

# Northwest Boreal Landscape Conservation Cooperative Charter

## I. Purpose of this Charter

The Northwest Boreal Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NWB LCC) Charter references the authorities that allow for the creation of this NWB LCC, defines the membership and roles of NWB LCC constituent parts, specifies the Charter review process, clarifies the governance of the NWB LCC, and outlines its operational guidelines. The Steering Committee will review the charter at least every three years. Amendments can be made to the charter at any time as voted by the Steering Committee.

---

The Northwest Boreal Landscape Conservation Cooperative is not a governing body and does not have statutory or regulatory power towards any partner organization or the greater stakeholder community. The purpose of LCCs is to leverage resources and strategically target science to *inform* conservation and sustainable resource management decisions. Thus the NWB LCC will not impact the jurisdictional responsibilities, management activities, or legal mandates of partner organizations.

---

## II. Introduction

The Northwest Boreal LCC is a self-directed management-science partnership, informing and promoting integrated science, sustainable natural and cultural resource management, and conservation to address impacts of climate change and other stressors within and across ecosystems. Open public access to Northwest Boreal LCC activities and products will promote acceptance and support of the science that guides potential changes in conservation strategy. Participation in the Cooperative is voluntary.

We live in an era of profound conservation challenges, including the loss and fragmentation of habitats, genetic isolation, invasive species, unnatural wildfire, and water scarcity. The effects of rapidly changing climate will exacerbate many of these threats. In these circumstances, it is imperative that natural resource management agencies, science providers, Tribes, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders work together in common cause across the greater western boreal forest ecosystem. In addition these entities shall work together to understand the impacts of climate change and other stressors and work together to determine how best to address these challenges. It is essential that the public and local communities receive clear communication

about the goals and purpose of the Northwest Boreal LCC and are involved in and supportive of its activities.

### III. Establishment Authority

The NWB LCC is formed in response to, and under the authority of, Section 3(c) of Secretarial Order No. 3289, issued on September 14, 2009 by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. This Order calls for the establishment of the LCC network as a response to landscape-scale stressors, including climate change. LCC Information Bulletins 1 & 2 (2010) provide guidance and framework to define the focus, membership, and scope of LCCs and directs LCCs to provide managers with the necessary tools and information to do their jobs more effectively in the face of impending and difficult-to-predict change. The NWB LCC partners include DOI agencies, other U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, the state, a Canadian province and territory, Native and First Nations entities, non-governmental organizations, and universities.

The NWB LCC is one of 22 LCCs to be established across the country. Collectively, these LCCs form a National Landscape Conservation Cooperative network.

### IV. Vision and Mission Statement

**Vision:** A landscape that sustains functioning, resilient boreal ecosystems and associated cultural resources in perpetuity.

**Mission:** To promote coordination, development, and dissemination of applied science to inform landscape level conservation in the face of a changing climate and other stressors.

### V. Guiding principles

The NWB LCC will operate under the following guiding principles:

- Consider and respect each participating organization's unique mandates and jurisdictions.
- Coordinate with other LCCs, committees, workgroups, and organizations that add mutual value, maximize capacity, avoid redundancies, and leverage resources.
- Provide rigorous biological, physical, and sociological science in support of sound, outcome-based, conservation and management.
- Respect social, political and legal limitations while promoting landscape-level solutions that benefit the greater conservation community.
- Be transparent in operations and ensure full public access to the NWB LCC process and products.

## VI. NWB LCC Goals:

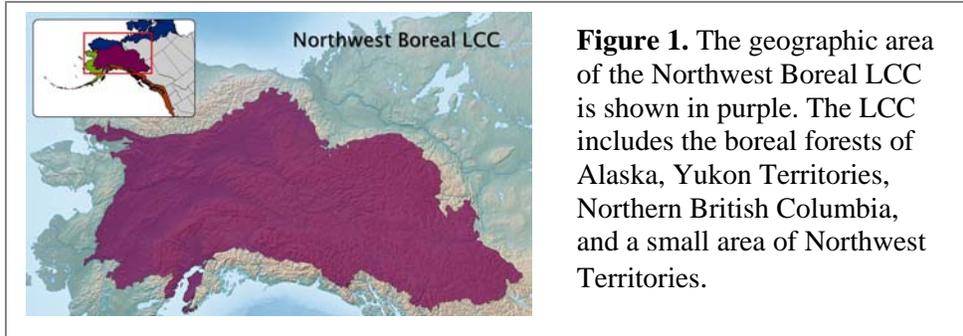
The overarching goal is to inform conservation and sustainable resources management within the NWB LCC by:

