



## LCC FY17 President's Budget Request

09 February 2016

- The President's FY17 budget request includes an increase of nearly \$6 million for LCC funding in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) budget. The Service supports the President's budget request.
- The LCCs' overarching budget goal is to secure the level of funding and other resources needed to support the long-term viability of the LCC Network and, ultimately, advance the Network vision of landscapes and seascapes capable of sustaining natural and cultural resources.
- The President's budget request includes important increases for the LCCs. This additional operational capacity is necessary to build and sustain LCC partnerships. Increased capacity will facilitate conservation by applying and refining models and decision support tools that will enable partners to manage species more effectively and develop shared, measurable biological objectives transcending geo-political boundaries.
- Increased applied science capacity will be directed to LCCs to deliver Landscape Conservation Designs, plans that produce measureable conservation improvements. The increased funding will focus on priority species and landscapes identified in State Wildlife Action Plans, Joint Venture Plans, Fish Habitat Partnership plans, and other cooperative planning efforts.
- During the next step of the budget process, the House and Senate appropriations committees will develop their respective budgets. In a standard budget year, differences in the House and Senate bills are resolved in a conference between the two chambers. A final bill is provided to the White House for signature or veto before the new fiscal year begins on October 1st.
- The first LCCs were established in 2010 to provide science capacity and technical expertise for meeting shared natural and cultural resource priorities. Today, the 22 LCCs and the LCC Network are changing how the nation thinks about, plans and acts upon conservation issues in a way that goes beyond boundaries.
- LCCs have been successful at enabling partnership-based, large landscape conservation within and among individual LCCs. With partners, LCCs have worked to restore aquatic connectivity and native fish in the Great Lakes Basin and have co-developed the Sage

Steppe Forum that provides a shared knowledge base of sagebrush habitat, wildlife, and management.

- The LCCs have also had tremendous success in filling key information gaps, like the vital support the North Atlantic LCC provided towards a regional synthesis of State Wildlife Action Plans, and in growing its record of achievement, such as the success achieved by the multi-LCC project to address coastal resiliency from sea level rise and land use changes in the Gulf Coast Vulnerability Assessment.
- Today, support for the LCCs is stronger than ever and continues to grow, with significant Tribal representation from at least 35 Tribes and participation of all 50 states in steering committees or working groups.
- In 2015, Congress directed the USFWS to have the National Academy of Sciences (Academy) evaluate the LCCs. The Academy concluded in its December 2015 report that, “the nation needs to take a landscape approach to conservation and that the Department of Interior is justified in addressing this need with the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.”
- The Academy also concluded that the LCCs provide a unique framework for addressing landscape conservation, “at a national scale, for all natural and cultural resources, in a way that bridges research and management efforts.”
- The Academy identified opportunities for improvement to enhance LCC coordination with partners and broaden the performance evaluation framework. The LCCs are aggressively addressing these recommendations.
- The LCC Network encourages LCC coordinators and all partners, including LCC Steering Committees and the LCC Council, to discuss their collective progress to date, identify areas for continued improvement, and consider how to improve perceptions about State and Tribal support for LCCs.
- Federal staff can explain the facts about the budget process to non-Federal partners. Federally funded staff cannot ask or encourage people to contact Congress on behalf of the LCC budget. However, this is an opportunity to continue to demonstrate the value of LCCs and highlight the participation and commitment of LCC partners.