

Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture

Communications Plan

for a

A landscape supporting healthy native bird populations across the LMVJV



Lower Mississippi Valley

J O I N T V E N T U R E

www.lmvjv.org

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The members of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Management Board agree with the priorities, messages, and tasks contained within this Communications Plan, and are committed to its long-term implementation.

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Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Communications Plan

PURPOSE

Communication is central to the success of Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture (LMVJV) activities, taking on innumerable forms and delivered over a wide range of media. As a result, identifying communication needs most critical to achieving LMVJV goals, specifying important audiences, and crafting key messages is essential for optimizing our effectiveness and efficiency. The LMVJV has developed this Communications Plan to provide guidance and focus to communications activities undertaken in support of its goals and objectives. This document directly addresses the 2013 Operational Plan's Communication Goals of (1) *identifying critical, immediate communications needs and begin addressing them by 2015, and (2) developing a Communication, Education, and Outreach Plan by 2017.*

LMVJV MISSION

The Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture functions as the forum in which the private, state, federal conservation community develops a shared vision of bird conservation for the Lower Mississippi Valley region; cooperates in its implementation; and collaborates in its refinement.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES, TASKS, AND KEY MESSAGES

This document is focused on identifying the LMVJV's highest priority communications objectives, tasks, and key messages, organized around the Five-Year Operational Plan elements of

- Organizational Performance
- Biological Planning
- Conservation Design
- Delivery
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Research

We anticipate that an effective communications plan will be instrumental in allowing LMVJV Support Office staff and partners to reach identified audiences, accomplish priority tasks, and share key messages necessary to move our Operational Plan Goals to completion.

Organizational Performance

Priorities:

Communicate relevant news and LMVJV partner accomplishments, activities, and needs with Management Board members, partner organization staff, and key supporters

Priority Communication Needs:

- Regular, concise information exchange among LMVJV staff and Management Board members
- Relevant and timely LMVJV information, news, and documents easily accessible to anyone interested (including but not limited to partners and potential funders/supporters)
- Communication product templates available to staff and partners for use in engaging existing and potential supporters
- Encouraging partners to include joint venture talking points, benefits, and messages in their interactions (field tours, office visits, etc.) with Administration and Congressional staff, as appropriate

It is important to understand that “Joint Venture activities” not only are the actions of JV Support Office staff, JV Working Groups/Networks, and/or Management Board members, but also include actions and decisions of partners that are informed by the partnership’s planning, design, monitoring, and research activities, that ultimately support the accomplishment of their biological objectives.

Primary Audiences:

Management Board members, partner staff, key Administration staff, Congress

Key Messages:

- Coordination and cooperation among LMVJV partners enables more efficient and effective on-the-ground conservation through intelligent application of the adaptive management concept
- LMVJV partners are working hard to bring about positive landscape change through collaborative science and delivery
- The LMVJV is guided by state-of-the-art science

Tasks:

1. Maintain baseline connection with Management Board members through regular emails, phone contact, and e-news updates regarding time-sensitive announcements, opportunities, and relevant events/accomplishments.
2. Maintain connection with Management Board members through Spring & Fall Board meetings
3. Maintain and update a website with news items, project examples and information, and JV-developed documents, all of which are easily accessed and downloadable.
4. Provide fact sheets with current relevant information for use by partners, and maintain a cache of communication templates (e.g., State Fact Sheets & Subject Briefs) for quick-turnaround custom uses and objectives.

Milestones:

- Quarterly News & Updates
- Web content updated at least monthly
- Project completions, acquisitions, dedications, etc. communicated by partners to JV staff within two weeks of completion.

Biological Planning

Operational Plan Goal:

Complete basic population objective-setting across both Bird Conservation Regions and all bird guilds by 2018 through active participation by key science and delivery partners in Working Group activities

Priority Communication Need:

Engage science and delivery partners in the planning process by conveying the relevance of JV objective-setting to their priorities, interests and day jobs, and vice versa.

