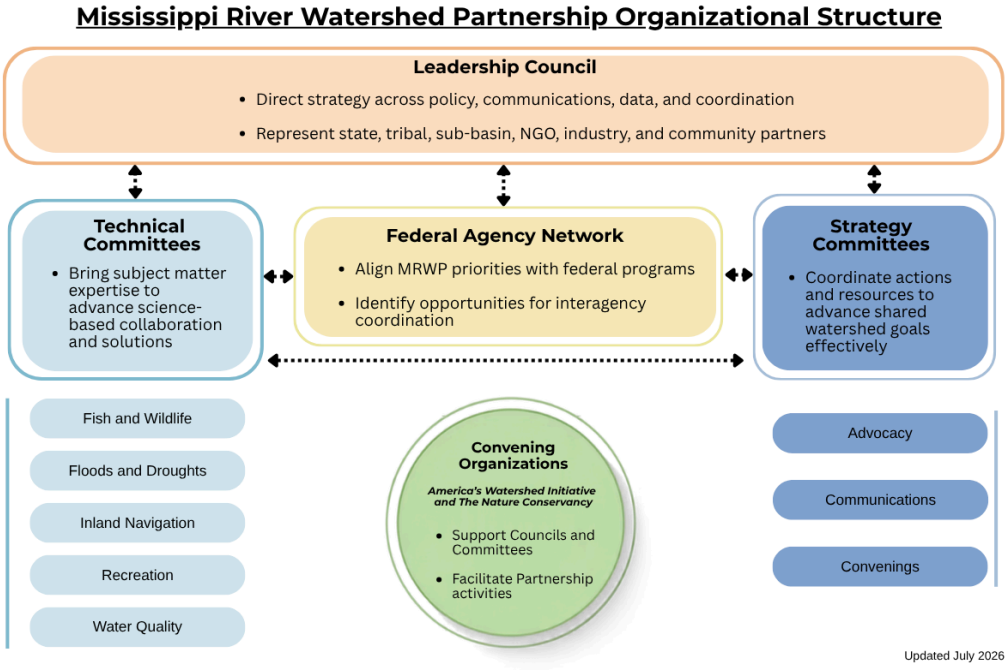
# Mississippi River Watershed Partnership Committees Operating Document

The Mississippi River Watershed Partnership has eight committees that move forward the work of the partnership. Five of these committees are technical committees that focus on the Partnership's five focus areas (fish & wildlife, floods & droughts, inland navigation, recreation, and water quality) and three of the committees are strategy committees that focus on the Partnership's key strategies (policy education & advocacy, communications, and convenings).

The Partnership's committees provide a structure for partners to actively contribute to and advance the Partnership's goals and actions. Technical committees focus on the substance of specific actions and issues, while strategy committees support the broader approaches needed to move the Partnership's work forward. Together, they bring partner expertise, identify opportunities for coordination, develop recommendations and resources, and help translate the Partnership's priorities into action.

This document is intended to outline the purpose, structure, roles, and operating procedures for the Mississippi River Watershed Partnership's technical and strategy committees. It also provides a consistent framework for committee participation and operation while allowing individual committees the flexibility to adapt their approach to best support their work.

The Convening Organizations will provide logistical and operational support to the committees, including coordinating and scheduling annual in-person meetings, providing virtual meeting links and technical support, and having a staff representative available at each meeting to answer questions and assist with committee operations. If the Chair or Vice Chair is absent, the Convening Organizations' representative may provide support to help ensure the meeting can proceed. The Chair and Vice Chair are responsible for leading the committee's work, facilitating discussions, and guiding progress toward committee priorities and deliverables.



## Technical Committees

Number of members: 11 maximum per committee
Membership:

- For initial selection, prospective committee members will fill out an application and send it into the convening partners. They will choose members that can represent the wide variety of constituents (regionally and across organization type) in the Watershed.
- After initial selection, new members will be voted on by the current committee.
    - Prospective members will send in an application to the committee.
    - All applications will be reviewed by the committee.
    - Any questions for applicants can be sent to the committee chair who will aggregate questions and bring prospective members responses to the committee meeting.
    - Then the committee will take a vote during a meeting.
- Committee members will serve an initial two-year term and may be reappointed for up to two additional two-year terms.
- Each technical committee must have representation from each of the 5 major subbasins.
- Members will have their name publicly listed on the MRWP web page for transparency.

