

Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative Charter

Approved: 23 August 2011

I. Purpose of this Charter

The Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC or Cooperative) Charter references the authorities that allow for the creation of this LCC, defines the membership and roles of LCC constituent parts, specifies the Charter Review Process, clarifies the governance of the LCC, and outlines its operational guidelines.

II. Establishment Authority

LCCs in Alaska are unique among LCCs elsewhere in that the senior executives from the State, Federal and non-federal agencies already convene to discuss climate change issues in the Alaska Climate Change Executive Roundtable (ACCER). ACCER is charged with facilitating coordination among the LCCs that occur within Alaska, DOI's Climate Science Center for Alaska, the Alaska Sub-Cabinet on Climate Change, and NOAA's Climate Service for Alaska. The existence of ACCER provides the opportunity for some statewide oversight of the LCCs primarily through the ACCER Statewide Coordinating Group.

The Western Alaska LCC is one of 22 LCCs to be established across the country, five of which are in Alaska (see Figure 1). Collectively, these LCCs will form a National LCC Network. The Western Alaska LCC is formed in response to, and under the authority of, Section 3(c) of Secretarial Order 3289 (September 14, 2009): "Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and other Natural and Cultural Resources". Current guidance at the time this charter was drafted describes LCCs as "...applied conservation science partnerships focused on a defined geographic area that informs on-the-ground strategic conservation efforts at landscape scales." LCC partners include DOI agencies, other federal agencies, states, Native and tribal entities, non-governmental organizations, universities and others.

III. Mission Statement

The Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative promotes coordination, dissemination, and development of applied science to inform landscape level conservation, including terrestrial-marine linkages, in the face of landscape scale stressors, focusing on climate change.

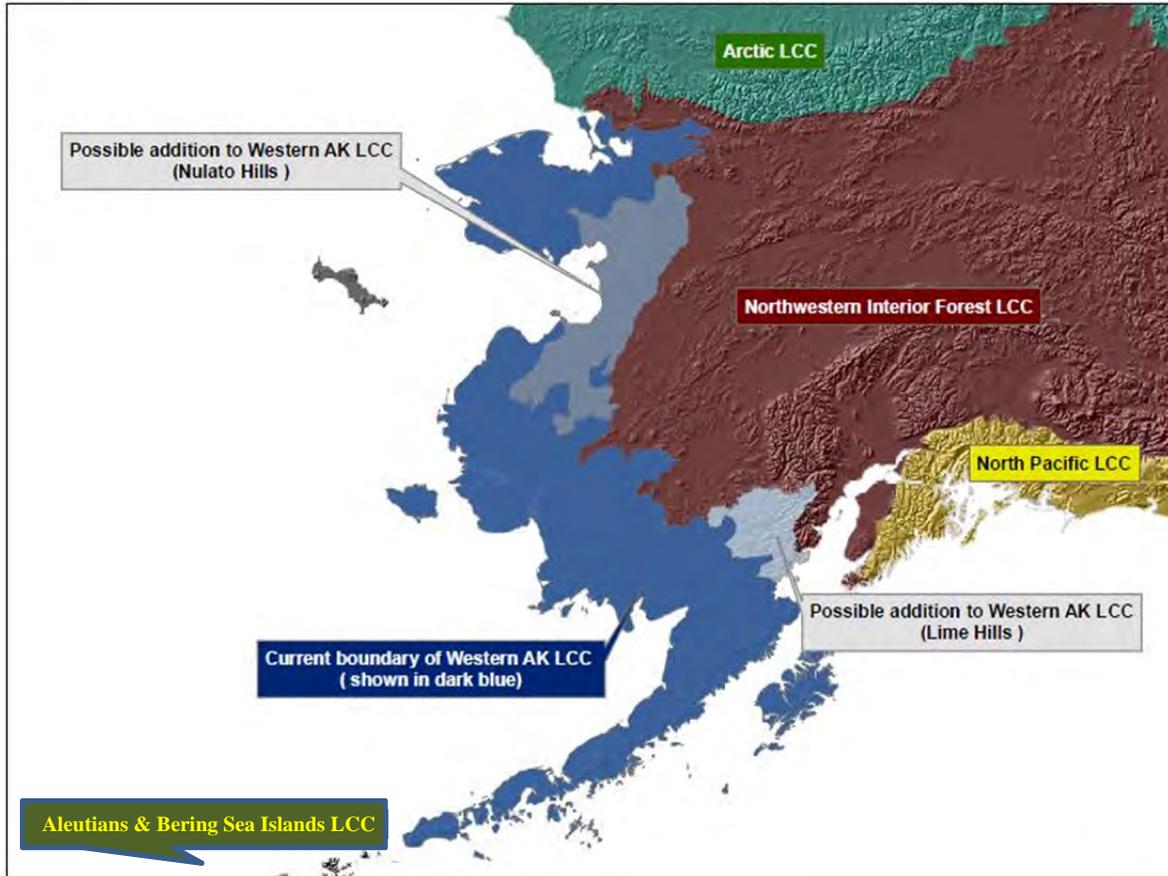


Figure 1. 2011 boundaries of the Western Alaska LCC.

