

REGION 7

GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATION

The Region 7 Steering Committee (RSC) hereby offers the recommendation that a long-term Watershed Coalition be formed within the current boundaries of Region 7 as shown in Figure 1 below. In the Regional Capacity Grant Building Program Policies and Procedures¹, Watershed Coalition is defined as, “A watershed coalition is a formalized entity based on regional watershed boundaries. Coalitions could be composed of

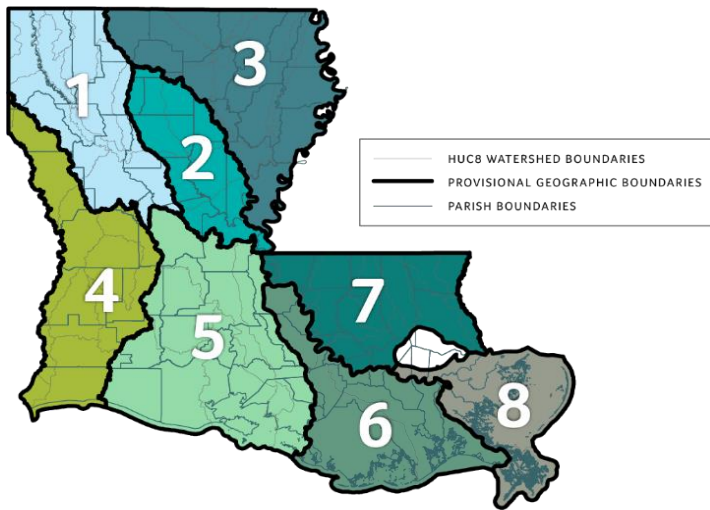


Figure 1. LWI Provisional Watershed

representatives from existing political subdivisions and other stakeholder organizations such as PDDs [Planning and Development Districts]”, MPOs [Metropolitan Planning Organizations], and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among others.” That document goes on to state... “as part of this Program and the LWI design process, coalitions will assume different governance structures for developing watershed management plans; aiding in the implementation of projects, programs and policies emanating from those plans; and

improving the lives of residents and the success of businesses affected by those plans. Watershed coalitions are an expected outcome of the Initiative. These entities do not currently exist in the state of Louisiana.”

Within the following text Region 7 Watershed Committee will be used instead of Watershed Coalition. The following details constitute a recommendation, subject to final review of the Region 7 Steering Committee and the Council on Watershed Management.

¹ <https://watershed.la.gov/assets/docs/RCBG-Policies-and-Procedures-6-9-20.pdf>



Document History

Version 1: Region 7 Provisional Governance Recommendation was adopted on January 28, 2021. The vote tally was 12 for the recommendation and 2 against.

Version 2: This document was presented to the Regional Steering Committee during the June 29, 2021 Steering Committee and was adopted. The vote tally was unanimous for the adoption of the recommendation.

The following votes were recorded as in favor of the motion (Yay):

- 1. Ascension Parish (Yay)*
- 2. East Baton Rouge Parish (Yay)*
- 3. Iberville Parish (Yay)*
- 4. Livingston Parish (Yay)*
- 5. St. Charles Parish (Yay)*
- 6. St. Helena Parish (Yay)*
- 7. St. John the Baptist Parish (Yay)*
- 8. St. Tammany Parish (Yay)*
- 9. Tangipahoa Parish (Yay)*
- 10. Washington Parish (Yay)*
- 11. West Feliciana Parish (Yay)*
- 12. Regional Representative, Amite River Basin Commission (Yay)*
- 13. Regional Representative, Home Builders Association of Greater Baton Rouge (Yay)*
- 14. Regional Representative, Pontchartrain Conservancy (Yay)*
- 15. Regional Representative, Individual who serves on the following committees and boards... St. John Coastal Advisory Committee, LA Recycling Coalition, Keep St. John Beautiful, etc. (Yay)*

The following votes were recorded in opposition of the motion (Nay):

None

Absent from the vote (non-attending) are the following Regional Steering Committee member affiliations:

- 16. East Feliciana Parish*



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Region 7 Watershed Committee should conduct regional watershed management activities and assist local entities through coordination, collaboration, technical assistance, and capacity building related to watershed management as detailed below. These activities are in support of the regional values, vision, and goals as stated in the Region 7 Guiding Principles Framework².