Member roles:

- Chair
    - Responsibilities:
        - Facilitate committee meetings, ensuring agendas are followed and discussions are productive
        - Coordinate with convening partners to set meeting schedules, agendas, and priorities
        - Ensure committee work aligns with MRWP goals and strategic guidance
        - Support consensus-building and conflict resolution within the committee
        - Encourage active participation
        - The Chair will vote only when necessary to break a tie
    - Expectations:
        - Attend all committee meetings; notify convening partners if unable to attend.
        - Ensure follow-up on tasks and deliverables assigned to the committee
    - Term Length:
        - 2 years per term, renewable once to allow continuity but also rotation of leadership
- Vice Chair
    - Responsibilities:
        - Take and distribute meeting notes or minutes in a timely manner
        - Track committee membership, attendance, and participation

        - Ensure action items and recommendations are clearly documented and communicated
        - Assist the Chair with agenda preparation and logistics as needed
        - Ensure all committee materials are accessible to members and archived appropriately
        - Send meeting minutes out to committee members and interested parties
        - If the chair is unable to attend a meeting the vice chair will lead the meeting and the convening partners will take notes during the meeting
    - Expectations:
        - Attend all committee meetings or communicate with the chair and convening partners to ensure coverage of responsibilities
        - Accurately summarize discussions, decisions, and action items
        - Support communication with Leadership Council, other committees, and the partnership as appropriate
    - Term Length:
        - 2 years per term, renewable once to allow continuity but also rotation of leadership

Member Responsibilities:

- Serve as a knowledge hub to inform both technical work and broader partnership decisions.
- Advance partnership actions by contributing to roadmaps, taking next steps, and ensuring work aligns with real needs.
- Facilitate coordination of work happening in different geographies and scales.
- Identify data gaps and research needs.
- Share updates, insights, and new developments from your field of expertise.
    - Provide a report out of information the partnership should be aware of within this technical area.

Member Expectations:

- Attend as many committee meetings as possible
    - If your committee meeting attendance is below 60% in a year or there is consistent failure to contribute to conversations and tasks you may be asked to step down from the committee to allow someone with the capacity to join in your place.
- Provide input based on your experience and role(s) outside of the partnership
- Serve as the voting members of the committee. Only appointed committee members may vote on committee decisions.
- Review pre-meeting materials ahead of the meeting and come prepared with any questions or concerns.

Operations:

- The Chair will coordinate meeting times with the committee and lead meetings.
- The Convening Partners will host meetings which will include sending meeting invites with zoom link and managing any technical difficulties.
- The Vice Chair will draft meeting agendas and circulate materials at least one week in advance.
- The Vice Chair will record notes and share meeting minutes with the committee and interested parties.

Meetings:

- The technical committees will meet once every other month for 1 hour.
    - If this cadence is not appropriate for the work that needs to be done, the committee can vote on a new cadence.
        - The committee will meet no less than 4 times per year.
- Meetings will be primarily virtual.
- The committee may choose to open certain meetings for non-members to join and provide input as requested.

## Strategy Committees

Number of members: 11 maximum per committee

Membership:

- For initial selection, prospective committee members will fill out an application and send it into the convening partners. They will choose members that can represent the wide variety of constituents (regionally and across organization type) in the Watershed.
- After initial selection, new members will be voted on by the current committee.
    - Prospective members will send in an application to the committee.
    - All applications will be reviewed by the committee.
    - Any questions for applicants can be sent to the committee chair who will aggregate questions and bring prospective members responses to the committee meeting.
    - Then the committee will take a vote during a meeting.
- Committee members will serve an initial two-year term and may be reappointed for up to two additional two-year terms.
- Each committee must have representation from each of the 5 major subbasins.
- Members will have their name publicly listed on the MRWP web page for transparency.

