**North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative Steering Committee**

**Conference Call Minutes**

**Thursday, June 27, 2012 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Action Items**

BJ Richardson will provide list of available regional spatial data layers to the Steering Committee and partners to seek input on which layers to prioritize including in the Conservation Planning Atlas (Data Basin site)

LCC staff will develop RFPs for vernal pools and aquatic connectivity and present recommended projects to the Steering Committee at the fall meeting.

Andrew to send out letter on National Fish Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy to implementation team

**Minutes**

Ken Elowe (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) welcomed Steering Committee members to the call and conducted a roll call. There were 30 Steering Committee members and partners on the call representing 14 member organizations, short of a quorum (attendee list at end of notes).

Ken asked for feedback on the minutes from the April 10 meeting. There were no corrections or comments. Due to the lack of quorum, approval of minutes was deferred to the fall meeting.

Andrew Milliken (North Atlantic LCC) reviewed the action items from the April meeting noting that several action items were to be addressed on the call. With regards to the conservation targets action item, Andrew noted that a next step is to use the species habitat models and occurrence information to inform the development of objectives this fall. Ken mentioned the agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies on selecting surrogate species and setting objectives for those species.

Scott Schwenk provided a summary of the *Decision support tool to assess aquatic habitats and threats in North Atlantic watersheds and estuaries* (Downstream Strategies) and discussed the importance of partner participation in selecting species and contributing the best available information. He also described the peer review process that had been set up to review completed projects noting the importance of a peer review for most projects.

Glenn Normandeau (New Hampshire Fish and Game) said that although his staff is stretched thin, they are extensively involved with anadromous fish and should be involved in this aquatic habitat project. Scott noted that any workshops or meetings would have full travel support if needed.

BJ Richardson (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) described the North Atlantic LCC Conservation Planning Atlas data portal: <http://nalcc.databasin.org/> that has been developed consistent with the recommendations in the information management needs assessment approved by the Steering Committee in April. He is interested in knowing which of the available spatial data layers partners would like to see uploaded first. He will send out a list to the Steering Committee and partners. Mary Ratnaswamy offered to share that list with the Climate Science Center for feedback.

Steve Fuller (North Atlantic LCC) provided an update on the Science Delivery Team. The expanded team had their first call on June 17 with over 30 partners in attendance. Several state, federal and NGO partners provided great examples of science delivery relevant to their work and the team then discussed and agreed upon key audiences, scales and categories of science delivery that are important for the information and tools being developed by LCC partners. The team will meet again this summer and develop recommendations for a science delivery RFP.

George Gay (National Wildlife Federation) noted that they needed to determine what the focus of the funding should be and emphasized the importance of providing grants to partners for demonstrating the application of LCC science.

Steve and Lori Pelech (LCC) then described one aspect of science delivery – the compilation and synthesis of RCN, LCC and partner science in support of SWAP updates. The LCC is supporting the synthesis efforts in several ways. On the habitat side, the LCC is compiling the spatial habitat data in the data portal described by BJ earlier and supporting the cleanup and posting of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) information through a shared position with TNC. On the species side, Steve and Lori have worked with the states and NatureServe to bring together occurrence data for Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need and are in the process of cleaning it up and analyzing it. There were significant delays in obtaining the occurrence data. The species data will inform the Synthesis report and ongoing efforts to analyze the regional context of species distribution and status. This effort is the first time that this set of information has been pulled together.

Rick Bennett (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) provided an update on the Department of the Interior Hurricane Sandy Resiliency funds. There were no decisions made on the proposals submitted this spring and now the Department is asking for proposals in a new format to be submitted in July. Andrew Milliken noted that he had provided a handout of the LCC Coastal and Marine Technical Team and Sea Level Rise Structured Decision Making Team that the Steering Committee had asked for in April. These teams represent a good cross section of the LCC membership and can help facilitate any LCC Hurricane Sandy projects.

George Gay encouraged partner discussions on the projects being developed. Patty Riexinger (New York State DEC) emphasized the importance of addressing priority coastal science needs through outside funds including the Hurricane Sandy Resiliency funds.

Scott Schwenk reviewed the status of science projects noting that there were two categories that the Steering Committee had approved for RFPs – vernal pools and aquatic connectivity. The RFP for vernal pools will go out early this summer and the RFP for aquatic connectivity had been waiting on the results of the DOI Hurricane Sandy proposals will likely now go out this summer as well. The results of those RFPs will be presented to the Steering Committee at the fall meeting. The two coastal science need categories on tidal wetland resiliency and effectiveness of wetland restoration will have to wait for the results of the DOI Hurricane Sandy proposals.

Andrew Milliken reviewed the status of the National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Conservation Adaptation Strategy (NFWPCAS). The Strategy recognizes the importance of LCCs for implementing the adaptation actions identified. LCC chairs and coordinators received a letter from the NFWPCAS implementation team encouraging the LCCs to consider how the Strategy can help advance adaptation efforts in each LCC, to identify activities called for in the Strategy that support local needs and priorities, and to begin translating Strategy recommendations into regional to local plans and actions. Andrew developed a crosswalk of the strategy actions to the LCC strategic plan. He also drafted a response letter that supported the Strategy and noted the three thematic areas identified that LCCs can contribute to include: Regional Landscape Conservation Planning and Design; Regional Conservation Priorities, Needs, and Agendas; and Decision Support Information and Tools. He asked the Steering Committee for feedback on the letter and approval for sending the letter.

Patty Riexinger, who was a co-chair of the strategy team and is a member of the implementation team, said that the crosswalk is very helpful and that the North Atlantic LCC should take a lead role in helping to implement implementation actions in the plan. She noted the importance of incorporating climate change into plans and NEAFWA committee actions. She supported sending the letter. Andrew agreed to send out the letter by the July 1 deadline.

Ken Elowe led a discussion about options for the fall Steering Committee meeting that included the usual one-day meeting, a two-day retreat and a combination of calls to discuss the usual business of the LCC and a meeting for the discussions needed on the direction of the LCC. The pros and cons of linking the meeting to the fall meeting of the NEAFWA Directors were also discussed. The group agreed that a longer meeting with time for discussions tied to the NEAFWA meeting was the way to go.

The call was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

**Call attendees**

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| Jean Brennan | Appalachian LCC |
| John Lyon | Bureau of Land Management |
| Mike Rasser | Bureau of Ocean Energy Management |
| John O’Leary | Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife |
| Hector Galbraith | National Wildlife Federation |
| George Gay | National Wildlife Federation |
| Bill Brumback | New England Wildflower Society |
| Glenn Normandeau | New Hampshire Fish and Game |
| Patty Riexinger | New York State DEC |
| Steve Fuller | North Atlantic LCC |
| Andrew Milliken | North Atlantic LCC |
| Scott Schwenk | North Atlantic LCC |
| Lori Pelech | North Atlantic LCC |
| Mary Ratnaswamy | Northeast Climate Science Center |
| Rick Palmer | Northeast Climate Science Center |
| Michelle Staudinger | Northeast Climate Science Center |
| David Hartos | Office of Surface Mining |
| Diana Day | Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission |
| Phil Huffman | The Nature Conservancy |
| Jad Daley | Trust for Public Land |
| Anne Kuhn | U.S. EPA |
| Tai-Ming Chang | U.S. EPA Region III |
| Ken Elowe | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Jeff Horan | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| B.J. Richardson | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Rick Bennett | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Dee Hines | U.S. Forest Service White Mountain National Forest |
| Pete Murdoch | U.S. Geological Survey |
| Rachel Muir | U.S. Geological Survey |
| Zoe Smith | Wildlife Conservation Society |