
DEVELOPING PRIORITIES FOR THE GREAT NORTHERN LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE: STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLANS (SWAP) AS ONE PIECE OF INFORMATION

Richard S. Sojda*, U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, Bozeman, Montana

Leslie Allen, U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, Bozeman, Montana

Tara Chesley-Preston, Montana State University, Montana Institute on Ecosystems, Bozeman, MT

Yvette Converse, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Bozeman, MT

Sean Finn, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Boise, ID

Thomas Olliff, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Bozeman, MT

Greg Watson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Denver, CO

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) are public-private partnerships that focus on natural resource challenges which transcend political and jurisdictional boundaries and require a more holistic, collaborative, and adaptive approach to conservation that is firmly grounded in science and strives to ensure the sustainability of land, water, wildlife and cultural resources. The Great Northern LCC, covering Western Montana and parts of several other states and provinces, is nearing completion of a process that synthesizes conservation priorities among the 25 organizations represented on the Steering Committee and their partners. This Strategic Conservation Framework identifies priority species, ecosystems, and ecosystem processes across the landscape represented by the Great Northern LCC based on synthetic summarizations of five state-based Wildlife Action Plans, 40 other regional conservation planning documents, and focused interviews with key personnel across the region. Here we report on the process by which we analyzed data from the State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) of ID, MT, OR, WA, and WY and from Strategic Habitat Conservation as one piece of information for strategic planning. Thirty-five species of greatest conservation need (as defined in the SWAPs) were identified as having commonality across the five states.

The ranges of these species were then overlain and a map of areas with the greatest number of species of conservation need can be visualized across the Great Northern LCC.