

“Strategic Plan for the Louisiana Irrigation Association”

Brief History

The Louisiana Irrigation Association (LIA) was formed in 2005 as a result of the Louisiana State Legislature passing a bill requiring all individuals working on or installing Landscape Irrigation Systems to be licensed. LIA’s primary role at that time was to provide training for Landscape Irrigation Contractors to become licensed. Irrigation Association (IA) instructors were retained to teach IA’s “Principles of Irrigation”, a two day course at various locations across the state. LIA provided training and still provides training for those individuals who wish to receive instruction to take the license exam. It’s a two day training and covers irrigation basics for landscape irrigation contractors.

In 2007 LIA also offered IA courses and instructors for training to those individuals who were licensed to receive recertification CEU’s, a requirement of licensure. In 2009 Dr. Ron Sheffield, Irrigation Specialist with the LSU AgCenter, crafted the ,”Irrigation Basics for Landscape Irrigation Contractors” two day course to better help potential irrigation contractors pass the licensure exam. So we no longer offer IA’s “Principles of Irrigation” class.

We used IA instructors and courses to teach the recertification classes until 2010 when we bought IA courses and provided our own instructors which we are currently doing. In addition we are crafting our own courses and providing our own instructors to provide licensed contractors with LDAF approved CEU course content.

Mission

The mission of the LIA is to:

- Promote efficient irrigation practices through the proper design, installation and management of irrigation systems and educational and informational programs
- Participate while effectively representing our membership in the legislative process
- Cooperate with other agencies and organizations in providing pertinent information to irrigation contractors, the irrigation industry, and general population

Vision

The need for efficient irrigation practices continues to increase as water availability decreases and water quality degrades, making water resources difficult to obtain and more expensive. This organization believes that the key to improving irrigation is to maintain a professional standard, achieved through education and practical experience. The vision of this non-profit organization is to elevate the standards of Louisiana’s landscape irrigation industry through knowledge and professionalism. This includes providing educational opportunities at an affordable rate, informing policies and legislation related to the irrigation industry, and communicating the importance of these standards to the industry, their customers, and the general public.

Values

The core values defined below were identified as integral to the success of the organization.

Protect Louisiana's natural resources

Nicknamed the "Sportsman's Paradise," Louisiana prides itself on the abundance of diverse natural resources throughout the state. Actions that result in the wasteful consumption or degradation of natural resources jeopardize the longevity of the landscape irrigation industry. Thus, the Louisiana Irrigation Association values these resources and the appropriate protection of them.

Promote professionalism, ethics, and standards of the industry

It is the responsibility of this professional society to encourage setting a standard for professionalism and ethics within the irrigation industry. Though no specific standards have been outlined, the Louisiana Irrigation Association relies on its members to identify and promulgate professional values within the community.

Provide education, knowledge, and resources for professional growth

In Louisiana, there are no formal opportunities (i.e. secondary education, higher education) to become trained to work in the irrigation industry. Also, there are very few affordable educational options outside of the state that can bridge the gap between introductory on-the-job training and modern irrigation methods, products, and technologies. This organization values the need for education and training across all levels of the irrigation industry.

Support of grassroots efforts

The LIA is a member-driven organization that has every opportunity to advance the irrigation industry at the local, regional, state, and national level. Specifically, the LIA Board of Directors [Board] values the opinions of its members and drives toward gaining feedback through surveys, polls, and direct interactions.

Objectives, Goals, Strategies, Measures

Education

The goal is to provide educational opportunities to elevate the irrigation profession in Louisiana. Currently, this is primarily addressed with an objective of providing educational opportunities to help potential and current landscape irrigation contractors meet the license requirements of the state. The LIA works toward meeting its goal using the following strategies:

- Providing courses aimed at teaching the basics for starting out in the irrigation industry,
- Developing courses that educate on advanced topics, new technologies, and modern methodologies,
- Offering the opportunity for knowledge and resources necessary to obtain the irrigation contractor license and recertify its validity, and
- Creating easily accessible courses without sacrificing content or quality.

The success of the educational goal is measured through survey responses, direct interaction between the Board and students of the classes, and numbers of educated individuals that pass the license exam.

Policy

The goal is to advocate for the values of the irrigation industry. The objective is to work toward achieving the vision of LIA. The following strategies include:

- Developing policy statements that specify stances on topics affecting the irrigation industry, and
- Protecting LIA's interests by lobbying at the local, regional, state, and federal levels.

The success for policy related matters can be measured by conducting an impact assessment and quantifying effectiveness over time.

Communication

The goal is to demonstrate the value of LIA. The objective is to create opportunities for stakeholder engagement. This will be accomplished through the following strategies:

- Engaging current and potential members during normal LIA events so that they understand the benefits of membership,
- Engaging current and potential members outside of normal course interactions including trade shows and distributor events,
- Providing organizational and educational information through multi-modal correspondence, and
- Developing an online presence that includes a highly functioning website tied to various social media outlets.

Success of effective communication will be measured through statistics related to membership totals, public contacts, and interpersonal interactions including web-based correspondence.