- Providing better understanding and prediction of effects of climate change and other stressors on landscape level physical and ecosystem processes;
- Supporting coordination, collaboration and communication among partners to facilitate knowledge exchange and improve efficiencies in their individual and shared science and information activities;
- Identifying and supporting scientific research, data collection, analysis, and sharing to address common information needs of land and resource management decision makers;
- Providing landscape scale information to better understand and plan for potential impacts of environmental change on natural resources, subsistence and cultural resources, and human infrastructure;
- Supporting and coordinating the collection and synthesis of baseline information and monitoring, and enabling data management and information synthesis at landscape scales; and by
- Engaging the community at large to help identify shared science needs, collaborate and leverage opportunities to address shared science needs, and avoid duplication of efforts.

## VII. Geographic Scope of the NWB LCC

The NWB LCC boundary closely follows that of the Northwestern Interior Forest Bird Conservation Region. The LCC falls within the boreal forest biome and includes Southcentral and Interior Alaska, most of the Yukon Territory, the northern portion of British Columbia, and a small part of Northwest Territories (**Figure 1**). The area includes over 330 million acres, and encompasses large portions of the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Susitna, and Copper River Basins. Close coordination with the Aleutian Bering Sea Islands, Arctic, North Pacific, and Western Alaska LCCs is imperative to ensure appropriate coordination on shared conservation interests.

The NWB LCC landscape also transcends international boundaries. Significant portions fall within each of the United States and Canada, and are subject to differing constitutional systems and requirements under law.



## VIII. Conducting Meetings

Reflecting the international character of the Northwest Boreal landscape, the Steering Committee will have a United States and a Canadian Co-Chair. The Co-chairs of the Steering Committee shall preside over the Steering Committee meetings. In the event that one Co-chair is absent, the attending Co-chair shall preside over the meeting. Steering Committee meetings must have either Co-chair in attendance, or the Co-chairs must appoint another Steering Committee member to lead the meeting. Meetings must have a quorum to engage in 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 following will apply to all Steering Committee meetings:

- 1. Quorum:** A quorum of the NWB LCC shall consist of a simple majority of the Steering Committee. A quorum of any working group established by the Steering Committee shall consist of a majority of the members on that committee. A quorum shall be required to conduct any business, but includes Steering Committee members that are present in person, via tele- or video-conference, or other appropriate form of distance communication.
- 2. Minutes:** Minutes shall be kept of each NWB LCC Steering Committee meeting as well as each meeting of any working group established by the Steering Committee. The minutes shall be detailed in nature, including but not limited to the details of any action taken, summaries of the comments of points raised by individual members, and votes taken. Members of the Steering Committee may, in addition to spoken comments, submit written comments on a subject addressed at meeting of the commission. Such comments, with the consent of the majority of the Steering Committee present and voting, shall be included as an addendum to the minutes of the meeting at which they were submitted.
- 3. Meeting locations:** Steering Committee meeting locations shall be alternating among locations of partner organizations and held within the NWB LCC region. At least one meeting per year will be hosted by a Canadian partner organization.

## IX. Voting

The following shall be the rules governing voting by the NWB LCC Steering Committee:

**Decision making:** The Steering Committee will strive for unanimity when making decisions in the spirit of collaboration and working towards shared goals. When unanimity is not possible, a 75% majority vote of those participating will indicate an approved decision, with a minority report.

- Each member organization is allowed a single vote.
- Votes shall be recorded, with each member organization voting “Yes”, “No”, and printed in the minutes of said meeting. Any organization voting “No” may provide a written statement describing their reason for voting “No” for inclusion in the record.

