**Memorandum**

To: North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative Steering Committee

From: Ad-Hoc Demonstration Project Subcommittee (Participants – Daley, Galbraith, Gay, Huffman, Walker, Smith, Slattery, and O’Leary // Interested – Soder)

Date: 4/13/12

Re: Demonstration Project Recommendations

*Background*

In order to address widespread ecological resource threats and uncertainties amplified by a rapidly changing climate, the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NALCC) pursues a set of common components and goals in the North Atlantic region. One goal is set forth in the NALCC’s Vision, Mission and Goals statement as follows:

Demonstration Projects: Support implementation actions designed to test, validate and improve scientific information and tools developed by the LCC to enhance the ability of our lands and waters to sustain fish, plant, cultural resources and unique ecosystems.

The NALCC steering committee supports “on the ground” application of NALCC funded science via demonstration projects. These will provide examples of how we can apply NALCC science to facilitate the conservation of important ecological resources in the region.

*Moving Forward*

In November of last year, the NALCC steering committee discussed this topic in detail. Consensus points regarding the nature/purpose of a demonstration project included:

* aligning with the Northeast Regional Conservation Framework
* facilitating science translation, adoption, and delivery, including utilization of LCC-funded science tools
* promoting multi-partner coordination at state and local levels
* aligning project selection process with science project selection process
* projects should make NALCC’s work “real and tangible” for our conservation partners and other key audiences (e.g., municipalities, regional planning entities)
* projects should help develop feedback loops to inform and enhance underlying science
* projects should inform local conservation planning efforts, but not advocate predetermined regulatory approaches

In light of the foregoing, NALCC staff directed the ad-hoc demonstration project subcommittee to identify and recommend several demonstration projects for the steering committee’s consideration at our spring meeting. The ad-hoc demonstration project subcommittee met on two occasions to address the matter. This memorandum and the attached three project description is the result of the group’s work.

*Evaluation Criteria*

Working from the input at the November steering committee meeting in Virginia Beach, the ad hoc committee developed the following criteria. Demonstration projects recommended for NALCC funding should:

* occur at multiple scales (local, state, sub-regional and regional)
* engage a diversity of partners
* in the aggregate, represent a diversity of geographies or ecotypes
* support conservation planning, management, and/or restoration
* reduce potential for project redundancy
* leverage existing science, including NALCC-funded science products
* illustrate how partners can utilize what the NALCC is producing to inform, prioritize, and enhance tangible conservation efforts of important ecological resources
* funds should be highly leveraged, providing a “catalytic spark” or “cap stone” for larger efforts
* demonstrate transferability to similar landscapes
* final reporting should detail lessons learned regarding applicability of NALCC related science to local conservation planning needs and whether or not the project achieved intended goals

*Building the Process for Determining Annual Demonstration Project Support*

Assessment of demonstration projects suitable for NALCC support should proceed in a transparent manner parallel with “science only” funding allocations on annual basis. Like the first generation of science projects, these recommended demonstration projects emerged from internal discussions involving the subcommittee and staff. The next generation of recommended demonstration projects will follow steps much like other NALCC steering committee processes utilized to refine/mature issues for consideration:

* Subcommittee pursues an internal/external project recruitment strategy
* Submitted projects are ranked by the subcommittee in accordance with foregoing criteria
* Submitted projects are individually scored in a fashion consistent with procedures utilized by the LCC technical committees and based on stated evaluation criteria
* Subcommittee decision-making process is open to all steering committee members
* Subcommittee recommends suitable demonstration projects to Steering Committee for its consideration at same time the “science only” projects are determined

*Conclusion*

Demonstration projects provide an efficient way to test, improve, and promote utilization of NALCC science. The projects will showcase NALCC science and leverage its value by providing resources for partners to integrate these science products into natural resource conservation on the landscape scale. We recommend the following suite of demonstration projects for funding in 2012. The total amount of funding suggested in FY 12 is $60,000, proposed to be split evenly among the three recommended projects.