

# DRAFT Meeting Summary

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## Great Basin LCC Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge

### Working Group: Webinar #5

November 24, 2014

## Participants

### S-TEK working group:

- Heather Ray, Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation
- Jason Barnes, Trout Unlimited
- Jim Hurja, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
- John McCann, U.S. Forest Service
- Kyle Mcfee, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Shivwits Band of Paiutes
- Maureen McCarthy, University of Nevada, Reno
- Terry Rich, Solutions for Bird Conservation LLC

### S-TEK Staff:

- Todd Hopkins, Science Coordinator, Great Basin LCC
- Ryan Orth, EnviroIssues
- Bridger Wineman, EnviroIssues

## Meeting documents

- Draft Priority Topics

## Key Discussion Points

### Welcome and agenda overview

Todd Hopkins, Great Basin LCC (GBLCC) Science Coordinator, welcomed attendees. Ryan Orth, EnviroIssues, provided an overview of the meeting agenda and expected outcomes. Ryan noted revisions have been made to the priority topics document based on discussion at the Oct. 15 workshop, including additional summary and background information for each of the categories. Additional general feedback on the document and specific comments and input on each of the sections, particularly the cross-cutting issues section, is requested from working group members.

### Review of priority topics

Jim Hurja, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, noted some of the example needs are the same among categories, including policy and socio-economic issues, for example. Ryan and Todd explained this was intentional and based on feedback provided at the Oct. 15. Meeting. The group discussed each of the seven categories of priority topics as Ryan edited the document on-screen.

### Rivers/streams, riparian

Jim said the topic regarding socio-economic work should include working with the states on issues related to water rights and species of concern. The group discussed the optimal way the LCC might address water rights issues. There are some activities, like forecasting water needs, which may be an appropriate activity for the LCC. However, because of its mission and available resources, the LCC will not be involved in acquiring water rights. The priority topics document was edited to indicate work on water rights is only in regard to climate change and the statement about acquisition of water rights was removed.

### **Shrublands (Sagebrush, Salt desert, Mountain brush)**

Terry Rich, Solutions for Bird Conservation LLC, asked if more specificity should be provided around the relationship between fire and sage-grouse.

Todd said he hopes to get some key items for future planning which are outcomes of the recent *Sage-grouse and Rangeland Wildfire in the Great Basin* conference. There is also a recent syntheses document from the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies he hopes to draw upon.

The bullet regarding Sage-grouse was changed to “sagebrush-obligate species.”

### **Wetlands, groundwater, springs, playas**

There were no comments on this category.

### **Alpine/subalpine**

Maureen McCarthy, University of Nevada, said the text covers the pertinent issues.

### **Lakes/reservoirs**

Maureen noted terminal lakes are not explicitly addressed in the example needs. There is funding available from other sources for work on terminal lakes and they are an important issue for the Great Basin. Todd said the mention of the terminal lakes in the summary of the category is sufficient at this point. Jason Barnes, Trout Unlimited, agreed the bullets included are sufficient and cover the major issues.

### **Forests and woodlands (aspen, coniferous forest, pinyon-juniper)**

Jim said the effects of woodcutting on fuels management and fire may be an issue to include. Todd said he will consider how to include that.

### **Cross-cutting topics and cultural resources**

The area of cross-cutting topics and cultural resources needs more input. Regarding the need for mapping and assembling base-line information, Terry said to include the connection between sage-grouse habitat and riparian playa wetlands.

Ryan noted the group has discussed some roles for the LCC apart from distributing funding, including holding a geospatial summit for baseline data needs for the region. He asked if there are other types of coordination activities to include.

- Terry said the Great Basin Bird Observatory is holding a conference in Reno in 2017, which could be expanded to topics beyond birds. He said holding a geospatial summit is also a useful idea.

- Terry said the Colorado State University Western Wildlife Values Project is an interesting example. He suggested the LCC review the questions that will be asked through that project to see if they can inform the LCC's work. Todd will follow up on this.

Ryan invited group members to share any additional comments following the webinar.

### **Implementation considerations**

Group members previously commented that the LCC has a broad mission for climate adaptation and an opportunity to fund needed work not addressed by other agencies. There was discussion of rolling two years of funding in to one to fund larger scale projects.

Maureen said she likes the idea of bi-annual RFPs. Prioritizing research at the ecoregional scale is part of what makes the LCC's approach unique and valuable. She said the bullets included for this topic are sufficiently broad.

Todd said if the LCC decides to roll multiple years of funding together they could decide to work just on cross-cutting issues or to focus on a single category for a period.

- Terry said he thinks it is a good idea to focus topically and cycle through the categories.
- Maureen said there will be better project proposals if more money is available. Providing additional focus is also useful. Rotating focus will allow the LCC to address needs not covered by other agencies. The topic chosen for focus would not have to be tied to a set cycle, thus allowing flexibility.
- Jim said in his previous experience there have been issues funding phased projects when subsequent phases to not receive the funding requested.
- Maureen suggested an advisory group could propose the theme of each funding cycle to the Steering Committee based on timely consideration. This would also allow flexibility to address changing needs.

Todd said he does not think balancing factors are needed if a focal approach is adopted which cycles through the resource categories. The group could reconvene for each RFP to determine the focus. Developing criteria, such as if a project represents actionable science, and funding leveraged, will be useful.

### **Basin Forum and next steps**

There will be a progress report on the S-TEK work to the GBLCC Steering Committee the week of Dec. 1. The priority topics document will then serve as the basis of some questions during the Great Basin Public Forum. The work completed so far, as well as input from the Steering Committee and through the Forum will go into the strategic plan to help focus funding and other activities.

The Forum is the GBLCC's annual open house. It will kick off with a webinar Dec. 8 and will include an online dialog about the S-TEK priorities. A registration link was distributed to working group members.

The group was asked to collect and share any example funding processes and criteria which might help inform the strategic plan.

There will be no S-TEK meeting in December, but group members will be contacted with a request for availability for a webinar in January, 2015 to gather additional input and continue advancing the strategic plan. The draft plan is scheduled to go to the Steering Committee in February.

Todd and Ryan thanked all participants for their involvement and helpful input.