Great Basin LCC to user groups such as the rancher, hunting, fishing, mining and recreational groups. The Great Basin LCC should help those entities realize the Steering Committee is a forum for addressing uncertainties affecting the ability to manage these resources well. These groups stretch across jurisdictional boundaries.

Helen Neville, Trout Unlimited, expressed concern that the Great Basin LCC struggles with the nature of the all-inclusive Steering Committee. Working groups or subcommittees might help engage some audiences because it is hard to act when the group gets too large.

Rick and Patrick suggested the Great Basin LCC could engage with these groups as needed or on a limited-duration activity such as a workshop or project directly related to their mission or organization. The Great Basin LCC can take advantage of their expertise and get their support without requiring these groups to come to regular meetings. This may be more appealing to some groups.

Sue noted that is also important to have those diverse interests on the committee so they can shape the priorities of the Great Basin LCC and influence decisions on which projects to support.

Steering Committee members agreed the group would benefit from more NGOs and tribes and should think about how the Great Basin LCC communicates the benefit of membership. Bill Campbell will talk to the Washoe and Pyramid Lake tribes and discuss a plan with Rick to engage tribal groups. Rick will pursue some of the NGOs suggested by the committee.

## **2017 WORK FOCUS AND PRIORITIES**

Rick reviewed the 2017 Great Basin LCC Work Plan. Work proposed for 2017 includes:

- Continuing work
  - Science Plan for Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration
  - Communication and outreach (videos, newsletters, website updates, presentations, etc.)
  - Northwest Basin and Range Synthesis and Greater Sheldon Hart Collaborative
- Potential new work
  - Cheatgrass and other invasives Request for Proposals (RFP with funding from BLM)
  - Expanding resistance and resilience work to forests and woodlands
  - New webinar series

Rick suggested the Steering Committee wait for confirmation from the BLM about funding for the cheatgrass RFP before further pursuing this effort.

Sue noted there is a standalone task in the Secretarial Order for cheatgrass and invasives, so this work is a high priority if the money comes.

Matt Germino suggested more large-scale testing should be done, particularly of biocontrol, before committing to large-scale demonstrations.

Rick said the Public Forum was used to gather suggestions for possible webinar topics and will be reviewed.

Helen asked if there will be a focus on water in some future efforts. Rick responded that Great Basin LCC work is adhering to the Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (S-TEK) Strategic Plan by working with a wide variety of groups, including a rotation of focus on S-TEK activity. This plan was adopted by the Steering Committee and voted to have initial focus was on the sagebrush system and its components. The next topic of focus is the aquatic ecosystem.

### NEXT STEPS AND ACTION ITEMS

- **Executive Committee:** Discuss the value of a working group to discuss the relevance of the LCC and to develop a plan for future outreach
- **Staff:** Create briefing paper or additional materials to explain the value and relevancy of the Great Basin LCC. Ensure these materials highlight that decisions are made by multiple partners.
- **Staff:** Think about Steering Committee diversity, where meetings are held, and potentially funding travel for in-person meetings
- **Staff:** Further develop the 2017 work plan based on the input from the committee
- **Rick:** Reach out to the LCC Network to discuss messaging the value of LCCs, especially how to show relevancy to non-federal partners
- **Rick:** Discuss future funding with Jim Lyons
- **Rick:** work with the Executive Committee to pursue new NGO members
- **Bill Campbell and Rick:** Make phone calls to tribal representatives (Summit Lake Tribe and Native American Fish and Wildlife Society) about partnership and being part of the Great Basin LCC Steering Committee