



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

Steering Committee Meeting Summary

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Organization/Agency	Member
Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada	Bill Campbell, Chair
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Armand Gonzales, Vice-Chair
Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit	Maureen McCarthy, Past Chair
Bureau of Land Management Idaho State Office	Joe Adamski
Intermountain Bird Observatory	Jay Carlisle
The Wildlife Society	Rocky Gutierrez
Southwest Climate Science Center	Steve Jackson
Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation	Jason Kessler
The Nature Conservancy	Liz Munn
Trout Unlimited	Helen Neville
U.S. Geological Survey	Sue Phillips
Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition	Julie Thompson
USDA Forest Service	Jim Winfrey

GREAT BASIN LCC STAFF AND FACILITATION TEAM

Rick Kearney, Coordinator
 Matt Germino, Research Ecologist
 John Tull, Science Coordinator
 Eric Jensen, Geospatial Data Specialist
 Liz Mack, EnviroIssues
 Cory Baranski, EnviroIssues

WELCOME AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

Rick Kearney, Great Basin LCC Coordinator, welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. Bill Campbell, Steering Committee Chair, opened the meeting and announced his new position as the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest tribal specialist.

Rick announced his intention to retire in January 2018 and thanked the Steering Committee for their dedication to the Great Basin conservation.

STEERING COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Action Item Review

Rick provided updates on action items from the September 2017 Steering Committee meeting:

- Rick researched the outreach activities of the SageWest group. The SageWest network has been a resource to communicate the work of the Great Basin LCC to members of the sagebrush community.
- John Tull, Science Coordinator, worked to identify strategies to engage broader audiences such as cattlemen and other land-users through the next Request for Proposals (RFP).
- John will continue to collaborate with the Northwest Climate Science Center through the RFP development process. Steve Jackson, Southwest Climate Science Center, will also reach out to John in the new year to discuss potential collaboration. John and Steve has scheduled a call to coordinate in January.

Fiscal Year 2018 Request for Proposals Update

Rick announced the Great Basin LCC 2018 Request for Proposals is on hold following guidance from the Bureau of Land Management and Fish and Wildlife Service.

John reviewed the RFP timeline discussed at the last Steering Committee meeting, including the formation of a science focal topic working group. In October 2017, 19 representatives met and provided feedback on a range of possible focal topics for the RFP. The group suggested focusing more on human dimensions in the RFP and broaden outreach and engagement. As follow up to the working group meeting, John and Matt Germino, Research Ecologist, worked to hone in on RFP topics based on the group's input. However, further development of the RFP is on hold until more is known about the budget for 2018. In the meantime, the Great Basin LCC will focus on other activities.

John mentioned one suggested strategy for funding was to require researchers to have a federal partner in place when they submit their proposal. However, this could limit the participation of the university community and would not meet the intent of the RFP.

Helen Neville, Trout Unlimited, asked if the Great Basin LCC core operational funding is secured. Rick confirmed the staffing costs of LCCs is included in all proposed budgets for 2018.

John and Matt shared with the Steering Committee an idea to request for proposals for a Great Basin LCC Fellow who would encourage more direct engagement with those funded through the RFP. This fellow would participate directly in Great Basin LCC activities to build continued relationships with researchers and managers. Matt also explained the intention for the RFP is to encourage proposals that promote the engagement of science and management, with consideration of the socioeconomic impacts of a proposed project when possible. The fellow could help support this engagement and share projects' successes.

Maureen McCarthy, Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystems Study Unit, noted the creation of a fellow may be outside of the scope of the RFP as defined in the STEK Strategy and asked if the fellowship is something the Great Basin LCC could proceed with while the RFP is delayed, such as through an internship program. Rick responded that the fellowship may not need to be associated with the RFP;

however, candidates would need to be identified through an alternate competitive process. Staff expressed concern around bringing on an intern or fellow without a topical focus.

Rick asked the group for input on how fellows may be identified if outside of a competitive process, like the RFP. Steve Jackson, Southwest Climate Science Center, responded that the Climate Science Center supports graduate and post-doc fellows, which has been effective at connecting students and projects across the network. Steve noted a Great Basin fellowship program could range from highly inclusive to selective and targeted. Steve and John agreed there may be opportunities for the Great Basin LCC to coordinate with the Climate Science Center fellowship program.

