**NALCC Steering Committee Meeting**

**April 10, 2013 Saratoga Springs, NY**

**Minutes**

**Action Items**

LCC staff and steering committee members will identify opportunities to bring together Cooperative Research Units across the northeast with the LCC.

LCC staff will participate with NOAA and Canadian partners on the Climate Network of the Gulf of Maine Council.

LCC staff will revise annual report to include demonstration projects, revise the NEAFWA map and add more detail on partners and re-post on the website.

LCC staff will provide additional detail to the Steering Committee on how the National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy links to LCC mission and goals.

LCC staff will provide a list of the members of the coastal and marine technical committee and sea level rise SDM technical committee as a starting point for discussing review of Hurricane Sandy resiliency projects.

LCC staff and new Science Delivery Team will map out relationship with regional and local partnerships and consider how translate information into ecosystem services terms.

Ken Elowe and LCC staff will determine the capacity we need to set and evaluate regional targets with a conservation targets team.

LCC staff will present options on the next call for a two-day Steering Committee retreat this fall.

The LCC Information Management Team and LCC staff will work with DataBasin to implement the recommended Information Management System.

Action items related to motion on funding:

LCC staff and technical committees will pursue and further define the top two science need recommendations of the Technical Committee for aquatic and terrestrial/wetland science needs and present recommendations to the Steering Committee on selecting projects to address these science needs.

LCC staff and Science Delivery Team will make recommendations to the Steering Committee on how best to support science delivery through projects.

The Fish and Wildlife Service will report back to the Steering Committee on any relevant decisions about Department of the Interior Hurricane Sandy resiliency funding. LCC staff will identify options for funding additional science projects once Hurricane Sandy resiliency funding decisions are made.

LCC Steering Committee will factor in above information and make decisions on final science and science delivery needs.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Patty Riexinger (New York State DEC), Wendi Weber (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Ken Elowe (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) welcomed the steering committee to Saratoga and to the LCC meeting. Wendi thanked the steering committee and highlighted the North Atlantic LCC’s leadership role, serving as a model for other areas of the country. Ken emphasized the LCC’s increasing focus on delivering science and tools and making its work useful so that it leads to improved conservation work on the ground.

Ken Elowe conducted a roll call ; Andrew Milliken (North Atlantic LCC) noted that there were 42 members and partners in attendance in person or on the phone representing 28 of the steering committee agencies and organizations and representing a quorum.

Ken Elowe asked for review and changes to the minutes from the December 12, 2012 meeting and the February 8, 2013 conference call. John O’Leary (Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife) requested a wording change (change wording of his comment to “adaptive capacity”) to the December 12 meeting minutes. Andrew Milliken will make the change. Becky Gwynn (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries) moves to approve both minutes with the change, Patty Riexinger seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

1. **Action Items from last Steering Committee call (February 8, 2013)**

Andrew Milliken reviewed the action items and actions taken from the February 8 call noting that several items will be discussed in more detail during the meeting.

* Regarding last year’s wetland restoration RFP that did not result in successful proposals, the Coastal and Marine Technical Team and LCC Staff confirmed that it is likely that this science need will be met by projects funded through the special Congressional appropriations for Hurricane Sandy restoration and resiliency and that there would not be a need to reissue the RFP.
* Regarding the planned workshop to review the synthesis of information for State Wildlife Action Plans - due to the prohibition of federal travel, the original workshop envisioned was downsized and the LCC staff sponsored a session with state partners April 9 at the NEAFWA conference to discuss the regional synthesis for State Wildlife Action Plans. Ten states participated and made significant progress on the species and habitat synthesis.

1. **State of the LCC**

Ken Elowe introduced this part of the agenda and asked attendees to refer to the 2012 annual report for the North Atlantic LCC and focus on the “Looking Forward” section that captures LCC staff thoughts about next steps. He noted that David Eisenhauer (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) is on detail as communications coordinator and helped pull this report together.

Andrew Milliken asked that if anyone has corrections or improvements they think can be made to the annual report, please let him know and they will revise the document.

Andrew provided a presentation on *State of the LCC: A Review of Progress and Next Steps*.

