

LCCs and CSCs – Working Together for Conservation and Science

Sustaining North America's natural and cultural resources and landscapes is essential to our quality of life and our economy. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) and Climate Science Centers (CSCs) are non-regulatory conservation partnerships that have been established to help accomplish these goals in recognition of the reality that no single agency has the capacity to conduct research, translate scientific information into management practices, and make decisions that address the numerous threats to natural resources. Collaboration among federal, state, tribal, local, and nongovernmental partners is essential for defining, designing, and implementing a coordinated conservation response to sustain natural and cultural resources.

Complementary Roles

At the simplest level, CSCs develop and deliver science needed to inform decision makers about vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, and LCCs work with partners to identify shared landscape-level conservation priorities, develop and provide integrated science-based information for conservation, and catalyze collaborative conservation actions. Both work closely with resource managers to ensure development of science-based information to address key conservation priorities. CSCs and LCCs are also distinguished on a number of other fronts:

- CSCs seek to understand climate-related ecosystem vulnerability and adaptation possibilities; LCCs address a broader suite of conservation challenges, including climate and land use change. Each LCC identifies its own balance among these priorities.
- LCCs work with a broad set of stakeholders to identify science needs and knowledge gaps; CSCs prioritize and conduct research based on the science needs and knowledge gaps identified by LCCs. Both work collaboratively to identify common priorities across multiple LCC geographies. CSC and LCC staff work together to develop coordinated and complementary science programs, leveraging the most appropriate science assets (i.e., university, federal, other) across all science providers in the region.
- CSCs and LCCs both require systems that facilitate management, sharing, integration, and long term maintenance of data, information, tools, and products. Together they will coordinate the development and use of common standards and protocols that enable access to data and research products from individual projects and across larger geographic regions.
- CSCs and LCCs work with partners to identify monitoring needs and to coordinate existing programs and data. CSCs provide design expertise for standardizing new or modified monitoring efforts; LCCs coordinate this monitoring across partners and ensure the resulting data are used to address key assumptions in conservation planning and delivery.

Seizing the Opportunities

CSCs and LCCs are committed to ensuring their work is effective and efficient. LCCs and CSCs:

- include cross-representation on stakeholder, steering, and technical / review committees,
- develop interoperable data systems,
- align annual and longer term science planning processes, including coordinated Request for Proposal (RFP) timetables and requirements,
- contribute to each other's science planning activities,
- capitalize upon each other's unique role and established relationships, including the broad stakeholder networks of many LCCs and the strong university linkages of many CSCs.