



# Strategic Plan 2011 - 2016

***Mission: To support professionals who study, protect and manage North America's rivers***

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## **Core Values: *What we believe***

The rivers of North America provide tangible and intangible benefits to individuals and society.

- Those in the river management profession play an important role by studying, protecting and managing these rivers.

The river management profession is evolving and dynamic, and it is important for its professionals to receive ongoing training and education throughout their careers.

- The Society, through the collective experience and knowledge of its members and capacity to link information and people together, improves the effectiveness of river management professionals and the organizations that employ them, as well as rivers and society.

It is important to understand how rivers function and how people interact with and affect rivers and other river users.

- The Society can play an important role by identifying research needs, facilitating the research itself, and helping to disseminate the results.

Recognition of excellence in the river management profession rewards those who have excelled in their field and elevates awareness of the attributes that contribute to excellence.

- Recognition by one's peers within a professional society is a distinguished honor and inspires others to achieve the same.

## **Strategic Direction: *Where we will focus***

### **Developing Professionals**

This is the core of our work and what we do best. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the river management profession and the fact the Society's members represent many public, private and nonprofit entities, our niche is in providing opportunities for professionals to develop within their own area of expertise and increase their understanding of other river management disciplines. We will provide training, presentations, field trips, research findings, and other pertinent material to those who study, protect and manage North America's rivers.

## **Advancing Knowledge**

Working with our members and our partners we will identify river management challenges and information needs. We will facilitate, support and conduct research that addresses these challenges and needs and help to disseminate the results.

## **Inspiring Future Leaders**

River management will become increasingly important to future generations due to the growing demands on rivers for our health, economy, and pleasure. We will inspire youth interest in rivers and how they are managed and create opportunities that help youth to enter the river management profession.

## **Building Capacity**

To achieve our mission and five year strategic plan we will maintain a fully functioning and viable organization.

## **Five-Year Strategic Initiatives: *How we will get there***

### **We will develop professionals by**

- Organizing biennial symposia and workshops
- Sponsoring field training exercises
- Mentoring emerging professionals
- Developing and maintaining professional standards
- Establishing and updating best practices guidance

### **We will advance knowledge by**

- Serving as an information clearinghouse for river knowledge and expertise
- Promoting broader understanding of river management issues through the Journal and other avenues
- Supporting the advancement of scientific knowledge about rivers and the people that use them
- Building partnerships and sharing knowledge between agencies, academia, industry and users

### **We will inspire future leaders by**

- Developing and sustaining internship programs
- Promoting programs that connect children with rivers
- Developing and maintaining certification and accreditation programs

### **We will build capacity by**

- Developing and implementing training programs that meet the needs of river managers
- Demonstrating river management expertise that appeals to an interdisciplinary audience
- Exhibiting river expertise and programming that appeals to funders
- Developing strong partnerships with public, private and nonprofit organizations
- Continue strong interaction with federal agency partners to create or expand necessary products and services

# Background

## 1. Factors to Consider

There are factors to consider while developing RMS strategies and programs:

**Economic** – The nation is recovering slowly from a deep recession and budget cost-cutting will continue to challenge staff and programs.

**Political** – Water resources and rivers in particular are becoming an issue of increasing public interest due to stresses on water availability, water quality and as a resource for green, renewable energy.

**Climate change** – Our changing climate is producing changes in hydrologic cycles that affect rivers both as a water supply and a recreation resource.

**Demographic** – River management came of age in the 1970s and many of the field's most experienced members are now reaching retirement age. This will deplete the inventory of experienced specialists but may also create opportunities for a new generation of river managers.

**Technology/New Media** – Technology and new media are evolving rapidly. To maintain our relevancy among current and future members, RMS must understand and use these emerging fields.

## 2. Potential Partners

The River Management Society is the only organization that focuses solely on the river management profession. There are other organizations that provide services that are of interest to RMS members. Some assist other nonprofit groups that focus on rivers, some are citizen advocacy groups, and yet others focus on the technical aspects of rivers. Partnering with these types of organizations can increase the Society's effectiveness, benefiting its members and the profession.

## 3. Organization

The River Management Society serves North America including Canada and seven chapters in the United States: Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, Northwest, Pacific and Alaska. Each chapter holds meetings and regional field trips to share and discuss river management issues and build lasting local partnerships.

