

**Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks  
Landscape Conservation Cooperative Interim Steering Committee  
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

**Mission**

The mission of the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative is to articulate the shared vision for sustainable natural and cultural resources in the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks geography in the face of a changing climate and other threats, foster a cooperative capacity within the conservation community to meet the challenges of achieving that vision, and facilitate the refinement of that vision through targeted evaluation over time.

**Introduction**

The Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks (GCPO) Landscape Conservation Cooperative (GCPO LCC or Cooperative) is a self-directed partnership of federal, state, and private organizations dedicated to the conservation of the natural and cultural resources within the GCPO LCC geography. To achieve its mission, the GCPO LCC will undertake the applied conservation science needed to inform its partners of Strategic Habitat Conservation priorities for the GCPO LCC geography. Further, the GCPO LCC will seek to engage other landscape conservation partnerships within the GCPO geography as full partners in the mutual development and implementation of GCPO LCC priorities.

The GCPO LCC will promote the application of adaptive conservation science by its partners within the various forums associated with the GCPO LCC and the other landscape conservation partnerships within the GCPO geography that share a similar mission – either in whole or in part – with the GCPO LCC.

**Membership**

The Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative is overseen and directed by an Interim Steering Committee (Committee). The Committee offers two membership options based on an organization's autonomous mission or legislative authority, level of commitment, and breadth of accepted responsibility in furthering the conservation goals of the Cooperative. Regardless of membership level, it is acknowledged that the commitment of Member agencies/organizations is voluntary and subservient to the organization's mission, authorities, and budgetary capabilities.

Executive Member: Executive Membership is open to any agency or organization that by virtue of mission or legislative authority is committed to sharing in the responsibility of coordinating and implementing state, national, and international

fish and wildlife adaptation strategies and conservation plans within the GCPO region in the interest of sustaining natural and cultural resources. Executive Member organizations are expected to commit resources (human and financial) to developing a shared vision of landscape sustainability for the GCPO and coordinating their otherwise independent actions in the cooperative pursuit and refinement of that vision.

Executive Member organizations will assign a representative to serve on the Steering Committee. Executive Board Members are expected to represent their agency or organization at an administrative and policy level on matters pertaining to allocating human and financial resources to GCPO activities that link science with conservation actions (i.e. biological planning, conservation design, outcome-based monitoring and inventory and assumption driven research). Additionally, Executive Board Members are expected to, within the limits of their organization's mission and legislative authority, work to align their organization's conservation delivery actions (e.g. acquisition, restoration, and management) such that they support the shared conservation vision for the GCPO.

New Executive Members will be considered by the Board upon receipt of a written request by the Chair from the agency or organization that documents its interest in participating and identifies the individual that would serve as its representative. Consensus of the Steering Committee is required for acceptance of membership.

A listing of the Interim Steering Committee Executive Member organizations and their representatives is included in Appendix I.

Associate Member: The GCPO Landscape Conservation Cooperative Steering Committee is open on an Associate basis to other agencies, organizations, or individuals whose mission may not lend itself to sharing fully in the broad spectrum of conservation actions inherent in implementing national and international fish and wildlife adaptation strategies and conservation plans but yet has a long-term and abiding interest in a specific facet of Landscape Conservation Cooperative implementation, e.g. carbon sequestration, sustainable forestry, wetland restoration, water quality enhancement, monitoring, and research, and is committed to furthering that aspect of LCC implementation through a joint commitment of energies and efforts.

Associate Members will be non-voting but will be invited to participate in all Steering Committee meetings and in Working Group meetings as appropriate to their area of interest/expertise. With the exception of non-voting status, only their level of interest and commitment will limit the participation of Associate Members in the development of conservation goals and objectives and the formulation and execution of conservation strategies.

Agencies, organizations, or individuals will be considered for Associate Membership upon receipt by the Chair of a letter documenting the organization's interest and

area of expertise in furthering a particular aspect of Landscape Conservation Cooperative implementation. Additionally, the Chair may solicit an organization's participation as an Associate Member, provided the Chair has approval of existing Committee members. On an annual basis, the Board will review the participation of Associate Members and may, with due notification and at its discretion, remove an agency, organization, or individual from Associate Membership status in the interest of maintaining an active and engaged Steering Committee.

### **Steering Committee Officers**

The GCPO LCC Steering Committee shall be comprised of a Chairperson and a Vice-chairperson. The Steering Committee will elect both officers to serve 3-year terms with no term limit. The Chairperson will organize and conduct the business meetings of the Steering Committee. The Vice-chairperson shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson. The Landscape Conservation Cooperative Coordinator will assist officers in the preparation and conduct of Steering Committee meetings. The Landscape Conservation Cooperative Coordinator will also record and act upon Steering Committee actions, serve as custodian of Steering Committee records, distribute information relating to LCC activities, and maintain and report on LCC accomplishments.

### **Meetings and Attendance**

Two regular meetings will be held annually (Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter) and shall be of sufficient length to ensure time for full discussion of relevant issues. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Steering Committee Chairperson.

Steering Committee Executive Members are expected to participate regularly and fully in advancing the goals and objectives of the GCPO Landscape Conservation Cooperative. Executive Members (or a recognized alternate) will be expected to attend two Steering Committee meetings a year; participate in conference calls or ad hoc working groups; and fulfill other such responsibilities in the course of a year as may be deemed appropriate by the Committee as a whole. If an Executive Member misses two consecutive meetings, a letter will be sent by the Chair to the organization inquiring as to their interest in remaining on the Steering Committee. In the event three consecutive meetings are missed, the Steering Committee member/organization will be placed in inactive status until such time as the organization recommits to participate.