* Mission, Components and Framework: Andrew reviewed the mission statement and key components of the mission and discussed these individually. He reviewed the Northeast Conservation Framework developed and the areas of that framework that the LCC is focused on. He noted that conservation design, science translation, conservation adoption and information management are where an increasing amount of our effort is going.
* Partnerships, Development and Operational Capacity – he noted that we have a strong partnership that is representative of most of the constituencies in the northeast, especially given that the partnership is not even three years old yet. But there are some areas that could be strengthened, such as coastal agencies, tribes, Canadian partners and delivery partners. Steering Committee currently has 32 members, average attendance at meetings and representation is strong. Hosting four meetings per year--- two on phone, two in person. Does that work for everyone?
* Patty Riexinger suggested that we need to have more time to allow for in-depth discussions, perhaps at a longer meeting once per year. Andrew agreed and noted that we could always add on a day or have a separate retreat.
* Andrew continued the presentation. Technical partnership and operational capacity has grown – now have 43 Technical Committee members and three subteams. Conservation Targets Team has 12 proposed members. Conservation Delivery team about to be initiated. Conservation Design Team for SWAP synthesis is coming together. Staff capacity includes FWS, EPA, NPS and TNC. Have added GIS capacity in both FWS and TNC to help synthesize and deliver information.
* Science Needs and Projects—need to keep checking that we are addressing the scope of issues and the needs to support conservation decision-making. Major work of 2010—regional climate change vulnerability assessment, landscape change and decision support—Designing Sustainable Landscapes, piping plovers and sea level rise, brook trout and stream temperature. Major work of 2011- foundational mapping, species-habitat mapping and modeling and mapping the distribution and abundance of marine birds; vulnerability assessments based on climate change. Major work of 2012- more foundational mapping, expanding to Canada, updating intertidal habitat mapping, refining aquatic habitat classification; creating decision support tools to assess aquatic habitats and threats; initiating demonstration projects across scales. All projects and reports are now on LCC website. Quarterly review of projects is being conducted by WMI and LCC staff and partners.
* Science delivery— one example of science delivery was engaging managers through the three Designing Sustainable Landscapes workshops. We are organizing, synthesizing, translating our work so that partners can adopt the science into their management. There is a wealth of information with TNC that we are making accessible via Lori Pelech’s (LCC GIS Analyst) and Alex Jospe’s (TNC, co-funded by LCC) positions. We are putting together the models and maps (conservation blueprints) as regional context for State Wildlife Action Plan revisions. We know the timeline is tight and are doing our best to get the states what they need. Science delivery team to be discussed later in agenda.
* Working across landscapes—we are fortunate to have the Northeast Climate Science Center (CSC) down the street and we are working closely with them. We are jointly getting people together to discuss sea level rise through structured decision making and modeling, and are going to be doing more with that in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.
* Communications and information management—BJ will be making a presentation about the directions the Information Management Team is recommending. We are communicating information through the dynamic content management site. Tribal outreach: we have 12 federally recognized tribes in the LCC. They have expressed support for the LCC mission but have challenges in participation; we are exploring ways with the United South and Eastern Tribes to bring them together regularly to talk about what’s going on at LCCs and Climate Science Center that relates to their needs. Reaching out to local planners is a work in progress - we planned and participated in a Regional Plan Association meeting as well as a Northern New England American Plan Association meeting. It was a great opportunity for feedback, indicating the need for simpler presentation of technical information and the value of town-by-town work.
* Worldviews Network—presentation in December—organization that combines academic institutions and planetariums to convey messages about sustainability. They featured some of the NALCC work at the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History. We’d like to get their travel dome at one of our meetings and use this as one tool of a larger outreach strategy.
* Hurricane Sandy—what science can support the resiliency work of preparing for future storms? Patty noted thatwe’ve had many storms in succession—four significant storms in the past 2 years (Irene-Lee-Sandy-Nemo). The last two years have brought climate change into the mainstream, reflected by examples like the Wall Street Journal running stories on the need for changes in rebuilding after storms. This is giving us an important opportunity to make positive change along coasts. Andrew agreed and noted that will be discussing hurricane response further in the next section.
* 2013 Next Steps. Partnerships - strengthening partnerships with Canadian agencies and organizations (could be limited by travel funding), working with tribes, local planners and land trusts. Science needs – more consistent involvement of Technical Committee throughout the year; considering broader call for science needs to update the portfolio; close coordination with Northeast and Southeast CSCs and neighboring LCCs; tracking of our ongoing projects and getting feedback via webinars; bringing together P.I.s from various projects. Science Delivery - need for continued or increased emphasis on science delivery through translation, information management, working with partnerships, demonstration projects and science delivery team; initiation of conservation targets team and the selection of indicators and targets that is incorporated into conservation planning. Hurricane Sandy - taking a lead role related to Hurricane Sandy resiliency funding that does not take away from other priorities. Communications and Information Management—continuing to build content for website, implementing the new data portal and building a communications strategy including innovative approaches such as the Worldviews Network.

