

# Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Communications Plan

*for a*

*A landscape supporting healthy native bird populations  
across the LMJVJ*



**Lower Mississippi Valley**

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

[www.lmvjv.org](http://www.lmvjv.org)

**October 2020**

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.

**Jeff Raasch, Chairman**

*Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

**Ron Seiss, Vice Chair**

*The Nature Conservancy*

**Russ Walsh**

*Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks*

**Jason Maxedon**

*Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency*

**Garrick Dugger**

*Arkansas Game and Fish Commission*

**Tom Doyle**

*U.S.G.S. - National Wetlands Research Center*

**Kristin Madden**

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Birds*

**Jeff Ford**

*Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation*

**Scott Manley**

*Ducks Unlimited*

**Michael Oetker**

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4*

**Merrie Morrison**

*American Bird Conservancy*

**Joel Porath**

*Missouri Department of Conservation*

**Chris Garland**

*Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources*

**Kenny Ribbeck**

*Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries*

**Mike Sullivan**

*U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service*

**Eddie Taylor**

*U.S. Forest Service, Region 8*

**Vacant**

*National Wild Turkey Federation*

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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 2018 Operational Plan's Communication Goal of *updating the Communication, Education, and Outreach Plan by 2023*.

## LMVJV MISSION

The Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture functions as the forum in which the private, state, and 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 of LMVJV activities, accomplishments, partner accomplishments, activities, and needs among Management Board members and their organizations' staffs, JV Support Office staff, key supporters, and others.

### ***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 raw material available to staff and partners for use in engaging people within their organizations as well as 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, which ultimately support the accomplishment of their biological objectives.

### ***Primary Audiences:***

Management Board members, partner staff, key DOI/USFWS administration staff, and 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 and success stories with current relevant information for use by partners
5. Solicit feedback from partners (primarily through the Management Board) regarding the most useful forms of communication raw material
6. Based on #5 feedback, maintain a cache of communication raw material (e.g., State Fact Sheets & Subject Briefs) for quick-turnaround custom uses and objectives, if warranted
7. Identify potential new partners for who could benefit from targeted communication
8. Encourage Management Board to bring new partner outreach needs to JV Office staff to develop and deploy

**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

**Metrics:**

- Newsletters: calculate average annual open and click rate; identify top stories; calculate growth in newsletter subscriptions
- Website analytics: visits and new visitors; traffic in response to e-news campaigns; document downloads
- Number of new case studies, accomplishment reports, etc. developed to communicate JV successes to partners and others

## Biological Planning & Conservation Design

**Operational Plan Goal:**

Complete landscape-oriented, biologically-driven, partner vetted, up-to-date population objectives and habitat objectives for priority species within all bird guilds in both BCRs by 2023. Share decision support tools to link and integrate habitat objectives for priority species in each bird guild with other relevant resource concerns by 2023.

**Priority Communication Need:**

Engage science and delivery partners in the planning and design processes by conveying the relevance of JV objective-setting to their priorities, interests and day jobs, and vice versa. Share conservation planning and design tools/recommendations with local and regional conservation organizations with similar interests, for example local land trusts.

**Primary Audiences:**

Research scientists, biologists, and delivery practitioners working to restore and manage important bird habitats of the LMVJV bird conservation regions. Conservation organizations working to conserve habitats or species for which the JV has developed plans and decision support tools.

**Key Messages:**

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

**Tasks:**

1. Refine existing “New Board Member” packet to be generally useful to all new partners
2. Identify new, more diverse audiences to broaden engagement and awareness of the JV’s planning and design processes
3. Provide effective, multi-functional, and user-friendly mechanisms for information exchange among CDN, Science Team, *ad hoc* Working Group members, and other interested partners (e.g., ftp site, virtual discussion forum, Google Docs, etc.)
4. Publish planning and design products, as appropriate, in the primary literature outlets (peer-reviewed scientific journals, books, etc.)
5. Publish completed planning and design 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, GCPOCC Conservation Planning Atlas, and Data Basin)
6. Actively distribute completed planning and design products to local and regional conservation organizations, including information on how to use the tools and where

to get more information. Target product outreach appropriate to organizations (such as MAV Forest Protection Model for land trusts).

**Milestones:**

- Publish at least one planning/design product-related piece in primary literature every two years
- 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.
- Targeted outreach to identified new audiences

**Metrics:**

- New organizations and/or individuals actively participating in/contributing to LMVJV science process and/or actively using products
- Number of LMVJV planning/design related articles published in primary literature over time

## Habitat Delivery

**Overall Goal:**

The Partnership actively seeks and fosters 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 2023. Fully supported long-term functionality and productivity of existing Conservation Delivery Networks (CDNs) and Tri-state Conservation Partnership (TCP).

