



Meeting Summary

Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (S-TEK) Working

Group: Webinar #1

May 1, 2014

Participants

Working Group Members:

- Raul Morales, Great Basin LCC Steering Committee, S-TEK Chair
- Jeanne Chambers, USDA-Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station
- Jim Hurja, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
- Stan Johnson, National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy
- Maureen McCarthy, University of Nevada, Reno
- Jennifer Newmark, Nevada Natural Heritage Program
- Mike Pellant, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho SO
- David Redhorse, BIA Northwest Regional Office
- Terry Rich, Idaho State Office; Partners in Flight
- Jeremy Spoon, Portland State University; The Mountain Institute

GB LCC Staff:

- Linda Kelly, BLM, Great Basin LCC Coordinator
- Todd Hopkins, USFWS, Great Basin LCC Science Coordinator
- John Wilson, BLM
- Ryan Orth, EnviroIssues, facilitator
- Bridger Wineman, EnviroIssues, facilitation support

Key Discussion Points

Welcome and agenda overview

Ryan Orth, EnviroIssues, introduced himself as facilitator, welcomed attendees and led a roll call. Todd Hopkins, Great Basin LCC, thanked participants for joining the working group. Todd said the work is important to the LCC's mission to enhance understanding of climate change and ability to adapt to future conditions.

Background and purpose

Raul Morales is the Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (S-TEK) Chair for the Great Basin LCC Steering Committee, serving as the liaison between the working group and the Steering Committee. Raul noted working group participants have a diversity of experience and expertise and the Steering Committee is very pleased to have their participation. Raul will report progress of the working group and provide any needed input from the Steering Committee.

Raul said the mission of the Great Basin LCC includes working to better understand the effects of changing climate and other human impacts and how best to respond and adapt to these conditions. The Steering Committee is interested in addressing science and management needs in a way which incorporates the best available science and is applicable to implementation on-the-ground. The Steering Committee heard a presentation from the North Pacific LCC in 2013 concerning their S-TEK process and determined to use a similar approach for prioritizing Great Basin science and management needs.

Todd said the S-TEK working group's primary purpose is to advise the creation of a five-year strategic science plan for the LCC. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is to be included in setting priorities for the LCC. For the purposes of the LCC, TEK is defined as the evolving knowledge acquired by indigenous and local peoples over hundreds or thousands of years through direct contact with the environment. There are a number of avenues the LCC has identified for integrating TEK into the science strategy. These include developing dialog on shared conservation goals, the exchange of traditional and western science to benefit tribal issues and circumstances, exploring models for engagement of tribal membership and traditional practitioners, protocols to ensure protection of TEK and strategies to protect treaty rights and trust resources. The LCC is committed to protecting cultural resources and hopes to provide a model of tribal partnership in strategic science planning for the Great Basin through this process.

Todd described a concurrent process to determine how FY2014 science funding will be distributed. Due to timing, these funds will be dispersed in advance of a final S-TEK strategic plan. For the immediate-term funding strategy, \$150,000 of \$600,000 total will be directed to projects focused on engaging tribal members and integrating TEK. The LCC expects to release the RFP for FY2014 projects in the next month. Interested members of the S-TEK working group have been engaged to provide input to the procurement process and review proposals. Final approval of recommended FY2014 projects will be made by the GB LCC Steering Committee. Funding decisions in future years will benefit from the work of the S-TEK process and refer to the resulting strategic plan.

Prioritization process and work plan

Todd introduced the S-TEK work plan and schedule. The process belongs to the working group and has been created with the goal of developing a five-year strategic plan for the LCC. He noted the in-person meetings can be challenging for participants to attend, but are included in the work plan because of the great progress meeting face-to-face will allow.

Ryan reviewed the three phases of the work plan. The S-TEK process is based on that used by the North Pacific LCC and was approved by the Steering Committee. The first phase focuses on gathering information and building the inventory of sources for science and management needs. A list of source documents compiled to-date was included in the meeting packet. Additional documents may be added to the list. The inventory of needs will be organized into a “long list” of science and management needs.