## X. Scientific Reporting

All reports from NWB LCC supported projects shall be peer reviewed by at least two qualified reviewers not associated with the project to ensure an unbiased and rigorous reviewing process. Reviewers shall be recommended by NWB LCC Core Staff, sub-committee or working group chair, and selected by NWB LCC Co-chairs. The lead author(s) will accommodate and incorporate the suggestions of those reviewers, and provide to the Steering Committee co-chairs a memo responding to those comments.

## XI. NWB LCC Composition and Staffing

The NWB LCC is comprised of a Steering Committee, Core Staff, working groups or teams, and interested entities as defined below. The basic organizational structure also includes various science and partnership communities which may include (but are not limited to) U.S. and Canadian, State, Provincial and Territorial, Federal, Alaska Tribal governments and First Nations, university, and nongovernmental organization participants, which serve as the membership pool for working groups or teams.

### A. *Steering Committee*

**Steering Committee Membership:** At the time this charter is ratified, the NWB LCC Interim Steering Committee assumes the role of Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall be comprised of designated representatives of U.S. and Canadian federal and state/provincial agencies, local and Alaska Tribal governments and First Nations, and non-governmental organizations with research or management activities/responsibilities within the NWB LCC geographical region. Organizations participating at the Steering Committee level must meet the stated pre-requisites, and selection of individuals to represent these organizations shall be made with an emphasis on field level managers and scientists.

***Pre-requisites for Steering Committee Membership:*** The following criteria shall be used to identify potential Steering Committee entities.

- Federal, state/provincial governmental agencies
  - Shall be included if the agency has management, research, and/or conservation activities/responsibilities regarding land, water, climate, cultures, or natural resources within the NWB LCC geographical region;
  - Individual Steering Committee members are selected by each respective organization represented within the Steering Committee;
  - Each agency will share a single vote on behalf of their agency.
- Alaska Tribal, First Nations, and local governments
  - Shall be included if jurisdictional boundaries are, at least in part, within the boundaries of the NWB LCC;
  - Individual Steering Committee members are selected by each respective government represented within the Steering Committee;
  - Each government will share a single vote on behalf of their organization.
- Non-governmental organizations
  - Shall be included if the organization has science or conservation or management activities/responsibilities, or works closely with government agencies regarding land, water, climate, cultures, or natural resources within the NWB LCC geographical region;
  - The organizations, or the branch of the organization that interacts with the NWB LCC, must not partake in advocating political positions or viewpoints;
  - Each NGO will share a single vote on behalf of their organization.
  - Non-governmental organizations interested in serving on the Steering Committee will follow the process below:
    - Each interested non-governmental organization will self-nominate after consultation with LCC Core Staff and Steering Committee Co-chairs
    - The Steering Committee will review nominations and determine membership on a case-by-case basis

- One seat on the Steering Committee will be available for a representative from the Alaska Climate Science Center as stated by the LCC Information Bulletin #1 (2010).

***Steering Committee Alternates:*** 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. Members will serve a two-year term. Alternates are encouraged to attend meetings and are permitted to serve on sub-committees and working groups.

***Steering Committee Structure:*** The Steering Committee shall select Co-Chairs who will serve for one year. Both positions shall alternate between a U.S. and a Canadian entity. Selection of the Co-chairs shall be made by the Steering Committee. In the event that an individual is unable to serve for the full term, a replacement will be selected by the Steering Committee to complete that individual's term.

### ***B. Scientific Community***

The Scientific Community is the collective science capacity, including Traditional Ecological Knowledge, within the NWB LCC. This includes university, governmental and nongovernmental scientists, independent researchers, and individuals with specialized science and technical expertise. This also includes traditional knowledge experts and elders from within the NWB LCC region. Individuals from the Scientific Community may 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 NWB LCC. The NWB LCC Core Staff coordinates with appropriate expertise within this Scientific Community to address specific shared information needs of the NWB LCC partners.

### ***C. The NWB LCC Core Staff***

At a minimum, the NWB LCC Core Staff shall be comprised of a coordinator and science coordinator. Positions can reside within any organizational entity represented on the Steering Committee. Staffing levels may increase in response to the needs and wishes of the Steering Committee. Hiring authority and oversight will reside with the entity funding the position; however, Core Staff serves the LCC and not the host agency.

