Survey of Fish Habitat Partnerships on relationships with Landscape Conservation Cooperatives

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On February 14, 2012, a questionnaire was sent by email to the 18 recognized Fish Habitat Partnerships, asking nine questions about their working relationships with Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. The purpose was to gather information that will help to encourage collaboration among FHPs and LCCs.

Fourteen FHPs returned the completed questionnaire. The results are compiled below. In summary, 11 of the 14 FHPs reported that they had had formal communication with one or more LCCs. Six FHPs are represented on LCC steering committees or other governance bodies. FHPs reported that they collaborated with LCCs on 4 projects involving financial contributions from LCCs or other sources; some of the projects involved multiple FHPs and LCCs.

Full responses to two open-ended questions are shown below, very lightly edited. In general FHPs expressed willingness to collaborate with LCCs, and highlighted successful collaboration. A lack of awareness of FHPs by the LCCs, and a lack of communication between FHPs and LCCs were cited as problems to be overcome.

Summary of responses to Question 4: Have representatives of your FHP had formal communication (meetings, conference calls, etc.) with LCC representatives to discuss common issues?

No direct communication with LCCs – 3 FHPs
Communication with one LCC – 7 FHPs
Communication with 2-4 LCC – 4 FHPs

Appalachian LCC – 2 FHPs
Desert LCC – 1 FHP
Gulf Coastal Plain and Ozarks LCC – 1 FHP
Gulf Coast Prairie LCC – 2 FHPs
North Atlantic LCC – 2 FHPs
Northwest Interior Forest LCC – 1 FHPs
Pacific Islands Climate Change Cooperative – 1 FHP
Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC – 2 FHPs
South Atlantic LCC – 2 FHPs
Southern Rockies LCC – 1 FHP
Upper Midwest-Great Lakes LCC – 1 FHPs
Western Alaska LCC – 1 FHP

Summary of responses to Question 5: Is your FHP officially represented on LCC governance or technical bodies?

No representation – 8 FHPs
Steering committee (primary or alternate) – 5 FHPs
Partnership committee – 3 FHPs
Science / technical committee – 4 FHPs
Communications committee – 2 FHPs
Other indirect representation – 2 FHPs

Appalachian LCC – steering committee (2)
Gulf Coastal Plan and Ozarks LCC – partnership committee & communications committee
Gulf Coast Prairie LCC – steering committee (2) & science committee
North Atlantic LCC – technical committee
Northwest Interior Forest LCC – steering committee (alternate) & science committee
Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC – technical team
South Atlantic LCC – partnership committee (2) & communications committee

Responses to Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7

	Formal	Official	Joint projects with	Communicated FHP

	communication?	representation on LCC bodies?	LCCs?	science needs to LCCs?
Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership	• North Atlantic LCC • South Atlantic LCC • Peninsular Florida LCC	• South Atlantic LCC partnership committee • North Atlantic LCC technical committees	• North Atlantic LCC • South Atlantic LCC Consultation on development & science needs	• North Atlantic LCC • South Atlantic LCC • Appalachian LCC • Gulf Coastal Plain/Ozarks LCC Face to face meetings
California Fish Passage Forum	None	None	None	None
Desert Fish Habitat Partnership	• Desert LCC • Southern Rockies LCC	None	None	• Southern Rockies LCC FWS Regional meeting
Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture	• Appalachian LCC • North Atlantic LCC	• Appalachian LCC steering committee, science & data workshop organization	None	• Appalachian LCC via the science needs workshop • North Atlantic LCC via submitting funding proposal, discussion at LCC-NFHAP meeting, and submitting a list of science needs
	Formal communication?	**Official representation on LCC bodies?**	**Joint projects with LCCs?**	**Communicated FHP science needs to LCCs?**
Fishers & Farmers Partnership for the Upper Mississippi River Basin	• Plains & Prairie Potholes LCC	None	• Plains & Prairie Potholes LCC $115K project to develop a standardized, incremental, & sustainable monitoring strategy for habitat restoration in the UMR Basin $130K project with Midwest FHPs to use monitoring data to drive conservation decisions	• Plains & Prairie Potholes LCC Indirect communication through Midwest Science Advisory Network
Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership	• Upper Midwest-Great Lakes LCC	None	• Plains & Prairie Potholes LCC $130K project with	• Plains & Prairie Potholes LCC Indirect

