



ABOUT THE REVIEW OF THE LCCS

In 2014, Congress directed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to engage the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review the LCCs. The objective of the NAS review was to evaluate the purpose, goals and scientific merit of the LCC program within the context of other similar programs. The Academy released its review in December 2015. The final report is available at: <http://bit.ly/NAS-LCCs>.

NAS REVIEW: FINDINGS

The 12-person NAS review committee concluded:

THERE IS A NATIONAL NEED FOR A LANDSCAPE APPROACH

The nation needs to take a landscape approach to conservation and that the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) is justified addressing this need with the LCCs.

LCCS CAN POINT TO EARLY SUCCESSES

While noting that the LCCs are still relatively new, the committee recognized that the LCC Network has made progress toward its high-level strategic goals of addressing conservation strategy, developing collaborative conservation and advancing science.

LCCS ARE UNIQUE

The committee determined that there is no other federal program like the LCCs that is designed to address landscape conservation needs.

The committee also noted the LCCs' ability to create opportunities for identifying common conservation goals and leveraging efforts of diverse partners at a much greater scale than any one entity could achieve alone.

Moreover, the committee found that consolidation of the LCCs with other "similar" types of programs such as Migratory Bird Joint Ventures and Climate Science Centers is not needed given the distinct roles of each of the programs.

NAS REVIEW: RECOMMENDATIONS

The NAS review committee offered specific recommendations and a number of observations for guiding improvements to the LCC Network and LCCs:

LCC STRATEGIC PLAN & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- » LCCs should conduct a network-wide evaluation on an ongoing basis to guide the work of the LCC Network as a whole. LCCs should also perform periodic evaluations for specific LCCs that have existed long enough to have had a perceptible impact on "end outcomes." Performance measures should align with LCC Network strategic goals.
- » The LCC Network should improve its evaluation process to better capture the contributions made by all partner agencies or groups toward common objectives.

LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION DESIGN

- » The NAS review acknowledged the importance of Design to LCC efforts, but found LCC Network guidance about Design should be improved.

COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION

- » DOI should review the landscape and habitat conservation efforts, especially the Joint Ventures and the LCCs, to identify opportunities for improved coordination.
- » Special consideration should be given to the limited capacity of state agency partners to participate in multiple efforts simultaneously.
- » The LCC and Climate Science Center programs should: be more clearly delineated; explicitly state how research efforts differ and complement each other; identify and build on existing examples of network-wide coordination; and make adjustments as appropriate.