**Appalachian LCC Annual Report 2016-17**

**Introduction by AppLCC Leadership: ‘A Strong Jumping Off Point”**

“Generally we ask the staff to report on the previous calendar year’s accomplishments, but given the national effort to critically review the programmatic direction and commitment large geographic conservation partnerships. Thus we have combine our efforts to report on the activities and successes of 2016 and 2017 in this Report. This is both an exciting and uncertain time for our Conservation Cooperatives: ‘uncertain’ only in the sense that we have yet to define the path forward. The Appalachian Conservation Cooperative is fortunate, and perhaps uniquely positioned to help inform this dialogue. 2017 was already a critical year in our partnership as it signaled a major year of transformation.

“We initiated our programmatic review of our work in the summer of 2016 to define elements of what key science barriers and conservation work might be addressed through such a collaborative, as we reviewed our previous 5-year work plan and began to define new goals and objectives to inform our future partnership. The partners directing the focus of our next phase of development on building upon the successes and achievements of the Appalachian LCC. Challenges faced in the previous years and consideration of present and future opportunities and needs were also identified. In the process of putting together the new plan, we benefited greatly from the excellent participation and creative ideas of the broader Appalachian conservation community. Thus, this combined report provides a strong “jumping off point” for the partners to use in defining next steps.

“Our partners have been energized by our successes: advances in the science of conservation planning, networks and partnerships being built, and tools being delivered to conservation planning in focal areas to inform conservation outcomes. Realizing the vision of the Cooperative partners is within our grasp as we take the next steps to mobilize our expertise, direct resources, and apply the science to work together towards common goals. This partnership can make a difference for the Appalachian region. This repot may provide guidance to the conservation community as we consider the path forward, reflecting on the success of the partnership and the LCC model of collaborative landscape conservation.”

Dr. Gwen Brewer, Appalachian LCC Chair, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Clyde Thompson, Appalachian LCC Vice-Chair, U.S. Forest Service