Discussion

* Pattyasked about the involvement and engagement of Northeast Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units and suggested a concerted effort to bring them together.
* Scot Williamson (Wildlife Management Institute) is impressed with how the NALCC has been working with the states. There is another level of planning that the LCC could infuse its work into, such as USFS plans for National Forests and National Wildlife Refuge plans (CCPs). If these plans reflect work of the LCC, that would be a good sign of success. Andrew agreed thatthis is something we would like to do, and the synthesis work we are doing for State Wildlife Action Plans should be applicable to this kind of planning as well. We are thinking about the right scale and are increasingly thinking about subregions for our work.
* Kennoted thatthere are partners who can translate LCC science and tools to those working more locally. Watershed groups such as those organized around the Connecticut River (Conte Refuge), Kennebec, and Susquehanna are interested in integrating with our work. We would like your feedback on how to best spend our time and energy and meet those needs of partnerships who are trying to work with us.
* Ellen Mecray (NOAA)—The Integrated Water Resources Science and Services partnership involving NOAA and DOI is assessing watersheds—Potomac, Hudson, Susquehanna, and Delaware River Basin—and this could be an effort for the LCC to link up with. NOAA is also working with Canadian agencies in Gulf of Maine, which the LCC could also tie into (talks scheduled for the end of May).
* Jad Daley (Trust for Public Land)—Agrees with Scot’s point on tying into planning efforts. Emerging inter-agency partnerships such as the Connecticut River Blueway and the Northern Forest Landscape effort of America’s Great Outdoors—those kinds of things are getting a lot of energy right now and it seems especially important to focus on as an opportunity to engage them in our discussion. The only thing missing from the LCC 2012 Annual Report was the demonstration projects—that belongs in here; these are a great tool for getting LCC science out for use and we should continue them. Andrew noted that demonstration projects should have been included and will be in revised version.
* Patty –Is the LCC Network going to take on implementation of the National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy (released 3/26/13)? Should the LCC’s cross-walk the report with what they are doing to address implementation? Andrew—yes, he has supported this in discussions with fellow LCC coordinators. This is an opportunity for the LCC to take a leadership role; many steps we are already taking, but we may find gaps that we need to work on. He will articulate crosswalk to the LCC mission and goals.
* Patty mentioned an edit that is needed for the annual report: the NEAFWA area should include the Canadian provinces. Andrew noted that we will revise this.
* Ken summarized next steps and asks for further discussion on working with sub-regional partnerships
* John O’Leary noted thatwe need to have a plan before we go out to talk to partners, and it would be a good idea to spend time listening as well as presenting. Given the sheer number of municipalities and land trusts, we should work through organizations such as regional land trust associations.
* Ken agreed that the LCC should work through regional partnerships, and first step would be to talk with Steering Committee members in those locations, to find out how we can best complement what you are doing already.
* Becky Gwynn is not surprised to hear you got feedback about smaller scale planning needs-- hears that all the time. The Designing Sustainable Landscapes talk she saw would be too technical and not applied enough for local level. We need to do a better job of translating the application of these projects.
* Ken agreed that we need to reduce what we’re creating to a simple pattern—this idea of science translation is where we need to focus our efforts.
* Pete Murdoch (USGS) suggested that we need a liaison process to translate the science. The people on the ground can convey what they need and the scientists can convey what science/research can be done. We need to make sure the problems that scientists identify are linked to feasible decisions.
* Patty responded that the people on the ground don’t necessarily want the hard science. They want to know what the options are. Sometimes we don’t know all the things we can do scientifically but to put it on the ground, we need to distill or translate the science.
* Pete agreed that we need a cooperative extension model – a team who can translate the science. And the scientists at the same time need to realize what’s possible on the ground.
* Glenn Normandeau (New Hampshire Fish and Game) agreed that users like water managers don’t want to hear all the details about why there is a problem, they just want to know what it is.
* Steve Walker, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife noted that he does the sciencetranslation in Maine. There are plenty of us trying to translate the science. You can do all the translating, but at the end of the day, you need to have an incentive for people to adopt what you are recommending or it won’t happen – for example, grants. Otherwise, they have competing needs and considerations that will take precedence.
* Patty noted that in New York they are working with the Department of Transportation on economic analyses that can support conservation-related actions, such as costs of replacing small culverts.
* Marvin Moriarty (Friends of Conte NFWR) added that in New Hampshire, people are getting out and talking to towns to find out where the needs are. He agrees with Patty that large storms can act as an incentive for action. He is here to learn what’s happening at the LCC and bring it back to the towns in the Connecticut River Watershed. As Pete said, we might need more of a cooperative extension type of approach in translating science.
* Zoe Smith (Wildlife Conservation Society) agrees with points made; we may need to tap into research on social networks in this area.
* Ken—this is a really useful conversation about the purpose of the LCC—it’s good to know that people want more of a translation of regional science work.
* Wendi Weber agreed that translation into economic terms is important—people don’t just care about bugs and bunnies. We need to translate a lot more of what we do into ecosystem services terms.
* Kim Royar (Vermont Fish and Wildlife) noted that Vermont is putting together a white paper on the economics of conservation—how people care about wildlife and open space and hoping to meet with Gund Institute (University of Vermont) about how conservation contributes to economy, rather than take away from the economy.
* Glenn noted that it takes a lot of money on the ground to get that message out. At the end of the day, in a state you’ve got to convince the governor and legislature because that’s who delivers the resources and directive to agencies.
* Ken added that the New England Governors have had landscape conservation on their agenda and asked the administration for support from federal agencies and that’s now transformed into northeast governors as 7 states (the Coalition of Northeastern Governors) -- it’s building a foundation to link what we’re trying to do for the states.
* John O’Leary agreed that the need for financial incentives is exactly right. In Massachusetts they are trying to take advantage of existing mechanisms. For towns to access the Land and Water Conservation Fund, they must develop open space plans, and that is the chance for the state to provide guidance. A separate, second mechanism is the Community Preservation Act—towns choose to tax themselves, providing funding for conservation.
* George Gay (National Wildlife Federation) agreed with Wendi on the importance of economic benefits, such as the value of our “green” infrastructure in protecting “gray” infrastructure in coastal areas. We should use some our resources to assess our green infrastructure.
* Jad agreed that this has been a very rich discussion, and we could benefit by continuing this conversation in a very structured, analytical way, such as by mapping out all of the parties and the hierarchies (e.g., town to state to federal).
* Ken agreed that we can scope out our relationship with regional partnerships and partners including ecosystem services and come back to the Steering Committee with a structured approach.

1. **Department of the Interior Hurricane Sandy Resiliency Funding**

* Ken introduced the discussion about Hurricane Sandy noting that other storms have also had major impacts on the LCC area but that Sandy has provided a financial opportunity to support the needed resiliency science.
* Wendi Weber noted that she is focusing her comments on Department of Interior (DOI) funding; many other agencies have received funding as well. Two funding categories: 1) DOI got a response and recovery fund of $445 million. A list of projects for each bureau is awaiting approval. USFWS is likely getting $78 million for construction. 2) Mitigation and resiliency component – $360 million ($342 million after sequester), of which $30.5 million is going directly to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and USGS. That leaves an additional $311.5 million for other DOI proposals to address resiliency. A verdict on this funding may be made by the end of the month. Out of resiliency funds, USFWS has submitted across four categories—beach restoration, marsh restoration, aquatic connectivity and science. Within the science categories are beach and marsh resiliency, marsh migration, aquatic connectivity, information management, and conservation design. There was some duplication of science needs across agencies and operating on a very tight timeline we pulled together the DOI bureaus to figure out collaboration and see where the LCCs could be plugged in. We requested $20 million for science needs and even if we only get a portion of that it is a substantial amount of funding and we need to know what the LCC partners want out of it. The funding will go to the 11 Stafford Act affected states. Coastal efforts are favored but there is some room to study inland impacts. The idea is to build a resilient future, considering a 9-foot base for 100 year flood zone plus 1 or 2 foot rise for storms.

