

Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture

Progress Assessment of 2013 Operational Plan Goals & Priorities Year 2



Lower Mississippi Valley

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

www.lmvjv.org

October 2015

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Organizational Performance

Priority A

Increased engagement and involvement from a greater proportion of MB members

Positives

Solid interest and participation in JV activities by most Management Board members

Several Management Board members actively facilitated increased involvement by their organization's staff in LMVJV technical teams, etc.

Challenges

Turnover in Management Board members challenges us to share institutional knowledge and maintain a common context

Priority B

Improved communication of LMVJV activities

Positives

Regular email updates regarding timely issues sent to Board members and partner networks

Four *News & Updates* issues and eight *Subject Briefs* distributed to the partnership during the past two years

Continued web site improvements, additions, and information refreshed

Challenges

Objective for *News & Updates* is four annually (have fallen short)

Major partner accomplishments (e.g., acquisition, restoration) could be communicated more effectively to the broader partnership with timely provision of basic information to the LMVJV Office

Capacity necessary to more effectively capitalize on value-added communications and outreach opportunities is largely lacking

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Organizational Performance (cont'd)

Priority C

Cultivating relationships with key Congressional delegations and relaying accomplishments

Positives

Board Chair (Penny), Board members (Raasch & Seiss), and the Coordinator (McKnight) participated in Congressional & Administration visits associated with the March 2014 Assoc. of JV Management Boards meeting in Washington, D.C. Met with senior U.S.D.A. N.R.C.S staff, including the Chief, as well as staff from Senator Roger Wicker's (MS) office. Meeting with the Chief led to hosting of a national JV-NRCS Workshop in Mississippi (Sept '15).

Waterfowl Working Group Chair (Naylor) and Board Chair (Penny) provided LMVJV background and summary information to Congressional staff visiting Arkansas & Mississippi in 2014.

Board Chair met with Senator Thad Cochran's staff in D.C., in August 2015, on bird conservation issues, including support for JVs.

Challenges

Maintaining more regular contact with key staff and Members, especially in local offices, remains a challenge.

Priority D

Cultivating new sources of funding for partner activities

Positives

Continued working with Lafayette Ecological Services office to select projects in the WGCP of Louisiana for funding through the Bird Mitigation Account administered through that office

Successful designation of the Lower MS River Valley as an NRCS Critical Conservation Area in 2014, influencing a key funding element of RCPP

JV Staff provide input and support to Longleaf Implementation Teams (LIT) in Louisiana and Texas, in conjunction with NFWF Longleaf Stewardship Fund grant requests

Continued working with Restore the Earth Foundation to secure donor funds for reforestation in high priority locations in the MAV

Challenges

Restore the Earth efforts have not resulted in new funds

Identifying and cultivating additional new donors to LMVJV partner efforts, while avoiding conflict with ongoing development efforts by partner organizations

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Organizational Performance (cont'd)

Priority E

Sufficient JV Office budget to support staff, travel, and activities

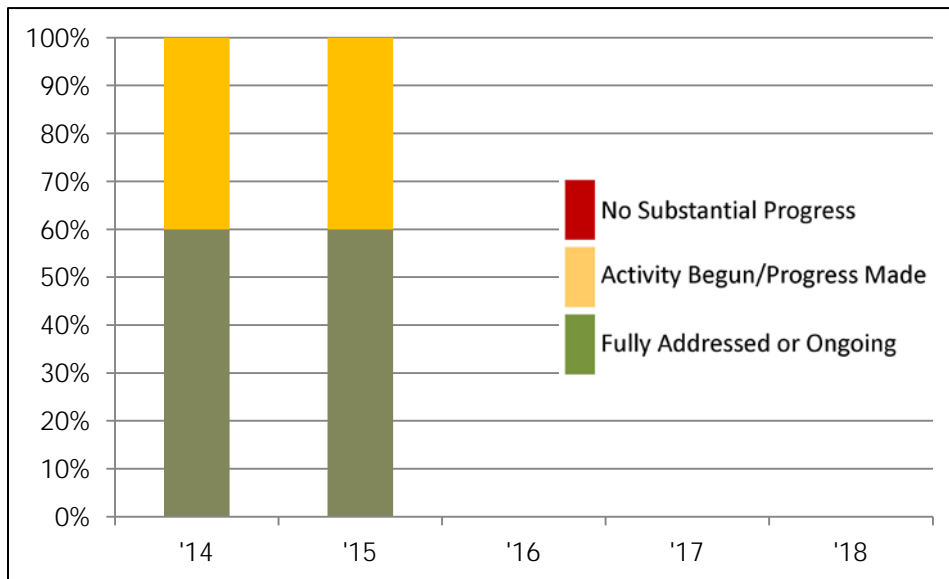
Positives

Maintained relatively flat Migratory Bird Joint Venture (1234) funding level from FY13 to FY15

Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee state wildlife agencies and Ducks Unlimited are contributing funds to the LMVJV Support Office to augment 1234 funds. Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., Missouri Dept. of Conservation, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service currently are drafting agreements to provide similar support.

Challenges

Maintaining current staff strength into FY17 will be difficult without additional funding streams.



LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Biological Planning

Goal 1: Landscape-oriented, biologically driven, partner vetted population objectives for priority species within all bird guilds in both BCRs by 2018

Highest Priority

Landbirds of the West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas

Landbird Working Group in the WGCPO is developing a draft Bottomland Hardwood/Riparian Bird Plan, scheduled for review by the Management Board in Spring 2016.

Highest Priority

Waterfowl of the West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas (update)

Waterfowl Working Group WGCPO members met in September and will meet in October 2015, developing revised population and habitat objectives, and new people objectives related to waterfowl conservation. A draft is scheduled to be ready for Management Board review by Fall 2016.

High

Waterbirds of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley & West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas

Conservation Delivery Network members were solicited for participation in Waterbird planning, and several have responded positively. No progress towards setting biological objectives beyond that.

High

Shorebirds of the West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas

Conservation Delivery Network members were solicited for participation in Shorebird planning, and several have responded positively. A Shorebird Ecology, Conservation, and Habitat Management Workshop was held in September 2015.

High

Landbirds of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley

Data from point count studies in the MAV are under analysis. These results, along with anticipated North American Landbird Conservation Plan information, will provide the necessary information to update our plans for landbirds in the MAV in 2016.

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Biological Planning (cont'd)

High

North American Waterfowl Management Plan Revision action items as appropriate

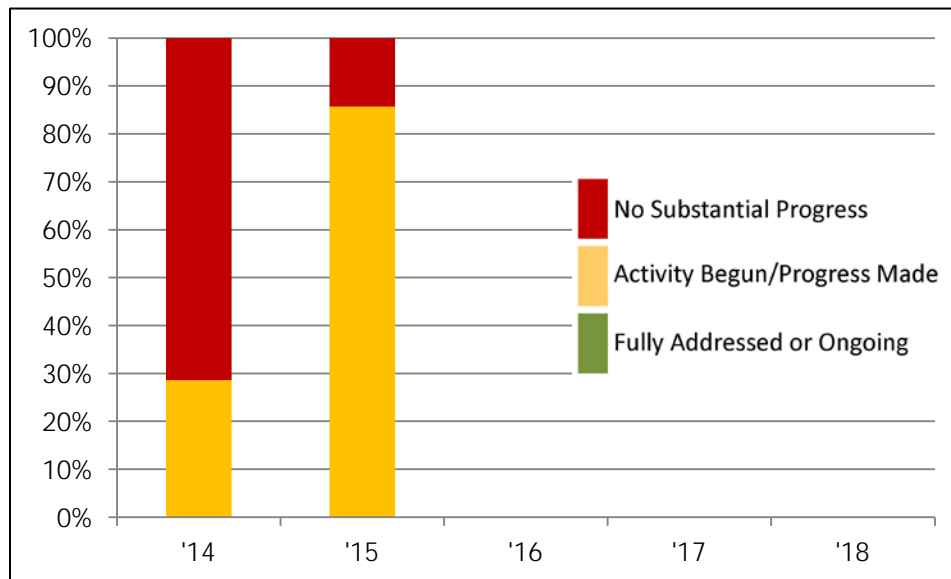
LMVJV Science Coordinator and Waterfowl Working Group are coordinating with Patuxent staff to obtain revised regional population objectives.

WGCP members of the Waterfowl Working Group have begun discussions regarding the most useful population objectives for the LMVJV.

