

**Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Work Plan
for the
Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative**

Introduction

The partners of the Desert LCC recognize the need to substantially enhance science and collaboration to adapt to climate change and other stressors on natural and cultural resources. There is a common understanding that no individual entity has the capacity to stand alone in efforts to address this suite of threats to resources. Therefore, the partners agree to identify a common set of priorities and value added activities, including objectives and desired conditions that will define the Desert LCC's success.

This work plan is intended to outline the Desert LCC budget and tasks to be initiated in support of the Desert LCC implementation of its Operations Plan and goals during fiscal year 2013. Some processes developed during fiscal year 2013 lead logically into tasks to be completed in fiscal year 2014. As a result, this work plan includes some 2014 work so that the larger purpose of tasks identified in 2013 is not lost during the course of the year. This work plan will be revised and updated prior to implementation in 2014.

Mission Statement (from Governance Document)

Through collaborative partnerships provide scientific and technical support, coordination, and communication to resource managers and the broader Desert LCC community to address climate change and other landscape-scale ecosystem stressors.

Goals and Strategic Actions (from Operations Plan)

Goal: Science Development and Delivery

Strategic Actions:

- 1) *Identify regional and LCC-wide science needs of the Desert LCC partners*
- 2) *Compile a broad scale inventory of existing information that can be used to meet science needs*
- 3) *Identify and/or develop new science products that will inform resource management needs*
- 4) *Identify and/or develop climate change vulnerability assessments for species and ecosystems*
- 5) *Identify and leverage the development of climate change adaptation strategies*
- 6) *Identify and leverage the development of decision support systems that would benefit partners*

Goal: Collaboration and Communication

Strategic Action:

- 7) *Collaborate and provide a forum for communication among partners and partner organizations*

Goal: Monitoring and Evaluation

Strategic Action:

- 8) *Incorporate current information from existing monitoring programs into Desert LCC plans and operations*

Goal: Outreach and Education

Strategic Action:

- 9) *Develop a suite of communication tools to education resource managers and the public about the effects of climate change and adaptation strategies*

Accomplishing the Goals of the Desert LCC

Dedicated Personnel

The Bureau of Reclamation and Fish and Wildlife Service have dedicated personnel to provide day to day oversight and coordination to the Desert LCC. Additionally, a facilitator has been hired to assist with meeting facilitation and ongoing outreach and dialogue with the LCC partners through a part of FY13 (at a minimum). The coordinators and facilitator will work closely with each other and with partners to identify priorities and accomplish the goals.

Additional staff (i.e. GIS/Data Manager) may be required to accomplish the goals of the LCC.

Description of 2013 Work Tasks

Goal: Science Development and Delivery

Strategic Actions:

- 1) *Identify regional and LCC-wide science needs of Desert LCC partners*

Task(s)

- Define a process to further prioritize science need themes identified in the Comprehensive Science Needs Assessment by choosing 1-3 pilot project opportunities within each desert region of the Desert LCC to define managers' most pressing management questions and needs related to DLCC priorities.
- Define a process for future strategic planning, including compiling or synthesizing information about partners' planning efforts, common conservation targets and desired outcomes and how the Desert LCC science can support those outcomes.
- Inform strategic science planning efforts and RFP processes of South Central and Southwest Climate Science Centers.
- Develop a plan to meet a prioritized terrestrial need as identified through one of the selected pilot projects, including determining the capacity for meeting that need.
- Conduct Science Roundtables with USGS leadership on 2 priority science needs identified in the Comprehensive Science Needs Assessment.

2) *Compile a broad scale inventory of existing information that can be used to meet science needs*

Task(s)

- Define a process for compiling an inventory of best-available science, data, and tools that respond to identified management questions in one of the selected pilot projects.

3) *Identify and/or develop new science products that will inform resource management needs*

Task(s)

- Define a process to further prioritize science need themes identified in the Comprehensive Science Needs Assessment by choosing 1-3 pilot project opportunities within each desert region of the Desert LCC to define managers' most pressing management questions and needs related to DLCC priorities.
- Develop a template for fact sheets on prioritized science needs.
- Develop a Funding Opportunity Announcement to fund non-Federal entities for applied science within the Desert LCC using information from the prioritized science needs and selected pilot projects.
- Use financial assistance agreements to fund Federal government entities for applied science projects within the Desert LCC using information from the prioritized science needs and selected pilot projects.

