

**Fiscal Years 2013-2014 Annual Work Plan
for the
Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative**

December 17, 2012

Introduction

The partners of the Desert LCC recognize the need for substantially enhanced science and collaboration to adapt to climate change and other stressors on natural and cultural resources. We recognize that no individual entity has can be effective in standing alone in addressing this suite of threats to resources. Therefore, the partners agree that identifying a common set of priorities and value-added activities, including working towards achieving clear objectives and desired conditions that will define the Desert LCC's success.

This work plan outlines the Desert LCC tasks to be initiated in support of implementation of the Desert LCC Operations Plan during Federal fiscal year (FY) 2013. Some processes developed during fiscal year 2013 lead logically to tasks for Federal fiscal year (FY) 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.

Accomplishing the Goals and Strategic Actions (from Operations Plan) 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. Additional staff is noted as a capacity need in Appendix A: FY2013 Desert LCC Annual Work Plan Task Specifics. Please note that tasks needing additional staff may not be accomplished during the intended timeframe if capacity needs are not met. Appendix A is a working document that will be used over the course of FY2013 and FY2014 to track progress in accomplishing tasks. The appendix describes steps needed to define processes in FY2013, including determination of time and capacity needed for implementation. As a result, many processes will not be implemented until FY2014. To accurately track our progress, as well as describe necessary next steps to implement actions over the next two years, this appendix will be

reviewed and updated, as necessary, by the Desert LCC coordinators and the Steering Committee.

Description of 2013 Work Tasks

This section describes broad tasks that move the LCC towards accomplishing a strategic action. More specific information, including 1) additional steps the LCC must take before accomplishing these broader tasks; 2) entity responsible for accomplishing the task; 3) need for additional capacity to accomplish a task; 4) timeline for completing a task; and 5) the targeted goal and associated strategic action is included in Appendix A. Please note that the task numbers listed under strategic actions below (1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc.) correspond to the task numbers in Appendix A and are not always sequential.

Goal: Science Development and Delivery

- 1) *Strategic Action: Identify regional and LCC-wide science needs of Desert LCC partners*
Task(s):
 - 1.0 Define process to further prioritize science needs identified in the Comprehensive Science Needs Assessment. Choose 1-3 critical management questions within each desert region of the Desert LCC to define managers' most pressing management questions and needs related to DLCC priorities. Focus on linking science needs/delivery with on-the-ground conservation objectives with intent of adding value to existing efforts.
 - 2.0 Inform science planning efforts and RFP processes of South Central and Southwest Climate Science Centers. Use information from CSCs to further inform LCC efforts.
 - 3.0 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.
- 2) *Strategic Action: Compile a broad scale inventory of existing information that can be used to meet science needs for a selected project*
Task(s):
 - 4.0 Establish a process for inventorying best-available science, data, and tools that respond to one of the selected critical management questions.
- 3) *Strategic Action: Identify and/or develop new science products that will inform resource management needs*
AND
- 5) *Strategic Action: Identify and leverage the development of climate change adaptation strategies*
Task(s):
 - 1.2 Develop a Funding Opportunity Announcement to fund non-Federal entities for applied science within the Desert LCC using the selected critical management questions.
 - 1.3 Use financial assistance agreements to fund Federal government entities for applied

- science projects within the Desert LCC the selected critical management questions.
- 1.4 Use additional partner funding as available for applied science within the Desert LCC using the selected critical management questions.
 - 5.0 Develop a template for fact sheets on prioritized science needs.
- 4) *Strategic Action: Identify and/or develop climate change vulnerability assessments for species and ecosystems*
- Task(s):
- 6.0 Identify other vulnerability assessment efforts completed by partners (e.g., Reclamation, USFS, USFWS, and BLM) that may complement NatureServe’s completed vulnerability assessment(s) of plant communities and ecosystems in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts as a basis.
- 6) *Strategic Action: Identify and leverage the development of decision support systems that would benefit partners*
- Task(s):
- 7.0 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.
 - 8.0 Determine process and capacity to make downscaled bi-national climate data and projections readily available to partners in the LCC (e.g., climate wizard expanded to south/Mexico).
 - 9.0 Begin planning for housing and/or referencing Desert LCC specific data, such as funded project reports and GIS data.

Goal: Collaboration and Communication

- 7) *Strategic Action: Collaborate and provide a forum for communication among partners and partner organizations.*
- Task(s):
- 10.0 Develop a process or plan for cataloging information using the Comprehensive Science Needs Assessment database as a platform.
 - 11.0 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.
 - 12.0 Participate in Stakeholder Advisory Councils, as needed, to coordinate with South Central and Southwest Climate Science Centers.
 - 13.0 Identify tasks the Mexico Working Group can accomplish to meet Desert LCC goals and strategic actions.
 - 14.0 Initiate Tribal Working Group to determine interested members and next steps.
 - 15.0 Provide current results of one or more relevant programs (as identified through ongoing partner efforts, roundtables, etc.) at the bi-annual Steering Committee meetings through a short “briefing” paper (i.e., use format of USGS research briefs).
 - 16.0 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).

- 17.0 Create process with State agencies, and partners as interested, to host meetings to facilitate communication of Desert LCC objectives, goals, science development, etc. to help provide opportunities for partners to travel more locally.
- 18.0 Determine guidance and expertise needed to assist the El Paso/Dona Ana County Conservation Cooperative.

Goal: Monitoring and Evaluation

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

Task(s):

- 19.0 Compile list of more detailed management questions related to existing monitoring programs, conservation targets and monitoring protocols as determined by one of the critical management question approved by the Steering Committee.

Goal: Outreach and Education

- 9) *Strategic Action: Identify and leverage the development of decision support systems that would benefit partners*

Task(s):

- 20.0 Communicate information generated by the LCC and its partners available through appropriate communication channels, including the website and SharePoint as needed. Archive and “publish” new research articles, funding opportunities, webinars, annual accomplishment reports, etc. (clearinghouse) as information is provided.
- 21.0 Create a Desert LCC specific user-friendly website for outreach and education purposes.
- 22.0 Assess existing tools and methods for communication and identify best tools/methods to meet Desert LCC communication goals.
- 23.0 Determine which Desert LCC materials should be translated for Mexican partners and possible work plan to accomplish tasks. Begin translation of selected materials.
- 24.0 Sponsor 1 webinar (or other communication tool) for scientists and managers on a topic that the Desert LCC has funded.
- 25.0 Sponsor 1 webinar that communicates existing knowledge and new tools related to partner efforts and the roundtable or manager/scientist meetings.
- 26.0 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.
- 27.0 Develop an end-of-year annual report on accomplishments.

Funding – FY13/FY14

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.