Executing the Plan

The Board is accountable for executing the strategies outlined in this document. This plan must be reviewed by the Board every five years beginning in 2020. Initiation of the review should occur during the first board meeting of the year. A committee should be appointed by the Board to conduct this review. The committee must consist of the Director of Education and at least one other LIA member, but may include others at the request of any person on the Board. All changes to the plan must be presented during the last board meeting of the year. The process continues based on the following outcomes:

- Negative vote by the Board
The strategic plan remains in its original form and the committee updates the membership during the next occurring annual meeting. The Board may initiate the review process again at the first board meeting of the following year. Same procedures apply.
- Board voted 'YES with additional revisions'
The committee should address the membership about the proposed changes for discussion during the next occurring annual meeting. All changes must be finalized by the first board meeting of the following year and voted again. During the second round, if the Board votes:

- 'NO'
A new committee is formed during the board meeting and the review process starts over. Same procedures apply.
- 'YES'
The new strategic plan must be announced to the membership at the next occurring annual meeting and updated on the website as well as other communication methods.
- Board voted 'YES,' with or without changes to the plan
The new strategic plan must be announced to the membership at the next occurring annual meeting and updated on the website as well as other communication methods.

A flow chart was created to help with the process (Fig. 1). The strategic plan can be reviewed outside of the specified schedule if affirmatively voted by the Board. However, additional reviews occurring outside of the specified timeline do not change the timeline for the five year review.

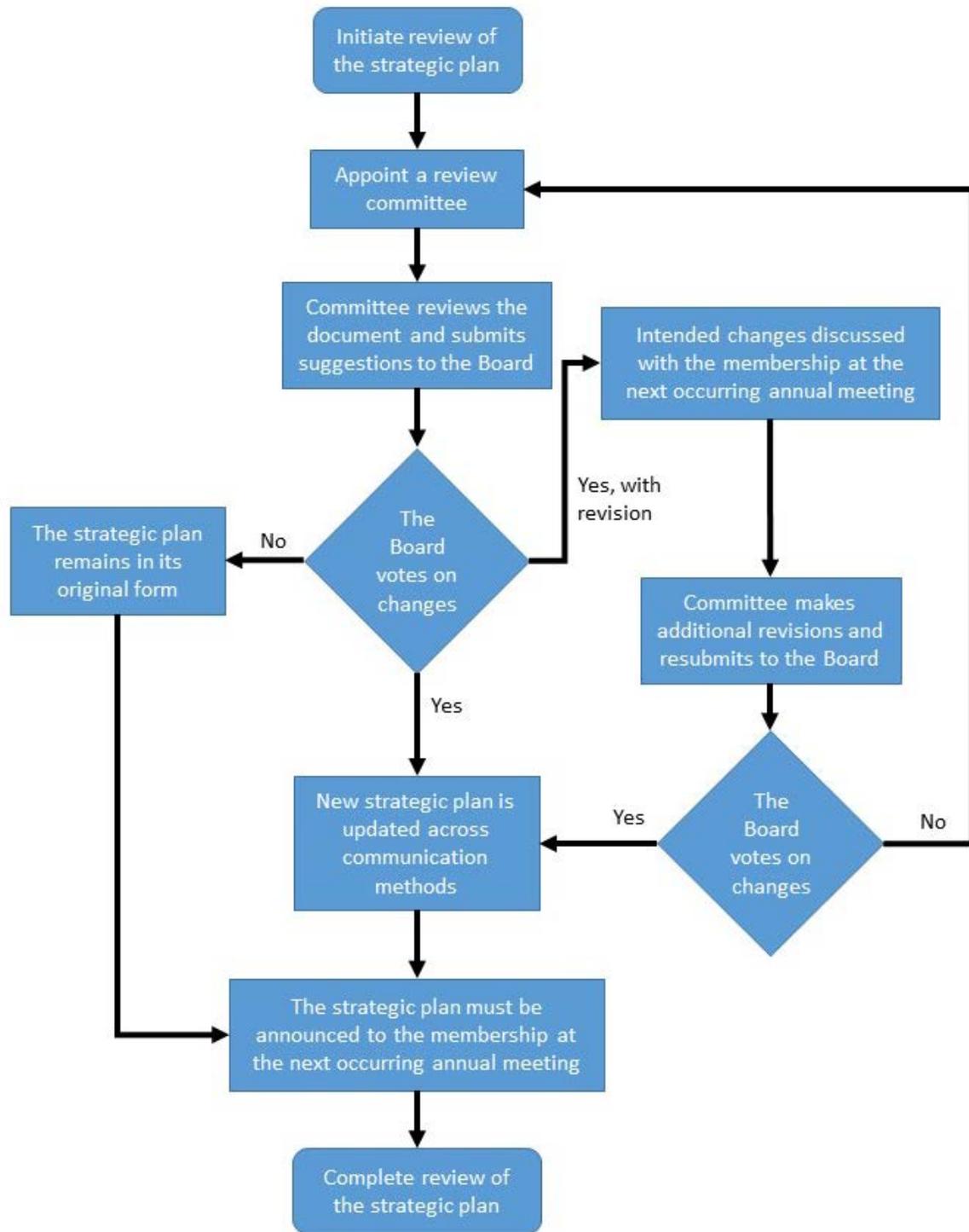


Figure 1. A flow chart depicts the review process for updating the strategic plan.