Rocky Gutierrez, The Wildlife Society, suggested the fellow be identified through an open application on the Great Basin LCC website that could be advertised through various partner networks.

Discussion: Budget Uncertainties

Maureen and Armand Gonzales, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, led the Steering Committee in a discussion of budget uncertainties and strategies for remaining relevant to conservation.

Armand provided an overview of the California LCC's strategy to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with its partners, a non-binding but formal agreement that articulates the vision and intention of the LCC. The intention is that an MOU would allow the LCC to endure shifts in policy that may degrade the LCCs ability to continue this work and partnership. The agreement memorialized the partners' commitment to conservation goals.

Maureen asked the Steering Committee for other suggestions that could help strengthen the Great Basin LCC partnership. Maureen emphasized the importance of solidifying the partnership the LCC has formed, particularly in light of budget uncertainties in the coming years. One possibility is to use large ecosystem problems as a way to connect with other groups working on smaller facets of the problem. For example, joining other LCCs and networks focused on specific problems, such as creating a Great Rivers Consortium to take the partnerships outside of just the Great Basin.

Rick added the Great Basin LCC could partner with other groups working in the sagebrush biome, such as the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). Participants agreed another sagebrush partnership may not be valuable unless it fulfills a specific need that is not addressed by existing sagebrush partnerships.

The Steering Committee considered the disadvantages of forming an additional partnership to solidify the mission of the LCC, including the time it takes to form a partnership, and it is not likely to receive funding. This may dilute resources for local efforts in the Great Basin.

Maureen advocated that an agreement to shore up the Great Basin partnership could be helpful for the Great Basin LCC and its work in the long run.

Rick asked if a new partnership would be perceived as competition with the U.S. Geological Survey or other groups that have activities taking place in the sagebrush biome. Sue Phillips, U.S. Geological Survey, responded that the LCC or another partnership would not be an organization conducting research or applied science, so there is no direct competition for them.

Other Committee Business

Maureen announced to the Steering Committee that the Fourth National Climate Assessment and the State of the Carbon Cycle Report are available for public comment at www.globalchange.gov. Maureen emphasized the importance of receiving constructive feedback on this report from those who work in the industry and encouraged participants to share their comments.

Great Basin Consortium

Rick reminded the group that the Great Basin Consortium is scheduled for January 28-February 2, 2018 at the Nugget Casino in Sparks, NV. The Consortium will be held in tandem with the Society for Range Management Annual Meeting. The Great Basin Science Summit will be held February 1, and the Steering Committee will hold an in-person meeting on February 2. The registration cost for the science summit is \$80 and provides access to all Consortium meetings. Registration information [is available here](#).

Participants noted some federal agencies are limiting participation in the Society for Range Management meeting, which may influence attendance of the Great Basin Consortium.

2018 Public Forum

Liz Mack, EnviroIssues, announced the Great Basin LCC Public Forum will launch on January 2, 2018. The Public Forum is an interactive website that operates for approximately three weeks and allows the greater conservation community to provide input on the work of the Great Basin LCC. This year, the Public Forum will target an expanded audience, including private landowners, land use planners, transportation professionals, utilities professionals, and recreationalists.

Liz explained the Forum content was developed to help meet the objectives of the Great Basin LCC Strategic Plan. She provided an overview of the website stations and key messages.

Liz asked Steering Committee participants if there are organizations or individuals that should be added to the Public Forum distribution list and how committee members can help expand the audience.

Liz Munn, The Nature Conservancy, suggested that leaders of the Conservation District may be an effective conduit to reach new audiences. Maureen added the Nevada Association of Conservation Districts may be able to share the Forum with their contacts.

Rick noted the Great Basin LCC will prepare promotional materials for the Public Forum that will be sent to Steering Committee members to share with their networks.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTION ITEMS

1. **Rocky, Steve and LCC Staff** will discuss options for a Great Basin fellowship program
2. **Armand** will share a draft of the California MOU with staff for further discussion at the February 2018 Steering Committee meeting
3. **Maureen and Rick** will discuss multi-LCC coalition options
4. **Rick** will send the full Consortium meeting schedule to the Steering Committee
5. **John** will send a notice to the research community regarding the new RFP timeline