### ***D. NWB LCC Working Groups***

Working groups are formed *ad hoc* by the Steering Committee and may be comprised of individuals with skills that can meaningfully inform management decisions related to the NWB LCC. These individuals may come from any organizational entity with natural or cultural resource conservation and management responsibilities or with organizations possessing science capacities in the geographic area. The members of technical working groups shall have expertise appropriate to that working group. Working groups will be chaired by a Steering Committee member to address topical areas that are better suited to small groups. Working groups will report findings and /or recommendations to the Steering Committee for further action.

## **XII. Roles of NWB LCC Committees, Groups, and Staff**

The NWB LCC Steering Committee, Science Community, Core Staff, and working groups shall fulfill the roles as described below:

***Steering Committee:*** Members of the Steering Committee shall represent their organizational entity's views on issues and represent the science needs, interests, and capabilities of their organizations. Because some NWB 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 NWB Core Staff to establish goals, set priorities, facilitate key activities of the NWB LCC, leverage funding across participating entities to accomplish priority tasks, and provide operational oversight of the NWB LCC.

***Scientific Community:*** The role of the Scientific Community is to provide its scientific or Traditional Ecological Knowledge to NWB LCC activities within its area of expertise. Members of this community may be asked to participate on working groups tasked with addressing specific questions or topics. Working groups will be coordinated by NWB LCC Core Staff. Members of the Scientific Community shall keep informed of the NWB LCC activities through the NWB LCC website, emails, and through their organizations.

***The NWB LCC Core Staff:*** The Core Staff shall provide support to all constituent parts of the NWB LCC. They shall convene meetings with the Science Communities, and the community at large, at the direction of the Steering Committee. They shall organize opportunities for input from the Science Community and the community at large on NWB LCC processes and products, and shall organize working groups and teams to address specific topics identified by the Steering Committee. Core Staff shall provide relevant information to the Steering Committee and will seek to fulfill information requests made by the Steering Committee. They shall facilitate and provide a forum for continuous communication between scientists and resource managers. 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.

***NWB LCC Coordinator:*** The NWB LCC Coordinator shall serve as the leader, manager, and supervisor of NWB LCC office. Duties shall include, but are not limited to:

- Direct supervision of NWB LCC staff hired within the NWB LCC Coordinator's agency;
- Coordinate with supervisors of NWB LCC staff within other agencies;
- Develop, administer, and oversee program budgets and funding;
- Maintain administrative and fiscal records;
- Document and convey NWB LCC activities and accomplishments;
- Ensure minutes are taken, reviewed, approved, and posted;
- Coordinate with NWB LCC member entities and other interested parties.
- Assist the Steering Committee in preparing for, and conducting its meetings;

- Assist in the development of methods to communicate with, and receive input from, the Science and community at large;
- Seek external funding opportunities and other available resources that could support NWB LCC activities and projects; and
- Facilitate Steering Committee meetings.

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

***NWB LCC Science Coordinator:*** The NWB LCC Science Coordinator shall work with the Steering Committee and others to identify and address science needs relative to, but not limited to, the NWB LCC. The NWB LCC Science Coordinator shall serve as the leader, manager and coordinator for NWB LCC scientific issues, activities, and programs. These duties include, but are not limited to:

- Design science strategies and implementation approaches for Steering Committee consideration;
- Coordinate existing inventory and monitoring programs;
- Coordinate, review, and provide technical support, and administration of projects implemented with NWB LCC funds;
- Manage and integrate scientific data;
- Facilitate information exchange and feedback among scientists within and outside the NWB LCC;
- Present scientific results and recommendations at regulatory and professional meetings; and
- Conduct 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 NWB LCC Science Coordinator also represents the NWB 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 NWB LCC and will keep the Steering Committee apprised of national initiatives that affect science within LCCs.

***Working groups:*** Working groups shall provide the Steering Committee with recommendations for fulfilling priority science needs and conservation objectives, methods of information exchange, and the development of progress reports. Upon authorization by the Steering Committee, the Core Staff may engage working groups in facets of NWB LCC planning and implementation. The Chair shall coordinate all phases of the group's work with the Core Staff 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 or no longer necessary.