Discussion and questions

* Ken pointed to Handout 6 that summarizes the questions that Hurricane Sandy funding could address and that a capacity to address these topics will need to be built.
* Patty and Wendi discussed the importance of working with the Army Corps of Engineers, when at times their approach may not coincide with state desires. There is a challenge in balancing the requirements to allocate money very quickly while still making well-informed decisions, such as on dredging and beach replenishment.
* Mike Rasser (BOEM) described how BOEM has a role in sand and gravel resources, not just energy (BOEM jurisdiction > 3 miles from coast, Army Corps < 3 miles). Given limited sand resources and the demand due to the hurricane, BOEM requested about $11 million to coordinate activities. In addition to environmental concerns, BOEM is concerned about submerged coastal resources as well. BOEM will be working on an EIS and before/after studies on benthic impacts as well as effects to higher trophic levels.
* Jad Daley asked: of the funds allocated, what might get distributed beyond federal lands, and have all of the locations been identified?
* Wendi replied that about 40% of USFWS funding will be dedicated to Refuge lands and 60% to non-federal lands, working with partners. New federal lands can’t be acquired. The statute required locations to be identified in advance so there is not as much flexibility in where work will be assigned as we would have liked. We don’t know if it will be projects will be funded through contracts or grants.
* Marvin Moriarty noted that maybe next time we can have a list of needs ready to go if there’s a short turnaround for funds.
* Ken agreed that’s a goal of the resiliency work. He asked how the LCC would like to coordinate this work. Do we want to establish a subcommittee?
* Pete Murdoch asked if we are suggesting that the LCC be the coordinating body for DOI?
* Ken replied that we want to complement existing forums for coordinating science. We want to enhance and not replicate.
* Bill Hyatt (Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection) asked if there is designated funding for the LCC?
* Ken replied that there is funding is built into the request for LCC science priorities and also a role for the LCC is providing information to guide restorations.
* John O’Leary noted that the LCC work shouldn’t be confined to the DOI scope; also FEMA and DOT for example.
* Wendi and Ken agreed - the LCC is not just a DOI organization.
* Ellen Mecray– the scope of this coordinating role is a question, because other entities may be aiming to take the same role.
* Ken emphasized that he is talking about coordinating resiliency science, not all efforts such as construction activities - we need to know the process of you think would work to coordinate this work.
* Wendi added that the LCC role is to facilitate and prevent duplication. We requested the money for science needs on behalf of the LCC so we would involve partners beyond DOI. That way we can most wisely address science questions throughout the region.
* Jad agreed that the LCC could be a great venue for this work. It sounds like we have a good science needs assessment—why not just run this funding through the same method we’ve used to disburse other funding?
* George- I think a lot of the work we could do with this money would benefit all coastal states—even those not receiving funding. They should be engaged in our process, and it may be important to coordinate with the South Atlantic LCC. Also, we should see whether we could find a way with these dollars to engage the coastal tribes more effectively. Andrew replied that there has been coordination among the North Atlantic LCC, South Atlantic LCC, and the climate science centers and that this coordination will continue.
* Marvin asked if we are seeking out assistance of the Inspector General. Wendi replied that we have been meeting proactively with Government Accountability Office and the Inspector’s General office.
* Rick Palmer (Northeast Climate Science Center) asked how scalable the LCC RFP process is since the funds are exceeding what you’ve worked with in the past. Ken replied that we can start with the LCC technical team already working on coastal issues to review proposals. If we need additional involvement and capacity, we can add it.
* Andrew noted that there is an opportunity to scale up a lot of the work we’re doing such as with culverts and connectivity and other projects that aren’t a regional effort currently.
* Laura Farrell (University of Vermont) - there’s work being done in Vermont to look at wildlife connectivity and culverts—we could build from that existing work. Marvin agreed that we need to prioritize connectivity issues associated with culverts.
* George Gay noted that this is a good opportunity to put emphasis on demonstration projects in the coastal arena.
* Ken noted that as an action item, we’ll send you the list of the coastal technical committee and sea level rise SDM team and if you want to suggest additional membership for reviewing coastal resiliency projects from Hurricane Sandy (should that happen).

