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# South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative

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## Charter

*(Approved: March 8, 2011)*

### Background

The South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (SALCC) is part of a national network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). LCCs are applied conservation science partnerships among federal agencies, regional organization, states, tribes, NGOs, universities and other entities within a geographic area. They are designed to inform resource management decisions in an integrated fashion across landscapes at a broader scale than any individual partner's responsibility. The partnership will consider landscape - scale stressors, including climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and water scarcity. LCCs provide scientific and technical support for landscape-scale conservation in an adaptive management framework by:

- supporting biological planning and conservation design,
- prioritizing and coordinating applied research that informs conservation delivery,
- supporting the design of inventory and monitoring programs,
- supporting the development of scientific analysis that informs and empowers land and resource managers to link actions at project sites to outcomes on broader scales.

The SALCC is a broad-based partnership of organizations concerned with the conservation of natural and cultural resources, including biotic organisms (e.g. fish, wildlife, plants), and their habitats and ecosystems (including abiotic and biotic processes) within the SALCC area (see attached map). It provides a forum for continuous exchange and feedback among partner organizations. It will aggregate and consolidate existing information and coordinate research activities to meet common science needs identified across partner organizations, with particular attention to how climate change will impact natural and cultural resource management and conservation. The SALCC governance is intended to facilitate coordination and feedback between landscape-level science and conservation delivery; collaboration and communication among partner organizations; and coordination with entities adjacent to the LCC (including adjacent LCCs and other partnerships sharing common species and conservation issues).

### Mission

The mission of the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative is to foster landscape scale conservation to sustain natural and cultural resources for future generations.

### Guiding Principles

The Partnership will:

Consider and respect each participating organization's unique mandates and jurisdictions;

Seek to add value to landscape scale conservation by integrating across partnerships and organizations; identifying and filling gaps; and avoiding redundancies;

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Conduct open and frequent communications within the SALCC network and be transparent in deliberations and decision-making;

Focus on developing shared landscape level priorities that lead to implementable strategies;

Develop and rely upon sound peer reviewed science;

Develop explicit linkages and approaches to ensure products are available in a form that is useable by partners delivering conservation.

## Overall Structure

The SALCC will initially function through a Steering Committee and Task Groups appointed by the Steering Committee to address specific issues. The initial structure and function of the SALCC is a starting point for operation of the partnership but is intended to change and evolve as the partnership develops. The SALCC structure will be reviewed as needed to evaluate whether additional tiers or a different structure would be beneficial (e.g., a committee to assist with operational oversight or a Partnership-At-Large to provide opportunities for a broader set of partners to participate). Any changes to the SALCC structure will be approved by the Steering Committee.

The initial emphasis of the Steering Committee is to quickly create a functioning SALCC. In light of this, to encourage operational efficiency the composition of the Steering Committee outlined in the following section is only an initial take on likely members. However, one of the Steering Committee's first responsibilities will be to conduct a further assessment that will be used to inform the long-term structure and membership of LCC governance. In the meantime, interested organizations not represented on the Steering Committee are encouraged to communicate their views to Committee members and the LCC coordinator. There also will be opportunities to serve on SALCC task groups.

## **I. Steering Committee**

### *A. Membership and Organization*

1. The SALCC Steering Committee will consist of executive level representatives from organizations that collectively have the following characteristics, especially at a regional level:
  - jurisdictional responsibility for natural and/or cultural resource management
  - significant capacity for furthering the purpose of the SALCC
  - actively engaged in addressing significant natural and/or cultural resource management issues
  - provide direct links and communication with other conservation organizations or land managers involved in conservation delivery, particularly those operating at local levels.

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The ultimate composition of the Steering Committee is intended to be as broad as necessary to effectively carry out its mission. It is anticipated that it will at least include representatives from state, federal, and local agencies, tribes, NGOs, private organizations, and the academic community.

