

Great Northern LCC - Steering Committee Conference Call Notes

September 1, 2011, 9:30 am MDT

Attendees

Sharon Kiefer, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Frank D'Erchia, USGS Central Region
Tasha Sargent, Canadian Wildlife Service Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture
Tammy Whittington, NPS Intermountain Region
Rick Mogren, Columbia River Basin Federal Caucus
Mike DeArmond, Idaho BLM State Office
Kevin Whalen, NW Climate Science Center, USGS
Sandy Brooks, Montana BLM State Office
Cindy Swanson, USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station
Larry Kruckenberg, Intermountain West Joint Venture
Stephen Zylstra, USFWS Pacific Region SA ARD
Andrea Rea, NOAA
John Emmerich, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Steve Guertin, USFWS Mountain-Prairie Region
Blake Henning, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Rick Manwaring, BC Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Tony Wideski, BC Ministry of FLNRO
Bryant Fairley, BC Intergovernmental Relations
Steve Torbit, USFWS Mountain-Prairie Region SA ARD
Leslie Weldon, USFS Region 1 Regional Director
Tory Stevens, BC Ministry of Environment
Glenn Pauley, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Yvette Converse, GNLCC Coordinator
Tom Olliff, GNLCC Coordinator
Sean Finn, GNLCC Science Coordinator
Rick Sodja, GNLCC Science Coordinator
Scott Bischke, E-Mountain Works Inc.
Nina Chambers, GNLCC Strategic Framework Co-Lead
Emily Wellington, GNLCC Intern MSU Research Assistant
Mary McFadzen, GNLCC Communications Coordinator

Agenda Items and Discussion

What to expect at the upcoming Steering Committee meeting in Whitefish, MT – Yvette Converse

Overview of meeting; will send updates out to SC next week for review of proposed agenda. See meeting information at <http://nrmsc.usgs.gov/gnlcc/meetings/SCFall2011>

GNLCC Strategic Framework status summary and Partner Forum roll-out – Nina Chambers

Nina provided a summary of the work the team is conducting on the Strategic Framework and Partner Forums. Yvette will send the executive summary of the report next week. The three options for the

Vision statements will be discussed in Whitefish. The development of the options are based on the team's work:

- Looked at 50 foundational documents relevant to region
- conducted SC and AT interviews, which helped identify desired direction, how to implement and function, and concerns and caution
- landscape priority research--what's out there, what's the priorities of each initiative.

Partner Forums will help ground truth initiatives. Conducted introductory Forum webinars and followed up with interviews. Next step is conference call for leadership team of each ecotypic area and next steps. This should happen in the next several months.

GNLCC is sponsoring Federal Land Managers workshop in Missoula next week, Sept 7-8. Sessions will allow for their recommendations on priorities and how things move forward.

Yvette: Partner Forums connect with ground level as opposed to SC, which is executive buy-in and program alignment. We have slowed down on Partner Forums per April direction so that Forums and Strategic Framework are moving hand in hand. Future workshops will not just be federal agencies but more cross cutting.

SC questions:

- How many Partner Forums? Yvette: Three defined Forums right now. Have had webinars with Partners to begin scoping; furthest along with sage steppe; in the next month, will have conference call on who will like to be involved.

Rick Sodja: Recently at NW Climate Science Center meeting and they are really looking forward to GNLCC starting sage steppe Partner Forum

Introduction of Province of British Columbia interim LCC Coordinator – Rick Manwaring

Dave Hales is interim BC LCC coordinator. Rick Manwaring: Dave is on annual leave. BC is moving toward meeting with Deputy Ministry of Resources to provide GNLCC update and opportunities. Dave assessing what long-term commitment is needed to support GNLCC initiative. Rick will provide update in Whitefish including BC's commitment like personnel, etc.

Update on suggested changes to GNLCC Governance Charter to reflect international scope and clarification of process/consistency of language – Yvette Converse

We are working to incorporate information as part of Canadian partners coming into this process at this time. Will have revised changes in governance document largely focused on needs of international partners but that include other updated language and revisions based on past year. Will send revised version next week and approve in Whitefish.

FY12 status and funding and potential opportunities to align landscape programs and funding – Steve Guertin

Introduces Dr. Steve Torbin who was recently hired by the USFWS Mountain-Prairie Region to integrate science programs. Federal budget process: expect another roller coaster. Growing expectation that LCC funding may not be cut as badly as at first expected--very likely that we will be funded by continuing

resolution for 1-6 months. This would mean flat level of funding for FY12. One speculation is that Congress will default to last year's process. If that is the case, we can drive forward LCCs, which is the highest priority of USFWS and very high in DOI. For planning assumption, we will simply move on and lobby for the program. Therefore we should move forward with LCC work while funding debate in Congress marches forward.

Yvette: Key is to align and leverage efforts from multiple ventures and initiatives: USFS CFLRP, Joint Ventures, BLM REAs and MT CAPs in order to address concerns from Congress and demonstrate the complimentary aspects of these programs.

Updates – Tom Olliff and Yvette Converse

- Demonstration Project: First technical team meeting in April. Moving from coordination to collaboration using project agreement. Five areas: wildlife species distribution (ID, MT, WY); connectivity analysis; Yale Science Project: subgroup from Demonstration Project; CIG data applying to project level; data integration: WGA, LC MAP, WY wind/sage grouse project
- USGS statistician Kathi Irvine (USGS NoRock) organized sage-steppe I&M workshop: Can we take disparate protocols and stitch together to answer questions at larger landscapes?
- GNLCC collaborating with MT and BC on NF Flathead agreement; continue to work on this, USFS, NPS, FWS, MT, BC, and hope to bring in CSKT and Ktunaxa. Will update folks in Whitefish. Talking with Senator Baucus' staff to ensure they are aware.
- Final update on GNLCC funding: NWCSC funded UW Climate Impacts Group (J. Littell) project and provided funding to Jason Dunham for bull trout assessment in PNW. NOROCK and GNLCC were able to fund a few more projects: Blackfoot Challenge and CFLRP; WY wind collaboration study for impacts on sage grouse; wolverine work in the Flathead; the five-state assessment. Will provide updates in upcoming months.

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