Medium

Shorebirds of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley

Conservation Delivery Network members were solicited for participation in Shorebird planning, and several have responded positively. A Shorebird Ecology, Conservation, and Habitat Management Workshop was held in September 2015.



LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Conservation Design

Goal 2a: Habitat objectives for priority species within each bird guild in both BCRs by 2018

Goal 2b: Effective decision support tools to link habitat objectives for priority species to delivery action by 2018

Highest Priority

Landbirds of the West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas

Landbird Working Group in the WGCPO is developing a draft Bottomland Hardwood/Riparian Bird Plan, scheduled for review by the Management Board in Spring 2016. This includes a draft decision support model which identifies the highest priority areas for reforestation and protection.

Refinement of the Open Pine Decision Support Tool for management of habitat for priority birds is in progress.

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LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Conservation Design (cont'd)

High

Integration of priorities among priority species

No Progress

Medium

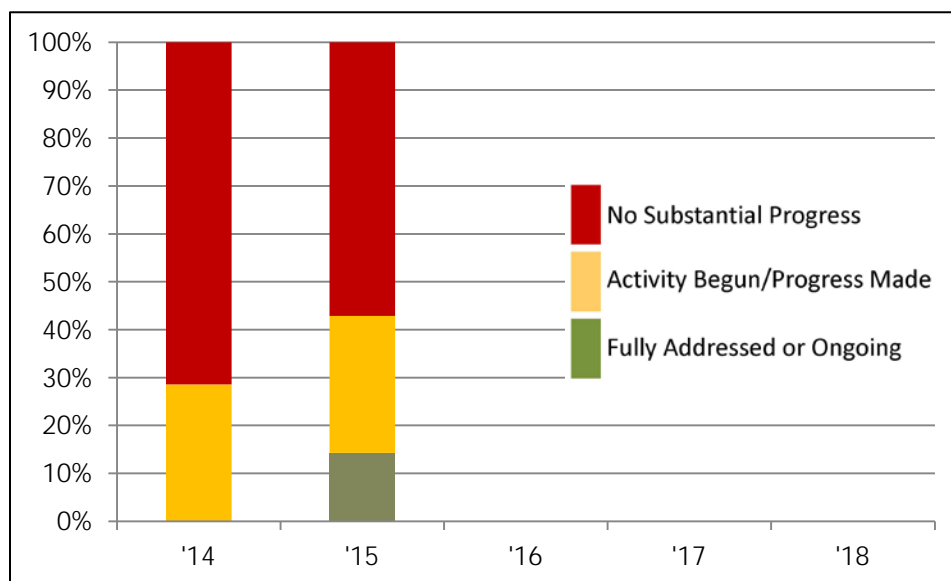
Landbirds of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley (update)

A revised Forest Breeding Bird Decision Support Tool has been submitted to the Management Board for approval. The revision is based on new forest habitat information and increased understanding of spatial requisites for forest core.

Medium

Northern bobwhites of both the Mississippi Alluvial Valley and West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas (update)

No Progress



LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Habitat Delivery

Goal 3a: The Partnership actively seeks and supports opportunities to foster existing and emerging opportunities for coordinated habitat delivery in support of LMVJV objectives

Goal 3b: Fully-functioning Conservation Delivery Networks throughout the JV, guided by LMVJV objectives by 2016

Highest Priority

Establish additional CDNs the West Gulf Coastal Plain /Ouachitas of Arkansas and Louisiana

The Arkansas/Louisiana WGCP CDN held its first full meeting in February 2015, and has established a Delivery Prioritization Working Group tasked with assembling appropriate information and making a recommendation to the CDN regarding delivery priorities.

Highest Priority

Continue support of existing CDNs & Cooperatives:

AR MAV CDN

LA-MS Delta CDN

NE TX CDN

LA Cons. Delivery Comm.

Longleaf Task Force

Positives

Much LMVJV Office staff and partner staff time has been invested in support of existing cooperatives and networks over the past two years.

Establishment of the **Tri-state Conservation Coordination Committee** (Tri-C) is providing an excellent mechanism for fostering the engagement of CDN based working groups in the MAV tri-state region in support of Farm Bill program related delivery. The Tri-C's role within the LMVJV was further formalized in the Spring of 2015 with the ratification of a Declaration of Partnership (signatories from NRCS AR, NRCS LA, NRCS MS, and LVMJV).