1. **Review of budgets and progress for ongoing projects**

* Scot Williamson (WMI) summarized budget and contracting status. NALCC has 20 active grant contracts, one terminated (PI moved) and one pending aquatic habitat map grant contract. WMI is coordinating quarterly reporting from P.I.s and reviews by LCC staff and partners. (Handout 7 summarizes North Atlantic LCC FY 2013 budget.)
* Scott Schwenk (North Atlantic LCC) —Where are we heading with science needs in the coming year? We want feedback from the Steering Committee. Handout 8 summarizes annual science needs process, Handout 9 summarizes ongoing projects. He summarized ongoing projects; discussed the Designing Sustainable workshops from last year as an example of the effort to connect science with decision-makers. He also pointed to a March workshop to bring together aquatic investigators for the North Atlantic LCC, Appalachian LCC, and Northeast Climate Science Center as an example of the LCC role in bringing scientists working on similar issues together.
* Andrew noted that there’s a lot of coordination already happening. We are also wondering what you want in terms of scaling projects.
* Zoe noted that rolling out work at sub-regions would be useful even though it takes a lot of time and effort. She also likes the idea of dividing by theme.
* Ken made the point that to the extent that you’d like more coordination and more translation of science, we can shift project dollars to have the capacity to do that.
* Pete Murdoch stated that his understanding is that the CSC and other folks were doing a lot of the science and the NALCC was going to be doing the translation.
* Ken agreed that CSC can lead on some of the basic science needs, especially on climate science but on other aspects of science such as conservation design, there is a need for a leadership role for the LCC.
* Rick Palmer noted that there’s more science to do than available funding.
* Jad noted that LCC work to coordinate existing science efforts is really valuable.
* Kim made the point that LCC is producing a lot of work and she is trying to breach the barrier to get internalized by people on the ground who can’t keep up with all the work being done; and other agencies are doing. It is challenging to get all of the information to all the people that could use it.

1. **Update from Northeast Climate Science Center**

* Rick Palmer provided an overview of the Northeast CSC, including coordination with the North Atlantic LCC (Handout 10 summarizes approved 2012 topics and 2013-2014 pre-proposal topics). Major things accomplished this year include stakeholder workshops and a draft science agenda. Through workshops, they identified seven primary agenda themes – climate assessments and projections; climate impacts on freshwater resources; coastal and near shore response; climate impacts on land use and land cover; ecosystem vulnerability and species response; impacts of climate variability on cultural resources; and decision frameworks for evaluating risks and managing natural resources. FY13 statements of interest: 68 received, $10.8 million requested for $400-500,000 of available funding. Average requested was $160k. All lead PIs had to be USGS or university consortium. Over 50% were collaborative. There seems to be a lot more stream proposals than other groups.
* Mary Ratnaswamy (Northeast CSC, USGS) - CSC may only have $500k for FY14. She is proposing a more targeted submission request for FY14.
* Rick Palmer noted that they are not looking for coastal and near-shore response proposals in FY14 because they feel those areas are already well funded.
* Zoe asked for a description of expectations for the cultural resources component?
* Mary replied that they have been trying to get a handle on that in stakeholder meetings—it could mean some proposals that link climate change to impacts on public lands; tribal knowledge is becoming a priority.
* Zoe asked about traditional uses -- hunting, maple syruping and other traditional practices, even if they’re not tribal.
* Mary agreed - nothing is ruled out so long as it’s at the nexus of climate and cultural/traditional use of resources.
* Marvin noted that Northeast Directors meeting talked about spatial tools – let’s make sure we’re coordinating and not duplicating efforts of spatial tools being created.

1. **Recommendation from technical committee on priority science needs for FY 2013**

* Scott Schwenk reviewed the science needs process and where we are. The proposed science needs address parts of the Northeast Conservation Framework, especially biological assessment, conservation design and science translation.
* The North Atlantic LCC Technical Committee membership is composed of 12 aquatic, 15 coastal and marine, and 16 terrestrial and wetland members (Handout 11). The 2013 process was focused on refining what we already had rather than a broad process to re-solicit science needs. We wanted to make sure all our projects were useful to partners and contributed to current work or complemented current work.
* Reviewed technical committee recommendations (Handouts 12a and 12b)—two scenarios: one in the absence of hurricane funding, one if we did have hurricane funding to address some of our coastal and marine needs. One of the major areas of science needs is in aquatic systems. We’ve heard a lot of desire for regional fish data for our aquatics projects and for other uses. A second area addresses stream connectivity and barriers. A third area, if Hurricane Sandy funding is available to address coastal priorities, would be further work in the area of stream flow and temperature.
* John O’Leary asked philosophically, how far do we drill down before we focus on implementation? Practically, in terms of budgeting, we need to look at impervious surface at the same time we’re looking at water resources. Scott agreed.
* Scott continued with the terrestrial topics, our first priority science need is to coordinate existing work to identify and monitor vernal pools and associated amphibians and reptiles. The second priority would be identifying migratory bird stopover habitats. The idea would be to complement our work on habitat for resident and breeding species, taking advantage of weather radar to locate areas where migratory landbirds congregate. A few mid-Atlantic states are already interested in doing this sort of work. We’re also proposing to allocate some funds to identifying forest disturbances.
* Bill Brumback (New England Wildflower Society) noted that the site suitability project was ranked high but not in the final cut and asked why. Scott replied that there is not the ability to apply this approach broadly yet. Pilot efforts by National Wildlife Refuges and NRCS should help determine the feasibility of this project for broader application.
* Scot Williamson asked whether we’re tracking projects outcomes/accomplishments
* Steve Fuller noted that project tracking is part of a broader question of information management that might be needed to tackle that.
* Ken mentioned an Upper Great Lakes LCC and TNCportal that was designed to track projects.
* Diana Day (Pennsylvania Fish and Boast Commission) agreed that tracking of projects is important but expressed concerned about the possibility of incorporating information into existing frameworks like TRACS to reduce redundancy.
* Steve noted that we have TRACS, Landscope America, WMI, Massachusett’s database and others. In order to track accomplishments in a common system, we need to agree on parameters first. What do we want to track and how will we do it? We need to work on a common system before the database component.
* Jad Daley and Jeff Horan (MD DNR/U.S. Fish and Wildlife) agreed. Lots more thought needs to go into this first including addressing scale questions.
* Scott continued with coastal and marine needs. We want to know what the short and long term impacts of sea level rise on marshes and marsh species; understand the effectiveness of wetland restoration projects for resilience (last year’s RFP); and understand natural systems response to Hurricane Sandy.
* Gwen Brewer (Maryland DNR) asked if ditch plugging was included in the marsh restoration project. Andrew replied that as part of that project, we would be looking at restoration aspects like the effectiveness of ditch plugs in increasing persistence of marshes in the face of sea level rise and storms.
* Patty wants to do a better job of protecting beach systems. Not just talk about Sandy. She is concerned we aren’t focusing enough on rapid response to how we handle storm damage on beach communities. Scott maybe we should have said “lessons learned” from Hurricane Sandy. Andrew noted that the hurricane resiliency funding will allow for more of the lessons learned type of work. Patty indicated that the natural storm impacts might not be as big a problem as the human responses to storms. Jad agreed and indicated that we need to try to apply parcel level decision support for systems impacted by storms.
* Andrew added that if we can’t address these topics through hurricane money, we’ll address in other ways.
* Scott clarified that the budget numbers are a range, not set.

