



## **LCC Network Definition of Landscape Conservation Design**

August 26, 2016

**Introduction:** Landscape conservation design is of broad importance for achieving the goals of the Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) Network. This document articulates the LCC Network's *Definition* of landscape conservation design.

**Definition:** Landscape conservation design is a partner-driven approach to achieve a sustainable, resilient socio-ecological landscape. It is an iterative, collaborative, and holistic process resulting in strategic and spatial products that provide information, analytical tools, maps, and strategies to achieve landscape goals collectively held among partners.



## Definition and Characteristics for LCC Landscape Conservation Designs

DISCUSSION DRAFT

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The following draft definition and characteristics for LCC landscape conservation designs were drafted by the LCC NAS Design Team in preparation for the LCC Network meeting to be held June 21-24, 2016. This draft definition and characteristics were revised based on feedback from LCC Coordinators and Science Coordinators. The intent is to identify the set of characteristics that LCC practitioners agree should be present in those landscape conservation designs that are supported by the LCCs. They will be used to help address the first component of the landscape conservation design agenda topic at the LCC Workshop:

*Develop common understanding and agreement across LCCs about what constitutes an LCC landscape conservation design, including the essential characteristics and why they are important.*

### **LCC Network Working Definition of Landscape Conservation Design:**

**Revised definition:** Landscape Conservation Design is a stakeholder-driven landscape conservation strategy to achieve a sustainable, resilient landscape. It is an iterative, collaborative, and holistic process that provides information, analytical tools, spatially explicit data and best management practices to reach jointly held landscape conservation goals among partners.

**Explanatory Text:** An effective design starts with people coming together to express common goals in the form of desired future conditions within a geography (landscape) they define. These stakeholders agree upon the important ecological and social elements they value most, the primary change agents (or stressors) that are likely to affect those values, and measurable indicators which can be used to track the status and trend of values through time. The design process then uses the best available science to assess current spatial and temporal patterns, vulnerabilities, risks, and opportunities within the socio-ecological system. This assessment is used to envision or project a range of possible future conditions based on estimates of change through time. The outcomes are a set of maps that help stakeholders visualize where conservation actions are needed to achieve desired conditions and strategies to accomplish those actions.

### **Draft Characteristics of LCC Landscape Conservation Design**

#### **Characteristic 1: Collaborative / Stakeholder-Driven [Convene Stakeholders]**

Description: The partnership creates a shared vision of a sustainable landscape and/or seascape through a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional, stakeholder-driven process.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: Broader than a single jurisdiction and at a scope and scale that matches the natural and/or cultural resource objectives expressed by the partnership.

#### **Characteristic 2: Shared Goals [Convene Stakeholders]**

Description: Stakeholders collectively develop shared goals, or fundamental objectives, for long-term, landscape-scale conservation in the subject geography.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: The goals are defined collaboratively, focus on the desired ends rather than the means to achieve them, and serve as the basis for more detailed descriptions of desired future condition (Characteristic 5) and conservation elements (Characteristic 6)

### **Characteristic 3a: Holistic / System Level Process (scale)**

Description: A holistic or systems-level look at the landscape over a specified time frame.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: Reflects shared identification of a suite of targets that are representative and indicative of the desired future conditions valued for some elements of the landscape.

### **Characteristic 3b: Cross-jurisdictional, Multi-sector (scope)**

Description: Integrates societal values and cross-jurisdictional, multi-sector interests with best available science and traditional knowledge.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: Multiple sectors as appropriate for the objectives. Cross-jurisdictional where achieving objectives is not possible as individual entities. Each partner can see its own role in achieving landscape-scale conservation across broad geographies.

### **Characteristic 3c: Iterative / Adaptive Process (product & process)**

Description: The product and process are designed and managed iteratively, adapting to events, responsive to change, incorporating uncertainty/sensitivity analysis, and has evaluation and refinement built in, periodically revisiting aspects of both the planning (product) as well as stakeholder engagement (process). Down-scaling for local implementation may involve modifying the product.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: The process has a mechanism for monitoring actions by partners in achieving goals, and revisits those goals and actions over time to reflect changes in partners, capacity, resource status, goals, actions, and projections.

### **Characteristic 4: Assess Current Conditions / Situational Analysis [Assessment]**

**Description:** An assessment of current conditions of a landscape; including biological, physical, and/or socioeconomic metrics. The economic, social, ecological, and political trends and opportunities within the social-ecological system; usually including a conceptual model and assessment of threats to conservation features (the “Problem”) in terms of the shared goals articulated in Characteristics 2 and 5 and may also include some analysis of enabling conditions for conservation and likely barriers to implementation.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: A situational analysis of the ecological, physical and social attributes of a geographic area that examines the conservation problems prioritized in Characteristic 2 (Shared Goals) and articulates a theory of change that addresses major threats, opportunities, and risks for the priority resources identified in the purpose or goals of the LCD.

### **Characteristic 5: Desired Future Condition [Spatial Design]**

Description: Spatial and/or narrative expression of the desired future trajectories or conditions of the landscape.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: Quantifiable objectives projected for specified points in time that may include short-term and long-term goals. Objectives include a combination of ecological and physical aspects with socio-economic considerations, as appropriate and feasible.

### **Characteristic 6: Conservation Elements [Assessment]**

Description: Conservation Elements include the focal conservation targets (e.g., species, habitats, cultural features, or socio-ecological processes) and the key change agents (e.g., climate change, land use) that stakeholders co-identify as the as most valued and/or urgent elements around which the design is constructed. Stakeholders converge on high priority elements as the basis for assessing current status and describing desired future condition. The Elements become the tangible expression of goals and the subject of assessment, projection and monitoring.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: Conservation targets include a suite of natural, social and/or cultural elements that have high economic, spiritual and/or ecological value and represent a broader set of elements or conditions. Useful conservation targets have some characteristic(s) -or indicators- that can be objectively measured or indexed.

There are likely to be many change agents affecting shared conservation targets. LCD stakeholders agree upon a (sub)set of change agents that are most likely to profoundly change system composition, structure, and/or function and identify measurable indicators for those agents. In some cases (notably climate change) stakeholders may have little control over forcings of change, in which case indicators may include mitigative-type responses rather than measures that address the change agent directly.

### **Characteristic 7: High Level Plan with Associated Strategies [Strategy Design]**

Description: High-level plan – with associated landscape-scale management, mitigation, and/or monitoring strategies – that provides recommendations on how to achieve stated resource objectives.

Conceptual Threshold / Indicator: The plan includes a short list of strategies and actions, with spatially-explicit context (maps), that have been determined most likely to succeed in achieving desired future landscape condition(s). The plan should help partners and stakeholders see their role in achieving the goals and objectives developed for the landscape.