IV. Guiding principles:

The WA LCC will operate under the following guiding principles:

- Consider and respect each participating organization's unique mandates and jurisdiction.
- Coordinate with other committees, workgroups or organizations that add mutual value, maximize capacity, avoid redundancies, and leverage resources.
- Focus on solving biological, physical, and sociological issues to promote scientifically sound, outcome-based, adaptive management.
- Respect social, political and legal limitations while promoting solutions to landscape-level stressors (climate and related) that benefit the greater Western Alaska conservation community.
- Be transparent in operations and ensure access to the Western Alaska LCC process and products.

V. Western Alaska LCC Goals:

The goals are not presented in priority order.

- Promote communications to enhance understanding regarding effects of climate change in Western Alaska
- Support coordination and collaboration among partners to improve efficiencies in their common science and information activities,
- Identify and support research, and data collection, analysis, and sharing that address common information needs of land and resource management decision makers,
- Enable synthesis of information at landscape and larger spatial scales,
- Enhance resource management in western Alaska through applied science and technology transfer.

VI. Geographic Scope of the Western Alaska LCC

The Western Alaska LCC extends from Kotzebue Alaska, through Unimak Island off of the Alaska Peninsula, and includes Kodiak Island. While the borders of the LCC should be considered to be flexible based on the issues addressed, the initial boundaries (Figure 1) serve to focus the LCC on issues important to western Alaska. The Western AK LCC's mission includes terrestrial-marine linkages, thus, marine areas may also be addressed by the Cooperative but no hard boundary is defined. However, the LCC will generally not address marine-specific issues. Other entities, such as the North Pacific Research Board, are the primary leads for marine issues. Close coordination with these entities and neighboring LCCs is imperative to ensure appropriate coordination on shared conservation interests.

VII. LCC Composition and Staffing

LCCs are comprised of the following groups: Steering Committee, LCC core staff, working groups or teams, and interested members of the public as defined below. The basic organizational structure also includes the Science/Traditional Ecological Knowledge Community and Partnership Community which are loosely defined, flexible and responsive in representation. These communities, along with State, Federal and Alaskan Native participants, represent the majority of the Cooperative's participants and serve as the membership pool for working groups or teams. Participation in the Cooperative is voluntary.

A. *Steering Committee*

Steering Committee Membership: The Steering Committee shall be comprised of the designated representatives of State, Federal and Alaska Native entities participating in the Western Alaska LCC with an emphasis on field level managers responsible for management and

conservation of land and natural resources in the Western Alaska (see Attachment 1 showing the 2011 State and Federal agencies on the Steering Committee).

State and Federal agencies holding a seat on the Western Alaska LCC Steering Committee may be represented by no more than two members. Steering Committee members may designate an alternate representative to a Steering Committee meeting, provided the alternate has been provided with the information, and vested with the authority to speak for, and make decisions on behalf of, the organizational entity being represented. Rotation between standing members and designated alternates may occur on a yearly basis.

Three Steering Committee seats will be available for individuals who can contribute Native Alaskan perspectives for the LCC. Identification of individuals to fill these seats will come through discussions with Tribal and Native entities within the Western Alaska LCC geographic area. If more than three individuals are interested in serving on the Steering Committee, alternates and a rotation pattern will be developed by the interested participants with the approval of the existing Steering Committee.

One ex-officio seat on the Steering Committee will be available for a representative from the Alaska Climate Science Center (ACSC) to maintain a strong linkage between the LCC and the ACSC. In total, the Steering Committee should not exceed 20 individuals, with an ideal structure of 15 individuals.