The second phase will narrow the long list of science and management needs in an objective and transparent way. Needs will be scored against criteria using an impact matrix which pairs change agents and resources of management concern. The working group will discuss and come to agreement on the exercise and scoring criteria in a future meeting. The result of the first exercise will include identification of the top ranked pairs of change agents and resources which comprise a ‘short list’ of needs.

During the third phase, the group will further narrow the short list, resulting in five to ten priority topics. Additional criteria and balancing factors will be applied to ensure a balanced portfolio of science and management priorities for the Great Basin. Finally, the list of priorities, supporting information and implementation guidance will be documented in a strategic plan for adoption by the Great Basin LCC Steering Committee.

Guiding Principles

Todd explained the working group will use guiding principles to inform the S-TEK strategic plan process. Staff suggested that the group begin drafting principles based on existing goals and objectives in the Great Basin LCC charter which apply directly to science and management. These may be supplemented or modified based on group discussion. They include:

Goal: Provide leadership and a framework linking science and management to address shared ecological, climate, and social and economic issues across the basin.

Objective: Develop landscape-level information that can be used to focus conservation programs on the priority elements of the landscape most sensitive to change.

Objective: Evaluate and synthesize existing technical information, and identify and support the generation of information needed to fill gaps.

Objective: Support the development of scientific information, tools and technical products to inform and augment conservation decisions and actions by natural resource managers.

Objective: Coordinate application of geospatial and other information management technologies as necessary to plan, monitor, and evaluate activities and outcomes at various eco-regional scales.

Goal: Focus science and management actions to sustain natural resources in the context of changing environmental conditions.

Objective: Identify and facilitate the development, integration, and application of social and natural scientific information needed to inform water, land, fish, wildlife, and cultural heritage management decisions.

Objective: Monitor landscape scale indicators, test scientific assumptions, and evaluate effectiveness of conservation actions to inform adaptive management.

Todd asked working group members to consider if some objectives should be given precedence over others and if there are gaps in the priorities addressed.

Group discussion of guiding principles

Maureen McCarthy, University of Nevada, said the first goal is very relevant as it is critical to incorporate science into land management decision making. She said there are many relevant new areas of research regarding environmental impacts of new energy sources, development and other topics. The areas considered by the working group should include such topics which might not have been included in conservation strategies in the past. Todd responded that these points relate well to the LCC goals.

Jeremy Spoon, Portland State University and The Mountain Institute, said it is not clear how input from the working group will be integrated into the process, especially for the tribal stakeholders. Jeremy said he would like to make sure funded projects focus on the needs of tribes and shared issues of science and TEK.

Todd said this point is well taken and there are a number of ways in which the needs of tribes will be incorporated through the process. Raul said there is an opportunity to bring in additional guiding principles which address TEK more directly.

Stan Johnson, National Center for Food and Agriculture Policy, said the criteria and interests encompassed seem to be very broad and the approach to setting priorities should be specific to the areas on which progress can be made.

Ryan responded that there will be multiple opportunities for refinement of the guiding principles and for additional specificity through the process. The guiding principles will be revisited as the priorities are narrowed to ensure alignment.

Science and management needs inventory

Todd said many source documents for science and management needs have been submitted and compiled for the S-TEK process. The document list, showing those which have been gathered and reviewed to date, was distributed with the webinar packet. The LCC requested volunteers from the working group to assist in reviewing documents. Staff will provide an email to working group members with more detail and a reminder to please offer assistance.

Jeanne Chambers, USFS, said there are a number of additional documents which should be included on the list which she will forward to Todd.

Next steps

Ryan thanked working group members for sharing their availability for the remainder of 2014 as it allows future meeting dates for the group to be set to achieve the greatest possible participation. A tentative slate of dates was announced, with final meeting dates to be distributed to the group via email. Working group members who are not able to travel are welcome to participate via internet and phone. Ryan said staff is also happy to conduct individual briefings via phone for those who cannot participate at the scheduled meeting time. Recordings and meeting summaries will also be provided.

Raul and Todd requested that working group members review the information presented and provide any comments. They thanked participants for their time and involvement.

Next steps for working group members

- Standby for the dates of upcoming meetings (distributed via email 5/14)
- Review the document list and identify any gaps or additions
- Respond to an upcoming email with availability for review of documents to identify science and management needs which will feed into the prioritization process
- Review the S-TEK work plan and provide any questions or comments