			Midwest FHPs to use monitoring data to drive conservation decisions	communication through Midwest Science Advisory Network
Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership	• Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC	• Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC technical team Midwest NFHP coordinator is on Plains & Prairie Pothole LCC steering committee	• Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC $150K plus $130K project with Midwest FHPs to use monitoring data to drive conservation decisions	• Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC Participation on technical team
Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership	• Pacific Islands Climate Change Cooperative	None	None	• Pacific Islands Climate Change Cooperative Informal meetings to discuss climate change and restoration planning held between PICCC and FWS habitat programs
	Formal communication?	**Official representation on LCC bodies?**	**Joint projects with LCCs?**	**Communicated FHP science needs to LCCs?**
Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership	None	None	None	• Northwest Interior Forest LCC Conversations with interim coordinator regarding data and science needs
Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership	• Northwest Interior Forest LCC	• Northwest Interior Forest LCC science committee, alternate for steering committee	None to date. Will seek to partner with Northwest Interior Forest LCC on development of its science plan	None to date. Will provide input to the Northwest Interior Forest LCC's science needs assessment
Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership	Indirect communication through Midwest Science Advisory Network	None	• Plains & Prairie Potholes LCC $130K project with Midwest FHPs to use monitoring	• Plains & Prairie Potholes LCC Indirect communication through Midwest

			data to drive conservation decisions	Science Advisory Network
Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership	• Gulf Coast Prairie LCC	• Gulf Coast Prairie LCC steering committee & science committee	None	• Gulf Coast Prairie LCC Science forum held in February 2012
Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership	• South Atlantic LCC • Gulf Coast Prairie LCC • Gulf Coastal Plain and Ozarks LCC • Appalachian LCC	• South Atlantic LCC partnership committee and communications committee • Appalachian LCC steering committee • Gulf Coast Prairie LCC steering committee • Gulf Coastal Plain and Ozarks LCC partnership committee and communications committee	• South Atlantic LCC • Gulf Coast Prairie LCC Through LCC and Multistate Conservation Grant funding, developing hydrologic information for the South Atlantic	• South Atlantic LCC • Gulf Coast Prairie LCC • Gulf Coastal Plain and Ozarks LCC • Appalachian LCC Science forums, steering committee meetings, partnership committee meetings.
Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership	• Western Alaska LCC	None. Currently NGOs, in general, are not represented on LCC governance boards.	None	• Western Alaska LCC

Responses to Question 8: What are the most effective ways for FHPs to engage with LCCs?

<u>Atlantic Coastal FHP</u>
LCCs should have representation at FHP meetings to help align commonalities in goals and objectives. Representation on steering committees and science working group teams would be advisable, but it is not necessary as long as the LCC coordinators had opportunities for input at regular partnership meetings and in the development of strategic plans and related guidance documents. FHP representatives should be engaged with LCC coordinators at their planning meetings and should be included in partnership project coordination efforts affecting fish habitat conservation within their regions.

<u>California Fish Passage Forum</u>
The Forum needs to establish formal discussions and planning with LCCs in California. We attended the initial LCC meeting in California and introduced ourselves but have not heard anything from LCC representatives about their activities or interest in working with us specifically.

<u>Desert FHP</u>

Having a DFHP representative on the LCC science work teams would be the most effective way for FHPs to engage with LCCs, although the other two choices would work as well. We could also have a DFHP committee member give a DFHP presentation at a LCC meeting.

Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
Where and when possible, via participation on LCC steering committees and representation on science work teams. FHP participation needs to occur at both levels and should be done in a FHP-coordinated manner. Participation at the LCC Steering Committee level helps to guide the overall effort ensure that aquatic resources (habitats) are identified as priority areas of concern / priority areas for LCC-sponsored research/ science and participation on the science work teams allows for specific FHP science needs to be identified / incorporated into RFPs and addressed via LCC-sponsored efforts.