Steering Committee Structure: The Steering Committee shall select a Chair and a Vice chair. The Chair will serve for one year, and will be succeeded by the Vice chair. Both positions shall alternate between a federal and a non-federal entity such that whenever the Chair is an individual from a federal agency (non-federal entity), the vice chair will be from a non-federal entity (federal agency). This federal & non-federal pattern will only be shifted at the request of the non-federal partners. Selection of the initial Chair and Vice chair shall be made by consensus of the full Steering Committee at one of the last meetings at the end of each federal fiscal year. Thereafter, selection of the Vice chair shall be made by consensus. In the event that an individual is unable to serve for the two-year term as Vice chair and Chair, a replacement will be selected by consensus to complete that individual's term from an appropriate federal or non-federal entity.

Additional responsibilities of the Chair and Vice-Chair positions are to provide guidance to the LCC staff, including agenda development and approval, presiding over meetings and representing the Steering Committee as needed.

The presence of a majority of the participating entities on the Steering Committee will constitute a quorum for decision making.

B. Science & Traditional Ecological Knowledge Community

The Science & Traditional Ecological Knowledge Community (Science Community) is the collective science capacity within the LCC, including university, government and nongovernmental scientists, researchers, and specialized science and technical expertise, including traditional knowledge experts and elders from western Alaska. Individuals from this Community participate, as permitted through their respective organizations, in various

specialized science panels or working groups and in the review of the science strategy for the LCC. The LCC staff coordinates with appropriate expertise within this Community to meet specific shared information needs of the LCC partners.

C. Partnership Community

The Partnership Community is the collective conservation partnerships and partners within the Western Alaska LCC and includes landscape, marine, species, habitat or issue specific partnerships, management and organizational representatives and other conservation partners. The Partnership Community participates in various panels or working groups and in the review of LCC guidance documents in order to share their partnership's priorities, and ensures the LCC is complementary to and not duplicative of existing partnerships, and increases efficiency by leveraging funds and collaborating on projects.

D. The LCC Core Staff

The LCC core staff (core staff) shall be comprised of a coordinator and science coordinator as the minimum staffing level. Additional staffing can evolve in response to the wishes of the Steering Committee, and positions can reside within any organizational entity represented on the Steering Committee. Hiring authority resides with the entity funding the position; however, the Steering Committee should be involved in the selection and work oversight of individuals.

E. LCC Workgroups or Teams

Working groups may be comprised of individuals from organizational entities with natural or cultural resource conservation and management responsibilities or science capacities in the geographic area or that have skills that can meaningfully inform management decisions related to this LCC. The members of technical working groups shall have expertise appropriate to that working group. Technical working groups shall be formed by the Steering Committee or core staff to address a specific LCC need. In addition, the partnership-at-large and core staff can request that the Steering Committee establish additional technical working group(s).

VIII. Roles of LCC Committees, Groups, and Staff

The Western Alaska LCC Steering Committee, Science Community, Partnership Community, core staff, and working groups shall fulfill the roles as described below:

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee shall represent their organizational entity's views on issues and represent the science needs, interests, and capabilities of their organization. Because some LCC participating organizations are programmatically diverse, there is the expectation that steering committee members will represent all of the programs within their organization. They shall work with the core staff to establish broad conservation goals, set priorities, facilitate key activities of the LCC, leverage funding across participating entities to accomplish priority tasks, and provide operational oversight of the LCC.

The Steering Committee shall make a good faith effort to seek consensus in reaching all decisions. Consensus shall be defined as concurrence without serious objection. While most decisions shall be made during Steering Committee meetings, decisions may also be made via teleconference, web conference, or other forms of electronic communication, provided a quorum is in participation.

Science Community: The role of the Science Community is to provide their scientific or Traditional Ecological Knowledge to LCC activities within their area of expertise. The LCC Core Staff will seek participation and will provide coordination from this community on work groups or teams tasked with addressing specific questions or topics. Members of the Science Community shall keep informed of the LCC activities through the LCC website and through their agencies or organizations.

Partnership Community: The role of the Partnership Community is to help identify shared science needs, collaborate and leverage opportunities to address shared science needs, and to help the LCC avoid duplication of effort. The LCC will engage with the partnership either through its Core Staff or through Steering Committee members engaged in the partnership and in the LCC. Members of the Partnership Community shall identify a point-of-contact for their partnerships to be kept informed of the LCC activities through the LCC website and emails with the LCC Core Staff.