The AR MAV, LA-MS Delta, and NE TX CDNs continue to function and are consistently supported by LMVJV staff. JV staff also provide support for the TX and LA Longleaf Implementation Teams, and staff have served on the Longleaf Partnership Council. Most LMVJV staff support is focused on the local Longleaf Implementation Teams in LA and TX where on-the-ground activities are supported by NFWF Longleaf Stewardship Fund grants.

Much great detail is provided in the annual CDN reports to the Board.

Challenges

LA Conservation Delivery Committee – The three original leaders of this committee have changed roles within their organizations or retired; it is unlikely that the committee will continue to function.

Attendance and participation in CDN meetings remains strong, but consistently fostering CDN based actions and activities outside of the meetings remains a challenge.

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Habitat Delivery (cont'd)

High

Develop additional CDN in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley

Positives

Initial interest has been expressed in establishing CDNs in both the Atchafalaya Basin and the MAV of MO/KY/TN. JV staff have had cursory exchanges with potential lead organizations in both areas, but no concrete steps have been taken to initiate CDN establishment in either geography.

Challenges

Balancing staff capacity in meeting associated demands of current organized delivery partnerships (i.e., existing CDN's & Tri-C) with the investments necessary to working with key partners to establish a new CDN

High

Foster & develop unique partnering opportunities to support CDN growth

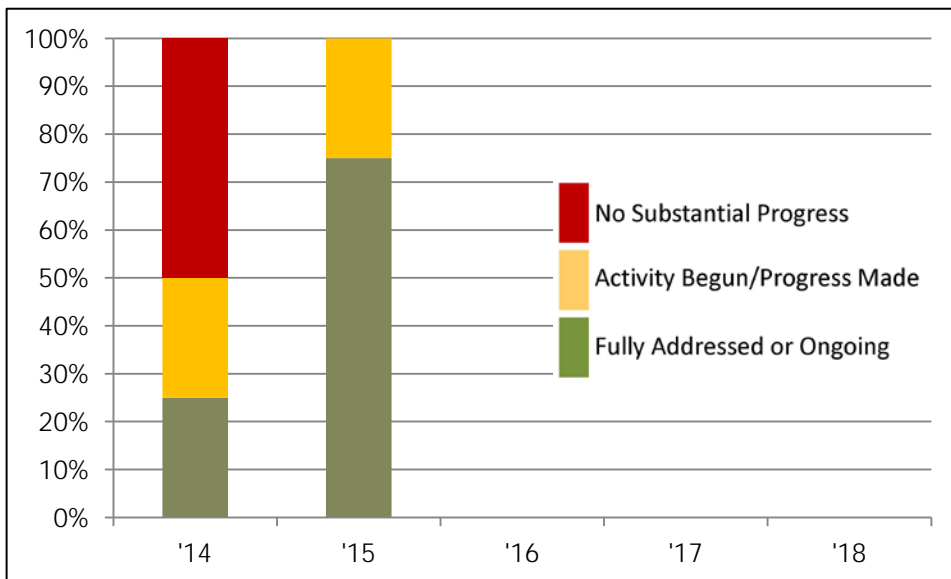
JV Staff have worked directly with Board member Seiss (as TNC's Lower MS River Program Coordinator) in leading the development and stewardship of the Tri-C. This NRCS-support focused committee identifies joint conservation priorities in MS, LA, and AR, the majority of which are or will be addressed through CDN based working groups. Specific recent examples of the natural collaboration inherent in the Tri-C/CDN relationship include

- JV Staff worked directly with Board member Seiss in facilitating development of WREP proposals in AR, LA, and MS.
- JV Staff/Seiss leading Tri-state CDN based Working Group to develop NRCS recommendations for forest management on WRP easements

WGCP Partnership Coordinator served 2 years (full term) as a member of the Longleaf Partnership Council & continues to explore developing opportunities with the Shortleaf Initiative.

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Habitat Delivery (cont'd)



LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Monitoring & Evaluation

Goal 4a: Develop iterative habitat and population monitoring & evaluation priorities by 2015

Goal 4b: Deploy highest monitoring and evaluation priorities by 2017

Priority

Updated Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

No progress directly, but development of our Science Priorities document and involvement in JV Science activities by a widening circle of scientists will help inform the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan.