Fishers & Farmers Partnership
All of these ways (steering committee representation, science work teams, meetings with LCC science coordinators) are effective for FHPs to engage with LCCs. We are open to LCCs visiting/working with us and we hope to engage on their steering committees.

Great Lakes Basin FHP
We are still in the informative stages, as a Partnership, in learning more about the LCC that we overlap with, and vice versa. We do see an opportunity and value-addedness of our FHP to the LCC, and vice versa. The GLBFHP Steering Committee Co-chairs have submitted a request to the Upper Midwest Great Lakes LCC Steering Committee for an opportunity to engage with the LCC's Steering Committee, and if deemed appropriate, we would request representation on the LCC's Steering Committee. Also, we have had similar communications with the Upper Midwest Great Lakes LCC's Science Coordinator, to learn more about opportunities for our GLBFHP's Science and Data Committee to engage and contribute, and vice versa.

Great Plains FHP
Recognition that LCC's and FHP's should be integrated with involvement of the FHP's at both the Technical and Steering Committee level. The roles are complementary with the LCC's developing the science needed to help deliver Strategic Habitat Conservation being done by the FHP's and the Joint Ventures. Sharing of the science needs of the FHP with the LCC development of their landscape level strategy.

Hawaii FHP
Regular interaction with LCC Science Coordinators to ensure the technical products that are needed for effective aquatic habitat restoration planning are identified and addressed by the LCCs.

Kenai Peninsula FHP
Outreach by LCCs to incorporate science and data needs of fish habitat partnerships.

Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership
Science work teams in development of science needs and science coordinators in development of RFPs

Ohio River Basin FHP
Meetings with LCC science coordinators would be good.

Reservoir FHP
FHP reps need to have an active role in LCC governance and/or Science Teams to be relevant. Aquatics have not been a focal point of the LCC's and for this to change, FHP representatives need to be actively engaged.

Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership
For our Partnership, LCC participation on the science and technical committee would probably be the most effective. Partnership participation on LCC RFP review committee. Opportunity of Partnership review of LCC policy and technical documents.

Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership
Varies according to the situation, but all of the above can work (steering committee representation, science work teams, meetings with LCC science coordinators). It is too soon to know the best ways, and there may not be one most effective way.

Responses to Question 9: Additional information, e.g. positive working relationships, problems encountered, suggestions for effective engagement

Atlantic Coastal FHP
The LCCs provide an opportunity for partnerships between partnerships, and connectivity across boundaries between FHP regions. Although we have begun to engage LCCs in our partnership efforts, we have not formalized much in the way of connectivity. This is changing and ACFHP will be working more closely and collaboratively with LCCs in the coming years.

California Fish Passage Forum
The Forum may need to reach out to the LCC again if NFHAP thinks the relationship is useful or necessary. We will discuss this with the Governance Committee and we will act accordingly. It appears the LCCs here are unaware of the Forum and its activities.

Desert FHP
DFHP sees a potential for the LCCs because the LCCs could help DFHP monitor effectiveness of habitat restoration projects, provide staff and funding, help identify funding sources, and create synergy between different groups.

The problem that DFHP has encountered with LCCs is inadequate communication. We don't know what the LCCs are doing, if they are established, if they have an RFP, if they have a steering committee, etc. The DFHP coordinator has sent the 5 LCCs that overlap with DFHP's geographic range coordinators information on DFHP including annual reports, strategic plan, newsletters, etc. The DFHP coordinator also asked the LCC coordinators to send any information they had on their LCC and to keep DFHP in the loop of upcoming meetings, RFPs, funding opportunities, etc., and nothing has been sent.

Both DFHP and the LCCs could do a better job at including each other in upcoming meetings, teleconferences, RFPs, and funding opportunities. We could make sure someone is at the LCC meeting

from DFHP. DFHP's science and data committee could be more involved with the LCCs. DFHP could invite LCC coordinators to the DFHP annual meeting and have them give a presentation on their LCC.

Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
We have positive working relationships with the LCCs that overlap our boundary. We have received some assistance from the Appalachian LCC in the form of website support. However, we could benefit from science / research support from the LCCs on EBTJV priority science needs.

Fishers & Farmers Partnership
Other than our monitoring plan that was funded by the PPP LCC, Fishers & Farmers hasn't had much communication from the LCCs. We were hoping to engage with more of them and maybe even work on projects together. It never hurts to network and find more funding opportunities for fish and wildlife habitat. In the Midwest, 5 or 6 of our Fish Habitat Partnerships get together on conference calls with our Midwest Coordinator and work together on initiatives. Our Midwest Coordinator would be an excellent person to engage with the LCCs in the Midwest.

As a FWS employee I haven't had much communication from the LCCs either. We've heard more from our partners about the LCCs than from in our own agency. However, Fishers & Farmers Partnership will also strive for more effective engagement with the local LCCs.

Great Lakes Basin FHP
To date, all of our interactions with the LCCs have been very positive. We really do not have more feedback to provide because we are in the early stages of our engagement with the LCCs.

Great Plains FHP
The relationship between the Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC and the Great Plains and other Midwest FHP's is exactly what it should have been designed into each of the LCC's.

The relationship between all of the FWS's programs and initiatives such as LCC's, FHP's, Joint Ventures, Fish Passage, and others, should be integrated to complement each other for the FWS mission rather than try to stand on their own. Then with these developed in concert with the Partners we have including the States, Tribes, NGO's are a recipe for success. If we develop those linkages, the potential value is more than can be comprehended.

Hawaii FHP
In our region, the PICCC is staffing up and its capacity for providing technical products to assist on-the-ground aquatic habitat conservation appears to be increasing. PICCC scientists are available for consultation and informal interaction.

Downscaling and modeling at the scale of specific islands is not expected to be feasible in the near term; therefore much of the technical assistance from PICCC is focused on identifying the range of uncertainty associated with potential changes to aquatic ecosystems in response to changing precipitation patterns and the potential effects of sea-level rise on estuarine and coastal wetland habitats.

Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership
LCCs are generally not informed about FHPs; need to establish this connection more formally.

Reservoir FHP

I am a long-time acquaintance/friend of the GCPLCC Coordinator. This allowed the Reservoir Partnership to get its "foot in the door." Scott Robinson (SARP) and I serve on the Steering Committee and Science Team. SARP was awarded a single project on in-stream flow during the first round of GCP funding. SARP and RFHP worked together to secure this funding. I am currently attempting to get involved with the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks LCC. We have contacted FWS Regional Director Cindy Dohner and plan to attend an upcoming Steering Committee meeting.

Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership

Climate change was identified in the Strategic Plan of our Partnership as a significant threat to fish habitat, and working with the Western Alaska LCC was identified as a strategy for addressing that threat, specifically:

1. Collaborate with the Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCCs)
2. Inform LCC research needs assessment to address priorities of the Partnership
3. Develop programs and projects in response to identified needs.

Given the overlapping geographies of partnerships with LCC's we suggest some coordination of funding. Our partnership has about $100,000 available for science projects related to habitat protection. If there is some way to leverage LCC project funding with NFHAP funding both may be able to achieve more. LCCs could incorporate needs of the Partnership in their RFPs and include a Partnership representative on the review committee for LCC proposals.

Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership

SARP and LCC staffs have worked hard to develop positive relationships with the LCCs in our region, and it seems to be producing positive results. As LCCs form and begin to mature, there is a need to better define the role of LCCs, FHPs, Joint Ventures, etc., They should work together to advance conservation, but for each group and all groups to be effective, LCCs should focus more on bringing it all together and identifying opportunities for synergy among disciplines or partners. They should be filling gaps and addressing the science needs already identified by FHPs and JVs, rather than working so much on developing "their own" science needs; that seems to be a step back in some ways rather than a step forward. In most cases it is all the same people representing the same core organizations, regardless of whether they are interacting within a FHP or LCC, and the science needs identified have not changed much since two or three years ago when they went through a similar process with FHPs or JVs. As the roles of each organization become better defined, interaction will be easier and more efficient for all involved.