2. Initial composition of the SALCC Steering Committee will include one primary and one alternate representative from each of the following partner organizations that accepts an invitation to participate at the Steering Committee level.
  - *State Natural Resource Management Agencies within the boundaries of the SALCC*
    - Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
    - North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
    - South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
    - Georgia Department of Natural Resources
    - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
  - *Non-governmental Organizations:*
    - The Nature Conservancy
  - *Regional Organizations and Partnership*
    - South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
  - *U.S. Federal Agencies:*
    - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
    - U.S. Geological Survey
    - National Park Service
    - U.S. Forest Service
    - Natural Resource Conservation Service
    - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
    - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
    - Department of Defense
  - *Native American Tribes:*
    - To be determined
3. Steering Committee members are expected to represent their agency or organization at an administrative and policy level on matters pertaining to allocating human and financial resources that are inherent to sustained, long term landscape conservation planning and implementation. They should also be sufficiently knowledgeable about landscape-scale conservation and climate change to make informed decisions regarding SALCC recommendations on priority projects and activities (see #4 under *Responsibilities* below).
4. Member organizations are expected to commit resources (human and financial) to developing a shared vision of landscape sustainability for the SALCC and coordinating their otherwise independent actions in the cooperative pursuit, refinement, and

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implementation of that vision consistent w/ member authorities, appropriations, and available resources.

5. New members will be considered by the Steering Committee upon receipt of a written request to the Chair from the agency or organization that documents its interest in participating and identifies the individual that will be representing such organization. A majority vote of the Steering Committee, with a quorum (majority of members) required for the vote to proceed, is required for acceptance of membership. Removal of Steering Committee seats is determined by the Steering Committee
6. Activities of the Steering Committee are run by an elected Chair and Vice Chair, each of which is elected for a two-year term. One of these positions should be non-federal. At the end of a term, the Vice Chair succeeds the Chair, and a new Vice Chair is elected. The Chairperson will organize and conduct the business meetings of the Steering Committee. The Vice-chairperson shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson.
7. The Steering Committee will schedule at least two meetings per year. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair, and additional Steering Committee business will be conducted by e-mail, teleconference and web conference. If a Steering Committee member is unable to attend a meeting or teleconference, he/she should delegate an individual from their organization with full decision-making authority to represent them.
8. For actions that require Steering Committee approval decisions will be made through consensus. For purposes of SALCC business, "consensus" means votes of affirmation or no objection by members present at the time of the vote. For issues directly affecting the programs or prerogatives of one or more entities not present at the time of the vote, then votes of affirmation or no objection shall be obtained from each such entity prior to the proposal being placed into effect. The presence of at least 60% of the primary or alternate designees from participating entities shall constitute a quorum Steering Committee Membership shall be maintained and recorded in meeting summaries and notes by the SALCC Coordinator or administrative designee of the SALCC Coordinator.
9. All partners are welcome to attend Steering Committee meetings and opportunity will be provided for comment during the Steering Committee deliberations.

### *B. Responsibilities*

The Steering Committee of the SALCC has the following collective responsibilities:

1. Serve as the SALCC's executive body for decision making, providing guidance on SALCC policy and actively engaging in development of the SALCC's operational and strategic plans.
2. Evaluate what additional organizations should be engaged and participate on the Steering Committee and develop appropriate mechanisms for communicating with and receiving input from organizations not represented on the Steering Committee regarding science needs and capacity for science delivery.
3. Promote cooperation, coordination, consolidation of information, and collaboration among partner organizations to support the goals and objectives of the SALCC.
4. Determine the coordination, planning and science activities that the SALCC will undertake. Approve prioritized SALCC-recommended projects and related activities for implementation.

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5. Work collectively to identify funding opportunities and other available resources (e.g., staff, in-kind services) for supporting SALCC priority projects and activities. Additional resources will be required to augment existing base funding in order to support the activities of the SALCC.
6. Establish standing and ad-hoc task groups as necessary to carry out the purpose and function of the SALCC; define the initial purpose and responsibilities of each task group; provide direction to task groups and facilitate their progress on action items.
7. Assure regular, clear communication with and among existing conservation partnerships (such as those indicated in the SALCC Development and Operations Plan), other LCCs and the DOI Climate Science Center; maintain transparency in SALCC decision-making.
8. Provide input on SALCC Coordinator position description and selection as Coordinator position reopens.