1. **Science Delivery**

* Ken introduced this topic describing the scope of what the LCC should do to move forward with the science delivery team.
* Steve Fuller added that we would like to build on existing and ongoing science and reach more managers. We need managers to weigh in on what’s needed to create regional context for the local level.

Discussion

* Pete Murdoch made the point that if decisions are ultimately made at the local level, then that level needs to be a target for science delivery.
* Andrew added that as raised in the morning discussions, we need to articulate the critical near-term audiences and products that can be reached, such as SWAPs, forest plans, and existing partnerships.
* Zoe Smith agreed that we should focus on networks that are already in place for looking at the levels of need. As a first step, identify who these networks are and how to connect with their needs on the ground.
* Steve asked how do we support them? How do we interface with them?
* BJ Richardson (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) noted that we need to be careful about the right scale of our products; some of our regional-scale products may not be appropriate or have high enough resolution for small scales of refuge or town planning.
* Steve agreed in part but noted that we can explain limitations and how best to use data.
* Marvin Moriarty noted that there are plenty of land trusts and other organizations who would like to be able to use information on the larger ecosystem context of their work.
* Ken suggested that the science delivery team define the components. There are many parties, at multiple levels, who are making conservation efforts and so are potential end users. Their needs may differ. What can we produce to help end users get what they need?
* Cathy Sparks asked what is the right way to connect with local users? Maybe through state fish and wildlife agencies. This is important to show accountability to FWS and Congress; connecting dots from LCC all the way down to the local town or land trust.
* Steve noted that one right level for the LCC to engage with is through regional organizations such as the Regional Plan Association. We should encourage local stakeholders to join forces in prioritizing.
* Kim Royar asked how do we get input from the end users (such as states, larger groups)? Maybe a regional meeting to get feedback.
* Ken noted that there are stakeholder groups like for the Conte Refuge, Chesapeake Bay Program, and we can go to those places. The three Designing Sustainable Landscape workshops were an example of reaching out to get feedback at that scale.
* Marvin – also, how do you serve good products to those end users?
* Cathy noted that the more steps in a distribution chain you depend on, the less consistency you end up with.
* Steve replied that an effective model in New Hampshire for their wildlife habitat ranking work was to use train-the-trainer workshops.
* Jad stated that the most efficient way for us to serve information out is through multi-partner coalitions focused on specific geographies; that is what the LCC should focus on. The Regional Plan Association prepared a report that describes the many landscape-scale partnerships and initiatives in the Northeast that we can look to.
* John O’Leary stated that we need to find a way to direct funding to larger conservation design, which will provide an incentive for more local efforts; for example, look to foundations like Doris Duke.
* Laura Farell --There’s a lot of expertise in the room and we should make sure we have a way of communicating out and being point people if another major environmental disaster happens.
* Zoe noted that we are in uncharted territory. Realize that it may be messy at first, but it is important to try out some ideas anyway.
* Phil Huffman overall, is really pleased with the attention this topic is getting. This is a new realm that should be pursued in a robust way. As we move forward, the charge to the group should include:
* the right scope for the partnership to advance
* Recognition that there are lots of others who are serving as a bridge to other groups that we should engage with, even if they do not serve on a standing committee. These are people like with Maine’s Beginning with Habitat or the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources that serve as models.
* Another dimension is the challenge of maintaining the momentum of existing regional partnerships in the face of limited funds. We should discuss how we can support emerging and existing partnerships.
* We should pursue the next generation of demonstration projects to get work out on the ground – don’t wait until we complete all of our initial science work.
* Ken concluded that the next time we get together, we’re going to spend more time on this discussion.

1. **Information Management System**

* BJ Richardson presented information on the LCC Information Management System Components and Conceptual Framework. After the review of the Information Management Assessment results, the Information Management Team recommends the ScienceBase/DataBasin framework (Handout 14). Many LCCs have adopted this approach. He showed screenshots of Databasin, ScienceBase and the gateway. The costs for DataBasin would be $35,000 to set up the gateway and then $10,000 annual maintenance fee.
* Scott noted that real strength of the recommended approach is that the other regional LCCs are using it already and it will give us a seamless approach throughout the eastern U.S.
* Andrew noted that as we go forward we provide for feedback on user experience.

