**North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative**

**Conservation Science Strategic Plan**

**Project Selection Criteria and Process**

**Prioritization of Needs**

The North Atlantic LCC Technical Committee is charged with reviewing and prioritizing science needs and making recommendations to the North Atlantic LCC Steering Committee. The Steering Committee decides whether to approve the recommendations. They may delegate the authority to select specific projects and contractors to the LCC Technical Committee and staff. The Technical Committee developed the following criteria to prioritize needs, modified to reflect this strategic plan and the 2011 Northeast Conservation Framework Workshop results.

Criteria for Prioritizing Needs

1. Needs that address strategies listed in the North Atlantic LCC Science Strategic Plan in a logical order.
2. Needs that fit into the Northeast Conservation Framework and were identified as a priority at the Northeast Conservation Framework Workshop.
3. Foundational needs for organizing landscape conservation including:

* building blocks for future science and tools (e.g., consistent classification, mapping);
* organizational frameworks for science and tools to guide conservation decision-making based on current and future conditions (e.g., modeling frameworks that link predictions of future conditions to conservation decisions);
* information management tools to ensure that information is organized in a way that it is available in scales and formats needed to guide conservation decisions;
* pilot/demonstration projects of approaches that can be applied at landscape and regional scales.

1. Needs that address major threats and uncertainties to sustaining natural or cultural resources in the North Atlantic LCC including:

* human impacts include land use change (e.g. urban growth, roads, sprawl, transmission corridors), changes in hydrology, invasive species, contaminants;
* climate impacts include sea level rise, impacts from changing temperature and precipitation including changing hydrology (floods, droughts, change in timing or duration);
* shifts/changes/loss of natural communities, changing phenology and changes in invasive species distribution;
* energy impacts including hydropower and wind development, biomass, transmission corridors;
* co-occurrence of these impacts.

1. Needs that address threats and uncertainties to multiple species or habitats.
2. Needs that will inform applied conservation decisions and actions by agencies, organizations and partnerships working in the North Atlantic LCC to sustain natural and cultural resources.
3. Needs that are priorities for existing partnerships in the North Atlantic LCC.

**Development and Selection of Projects and Collaborators**

Direct Selection of Projects and Collaborators

There are many partner agencies, organizations and universities active in conservation in the Northeast region and nationally with expertise and resources related to identified LCC science needs. Through discussions with the LCC Technical and Steering Committees, partnerships in the Northeast, adjacent LCCs and others, key collaborators to address a prioritized need may be identified. In many cases, this collaborator has already been addressing a particular science need in the northeast and is uniquely qualified to continue that work. If a collaborator is identified that is determined to be uniquely qualified by the Technical Committee or partnerships working with the Technical Committee, that collaborator may be selected.

Request for Proposals

When there is not a clear collaborator or ongoing project identified to address a science need, the Technical Committee and staff may issue a Request for Proposals (RFP). This RFP should be targeted to a specific science need or set of science needs. The Technical Committee will work with LCC Staff and Contractors to develop the RFP language and criteria for selecting projects and on the final selection of collaborators.

Contracts

For those proposals that are selected to receive funding through appropriated LCC funds, a subcontract will be developed through the existing administrative agreement between the LCC and the Wildlife Management Institute. This subcontract will include provisions for reporting and dissemination of projects.

Advisory/Oversight Committees

In most cases, selected projects will have advisory committees that include LCC partners to provide input and oversight on the project and ensure that it is achieving its intended need. Projects that are intended to result in decision-support tools may also have management or user committees made up of decision-makers that will use the tools once developed.

**Table 1. LCC Annual Process for Assessing Science Needs and Selecting Projects NEAFWA RCN Annual Process**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date(s)** | **LCC Event** | **LCC Decision or Process** |  | **NEAFWA Event** | **NEAFWA Decision or Process** |
| **October** | October LCC Technical Committee Meeting/Call | Recommendations on Projects for LCC Funding | NEWA/NEFA Meeting | Approve RCN Recommendations |
| Recommendations on CSC Needs |
| **November** | November LCC Steering Committee meeting | Funding Decisions on LCC Projects (including RCN projects for LCC support) | NEAFWA Directors Meeting | Final Decisions on RCN Projects |
| Approve Recommendations on Climate Science Center Needs | Approve Modification to Priority Topics for RFP |
| **December** |  | Notify Applicants/Announce Funding Decisions |  | |
| **January-February** |  | Request Input on Science Needs to Partners |  | RCN Request for Proposals |
| LCC Steering Committee Conf. Call | Additional Decisions on Projects (as needed) |  |  |
| **March** | Technical Committee Call/Meeting | Develop Recommendations on Science Needs |  | RCN Proposals due |
| **April** | Steering Committee meeting at Northeast F&W Conference | Approval of Science Needs (including RCN topics that LCC could support); Additional decisions on projects (as needed) | Directors Meeting at Northeast F&W Conference | Select Priority RCN Topics for Following Year |
| Northeast F&W Conference | Presentations on completed LCC Projects | Northeast F&W Conference | Presentations on completed RCN Projects |
|  | Provide RCN proposals to tech. review teams |
| **May-June** |  | Assess need for RFP or direct contracts |  | Technical review scores due |
| Issue targeted RFP if needed |
| **July** | Technical Committee Call/Meeting | Review of Proposals, recommendations on initial science projects, identification of need for further work on proposals |  | Proposals reviewed and scored by states |
| **August** | LCC Steering Committee Conf. Call | Decisions on initial projects (as needed) |  |
| **September** |  | Revision of proposals (as needed); input from Northeast Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee |  | NE F&W Diversity Tech. Com. | Recommendations on RCN projects |