## *II. Staffing*

The SALCC staff will be dedicated to carrying out the vision and priorities of the Steering Committee. The staff will work with a variety of standing committees, task groups, organizations, and individuals to conduct the day to day business of the partnership. Examples include development of draft products such as species priorities, science priorities, and work plans for consideration and approval by the Steering Committee. Staff capacity will be added strategically over time to enhance the SALCC's functions to meet partner needs for additional products and services. Initial capacity is as follows:

**SALCC Coordinator:** The Coordinator serves as the executive director for the partnership, working directly with the Steering Committee Chair to provide communication to the steering committee and receive their direction. The Coordinator leads, facilitates, and communicates SALCC vision among the staff; directs overall operations of the SALCC; and ensures coordination among SALCC staff as per operations and direction from the Steering Committee.

**Science Coordinator:** The Science Coordinator works under the direction of the Coordinator to provide coordination and synthesis of SALCC science activities, products and needs. The Science Coordinator provides assistance to the Coordinator on specific technical and science-related duties and tracks and translates status and results of relevant science and research activities among the SALCC staff and users.

**Consulting Team:** The Consulting Team serves as a working team, under the leadership and coordination of the LCC Coordinator. The Consulting Team has the following responsibilities:

1. Develop foundational concepts, draft governance and operational documents
2. Provide specific recommendations on such tasks as the, Operational Plan, Annual Work Plan, and other formative and operative needs.
3. Provide feedback and guidance on high priority conservation decisions for conservation planning projects
4. Serve as a SALCC "think tank" to develop strategic concepts, analyze issues and other operative needs.
5. Promote and communicate long-term vision

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The membership of the Consulting Team is intended to be representative of a broad spectrum of perspectives within the partnership, yet limited to about eight members. It is not intended to provide one-to-one representation for partner organizations. Examples of the types of perspectives anticipated are: federal, state, non-profit, land management, species management, cultural resources, ecosystem services, regulatory, etc. Ideally this would be accomplished through individuals who can bring a combination of these perspectives. Any individual within the LCC can nominate a candidate for membership in the Consulting Team; however, final selection of Consulting Team membership will be conditional on approval by the Steering Committee and explicit approval from the respective parent entity.

### **III. Partnership Committee**

The Partnership Committee facilitates coordination and integration with existing landscape conservation partnerships (i.e. joint ventures, fish habitat partnerships, etc.) and provides advice and recommendations to the Steering Committee on conservation issues, strategies, and initiatives of mutual interest to the conservation community of the SALCC. The Partnership Committee will provide a forum for:

1. Formal collaboration on issues of mutual interest
2. Sharing resources and assets to meet mutual goals and objectives
3. Making recommendations on LCC priority resources and priority conservation decisions
4. Making recommendations on science integration, projects, strategies, and initiatives for the collective SALCC conservation community.
5. Promote, test, and suggest improvements of SALCC decision support tools and conservation plans.

Membership in the Partnership Committee will be open to representatives (generally Coordinators or designated staff) of any partnership that crosses both state and organizational boundaries within the SALCC (e.g., Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, Southeast Aquatic Resource Partnership, Southeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation). One member of the Partnership Committee will also serve on the Consulting Team. The committee will be chaired by the Coordinator of the SALCC. The Committee will provide a liaison to participate in Steering Committee meetings.

### **IV. Standing Committees**

Standing committees would be distinguished by the expected long-term nature of their chartered purpose. The SALCC Steering Committee can establish standing committees at any time and can identify initial committee chairs at their inception. Committee members can be appointed by the Steering Committee or may be volunteers approved by the committee and will reflect the collaborative character of the SALCC. Committees will be responsible for accomplishing their responsibilities as defined by the Steering Committee but can refine or expand their tasks in consultation with the Steering Committee. The Chair of each committee will be responsible for reporting the group's progress and results directly to the Steering Committee.

### **V. Task Groups**

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Task groups can be established by the SALCC staff to support needs of an ad-hoc nature and with short term (one year or less) duration. These groups would be convened to assist staff with items of a developmental nature that the Steering Committee has yet to communicate a specific need for. Membership on these groups would be at the request of the SALCC Coordinator or Science Coordinator but would be open to anyone.

## SALCC Partnership Structure



