

# **Arkansas MAV Conservation Delivery Network**

## **General Operating Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

These guidelines provide broad direction in the establishment of the Arkansas Mississippi Alluvial Valley Conservation Delivery Network (hereafter AR MAV CDN) regarding purpose, function, and intended operational outcomes. It is the desire of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture (LMVJV) Management Board that CDN's have significant latitude and discretion in accomplishing overarching goals and identified objectives. However, the general organizational and operational structure recommended in these guidelines by the JV Management Board, have been developed to foster more seamless, less cumbersome coordination across and between CDN's within the LMVJV area.

The following General Operating Guidelines represent both an integration of the recommended JV Management Board framework and additional operational structure developed by the AR MAV CDNs Governance Committee..

### **Purpose**

The AR MAV CDN is chartered by the LMVJV Management Board to serve as a forum - to coordinate on-the-ground delivery of their otherwise independent efforts. It is intended that the AR MAV CDN and other established CDN's will be guided by the vision that through cooperative coordination, leveraging, and targeting of their actions they may more effectively achieve, at ecoregional/landscape scales, the measurable biological outcomes sought by the LMVJV partnership. A primary targeted outcome of the CDN partnership will be the linking of on-the-ground delivery to the biological goals and objectives that emanate from the JV's biological planning and conservation design activities. The scope of coordination within the CDN may also include pursuit of funding by developing and implementing grants through programs such as the North American Wetland Conservation Act, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, State Wildlife Grants, and private foundations, as necessary to accomplish identified objectives as well as to assist in the more effective leveraging of otherwise standalone resources of CDN partner organizations.

### **Membership**

Initial CDN membership will be limited to LMVJV Management Board organizations, although it is expected that the CDN will reach out to and include other conservation entities that have a responsibility for enhancing, managing, and/or protecting natural communities for wildlife. The AR MAV CDN will also develop a process for identifying and inviting other such conservation entities.

Each CDN member organization (i.e., from JV Management Board Orgs) will designate one voting member to serve on the CDN's Steering Committee. LMVJV Board organizations will also direct and encourage key staff responsible for conservation delivery within the MAV to represent their agency/organization as Participating Members in the CDN

## **Leadership**

Chair: The AR MAV CDN will be initially chaired by a representative of the organization volunteering to lead the CDN's establishment and early development. Candidates for Chairmanship will have their organization's support to carry out duties as Chair, such that these duties are included in the spectrum of expected day-to day job tasks. The Chair will serve a maximum two (2) year term, with unlimited opportunity for re-election. Subsequent Chairs will be elected by majority vote of the CDN Steering Committee. Nominations may be taken prior to and/or during a pre-scheduled, full CDN membership meeting.

Responsibilities of the Chair include:

1. Presides at the Network meetings
  2. Develops agenda for the Network meetings with the assistance from the Vice Chair and Steering Committee Members
  3. Works with members to develop long range plans and coordinates pursuit of grant opportunities
  4. Represents the Network on the LMVJV's CDN Steering Committee (comprised of CDN Chairs from across the LMVJV) , which will function to support coordination and communication across CDNs within the LMVJV region
  5. Works directly with the LMVJV Partnership Coordinator to facilitate accomplishment of the common goals and objectives of the LMVJV and AR MAV CDN
  6. Is responsible for annual reporting to the JV Management Board
- Vice Chair: A vice chair will be selected by majority vote of the CDN Steering Committee. Nominations will be solicited from the full CDN Membership. The recommended duties of the Vice Chair may include:
1. Assists the Chair in all planning efforts and may participate as a voting member of the CDN Steering Committee as the Chair's proxy.
  2. Will coordinate, communicate with and manage reporting of active Working Groups as established by the Membership.
  3. Assumes all duties and responsibilities of the Chair in his/her absence
  4. Performs any tasks agreed to that may be assigned by the Chair

Chair and Vice Chair will both serve 2-year terms and may, following the established nomination process, be reappointed upon majority vote of the Steering Committee. However, only 1 position will be available for re-election in a given year, so as to provide continuity of leadership within the organization.

### **Committees or Working Groups**

Committees and/or working groups may be established to address needs on a case by case basis, as indicated by support of the CDN members and Steering Committee. It is envisioned that each committee or working group would be established for a limited period and will be led by Working Group Chairs. These Chairs will be assisted by the Vice Chair of the CDN Membership.