**Priority Communication Needs:**

- Support and further develop existing CDNs and the TCP, as well as foster development of new CDNs and similar partner networks through regular, concise information exchange among CDN leadership and CDN members (e.g., Steering Committee, bi-annual membership, working group and sub-committee meetings) and other partners
- 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 valued and vital to the LMVJV's conservation mission
- Conservation Delivery Networks provide value-added opportunities for coordination, communication, collaboration, and perhaps most importantly, camaraderie and relationship-building, 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. Refine existing "New Board Member" packet to be generally useful to new and more diverse partners.
2. Improve connections between Board Members and Conservation Delivery Networks.
3. Periodically update Board Members on the opportunity to form new CDN's in relevant portions of JV region
4. Provide relevant information and success stories regarding the science-driven priorities and effective partnership activities of the LMVJV to potential funders and prospective delivery partners (e.g. Land Trusts)
5. Provide effective, multi-functional, and user-friendly mechanisms for information exchange among CDN members (e.g., ftp site, virtual discussion forum, etc.)
6. 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 maintain positive and active relationship with USFWS staff who administer NAWCA, and attend, when feasible and appropriate, NAWCA Council Staff meetings where U.S. grant proposals will be considered



## Monitoring & Evaluation

### **Overall Goal:**

Develop iterative habitat and population monitoring and evaluation priorities by 2021, and capitalize on opportunities for effects monitoring that support LMVJV priority habitat conservation actions.

### **Priority Communication Needs:**

- Engage science and delivery partners in contributing to updates and maintenance of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- 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
- Engage key partner staff in effective exchange of habitat accomplishment and assessment data in support of addressing monitoring and evaluation objectives

### **Primary Audiences:**

Field biologists, area managers, other partner staff responsible for monitoring

### **Key Messages:**

- Adaptive management 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 highlight positive results of having such information
2. Provide compelling justification to partner biologists, monitoring specialists, etc. for maintaining, revising, and carrying out Monitoring & Evaluation Priorities

### **Milestones:**

- Monitoring & Evaluation “success stories” uploaded to the web site and updated bi-annually

- Share results of a planned Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries pilot project to synthesize, analyze, and interpret numerical response of humans to management actions on appropriate state Wildlife Management Areas
- Report annually to the Management Board on progress towards meeting the partnership's Monitoring & Evaluation objectives and identify barriers to achieving priority tasks

**Metrics:**

- Number of projects, annually, with monitoring & evaluation components directly addressing LMVJV objectives and/or Science Priorities

## Research

***Overall Goal:***

Update and prioritize assumption-driven research needs by 2022, and continue to grow active engagement by key research professionals in assumption testing and other applicable research for each bird guild and human science in both BCRs.

***Priority Communication Needs:***

- Actively seek opportunities to increase research funds available through and to LMVJV partners
- Maintain and continue to build the depth and breadth of research scientist participation in LMVJV-relevant research topics
- Improve understanding of private landowner participation in conservation programs to facilitate better/more efficient delivery of LMVJV habitat priorities

***Primary Audiences:***

Research scientists and other LMVJV partners with interest or potential interest in the LMVJV region, and potential funders.

***Key Messages:***

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

**Tasks:**

1. Promote and disseminate updated **Science Priorities** document (in development) and **Monitoring & Evaluation Priorities** (in development) to research scientists and partners
2. Gain a better understanding of how JV partners (especially states) allocate and spend research dollars and work to align research projects (via issuing RFPs and other means)
3. Identify and develop opportunities for increased interaction and information exchange such as symposia, workshops, etc.
4. Assist research scientists with articulating the need for and benefits of addressing key LMVJV science needs to funding entities

**Milestones:**

- Host and/or actively participate in development and delivery of workshops and symposia focused on the status and needs of science related to LMVJV priorities
- LMVJV Support Office staff and technical working group leaders attend >2 professional technical meetings annually to network with partners
- LMVJV Science Priorities addressed in research proposals. For science priorities accomplished without a formal research proposal, a project description and measurable outcomes will be provided by LMVJV Support Office Staff
- Report annually to the Management Board on progress towards meeting the partnership's Research objectives and identify barriers to achieving priority tasks

**Metrics:**

- Number of new scientists who attend or participate in LMVJV workshops and projects
- Number of unique individuals who open the **Science Priorities** document when disseminated/number of web hits
- Number of projects initiated that address LMVJV Science Priorities