

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

**Mission**

The mission of the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative is to define a shared vision for sustainable natural and cultural resources in the face of a changing climate and other threats; design strategies to achieve that vision; and deliver results on the ground through leadership, partnerships, contributed resources, evaluation and refinement over time.

**Introduction**

The Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks 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 science needed to inform its partners of landscape conservation priorities for the GCPO LCC geography, using a variety of strategic conservation planning frameworks to meet the partnership's needs. 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 a Steering Committee. 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 geography in the interest of sustaining natural and cultural resources. 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.

Member organizations will assign a representative to serve on the Steering Committee. Steering Committee 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, Steering Committee 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 Members will be considered by the Steering Committee upon receipt of a written request to the Steering Committee 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 Steering Committee Member organizations and their representatives is included in Appendix I.

### **Steering Committee Officers**

The GCPO LCC Steering Committee shall elect a Chairperson and up to two Vice-chairpersons. The Steering Committee will elect officers to serve 3-year terms with no term limit. Elections will be held in alternating years to facilitate continuity in leadership positions for the LCC partnership.

The Chairperson will organize and conduct the business meetings of the Steering Committee. The Vice-chairperson(s) shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson. The LCC Coordinator will assist officers in the preparation and conduct of Steering Committee meetings. The LCC 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 Members are expected to participate regularly and fully in advancing the goals and objectives of the GCPO Landscape Conservation Cooperative. 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 Steering Committee as a whole. If a Member misses two consecutive meetings, a letter will be sent by the Chairperson 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 staff, or other invitee of Steering Committee members, members of standing committees, and any other interested party.

### **Decision Making**

Each Steering Committee 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.

On matter(s) where a Steering Committee Member organization has a real or potential conflict of interest, or policy that prohibits that Member organization from voting on a question before the Steering Committee, the Member shall recuse or abstain from voting on the matter at hand.

### **Quorum**

There will be no official business completed by the Steering Committee via a meeting, teleconference or e-mail without the participation of at least two thirds (67%) of Steering Committee 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).

### **Working Groups and Teams:**

The GCPO LCC will establish Working Groups, Teams, and other entities to carry out specific tasks and initiatives, as directed by the Steering Committee. Each 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 Working Groups and Teams, and their charters are included in Appendix 2.

Appendix I.

**2017 Steering Committee Member Organizations and Representatives**

<b>Member Organization</b>	<b>Member Representative</b>
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Amy Silvano
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission	Chris Colclasure
Ducks Unlimited	Craig LeSchack
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission	Brian Branciforte (Chair)
Gulf of Mexico Alliance	Laura Bowie
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	Ron Brooks
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	Kenny Ribbeck
Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee	Angie Rodgers
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks	Vacant
Mississippi State University	Wes Burger
Missouri Department of Conservation	Norman Murray
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative	Tom Dailey
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	David Kidwell
National Park Service	Giselle Mora-Bourgeois
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation	John Skeen
South Central Climate Science Center	Michael Langston
Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership	Jessica Graham
Southeast Climate Science Center	Jerry McMahon
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Corey Mason
The Nature Conservancy	Vacant
TN Wildlife Resources Agency	Bobby Wilson
US Army Corps of Engineers	Paul Wagner/Bari Greenfield
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2*	David Weaver
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3*	Cathy Nigg
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4*	Jeff Fleming (Vice-chair)
US Forest Service, Region 8*	Eddie Taylor
US Forest Service, Region 9*	Sherri Schwenke/Tony Crump
US Geological Survey	Scott Gain

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

## Appendix II – Working Groups and Teams

### **Adaptation Science-Management Team:**

#### **Purpose:**

The GCPO LCC Adaptation Science Management Team (hereafter, “ASMT” or “Team”) will serve as the technical forum for coordination and communication among LCC partners in matters pertaining to the achievement of the GCPO LCC’s mission. The Team serves at the nexus of science and management and provides the Steering Committee and Partnership Advisory Council insights into the proper balance of scientific rigor and operational reality in achieving its priorities – particularly development and implementation of a Conservation Adaptation Strategy in support of sustaining trust resources in light of current and anticipated stressors within the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks geography. The Team also serves as core capacity for coordination of achieving technical tasks on behalf of the GCPO LCC Partnership.