It is recommended that each committee or working group be given clear, written direction regarding their purpose, goals and objectives. This could be done for example in the form of a brief charter or guidance that specifies:

1. Purpose and role of the working group as an arm of the CDN
2. Operational guidance and objectives of the working group; also describes the approach that will be taken to achieve the goals
3. A set of milestones, together with time frames for their completion

### **Meetings**

CDNs should meet a minimum of once per year but will strive for two meetings annually and/or as deemed necessary by its members. Meetings will be scheduled and coordinated by the CDN Chair and/or Vice Chair via direct planning and coordination with the CDN Steering Committee, with assistance from the LMVJV Office, particularly the Partnership Coordinator, as needed. Minutes or meeting summary notes shall be developed for each Network meeting in order to maintain a record of the group's important discussions, decisions, and activities. Meeting notes will be distributed to all CDN members in a timely manner.

### **Reporting**

In order to foster effective communication and coordination between the JV Management Board and CDN's, each CDN will provide a summary report to the Board highlighting its priorities, activities and accomplishments annually. The reporting deadline will be March 30, prior to the Spring Management Board meeting. Annual reports should include at a minimum the following:

1. General information on meetings (e.g., current chair and vice-chair, dates, participating organizations, resulting priority action items)
2. Status of projects and funding of both active and planned activities (e.g., list of projects with purpose and participating partners; grants received; direct and in-kind funding from participating organizations; estimated project costs)
3. Accomplishments toward addressing the coordination priorities identified in the CDN Charter
4. Provide input on, or identify any specific planning needs the CDN would like to convey to the Management Board

## MEMBERSHIP, NOMINATING PROCEDURES AND OFFICER TERMS

### **Membership and Membership Criterion**

There are three (3) functional areas of participation in the Arkansas Mississippi Alluvial Valley Conservation Delivery Network (AR MAV CDN). The Steering Committee will provide oversight responsibilities for the AR MAV CDN and function as the formal voting body for appropriate AR MAV CDN needs. The Steering Committee will be the organizational body through which AR MAV CDN meetings are scheduled and facilitated, as well as the body through which pertinent items of CDN business and action are reviewed and coordinated. The remaining functional level of the AR MAV CDN is the Participating Membership.

The following criteria provide guidance regarding basic membership requirements and roles of the three areas of participation in the AR MAV CDN:

**Steering Committee:** Initial membership and participation on the AR MAV CDN Steering Committee has been restricted to appropriate LMVJV Board organizations. Additional membership and participation on the Steering Committee is reserved for agencies and organizations having a functional responsibility, a well-defined geographical mission and dedicated resources capable of implementing conservation delivery actions on both public and private lands within the AR MAV. The leadership of each agency and organization meeting these basic requirements and fulfilling the required nomination and approval procedure detailed in this document will designate one of their employees to serve on the Steering Committee and represent the agency or organization in all official Steering Committee business and functions. As the singular voting body of the AR MAV CDN, the agencies and organizations represented on the Steering Committee must commit to providing a vested leadership role in the Network's decision-making processes and implementation of conservation delivery actions. The Steering Committee will be restricted to less than or equal to twelve ( $\leq 12$ ) members to efficiently carry out necessary CDN administrative and conservation functions.

The Steering Committee will function under the leadership of the AR MAV CDN Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the CDN Vice-Chair will preside over Steering Committee activities. The Steering Committee Chair will be a non-voting member of the Steering Committee, except for the need to break a tie vote within the Committee. Each member agency/organization represented on the Steering Committee will have one vote. All Steering Committee decisions will be derived by a simple majority vote. No procedural waiver is required by the Steering Committee to function in any decision-making process with a majority forum present. All votes of the Steering Committee members in good standing, either in person or by official written proxy, will be counted to proceed to a decision.

Steering Committee members will be chosen by their respective organizations, and will serve a term, not to exceed 3 years before re-appointment. Unlimited opportunity will be available for each organization's Steering Committee appointment.

**Participating Membership:** Membership and participation on the AR MAV CDN is not exclusively reserved to agencies, organizations, entities or individuals directly associated with the LMVJV. Any additional agency or organization personnel participating as a member of the AR MAV CDN must have a functional responsibility or expertise in delivering conservation actions at the field level. The general membership body of the AR MAV CDN is non-voting. Participating members of the CDN should be vested in their participation, are encouraged to attend CDN meetings, and are vital for the CDN to functionally deliver projects to the ground.