Member Responsibilities:

- Policy education and advocacy
    - Identify opportunities for MRWP to engage in policy discussions, briefings, or comment processes.
    - Provide guidance on how partnership work aligns with or informs policy.
    - Support the development of shared policy positions or recommendations (if agreed upon by partners).
    - Develop educational content for stakeholders, communities, and decision-makers.
    - Facilitate connections between policymakers and MRWP science/partnership expertise.
    - Ensure policy work remains nonpartisan and grounded in the partnership's shared priorities.
- Communications
    - Facilitate information-sharing across the basin.
    - Coordinate storytelling and amplification of partner work across the watershed.
    - Develop and guide internal and external communication strategies including what platforms should be used for maximum reach
    - Ensure consistent messaging about MRWP's mission, priorities, and successes.
    - Support MRWP website, newsletters, social media, and other outreach tools through offering or providing input on ideas to ensure these avenues provide meaningful communication
    - Provide communications support for MRWP events, initiatives, and announcements by providing input on materials prior to them being sent out.
    - Monitor and evaluate communication effectiveness (audience engagement, reach, clarity) by analyzing engagement through tools like Linkedin and Constant Contact, which the convening partners can provide analytics from
- Convenings and Coordination
    - Support in planning and coordinating partnership-wide meetings, workshops, and learning exchanges.
    - Identify goals and outcomes for convenings (relationship building, decision making, shared learning).
    - Help AWI develop agendas, formats, and facilitation strategies that promote inclusive participation.
    - Ensure diverse representation of geographies, organizations, and perspectives are aware of convenings and receive invitations.
    - Capture and share outcomes, key learnings, and next steps from convenings.
    - Support ongoing engagement between convenings (e.g., virtual check-ins, working groups).

Member roles:

- Chair
  - Responsibilities:
    - Facilitate committee meetings, ensuring agendas are followed and discussions are productive
    - Coordinate with convening partners to set meeting schedules, agendas, and priorities
    - Ensure committee work aligns with MRWP goals and strategic guidance
    - Support consensus-building and conflict resolution within the committee
    - Encourage active participation
  - Expectations:
    - Attend all committee meetings; notify convening partners if unable to attend.
    - Ensure follow-up on tasks and deliverables assigned to the committee
  - Term Length:
    - 2 years per term, renewable once to allow continuity but also rotation of leadership
- Vice Chair
  - Responsibilities:
    - Take and distribute meeting notes or minutes in a timely manner
    - Track committee membership, attendance, and participation
    - Ensure action items and recommendations are clearly documented and communicated
    - Assist the Chair with agenda preparation and logistics as needed
    - Ensure all committee materials are accessible to members and archived appropriately
  - Expectations:
    - Attend all committee meetings or ensure coverage by a designated alternate
    - Accurately summarize discussions, decisions, and action items
    - Support communication with Leadership Council, other committees, and the partnership as appropriate
  - Term Length:
    - 2 years per term, renewable once to allow continuity but also rotation of leadership

Member Expectations:

- Attend as many committee meetings as possible
  - If your committee meeting attendance is below 60% in a year or there is consistent failure to contribute to conversations and tasks you may be asked to step down from the committee to allow someone with the capacity to join in your place.

- Provide input based on your experience and role(s) outside of the partnership
- Serve as the voting members of the committee. Only appointed committee members may vote on committee decisions.
- Review pre-meeting materials ahead of the meeting and come prepared with any questions or concerns.

Operations:

- The Chair will coordinate meeting times with the committee and lead meetings.
- The Convening Partners will host meetings which will include sending meeting invites with zoom link and managing any technical difficulties.
- The Vice Chair will draft meeting agendas and circulate materials at least one week in advance.
- The Vice Chair will record notes and share meeting minutes with the committee and interested parties.

Meetings:

- The strategy committees will meet once every other month for 1 hour.
    - If this cadence is not appropriate for the work that needs to be done, the committee can vote on a new cadence.
        - The committee will meet no less than 4 times per year.
- The strategy committees will have two joint meetings a year in which all three strategy committees will meet together
- Meetings will be primarily virtual.
- Non-members may join the meetings to listen in and provide written comments and questions through email. If time allows, non-members may share comments during the call.