Primary Audiences:

Research scientists, biologists, and delivery practitioners with expertise in priority bird species ecology, habitat requirements, and management

Key Messages:

- Biological planning is a critical aspect of LMVJV responsibilities, providing the foundation for effective conservation design, delivery, and monitoring, and dependent upon research.
- Timely development and refinement of biological objectives is crucial for optimal conservation delivery, and effective dissemination of this information is essential for validation and assumption testing.

Tasks:

1. Provide concise yet complete contextual information regarding the purpose and responsibilities of the LMVJV to new and potential participants in planning activities
2. Provide effective, multi-functional, and user-friendly mechanisms for information exchange among Working Group members and interested partners (e.g., ftp site, virtual discussion forum, etc.).
3. Publish completed planning products quickly, and on easily-accessible media (e.g., .pdf and Word files via the LMVJV web site, GIS files via the LMVJV ftp site, and web enabled maps and databases via various servers such as USGS, GCPOLCC Conservation Planning Atlas, and Data Basin).

Milestones:

- Presentations/posters (≥ 2 annually) regarding LMVJV science presented by Support Office staff and/or partners at professional meetings
- Completed planning, design, research, or monitoring documents uploaded to the web site within 2 weeks of completion, accompanied by mass (e.g., email) notification to partners

Conservation Design

Overall Goal:

Complete habitat objectives and decision support tools across both Bird Conservation Regions and all bird guilds by 2018 through active participation by key science and delivery partners, and LMVJV staff in Working Group activities

Priority Communication Need:

Engage science and delivery partners in the design process by conveying the relevance of JV habitat objective-setting to their priorities, interests and day jobs, and vice versa.

Primary Audiences:

Research scientists, biologists, and delivery practitioners with expertise in priority bird species ecology, habitat requirements, and management

Key Messages:

- Conservation Design is the primary nexus between conservation science & habitat delivery.
- Conservation Design is an important aspect of LMVJV responsibilities, informing delivery and dependent upon research and monitoring for evaluation of assumptions.
- Timely development and refinement of habitat objectives and design products are crucial for optimal conservation delivery, and effective dissemination of this information is essential for verification and testing.

Tasks:

1. Provide concise yet complete contextual information regarding the purpose and responsibilities of the LMVJV to new and potential participants in conservation design activities
2. Provide effective, multi-functional, and user-friendly mechanisms for information exchange among Working Group members (e.g., ftp site, virtual discussion forum, etc.).
3. Publish completed design products quickly on easily-accessible media.

Milestones:

- Presentations/posters (≥ 2 annually) regarding LMVJV science presented by Support Office staff and/or partners at professional meetings
- Completed planning, design, research, or monitoring documents uploaded to the web site within 2 weeks of completion, accompanied by mass (e.g., email) notification to partners
- LMVJV Office science staff and/or technical working group leaders attend Conservation Delivery Network (CDN) meetings (full membership and/or working group) to provide science updates and solicit feedback from CDN members.

Habitat Delivery

Overall Goal:

The Partnership actively seeks and supports opportunities to foster existing and emerging opportunities for coordinated habitat delivery in support of LMVJV objectives, and establishes fully-functioning Conservation Delivery Networks throughout the JV, guided by LMVJV objectives, by 2016.

Priority Communication Needs:

- Regular, concise information exchange among CDN leadership and CDN members (e.g., Steering Committee, bi-annual membership, working group and sub-committee meetings)
- Relevant and timely LMVJV information, news, and documents easily accessible to delivery professionals

Primary Audiences:

On-the-ground delivery biologists, program biologists, agronomists, foresters, soil scientists, technicians, etc. and their supervisors

Key Messages:

- The JV partnership is an inclusive and forward thinking group of conservation professionals working together to advance habitat conservation in the LMVJV region
- The activities, experiences, and perspectives of on-the-ground delivery professionals are vital to the LMVJV's conservation mission
- Conservation Delivery Networks provide value-added opportunities for coordination, communication, and collaboration among conservation delivery professionals
- In addition to leveraging current resources, Conservation Delivery Networks have the capacity to attract new and non-traditional funding for habitat conservation.