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Research

Goal 5a: Identify and prioritize assumption-driven research needs by 2015

Goal 5b: Active engagement by key research professionals in assumption testing and other applicable research for each bird guild in both BCRs by 2016

Priority A

Revision of LMVJV Science Priorities document

Science Priorities document approved by the Management Board in October 2014.

Priority B

Proposed strategies to increase research funds available through and to LMVJV partners

No progress

Priority C

Increase the depth and breadth of research scientist participation in LMVJV-relevant research topics

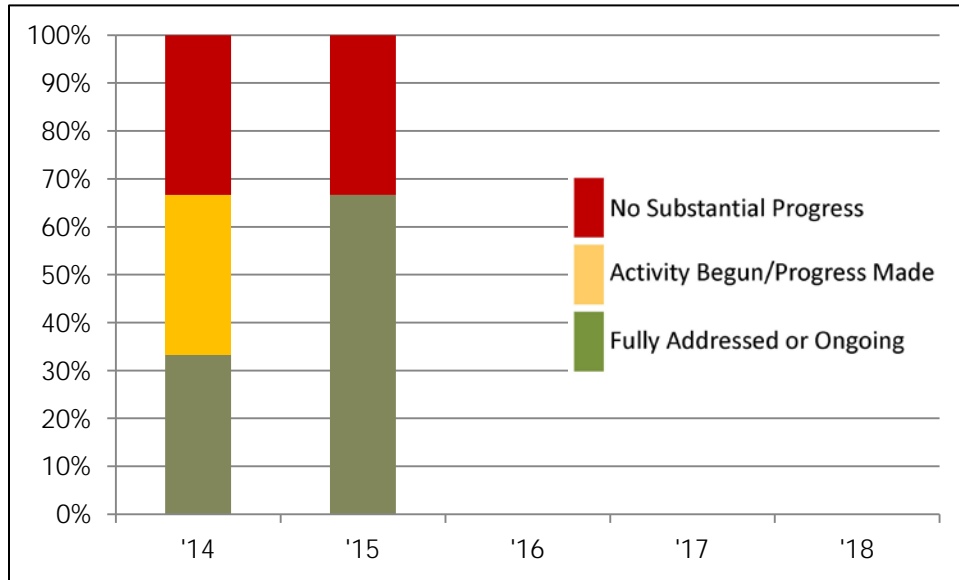
Outreach to universities and other organizations by LMVJV Staff has increased awareness and interest in LMVJV activities. As JV science priorities continue to progress, and working groups are formed, further outreach is anticipated.

Current participants and/or contacts include: Arkansas State University; Enviroscapes Ecological Consulting; Louisiana State University; Mississippi State University; University of Mississippi; University of Arkansas; University of Arkansas, Monticello; University of Missouri, Columbia; Delta Wind Birds

Planned outreach includes: Stephen F. Austin University; Texas State University

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Research (cont'd)



LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Communication, Education, and Outreach

Goal 3a: The Partnership actively seeks and supports opportunities to foster existing and emerging opportunities for coordinated habitat delivery in support of LMVJV objectives

Goal 3b: Fully-functioning Conservation Delivery Networks throughout the JV, guided by LMVJV objectives by 2016

Priority A

Scope basics and requirements of a CEO Plan

CEO Plan approved by the Management Board October 2014

Priority B

Update and maintain the lmvjv.org web site

Web site completely overhauled

More planning and design information readily available than prior to 2013 - especially links to planning, design, and management tools

News & Updates page refreshed with current information

Home Page has been refreshed monthly

Priority C

Provide quarterly updates to the Management Board and partners

Positives

News & Updates publication distributed via email and available on the web

Eight *Subject Briefs* distributed to the Board

Challenges

News & Updates publication not distributed quarterly

Capacity necessary to more effectively capitalize on value-added communications and outreach opportunities is largely lacking

Priority D

Hold field tours with key Congressional Staff

Positive

Partners conducted three Congressional Staff tours (1 in AR, 2 in MS), providing LMVJV information to participants in 2014.

Challenge

Maintaining more regular contact with key staff and Members, especially in local offices, remains a challenge.

LMVJV Operational Plan – Year 2 Progress

Communication, Education, and Outreach (cont'd)