1. **Landscape Conservation Design and the Role of LCC in providing regional information and synthesis for State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Updates**

* Patty introduced the regional SWAP synthesis work. This effort is timely because the second round of SWAPs must be finalized in 2015. The idea is to “roll down” all the great work of the LCC and RCNs and package it so that it can be used in SWAPs, which increasingly drive not only SWG grants but other projects and priorities. This work is complementary to another project to develop a common lexicon so that state work can be “rolled up” to a regional level.
* Steve presented additional information: Update on Northeast Landscape Conservation Design and Synthesis for SWAP Revisions (see also Handouts 15a, 15b). There are big benefits of doing a regional synthesis even though there are lots of concerns about data sharing. The most tangible outputs are the tools and data for SWAPs, but it goes beyond that: it brings together partners to work together on planning and it shares data in a way that has never been done before. Much of the work must be completed by the end of this year, though there can be placeholders for other work that is nearing completion.
* Dean Smith asked do you have data for Canada. Steve replied that yes, they have received Canada data from TNC, will continue to add. Andrew added that the consistent habitat mapping is now being extended into Canada as well.
* Marvin noted importance of SWAPs in identifying species for vulnerability assessments.
* Patty noted that even New York State DOT is using information from SWAPs.
* Ken – notes that states want to retain a focus on state Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCNs) even as they identify regional SGCNs. Also, SGCNs are a subset of what states must consider, with other endpoints being game species, ecosystems, biodiversity; this should be kept in mind.
* Jad asked if the national conservation easement database is getting consideration. Steve replied that it was. He then reviewed the various aspects of RSGCN data and base layers.

1. **Consensus on supporting funding for science needs, science delivery and information management (items 7-9 above)**

* Ken—presented the project budget and components with adjusted numbers to account for information management. Is this the appropriate mix as we go forward?

Discussion

* Bernie Marczyk – what is the timing for funding? Ken replied that because of our agreement with WMI, we do not need to fully fund all projects this fiscal year but that we try to select and fund all projects by the end of the calendar year.
* Becky expressed her support for science delivery.
* Zoe would like to see more emphasis on delivering to partners such as through demonstration projects.
* Jad also supports more emphasis on science delivery.
* Steve noted that if we’re expanding the number of projects, we need to expand the staff capacity to oversee and coordinate the projects.
* Patty noted that we need to keep in mind the diminishing budgets and show real progress that confirms the reason for having an LCC.
* Bill Hyatt indicated that unfortunately states are losing capacity; it is important for the LCC to help fill these gaps.
* Jad indicated that we are addressing many needs just by getting the data back in the hands of the states. He supports more money going into science delivery projects and staff. We can use all of this as an opportunity to really build the relationships we need to get things done. Would like to see small grants to regional partnerships.
* Ken summarized that there is a need to revisit science delivery and to balance allocations resources from new science projects to additional science delivery. For new science projects, how about starting with the top tier of projects, and hold off on the others for now.
* Andrew noted that we can also decide the allocation of funds after we see what comes back from RFPs and noted that we need to give feedback to the technical committee to narrow the range of possibilities as a matter of process. We don’t want to hold back the technical committee or we won’t get RFPs out the door.
* Scott noted that an RFP may not be the recommended option for all science needs if an existing P.I. is a sole source.
* Andrew summarized a proposed motion based on the discussions. Conceptually the motion included these elements: a) the top two science need recommendations of the Technical Committee for aquatic (A1- compilation of aquatic biological data and A2 – stream connectivity and barriers) and terrestrial/wetland (TW1- vernal pool mapping and monitoring and TW2 - migratory bird stopover habitat) are to be pursued and further defined; b) at a later date LCC staff will present recommendations to the Steering Committee on selecting projects to address these science needs (RFP or sole-source contracts); c) LCC staff and Science Delivery Team will make recommendations to the Steering Committee on how best to support science delivery through projects; d) once Hurricane Sandy resiliency funding is decided, LCC staff will identify options for funding additional science projects; and e) the Steering Committee will make decisions on balancing science projects and science delivery based on this additional information (a-d above).
* Ken/Steering Committee—the motion to accept the recommendation for $45,000 to implement the first phase of the Information Management System was approved with no objections. The motion (described above) on moving forward with science projects and science delivery with further detail to be provided to the steering committee was approved with no objections.

1. **LCC national and regional communications**

* David Eisenhauer presented information on telling the collective story for the LCC for next year (Handout 17). He highlighted the following next steps: develop and implement an actionable communications strategy; emphasize key messages that connect with various target audiences;

develop a network of communications practitioners within the Northeast region to share ideas, expertise, technologies and communications capacity to achieve identified goals and objectives of the national LCC network and Northeast Conservation Framework; develop a comprehensive Congressional outreach strategy; develop mechanisms for illustrating the value and utility of the North Atlantic LCC and nationwide network of LCCs through storytelling including print, multimedia, social media and multiple venues; and develop internal communications strategies to strengthen support from within partner agencies and organizations.

