

Summary of the Goals and Gaps as identified in the Strategic Plans/Action Plans/Work Plans of the many Conservation and Resource Management Agencies and Organizations Working across the Appalachian Region.

Prepared for the AppLCC ISC July 2012 Workshop^

Background: Summary tables below present a “quick snapshot” of the Primary Goals and Primary Gaps for the collective LCC Cooperative Member organizations, as well as other conservation partners in Appalachia. This assessment was conducted by Appalachian LCC staff through a review of 103 plans and other materials produced by partners (Interim Steering Committee (ISC) Cooperative Member organizations and partnerships) regarding their current conservation activities and plans (a full list of documents reviewed is available with hyperlinks).

GOAL Definition: *The priorities, mission, vision, or actions articulated by the partner in a published plan or document as those things most important to their success (17 Categories of Goals were identified).*

GAP Definition: *A lack of action, information, tools, products, coordination, relationships, or understanding that impedes the successful fulfillment of that partner’s Goals (13 Categories of Gaps were identified).*

Table1. Summary of ISC Members Organizations

TOP 3 Ranked GOALS = Primary Goals	TOP 3 Ranked GAPS = Primary Gaps
Improve Landscape Planning	1. Execute Landscape Planning
Manage Species/Populations	2. Conduct Population Assessments
Enhance Outdoor Recreation	3. Conduct Habitat Assessments
Primary Gap	Action Recommended
Gap 1. Execute Landscape Planning	Address Tribal fisheries resource issues (brook trout, sicklefin redhorse, etc.) [Note: Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture also prioritizes conservation planning for brook trout.]
	Conduct water supply forecasts as they impact future water quality
	Plan for conservation of rare species and communities. [Note: majority of at-risk species and habitats are aquatic]
Gap 2. Conduct Population Assessments	Develop population sustainability models (Population Viability Index and other models)
	Identify representative/surrogate species
Gap 3. Conduct Habitat Assessments	Evaluate threats of land use change, including conversion and fragmentation of habitats
	Conduct ecosystem resilience assessments

ISC Summary Notes: Landscape Planning was the most prevalent Goal and Gap ranking. The most urgent landscape planning needs were focused on Aquatic Habitats, but this will likely require upland watershed assessments as well. Climate change is one of the land use change threats; State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP) will reflect this analysis in future SWAP planning documents. The Primary Goal of **Enhance Outdoor Recreation** will be supported by a Landscape Planning effort; additionally fishing, boating, and water sports will benefit from a focus on aquatic species and habitats. The second Gap, **Conduct Population Assessments** will directly addresses Primary Goal 2 (Manage Species/Populations), and in many instances Goal 3 as well (**Enhance Outdoor Recreation**). Population modeling needs are greatest for aquatic species (the highest % at risk in Appalachia are aquatic), but are also needed for terrestrial species in order to fully support the Primary Gap of **Execute Landscape Planning**. The USFWS has adopted the surrogate (or representative) species approach as an efficient means to model both species guilds and their associated habitats.

Table2. Summary of Non-ISC Members Organizations & for All Canvassed

Non-ISC	
TOP 3 Ranked GOALS = Primary Goals	TOP 3 Ranked GAPS = Primary Gaps
Improve Landscape Planning	Execute Landscape Planning
Enhance Outdoor Recreation	Conduct Habitat Assessments
Manage Aquatic Habitats	Forge Professional Relationships
All Canvassed	
TOP 3 Ranked GOALS = Primary Goals	TOP 3 Ranked GAPS = Primary Gaps
Improve Landscape Planning	Execute Landscape Planning
Enhance Outdoor Recreation	Conduct Habitat Assessments
Manage Species/Populations	Conduct Population Assessments

Non-ISC and All Canvassed Summary Notes: Non-ISC Members confirmed that Energy should be an important focus of the AppLCC, and restoration of abandoned mine lands (AMLs) was mentioned repeatedly as an area that lacked broad landscape planning efforts to date. The importance of including karst and early successional habitats was noted by many Non-ISC Members. Regarding the Gap of **Forge Professional Relationships**, there were many partners who saw the need for Actions Recommended in the area of Data Sharing, data protocols, and better overall data management. Specific Non-ISC Members also suggested their need to increase synergy by establishing or improving their relationships with other conservation entities (e.g. Land Trusts), with transportation planning agencies, in regard to invasives control measures, and with the public regarding threats to certain faunal groups.

Overall, the Primary Goals and Primary Gaps were the same when the entire dataset of ISC and Non-ISC Members was analyzed. Outdoor Recreation was slightly more important to Non-ISC Members and therefore rose in rank from Goal 3 to Goal 2 in the grouped analyses. However, this is in part a function of the fact that LCC Staff had made a deliberate attempt to review a subset of Outdoor Recreation Plans to assess how their goals and gaps aligned with, complemented, or contrasted with ISC Membership. The importance of aquatic species and habitats was such a strong, consistent theme in plans and documents reviewed for Appalachian conservation the ISC leadership *may wish to consider/reflect this high ranking of aquatics* in the near-term Work Plan.

There were several Gaps prioritized by Sectors of Non-ISC Members **that differed** from the prioritization reflected of Priority Gap selection by ISC and other Non-ISC Members:

Sector: Federal

Gap: Improve Climate Change Forecasting

Sector: Tribal

Gap: Increase Human Dimensions/Values Understanding

Sector: NGOs

Gap: Forge Professional Relationship (e.g. with new or non-traditional partner)

Sector: States (*did not differ*)

Summary: This extensive review has yielded a tremendous wealth of information on the views of conservation agencies and partners in the Appalachian LCC region, and demonstrated quantitatively that the landscape planning function and broad landscape assessments of species/populations and habitats that the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives were designed to execute is indeed a critical need. The Appalachian LCC partnership also has the potential to serve an important role in human dimensions research and in enhancing relationships among partners, including the strongly demonstrated outdoor recreation interests.