### **Nomination Procedures for Membership**

The following procedures for nominating new agencies or organizations as members of the AR MAV CDN Steering Committee are outlined as follows:

**Steering Committee:** All nominations for additional agency/organization members of the AR MAV CDN Steering Committee can be submitted by any participating AR MAV CDN member, but must be through an existing voting member of the Steering Committee. Prior to considering the election of a new Steering Committee agency/organization, the current Steering Committee member sponsoring the nominated agency/organization will forward to each Steering Committee member, via electronic mail, a nomination form outlining the following information concerning the potential member: **Organization's name, mission statement, natural resources role, geographical scope, resource funding and delivery potential, as well as staffing availability for conservation actions.**

Upon receipt of the nomination form, the AR MAV CDN Steering Committee Chair, or his designee, will initiate a discussion between standing Steering Committee members. No formal meeting of the Steering Committee will be required to conduct these discussions. When all relevant discussions have been concluded, the Chair will call for a vote of the full Steering Committee. A simple majority vote will be required for the new membership to be accepted. If a new membership is accepted, then the newly accepted agency/organization will be asked to appoint one member of that agency/organization to serve on the Steering Committee. Upon conclusion of the election of a new member agency /organization designee to the AR MAV CDN Steering Committee, the Chair, or his designee, will inform the full CDN body of the election results. The election of new member agencies/organizations to the Steering Committee can be conducted at any time under the provisions outlined in this procedure.

**Participating Members:** Each agency/organization represented on the CDN can determine the appropriate personnel within their ranks that will serve to support conservation delivery and provide resource expertise. Participating members associated with each CDN agency/organization will as a general rule not remain static. The number of members from any organization represented on the CDN may be increased or decreased as appropriate to the number of key delivery staff within the AR MAV. Other non-JV agencies/organizations or individuals may be Participating Members as agreed upon by the Steering Committee.

In order to best serve conservation delivery within the AR MAV while remaining a functional network, good communication and coordination is an absolute requirement.

## **Committee Officer Terms:**

The standard term of service for the Chair of the Steering Committee will be two (2) years. The standard term of two (2) years for any individual Chair officer can be extended one time by a simple majority vote of the Steering Committee only in such cases where the vacancy of the office would be detrimental to the overall function of the CDN. There will be no provisions to prevent anyone from serving more than once in the Chair position of any Committee as long as they are not consecutive terms.

The standard term of service for the Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee will be two (2) years. The standard term of two (2) years for any individual Chair officer can be extended one time by a simple majority vote of the Steering Committee only in such cases where the vacancy of the office would be detrimental to the overall function of the CDN. There will be no provisions to prevent anyone from serving more than once in the Vice-Chair position of any Committee as long as they are not consecutive terms.

It will be quietly assumed the Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee will succeed the outgoing Chair of their respective Committees. However, all exchanges of offices will be confirmed by a vote of the Steering Committee members with a simple majority needed for confirmation.

## **Tri-state Conservation Coordination Committee (Tri-C)**

The Tri-C was initiated in May, 2013 to formulate a unique forum aimed at improving collaboration among the NRCS and conservation partners in the LMRV. The fundamental goal of the Tri-C partnership is to address coordination and support opportunities associated with Farm Bill Program delivery.

The Tri-C Steering Committee includes the NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs and Wetland Reserve Easement Coordinators from AR, LA and MS, the Louisiana NRCS Conservation Programs Specialist and the Mississippi NRCS LMRV Area Wildlife Biologist. Staff representing the broader conservation partnership on the steering committee, including a CDN representative (i.e., Arkansas MAV CDN and Louisiana/Mississippi Delta CDN) from each state, The Nature Conservancy's Lower Mississippi River Program Director, and the LMVJV's LMRV Partnership Coordinator.

The AR MAV CDN is therefore allotted one member representative on the Tri-C Steering Committee. The CDN representative will be nominated and voted on by the CDN Steering Committee. CDN Steering Committees will be responsible for seeking nominations from within their respective organizations during the nomination period.

The CDN member representative on the Tri-C will serve a two year term. The same representative may unlimited reappointment to the position should there be no new nominees offered and the existing presentative is willing to continue serving.