4) *Identify and/or develop climate change vulnerability assessments for species and ecosystems*

Task(s)

- Using the completed vulnerability assessment(s) of plant communities and ecosystems in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts as a basis, review the product(s) and determine ways to integrate various vulnerability assessment efforts completed by partners (e.g., Reclamation, USFS, USFWS, and BLM). Provide synthesis of the information.

5) *Strategic Action: Identify and leverage the development of climate change adaptation strategies*

Task(s)

- Develop a Funding Opportunity Announcement to fund non-Federal entities for applied science within the Desert LCC using information from the prioritized science needs and selected pilot projects.
- Use financial assistance agreements to fund Federal government entities for applied science projects within the Desert LCC using information from the prioritized science needs and selected pilot projects.

6) *Identify and leverage the development of decision support systems that would benefit partners*

Task(s)

- Facilitate a webinar or other methods of communication to explain the Rapid Ecological Assessment products of the BLM to the Science Working Group and other partners.
- Determine process and capacity to make readily available downscaled bi-national climate data and projections (e.g., climate wizard expanded to south/Mexico).
- Begin planning for housing and/or referencing Desert LCC specific data, such as funded project reports and GIS data.

Goal: Collaboration and Communication

7) *Collaborate and provide a forum for communication among partners and partner organizations.*

Task(s)

- Develop a process or plan for cataloging information using the Comprehensive Science Needs Assessment database as a platform.
- Create “dictionary” of shared terminology that is necessary for the cataloging process and to promote communication.
- Create a Point of Contact list that describes position and name of resources available that can help meet needs of the Desert LCC with geographic representation of areas (i.e., map).
- Participate in Stakeholder Advisory Councils, as needed, to coordinate with South Central and Southwest Climate Science Centers.
- Create process with State agencies, and partners as interested, to host “in-service” meetings to facilitate communication of Desert LCC objectives, goals, science development, etc. to help provide opportunities for partners to travel more locally.
- Determine guidance and expertise needed to assist the El Paso/Dona Ana County Conservation Cooperative.
- Examine tools to organize data and identify needs.
- Provide current results of one or more relevant (as identified through ongoing partner efforts, roundtables, etc.) programs at each of the bi-annual Steering Committee meetings through a short “briefing” paper (i.e., use format of USGS research briefs).
- Develop charter, list of partners, and process for collaboration and communication in the Local Governments Working Group. Identify tasks the Local Governments Working Group can accomplish to meet Desert LCC goals and strategic actions.
- Identify tasks the Mexico Working Group can accomplish to meet Desert LCC goals and strategic actions.
- Initiate Tribal Working Group to determine interested members and next steps.

Goal: Monitoring and Evaluation

8) *Incorporate current information from existing monitoring programs into Desert LCC plans and operations.*

Task(s)

- Compile list of management questions related to existing monitoring programs, conservation targets and monitoring protocols as determined through selected pilot project and one priority science need. Provide synthesis of existing information and identify gaps or needs related to monitoring.

Goal: Outreach and Education

9) *Develop a suite of communication tools to education resource managers and the public about the effects of climate change and adaptation strategies.*

Task(s)

- Finalize communications plan.
- Create a Desert LCC specific user-friendly website.
- Develop understanding of what Desert LCC materials should be translated for Mexican partners and possible workplan to accomplish tasks.
- Assess existing tools and methods for communication to identify best tools/methods to meet Desert LCC communication goals.
- Archive and “publish” new research articles, funding opportunities, webinars, annual accomplishment reports, etc. (clearinghouse) as information is provided.
- Sponsor 1 webinar (or other communication tool) for scientists and managers on a topic that the Desert LCC has funded.
- Sponsor 1 webinar that communicates existing knowledge and new tools related to partner efforts and the roundtable or manager/scientist meetings.
- For all Desert LCC project funding, include a requirement for the awarded entity to host a webinar (at a minimum) and complete a FAQ sheet or executive summary about the funded project once it is completed.
- Develop end-of-year annual report on accomplishments.

Funding – FY13

Support for the Desert LCC is expected to come in the form of specific funding and in-kind services from many sources. In addition to Reclamation and FWS, other LCC partners are also expected to provide dedicated staff time and cost shared funding for Desert LCC priorities.

Known funding and in-kind services are identified in the next section.

