

Review of the landscape conservation cooperatives

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Because fish, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources extend beyond political boundaries, there is a national need to develop resource management strategies across jurisdictions and sectors, says a new congressionally mandated report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), initiated by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2009 and coordinated by the department's Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), were created to address this national need and can point to many early accomplishments. Ultimately, the long-term success of this effort will depend on developing ways to measure and demonstrate benefits to its conservation partners and the nation.

At the request of Congress, FWS asked the Academies to convene a committee to evaluate the LCCs, a network of 22 regional conservation partnerships in the United States, including the Pacific and Caribbean islands, as well as parts of Canada and Mexico. Each LCC is tasked with creating a collaborative framework to develop shared conservation priorities and identify applied research needs across federal agencies, state agencies, tribes, private landholders, and other stakeholders working on conservation efforts within its region.

Individual LCCs have generated some early accomplishments, such as identifying partners, establishing governance structures and steering committees, and developing shared conservation and research priorities for use by all partners, says the report. It is too soon to expect the network as a whole to have made measurable improvements to managing

fish, bird, and other wildlife populations and their habitats. In addition, the LCC network needs to improve its evaluation process to better capture the contributions made by all partners toward common objectives and to better measure and demonstrate benefits to its partners.

The report finds that LCCs are unique in that they are designed to address landscape needs at a national level for all natural and cultural resources as well as to bridge conservation research and management. Similar federal programs are more narrowly focused and the LCCs generally seek to coordinate with other programs where their interests overlap. Moving forward, the LCC network needs to strengthen coordination with other programs that have a strong interest in landscape approaches to [conservation](#) to avoid duplicative efforts and limit demands on state agency and other partners that participate in multiple programs.

The study was sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

More information: www.nap.edu/catalog/21829/a-re...rvation-cooperatives

Provided by National Academy of Sciences

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