The LCC Core Staff: The Core Staff shall provide support to all constituent parts of the LCC. They shall convene meetings with the Science and Partnerships Communities, and the general public, at the direction of the Steering Committee. They shall organize opportunities for input from the Science and Partnerships Communities on LCC processes and products, and shall organize workgroup or teams to address specific topics identified by the Steering Committee. They shall provide relevant information to the Steering Committee and seek to fulfill information requests made by the Steering Committee and its members. They shall facilitate communication between scientists and resource managers and provide a forum for continuous exchange. The Core Staff shall assemble, translate, and deliver scientific data, analyses, and scientific tools required for conservation design and resource management decisions, as directed by the Steering Committee. Finally, Core Staff shall coordinate with, communicate activities to, and seek opportunities to leverage funding with other partnerships and neighboring LCCs.

Western Alaska LCC Coordinator: The LCC Coordinator shall serve as the leader, manager, and supervisor of Western Alaska LCC support office. This shall include, but is not limited to: direct supervision of LCC staff hired within the LCC Coordinator's agency; coordinate with supervisors of LCC staff within other agencies; development, administration, and oversight of program budgets and funding; maintenance of administrative and fiscal records; documentation and conveyance of Western Alaska LCC activities and accomplishments; coordination with LCC member entities and other interested parties. The Coordinator shall assist the Steering Committee in preparing for, and conducting, their meetings. The Coordinator shall assist in development of methods to communicate with, and receive input from, the Science and Partnership Communities and general public. The Coordinator shall seek external funding opportunities and other available resources that could support Western Alaska LCC activities and projects. Finally, the Coordinator shall serve as facilitator for the meetings.

The LCC Coordinator also serves as a member of the LCC National Network team to represent the interests of the Western Alaska LCC Steering Committee in the national forum. The Coordinator will share information on potential Network needs or direction with the LCC Steering Committee.

Western Alaska LCC Science Coordinator: The Science Coordinator shall work with the Steering Committee and others to identify and address science needs relative to, but not always limited to, the Western Alaska LCC. The LCC Science Coordinator shall serve as the leader, manager and coordinator for Western Alaska LCC scientific issues, activities, and programs. These duties include, but are not limited to: designing science strategies and implementation approaches for Steering Committee consideration, designing inventory and monitoring programs; coordination, review, technical support, and administration of projects implemented largely with Western Alaska LCC funds; managing and integrating scientific data; facilitating information exchange and feedback among scientists within and outside the Western Alaska LCC; presenting scientific results and recommendations at regulatory and professional meetings; and conducting public outreach and communications relative to science and technology issues and accomplishments. The Science Coordinator shall serve as the main scientific advisor to the Steering Committee.

The LCC Science Coordinator also represents the Western Alaska LCC at national LCC meetings on science topics and processes. The Science Coordinator will share information gathered from other LCCs which may be useful to the Western Alaska LCC and will keep the Steering Committee apprised of national initiatives that affect science within LCCs.

Workgroups or Teams: Working groups or teams shall provide to the Core Staff both recommendations for fulfilling priority science needs and conservation objectives, information exchange, and progress reports. Upon authorization by the Steering Committee, the Core Staff may engage working groups in facets of LCC planning and implementation. Each working group shall have a Chair appointed by consensus of the working group. The Chair shall coordinate with the Core Staff all phases of the group's work and, if requested, have a representative of the group provide the Steering Committee with a written or oral report of activities and products. The Steering Committee may disband or change the composition of technical working groups that it deems to be ineffective.

IX. Steering Committee Meetings

The Chair of the Steering Committee shall preside over the Steering Committee meetings. In the event that the Chair is absent, the Vice chair shall preside over the meeting. Steering Committee meetings must have either the Chair or Vice Chair in attendance, or the Chair or Vice chair must appoint another Steering Committee member to lead the meeting. Meetings must have a quorum to engage in decision-making. The presence of a majority of the participating entities on the Steering Committee will constitute a quorum for decision making. All organizations with representation on the Steering Committee are expected to send their representative or a designated alternate to each Steering Committee meeting. The LCC cannot provide funds to support Steering Committee travel, however, many meetings will be held using teleconference or videoconference tools to limit travel for Steering Committee members.

Amendments and revisions to this charter will be made by consensus of the Western Alaska LCC Steering Committee at such times that they deem appropriate. At a minimum, the charter will be reviewed by the Steering Committee every five years.

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ATTACHMENT 1:

Western Alaska LCC Steering Committee Entities at the time this Charter was approved, 23 August 2011. The Western Alaska LCC website will show the current list of Steering Committee members.

- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Park Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

As of 23 August 2011, we are initiating a process to identify individuals who can serve on the Steering Committee to represent Alaskan Native perspectives. This process involves contacting Tribal Councils first, then other Alaska Native entities.