Planning and Development Guidance

- State should adopt minimum development standards based on local environmental risk factors based on regional input.
 - Examples **may** include: 1 foot of freeboard.
- Region will provide technical assistance and offer best practices to local entities on land use planning and development guidance as it relates to floodplain management and flood risk reduction.
 - Examples **may** include: Support for development of model ordinances; Support for best practices

Support for Projects

- Provide technical assistance on projects as deemed appropriate by the future bylaws of the Region 7 Watershed Committee
 - Examples **may** include: Support for project conceptualization; Support for project co-design processes; Support for data access and interpretation; Support for identifying funding streams

Data and Modeling

- Repository of technical data and information, including H&H models at the State level that is informed by, and made accessible to, the region.
 - Examples **may** include: State-wide data portal website.
- Technical assistance for interpretation and utilization of information and data
 - Examples **may** include: Support for interpretation and use of H&H model information and other data; Translation of models into action for projects, policy, and programs; Provide information and have a technical expert run models and provide outputs; Partnership opportunities for a regional gauge network.

²

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54cbd54fe4b047a0380cae54/t/5f8846c923173127aa9b64fd/1602766539187/Guiding+Principles+Framework+Updated+10132020.pdf>



Outreach and Engagement

- Conduct intentional watershed-related outreach and education to support long-term capacity building from the region to public entities and citizens.
 - Examples **may** include: Education for legislators; Clearly communicate updates to policy and regulations to elected officials and the general public; Flood risk communication to general public; Localized outreach and engagement efforts on resilience, flooding, climate change, relationship/impacts to other sectors; Training for citizens, practitioners, and elected officials.

Recommended Authorities for the Region 7 Watershed Committee

- Authority to provide support for projects, data and information, planning, outreach and engagement, and programs as determined by the Region and/or State
- Authority to cooperate or contract with other governmental agencies.
- Authority to manage and facilitate regional planning processes.
- Authority to receive, manage, and distribute funds from governmental, private, or non-profit sources, including the authority to set policies for consistency on how funds will be distributed.

ROADMAP TO IMPLEMENTING THIS RECOMMENDATION

In order to successfully implement the recommendation above, the RSC recommends the following implementation steps:

Who staffs future efforts?

Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) shall facilitate all meetings of the Region 7 Watershed Committee and shall perform administrative functions related to the work of the Region 7 Watershed Committee.

How will the future Region 7 Watershed Committee be chartered?

Legislatively via a state commission, board, or agency.

How consistent are charters among regions?

All of the watershed bodies in the state should be authorized by a single charter that includes a list of standards and authorities identified by all regions, wherein each region is able to choose which standard or authority to implement and at what degree within individual Region 7 Watershed Committee bylaws/regional charters.

Who should be represented?

The Region 7 Watershed Committee should be composed of a mix of technical experts, elected officials (or their appointees), and citizens/organizations outside of government entities who represent citizens. It is



recommended that the membership structure is established separately in each region's bylaws in coordination with the State's recommendations.

What is the State's role?

The Region 7 Watershed Committee should have oversight by a State agency which provides consistency and state-level management.

How are regional boundaries defined?

The regional watershed boundaries should be recognized or approved by a State agency, board, or program.

What options are available to the Region 7 Watershed Committee for funding?

The Region 7 Watershed Committee should have the ability to obtain external funding and maintain stable local funding.

What is the Region, and State's, role in drafting legal elements that reflect these recommendations?

The state should lead the effort in drafting the legal elements that reflect these recommendations while the regions collect feedback on recommendations and the regions should be kept aware of continued progress.