#### **The Team is empowered to:**

- 1) Identify the technical challenges inherent in achieving the broad mission and specific priorities identified by the GCPO LCC Partnership; outline solutions for overcoming these challenges and provide recommendations to Steering Committee and Partnership Advisory Council on preferred approaches, tasks, timing, and projects.
- 2) Provide a framework for a regional Conservation Adaptation Strategy, oversee its development, and periodically review and refine it to maintain its relevance.
- 3) Develop and implement a process for soliciting science needs to inform a Conservation Adaptation Strategy.
- 4) Develop and implement a process for prioritizing science needs that facilitates the development and refinement of a Conservation Adaptation Strategy by addressing key uncertainties.
- 5) Identify additional science capacities needed within the GCPO LCC Partnership to guide development, implementation, and refinement of a Conservation Adaptation Strategy.
- 6) Organize ad hoc or standing sub-committees and teams deemed necessary in accomplishing its purpose and/or meeting any additional charges from Steering Committee.

#### **Membership:**

Membership on the Team will seek to reflect a cross-section of the geographic, resource, functional, and organizational perspectives present within the GCPO LCC conservation community (Appendix 1). Effective group size precludes each partner from being represented for each functional role specific to each resource within each geography. Therefore, representatives that reflect multiple perspectives will be relied on to ensure all partners are franchised on the ASMT. Additional standing members that reflect the necessary skill sets and technical expertise required to effectively accomplish the Team’s mission will be solicited through an open nomination process (self-nomination acceptable).

Membership is open to all individuals associated with an organization or agency currently serving as an Executive Member or Cooperating Member on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee must approve all Team members. The Standing Members of the Team so appointed are empowered and encouraged to enlist other such members as deemed appropriate to the creation and operation of ad hoc or standing subcommittees.

**Officers:**

The Team will select a Chair from among its members. The Chair will work with the LCC Science Coordinator to plan and conduct meetings, prepare and disseminate notes and other documents from and to the Team, and report recommendations to the Steering Committee.

**Process:**

The ASMT will operate under the broad guidance and direction of the Steering Committee and with operational oversight provided on behalf of the Steering Committee from the LCC Coordinator and Science Coordinator. Standing members retain voting privileges; simple majority rules. The ASMT should operate with an annual work plan that identifies priorities consistent with the biological direction provided by the development and implementation of a Conservation Action Plan, the purpose of the GCPO LCC, and the mission, authorities, and responsibilities of the GCPO LCC’s member agencies and organizations.

**Reporting Responsibilities And Relationships:**

The Team will submit an annual report through the GCPO LCC Coordinator and Science Coordinator to the GCPO LCC Steering Committee at least 10 days prior to the Steering Committee’s Spring/Summer meeting. Report topics should include progress and activities associated with the current year’s work plan and priorities, issues, findings or recommendations, and proposed work plan for the ensuing 12 months.

**Appendix 1:** A snapshot (and subset) of the geographic, resource, functional, and organizational perspectives within the conservation community of the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks.

**Geographic perspectives:**

Interior Highlands/Missouri/Ohio/Upper Mississippi  
West Gulf Coastal Plain/Arkansas-Red-White/Texas-Gulf  
East Gulf Coastal Plain/South Atlantic-Gulf/Tennessee  
Gulf Coast/South Atlantic-Gulf

Mississippi Alluvial Valley/Lower Mississippi

**Resource perspectives:**

Birds  
Fish  
Amphibians  
Reptiles  
Mammals  
Insects  
Crustaceans  
Mollusks  
Plants  
Cultural resources

**Functional perspectives:**

Manager  
Scientist

**Organizational perspectives:**

State  
Federal  
Non-profit  
Partnership

**Geomatics Working Group**

(Draft charter to be developed)

**GCPO/Gulf Coast Prairie Human Dimensions Working Group**

(Draft charter to be developed)