The Society's constitution and bylaws define the organizational structure of the Society, direct how it functions, and provide the basis for consistent process and operations. The bylaws undergo periodic amendments as needs dictate.

The constitution requires that the Society operate under the direction of a board of

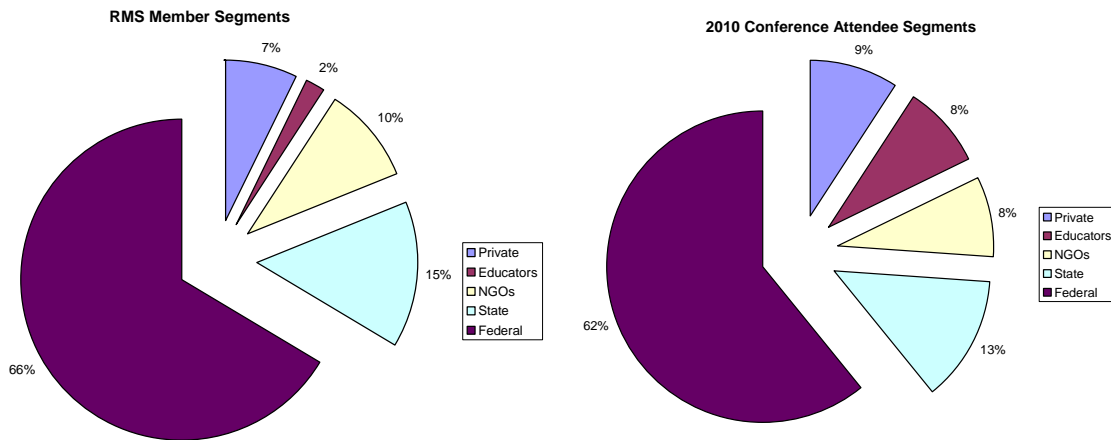
directors comprised of the nationally elected officers, chapter presidents, and non-voting ex-officio advisors who provide needed expertise. The board of directors meets in person once annually and conducts business during the balance of the year through monthly conference calls. The Executive Committee, comprised of the national officers and one chapter president, is responsible for routine activities and personnel actions.

The RMS symposia are held in even-numbered years. River Management Workshops are held in odd-numbered years. RMS serves as a workshop co-sponsor and one of the four federal land managing agencies (Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) serves as the organizational lead. Additional hallmark programs are the RMS Journal (published quarterly), a members-only listserve, and internships. Special projects include the publication of technical research and best practices, maintenance of a national river inventory, and ongoing networking workshops for federal, state and private river professionals.

The RMS accomplishes its work through standing committees and project task forces. The bylaws identify the following committees: finance and budget, fundraising, awards and elections, membership, public policy, and symposium.

RMS members include federal and state river managers, river program managers and outdoor recreation planners, non-profit organizations, education institutions (educators and students) and water-related business such as consultants, outfitters. and utility companies. Private landowners, including tribes and private foundations, are both external stakeholders and potential members.

The following chart illustrates the breakdown of RMS members and participants in the 2010 Symposium, co-hosted with the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners.



#### 4. History

In 1972 managers from the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service met to exchange ideas on how to address problems associated with increasing river use. This informal meeting led to the development of the Interagency

Whitewater Committee which formed in 1972 and disbanded in 1988 when it evolved into the American River Management Society (ARMS). The ARMS broadened its reach to include state, regional, and local river management specialists. It also widened its program to include diverse management issues such as fisheries enhancement and restoration, in-stream flows, water quality, riparian area health, and watershed conservation.

- ARMS was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, professional organization in 1991 in Ohio.
- ARMS Eastern and Western Regions merged to form a single national organization. ARMS held its first symposium in Portland, Oregon in 1992.
- The Canadian River Management Society became a chapter of ARMS, expanding the scope of the organization to an international scale in 1994.
- ARMS and the River Federation (state river program managers) collaborated to host the second biennial symposium in Grand Junction, CO in 1994 and by 1996 merged to become the River Management Society (RMS). Its constitution and bylaws were adopted in June 1996 at the third biennial symposium. Chapter duties and responsibilities were first described in 1998.