Steering Committee meetings shall be open to Associate Members, staff, or other invitee of Steering Committee members, members of standing committees, and any other interested party.

## **Decision Making**

Each Executive Member organization carries one vote. The Steering Committee Officers will participate in all votes. In situations in which consensus is not achieved and the Steering Committee Chairperson determines that a decision is required, a motion will pass by a simple majority vote of Board members (see quorum). Items requiring a decision or vote must be provided to all Steering Committee members not less than ten (10) days prior to a Steering Committee meeting. Decisions/votes may also be conducted via teleconference or e-mail provided there has been 10-days prior notice.

## **Quorum**

There will be no official business completed by the Steering Committee via a meeting, teleconference or e-mail without the participation of ~75% or more Executive Board Members (including those represented by alternates or proxies). A quorum should seek to include >60% state board representatives (i.e., 7 of 12 state member agencies).

## **Councils, Working Groups, Teams:**

The GCPO LCC will establish Councils, Working Groups, Teams, and other entities to carry out specific tasks and initiatives, as directed by the Steering Committee. Each Council, Working Group, or Team will develop a charter that will guide the group's work. The charter will be approved by the Steering Committee. A listing of Councils, Working Groups, and Teams, and their charters are included in Appendix 2.

Appendix I.

**2011 Interim Steering Committee Executive Member Organizations and Representatives**

<b>Executive Member Organization</b>	<b>Member Representative</b>
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Gary Moody
American Bird Conservancy	David Pashley
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission	David Goad
Ducks Unlimited	Curtis Hopkins
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission	vacant
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Jim Herkert
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	Rocky Pritchert
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	Kenny Ribbeck
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks	Ron Seiss
Missouri Department of Conservation	Gene Gardner
Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative	Tom Dailey
Natural Resource Conservation Service, AR*	Mike Sullivan
Natural Resource Conservation Service, MS*	Homer Wilkes
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation	John Skeen
School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University	Barry Grand
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Jeff Raasch
The Conservation Fund	Ray Herndon
The Nature Conservancy	Scott Davis
TN Wildlife Resources Agency	Steve Patrick
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2*	Michelle Shaughnessy
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4*	Cynthia Dohner or Mark Musaus
US Forest Service, Region 8*	Mike Balboni
US Forest Service, Region 9*	Dave Whittekiend
US Geological Survey	Max Ethridge or Allison Shipp

\*Organizations with more than one Steering Committee member will have only one vote for that organization.

## Appendix II – Councils, Working Groups and Teams

### **GCPO LCC Advisory Council:**

In order to facilitate coordination and integration with existing landscape conservation partnerships (i.e. joint ventures, aquatic partnerships, etc.) a GCPO LCC Advisory Council is established to provide advice and recommendations to the Steering Committee on conservation issues, strategies, and initiatives of mutual interest to the conservation community of the GCPO LCC. The Council will provide a forum for: 1) formal collaboration on projects of mutual interest; 2) sharing resources and assets to meet mutual goals and objectives; 3) making recommendations on priority projects, strategies, and initiatives for the collective GCPO LCC conservation community. Membership of the GCPO LCC Advisory Council will include representatives (generally Coordinators or designated staff) of the following conservation partnerships: Black Bear Conservation Committee, Central Hardwoods Joint Venture, East Gulf Coastal Plains Joint Venture, Gulf Coast Joint Venture, Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture, Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee, and Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership. Additional partnerships (e.g., Southeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation) may be considered for membership based on interest of individual partnerships and approval by the Steering Committee. The Council will be chaired by the Coordinator of the GCPO LCC.

(Draft charter to be developed by the GCPO LCC Advisory Council)

### **Adaptive Science-Management Team:**

In order to facilitate the identification and prioritization of applied conservation science across the GCPO geography, an Adaptation Science Management Team is established to provide the necessary expertise and guidance on the conservation science enterprise for the GCPO LCC. This team will have representation from experts on specific resource issues and geographies. A cross-section of the conservation community that represents both research and management disciplines and the myriad of partners in the GCPO LCC will be brought together in this Team. Initial responsibilities of the Adaptation Science-Management Team include: 1) Development of a Conservation Adaptation Strategy (CAS) framework; 2) Development and implementation of a process for prioritizing science needs specific to the CAS; 3) Development of a process for incorporating new information into the LCC's science foundation; 4) identification of a process for prioritizing science capacity needs

(Draft charter to be developed by the Adaptive Science-Management Team)

### **State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Team:**

In order to facilitate effective integration of State Wildlife Action Plans into the GCPO LCC conservation enterprise, a SWAP Working Group is established to provide guidance and recommendations to the Steering Committee on priority conservation science needs for SWAP's as it relates to changing climate and other stressors that impact the GCPO geography. The SWAP Working Group will seek to: 1) integrate individual SWAP's into a regional network of priority species and landscapes that comprise the GCPO LCC geography; 2) develop priority conservation actions to sustain priority habitats and species at prescribed levels, and; 3) inform the conservation community of the GCPO LCC on priority actions to integrate SWAP's into the larger conservation enterprise of the GCPO LCC.

(Draft charter to be developed by the SWAP Working Group)