**Discussion and Input from North Atlantic LCC Steering Committee Members and Partners**

**Conservation Design:** Next Steps for conservation design at multiple scales in the region (agenda item 4). As we discussed in April, the LCC is continuing to support an integrated program of information management, science delivery and conservation design that addresses multiple scale and format needs for conservation decision making.

An initial landscape-scale conservation design pilot facilitated by the LCC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Connecticut River watershed is providing an opportunity for a broad range of partners to learn about both the process and products for landscape scale conservation design in a way that helps us achieve more coordinated and strategic conservation for multiple species and resources. The process, results and decisions made by the group will be summarized for application to other landscapes. We have the capability to expand our conservation design modeling to the entire northeast.

Additionally, an approach is being developed in collaboration with state fish and wildlife agencies to develop regional Conservation Opportunity Areas (RCOAs) for State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPS). The scope of that effort will be determined by the needs of the state agencies to inform SWAPs and conserve Species of Greatest Conservation Need of high regional concern and responsibility.

We would like your input on next steps for conservation design that would be most useful to you. Some options include:

1. Develop model outputs and maps of showing value of habitats for representative species and ecosystems at the regional scale under current and projected future conditions and scaled to the region, states and watersheds.
2. Using a “standard” set of weightings and decisions (informed by lessons learned in the Connecticut River watershed), develop conservation designs (core areas and connections) for representative species and ecosystems to give us a draft regional conservation design for multiple species and resources and also in states, watersheds or other smaller landscapes. A more inclusive process of weighting and decisions by regional partners can follow this demonstration effort.
3. Support conservation design efforts in other watersheds and landscapes across the region learning from the Connecticut River Pilot and drawing from the same set of models and information so that the results can be compared across landscapes. In those landscapes, partners are already or will likely be taking take the lead role in developing designs with support from LCC staff and contractors (for example, in the Susquehanna watershed).

 **If you prefer to submit ideas in writing, please add them here and hand to LCC Staff**

Strategic Direction for the LCC (agenda item 7). Four years after our first Steering Committee meeting in New Castle, New Hampshire, and three years after the approval of the LCC science strategic plan, the North Atlantic LCC is at a critical juncture. We have made tremendous progress thanks to your involvement and support, but we need continual input to ensure we are moving in the right direction. We have the capability now to develop regional, multi-resource conservation designs. Our fall meeting is a prime opportunity to reflect on how far we’ve come, and where we need to go from here. We invite you to provide specific feedback on the North Atlantic LCC’s strategic direction during this meeting to guide the staff and technical committees on how they allocate time and resources, and to inform additions and revisions to the strategic plan.

At the Steering Committee meeting we will be asking for your verbal and/or written input on the following questions. If you prefer to provide input in writing please add ideas here and hand to LCC staff or chairs.

Given the mission, vision and goals of the LCC and the Northeast Conservation Framework (shown on next few pages) as reflected in the LCC Strategic Plan:

* **How is the LCC doing?**
* **Are we focusing on the right things?**
* **Are there components that need more attention?**
* **Is the LCC going in a direction that is value added and relevant to your organization?**
* **If not, what would make it more relevant?**

**North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative**

**Vision, Mission and Goals**

**Vision: *(vision for the future, future desired condition)***

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: *(purpose of LCC)***

The North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative provides a partnership 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 and delivering the scientific information and tools needed to prioritize and guide more effective conservation actions by partners toward those goals.

**Components and Goals (*what the LCC does*)**

Coordination and Organization:Provide structure, staff and process that brings together and coordinates partners, develops consensus on common goals (resource outcomes), builds on and integrates existing partnerships and capacity, leverages and generates funding and other resources, prioritizes and develops scientific information and tools to make conservation more effective and evaluates progress towards resource outcomes by partners and partnerships within the LCC area and as part of the LCC network.

Ecological Planning:Compile, organize and provide information from existing partners and partnerships on status, trends, current and emerging threats and limiting factors for priority fish, wildlife and plant species and cultural resources; agree on regional objectives for these species and resources; and assess their relationship to limiting factors, habitats and landscapes to provide a scientific basis for conservation actions.

Conservation Design: Develop and provide tools and information to guide decision makers and inform conservation actions to more effectively address threats, limiting factors and uncertainties and efficiently achieve objectives and ensure functional systems under current and predicted future conditions and link site-scale actions to landscape and regional scale goals.

Conservation Adoption and Delivery: Assist partners with use of science and tools and work with partners to implement actions 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, wildlife, plant, cultural resources and unique ecosystems.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Facilitate monitoring of populations, resources, habitats and landscapes and tracking of conservation actions designed to assess the effectiveness of conservation actions, assess progress towards common goals and guide future planning and actions based on the results.

Research: Facilitate the pursuit and support of priority research activities based on needs identified and prioritized by partners and partnerships that test key assumptions in planning and inform future planning and delivery; provide guidance to Climate Science Centers on climate science needed by the LCC; and work with partners to coordinate ongoing research initiatives on priority conservation issues.

Communication and Outreach:Develop effective communication products to enhance communications among partners and partnerships, develop and sustain the LCC partnership, attract new partners, support existing funding and seek new funds, improve internal and external relations, and raise awareness of LCC priorities targeted to specific audiences.

Information Management: Compile, synthesize, organize and make available information, data, science and tools developed by partners and partnerships and the LCC in scales and formats needed by partners.

*Northeast Conservation Framework agreed to at Northeast Conservation Framework Workshop in 2011*