Tasks:

1. Provide concise yet complete contextual information regarding the purpose and responsibilities of the LMVJV to current and potential participants in CDNs.
2. Provide relevant information regarding the science-driven priorities and effective partnership activities of the LMVJV to potential funders
3. Provide effective, multi-functional, and user-friendly mechanisms for information exchange among CDN members (e.g., ftp site, virtual discussion forum, etc.).
4. Publish and disseminate completed products quickly on easily-accessible media.

Milestones:

- Completed CDN products uploaded to the web site within 2 weeks of completion, accompanied by mass (e.g., email) notification to partners
- LMVJV Office staff attend all NAWCA Council Staff meetings where U.S. grant proposals will be considered

Monitoring & Evaluation

Overall Goal:

Develop iterative habitat and population monitoring & evaluation priorities by 2015, and deploy the highest monitoring and evaluation priorities by 2017.

Priority Communication Needs:

- Engage science and delivery partners in appropriate monitoring activities by communicating LMVJV monitoring priorities, and identifying connections between agency/organizational monitoring needs and those of the LMVJV partnership.
- Convey LMVJV accomplishments accurately and efficiently to USFWS, Congress, and potential funders
- Engage key partner staff in effective exchange of habitat accomplishment and assessment data

Primary Audiences:

Field biologists, area managers, agency and organization administrators responsible for budgets, monitoring science specialists

Key Messages:

- Strategic Habitat Conservation demands focused and effective monitoring of conservation outcomes.
- Effective monitoring, that informs improvements to biological planning and design, results in better, more effective conservation outcomes.
- Effective monitoring requires a network of coordinated and dedicated biologists to conduct appropriate monitoring activities at appropriate temporal and spatial scales
- Our ability to understand and communicate partnership accomplishments positively impacts agency, legislative, and donor support for our continued work.

Tasks:

1. Catalogue and summarize LMVJV monitoring and evaluation activities to date, and hi-light positive results of having such information
2. Provide compelling justification, by the end of 2014, to partner biologists, monitoring specialists, etc. for developing Monitoring & Evaluation Priorities
3. Develop an efficient and effective template for gathering and summarizing annual accomplishments of LMVJV partner organizations

Milestones:

- Monitoring & Evaluation “success stories” uploaded to the web site by mid-2015, and updated bi-annually
- Provide rationale and justification for developing LMVJV Monitoring & Evaluation Priorities to partner staff by mid 2015
- Protocol prospectus for assembling annual partner accomplishments provided to the Management Board for review by Fall 2015 business meeting; protocol in place by Fall 2016

Research

Overall Goal:

Identify and prioritize assumption-driven research needs by 2015, and increase the network of research scientists and partners with direct interest in addressing the LMVJV's highest priority research needs by 2016.

Priority Communication Needs:

- Improve the exchange of knowledge and dissemination of science-based information to advance bird conservation
- Convey the need for and benefits of increased science in the LMVJV to potential funding sources

Primary Audiences:

Research scientists and LMVJV partners with interest or potential interest in the LMVJV region, potential funding sources

Key Messages:

- Habitats of the MAV & WGCPO are extremely important to continental populations of numerous high priority bird species
- Sound science is integral to helping partners deliver conservation most efficiently and effectively
- Science carried out in the LMVJV is an excellent investment in resource conservation because of the coordination and cooperation among scientists, planners, and delivery staff

Tasks:

1. Promote and disseminate the completed **Science Priorities** document (in development) and Monitoring & Evaluation Priorities to research scientists and partners
2. Identify and develop opportunities for interaction and information exchange such as symposia, workshops, etc.
3. Assist research scientists with articulating the need for and benefits of addressing key science needs to funding entities

Milestones:

- Host LMVJV waterfowl biological planning & conservation design workshop in 2015, with organization & direction provided by the LMVJV Waterfowl Working Group
- LMVJV Support Office staff and technical working group leaders attend ≥ 2 professional technical meetings annually to network with partners
- LMVJV Science Priorities (≥ 2 annually) addressed in research proposals. For science priorities accomplished without a formal research proposal, a project description and measureable outcomes will be provided by LMVJV Support Office Staff.