

Ecosystem Restoration and Protection (R&P) Working Group Charter

Approved by the

Ohio River Basin Alliance Steering Committee

on

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1. R&P Working Group Mission Statement

Link to Alliance Mission and Vision: Population growth is driving the continued development of green areas in our watersheds while urban exodus and economic downturn has freed up much of urban areas for reuse. Nearly half of the freshwater fishes and over a third of all mussel species in the U.S. are within the Ohio River Basin. This treasure of biodiversity is at increasing risk from invasive species which cause losses of almost \$120 billion annually.

The goal of this R&P Working Group is to: Conserve, enhance and restore ecosystems within the Ohio River Basin to support natural habitats and the fish and wildlife resources that depend upon them.

2. Objectives and Deliverables

The objectives outlined below are not meant to exclude potential habitat improvement actions for individual project sites with unique threats. ORBA members are encouraged to partner to address restoration and protection throughout the basin. The objective of the R&P Working Group is a guiding framework of high leverage strategies that will be strongly considered by ORBA for inclusion in an Ohio River Basin (ORB) Restoration Strategy.

The main objectives of the R&P Working Group are to:

Objective 1: Identify and propose ORB strategic elements to protect intact and healthy waters and corresponding terrestrial habitats.

Objective 2: Prioritize stream systems within the ORB for restoration of natural variability in river and stream flows and water surface elevations in floodplain features and propose regional strategic elements to achieve objective.

Objective 3: Prioritize and propose regional strategic elements to reconnect fragmented river, stream, reservoir, coastal, and off-river habitats to allow access to historic spawning, nursery and rearing grounds.

Objective 4: Propose an ORB strategy to reduce the potential for invasive species impact through prevention and control measures at the basin-level and within priority systems.

Objective 5: Provide input to the strategy development of the Water Quality, Availability, and Management Working Group related to nutrient, sediment, and other pollution issues.

Deliverables of the R&P Working Group include:

- Quarterly teleconferences or face-to-face meetings
- Minutes of teleconferences and face-to-face meetings

- Active leadership team comprised of strategic regional organizations
- Contact list of organizations for which regional ecosystem restoration and protection is strategic
- Working Group breakout panels and discussions at ORBA Summits (planned in collaboration with the Steering Committee)
- Summary reports from Summit panels
- Led by the existing collaborations, define the high-priority challenge and strategic elements being proposed for inclusion in the ORB Restoration Strategy; include a compelling case for the strategic elements expressed as a regional value proposition.

3. Duration

This Working Group is scheduled to last 24 months, from January 20, 2017 through January 19, 2019.

4. Success Criteria

The main criterion of success for the R&P Working Group is active participation of regional organizations for whom ecosystem restoration and protection is critical in the development of an ORB strategy in 2018 and timely achievement of milestones listed below.

5. Milestones

- Minutes for quarterly teleconferences and meetings received by April 30, 2018, July 30, 2018, October 30, 2018, and December 31, 2018.
- Strategic regional restoration and protection organizations engaged with the Working Group by March 31, 2018.
- Identify (in collaboration with the champions and the Steering Committee) speakers for the Summit for each preliminary high-priority six months prior to the Summit.
- Vision and value proposition developed under leadership of champion for each preliminary high-priority submitted to Steering Committee at a time to be determined for inclusion in the draft strategy.
- Summit panels or discussions for each high-priority challenge.

6. Confidentiality

The Working Group and its meetings and discussions are open to the public. Per Section VIII(d) of the bylaws: *Working groups shall report to the Steering Committee. All written reports shall be submitted to the Steering Committee and no report shall be published or released for public information without approval from the Steering Committee.*

7. Dependencies/Relationship With Other ORBA Activities

The success of the R&P Working Group is heavily dependent on the active participation of ORBA members in the Working Group and on the Steering Committee coordinating with the Working Group regarding strategic planning and the planning of the 2018 Summit.

8. Coordination With External Groups

The key to the successful production of strategies for the high priority challenges is the identification and effective engagement of existing collaborations focused on respective challenges. Being able to leverage their priorities and strategies will give credibility and weight as these are incorporated into the Collaborative Ohio River Basin Strategy.

9. Communication Mechanisms

Email

The mailing list for the Working Group is maintained by the Chairperson is the primary means of discussion within the group. The Chairperson will provide the mailing list to the Working Group Leader on request.

Web

The ORBA website (<http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/ORBA/>) can be used to post meetings to the calendar and to post documents after approval by the Steering Committee. The ORBA Chairperson serves as the “gatekeeper” to the website.

Phone Meeting

The R&P Working Group meets every quarter (time and call-in information determined quarterly) by phone for one hour.

Face-to-face Meetings

Face to face meetings will occur at ORBA Summits.

Communication with the Public

See Section 6 “Confidentiality”.

10. Voting Mechanisms

The Working Group normally makes decisions by consensus, defined as “when no party objects to the proposed action or decision”. However, in situations where consensus cannot be reached on questions of unusual urgency, importance, or contentiousness, voting on such questions may be conducted upon the agreement of the Working Group.

In teleconference situations where a Working Group vote is necessary, voting may be done via e-mail to all Working Group members. At least 25% of the members must be respond to form a quorum. In face-to-face meetings, those present will constitute a quorum. Only decisions with a 3/4 majority vote of the response by e-mail or of present members in face-to-face meetings will be enacted to help maintain the cooperative nature of ORBA.

11. Participation

Participation in Working Groups is open to ORBA Members. Working Group Members are expected to participate in the teleconferences, meetings, and activities of the Working Group. The Working Group Leader may recommend to the Steering Committee the removal of inactive Members from the Working Group.

12. How to Join the Working Group

To join a Working Group, an ORBA Member should submit an e-mail expressing interest to the ORBA Steering Committee Chairperson. The Chairperson will submit to the Steering Committee for consensus approval and, upon approval, will notify the ORBA Member and the Working Group Leader of their addition to the Working Group.