Handout 4

**North Atlantic LCC**

**Calendar Year 2013 Communications Plan Outline**

**Background**

The North Atlantic is home to a wide and important variety of natural resources. It encompasses diverse coastal and inland ecosystems and habitat types, major river systems such as the Connecticut River, and a hugely diverse community of living resources including federally listed and candidate species such as the Atlantic salmon, Canadian lynx, and piping plover. Containing only 7% of the United States’ landmass, almost 25% of the population resides in the Northeast – making the influences of people an integral part of the region’s complex environment. As populations grow in a changing climate, stressors such as habitat loss are increasingly putting the North Atlantic’s natural heritage at risk.

The North Atlantic landscape conservation cooperative (LCC) was formed in 2009 as a broad-based partnership to provide the science necessary to do strategic conservation of our natural resources across a geographic area that spans 13 states, two provinces, 18 federally recognized Tribes and the District of Columbia.

**Vision:** Landscapes that sustain our natural resources and cultural heritage maintained in a healthy state through active collaboration of conservation partners and partnerships in the North Atlantic region.

**Mission Statement:** The North Atlantic LCC provides a forum in which the private, state, tribal and federal conservation community works together to address increasing land use pressures and widespread resource threats and uncertainties amplified by a rapidly changing climate. The partners and partnerships in the cooperative address these regional threats and uncertainties by agreeing on common goals for land, water, fish, wildlife, plant and cultural resources and jointly developing the scientific information and tools needed to prioritize and guide more effective conservation actions by partners toward those goals.

**Key Messages**

Key messages will be developed throughout 2013 based on our communications goals and audiences.

Initial key messages include:

1. To date, the North Atlantic LCC has funded over $2.2 M in needed science projects.
2. The North Atlantic LCC is science partnership in which the private, state, tribal and federal conservation community works together to address increasing land-use pressures and widespread resource threat.
3. There is no other forum that brings together **ALL** resource management partners to identify science and conservation management needs, share information and capacity and set common goals to collectively build the Northeast landscape.

**Resources**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has committed to staffing a part-time communications coordinator position for the North Atlantic LCC. The communications coordinator is responsible for all materials and outreach to date regarding the North Atlantic LCC.

This position is now vacant, but FWS is working to have it filled. In the meantime, FWS will be providing some support from external affairs staff to help design documents, perform congressional outreach and support some web development activity.

**Communications Objective**

Improve understanding of the role of the LCC, what it has accomplished in the past few years and why the LCC is a useful and necessary part of the Northeast conservation community.

**Communications Goals**

1. Ensure proper communications at all meetings, ensuring that required technology, phone systems and web conferencing capabilities are available.
2. Improve communications to Congress, including: identifying the key players and highlighting the LCC’s relevancy and efficiency, how the LCC is helping constituents and how the conservation community is using the results produced by the LCC.
3. Develop a series of testimonials from partners for use in fact sheets, on the website, etc.
4. Create and distribute news releases for every funded and complete project.
5. Share the story of each project.
6. Emphasize partnerships, specifically the partnership between NEAFWA, state wildlife grants and the RCN program.
7. Create and provide communications materials that highlight each state’s story and participation in the LCC.

**Key Audiences:** Communications efforts will target several broad and targeted audiences in an effort to meet the North Atlantic LCC’s Communications Goals.

1. Congress – need to provide information for each state’s involvement in the LCC, with a focus on those members and Senators on appropriations and authorizing committees.
2. Staff – many staff in multiple organizations still are not clear on the role of the LCC in the Northeast.

**Communications Tools**

1. Congressional fact sheets for each state detailing their participation in the LCC, similar to what the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture has done.
2. A 2012 Annual Report booklet and Executive Summary pamphlet outlines the success of the LCC in fiscal year 2012.
3. Project updates both as fact sheets and stories for the website for every project the LCC has funded since fiscal year 2010.
4. Develop a comprehensive congressional outreach strategy working with the FWS Northeast Region Congressional Affairs Liaison, state agencies and the steering committee member organizations.
5. Create a workshop for NEAFWA in April 2013 that details the LCC efforts regarding SWAPS, funded projects and provides a forum for feedback and dialogue between LCC and partners’ staff.
6. Testimonial videos and blurbs for the website from partners detailing the importance of the LCC’s work or their participation in projects, committee, etc.