1. **Conservation targets next steps**

* Ken discussed conservation targets to focus how much of what we need to do and where do we need to do it (next steps set forth in Handout 16)? Targets are our way of articulating what’s needed in terms of accomplishments. There is increased interest and need for the LCCs to coordinate across the network of LCCs. There needs to be more articulation of what we’re trying to achieve. We need to agree on terminology. We all have different interests, missions and responsibilities. The Fish and Wildlife Service and state fish and wildlife agencies need to relate all our work back to species but other agencies and organizations in the LCC have different missions and goals.
* Pete asked why there are no physical/chemical indicators in the list. Ken replied that this list was not meant to be inclusive, just to give examples. We need to integrate the various components—habitats, species, ecological function, etc.
* Patty asked how this setting of targets will happen. It is a monumental task, and important to do, and will have large implications.
* Marvin added that perhaps focus on three pilot areas, or subregions?
* Steve asked that we try to align with the 13-state effort rather than break out into smaller landscapes at first; Ken agreed that need to do it at a regional scale. Director of USFWS Dan Ashe is looking for surrogate species targets by the end of the year; looking for a direction, not final targets.
* Jad agreed that this could be really important; demonstration projects should be tied in. Out West, using Sage Grouse as a conservation target has drawn a huge amount of resources, which is an example of incentives for establishing targets.
* John noted that it should not just recycle existing population goals but should truly get at a better understanding of future status of the species. Need to consider the full spectrum of management actions that can be taken.
* Ken noted that we need to focus on what we can do as an LCC that will help achieve species targets.
* Patty noted that we need to differentiate between what should be done and how to do it. We can agree about where we are going, and retain unfettered discussions on how to get there.
* Marvin -- we should focus on the most climate-sensitive species and use those for planning.
* Zoe noted that we could pull in the expertise of the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Conservation Support Team. They are working with another LCC and may be able to help us.
* Andrew added that in addition to moving forward with initial targets, in parallel we can learn from the Designing Sustainable Landscapes conservation design work about potential species-habitat and ecological integrity metrics at regional and sub-regional scales.
* Ken Elowe and LCC staff will determine the capacity we need to set and evaluate targets with a conservation targets team. Andrew emphasized the importance of more participation in this work.
* Pete noted that there are a number of groups out there who have already defined and identified indicators that we should draw from, such as EPA and the climate change research program.

1. **Revisit action items and next steps; other business**

* Patty proposed a fall two-day meeting, broken off from the Northeast Directors meeting. Give updates by phone, and reserve the meeting for discourse.
* Cathy noted that alternatively, we could keep it as a one-day meeting, but get the housekeeping components out of the way in advance. (Also notes a correction needed in map in Annual Report – no Rhode Island!)
* Andrew noted that the report will be revised to reflect this and other comments raised.
* Ken thanked participants for contributions

**Meeting adjourned.**

**Meeting Attendance**

| **Organization** | **Representatives** | **Title of Representative** | **Present** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection | Bill Hyatt | Chief, Bureau of Natural Resources | Y |
| Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife | Greg Moore | Wildlife Administrator | Y |
| Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife | Steve Walker | Coordinator, Beginning with Habitat program | Phone |
| Maryland Department of Natural Resources | Gwen Brewer | Science Program Manager | Phone |
| Massachusetts Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife | John O’Leary |  | Y |
| New Hampshire Fish and Game Department | Glenn Normandeau | Director | Y |
| New York Department of Environmental Conservation | Patricia Riexinger | Director, Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources | Y |
| Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission | Diana Day | Conservation Coordinator | Phone |
| Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management | Cathy Sparks | Chief, Division of Forest Environment | Y |
| Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife | Kim Royar | Director of Operations | Y |
| Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries | Becky Gwynn | Assistant Bureau Director, Bureau of Wildlife Resources | Y |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Wendi Weber | Northeast Regional Director | Y |
| Ken Elowe | Assistant Regional Director, Science Applications | Y |
| Rick Bennett | Regional Scientist | Y |
| U.S. Geological Survey | Pete Murdoch | Regional Science Advisor, Northeast Region | Y |
| Department of the Interior Northeast Climate Science Center | Mary Ratnaswamy | USGS Director, Northeast Climate Science Center | Phone |
| Rick Palmer | UMass Director, Northeast Climate Science Center | Y |
| National Park Service | Amanda Babson | Coastal Landscape Adaptation Coordinator | Phone |
| Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement | Mike Rasser |  | Phone |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs | Christina Stringer | Regional Hydrologist | Phone |
| National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | Ellen Mecray | Regional Climate Coordinator | Phone |
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Tai-Ming Chang | Region III, LCC Liaison | Phone |
| Anne Kuhn | Office of Research & Development | Phone |
| U.S. Forest Service | Roger Simmons | Natural Resources Staff Officer | Phone |
| Environment Canada Canadian Wildlife Service | Andrew Boyne | Acting Director , Atlantic Region | Phone |
| Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies | Dean Smith | NAWMP Coordinator, Wildlife Liaison | Y |
| Ducks Unlimited | Bernie Marczyk | Director of Conservation Programs | Y |
| National Wildlife Federation | George Gay | Senior Manager, Climate Change Program | Y |
| The Nature Conservancy | Phil Huffman | Director of Conservation Science, Vermont Chapter | Y |
| Trust for Public Land | Jad Daley | Director, Climate Conservation Program | Y |
| Wildlife Management Institute | Scot Williamson | Vice President | Y |
| Wildlife Conservation Society | Zoe Smith | Director, Adirondack Program | Y |
| New England Wildflower Society | Bill Brumback | Conservation Director | Y |
| Friends of Silvio O. Conte NFWR | Marvin Moriarty |  | Y |
| University of Vermont | Laura Farrell |  | Y |
| **Staff** | | | |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Andrew Milliken | North Atlantic LCC Coordinator | Y |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | David Eisenhauer | Detail - North Atlantic LCC Communications Coordinator | Y |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | BJ Richardson | Regional GIS Coordinator | Phone |
| North Atlantic LCC | Scott Schwenk | Science Coordinator | Y |
| North Atlantic LCC | Steve Fuller | Conservation Design Specialist | Y |
| North Atlantic LCC | Lori Pelech | GIS Analyst | Y |