



Co-piloting your organization



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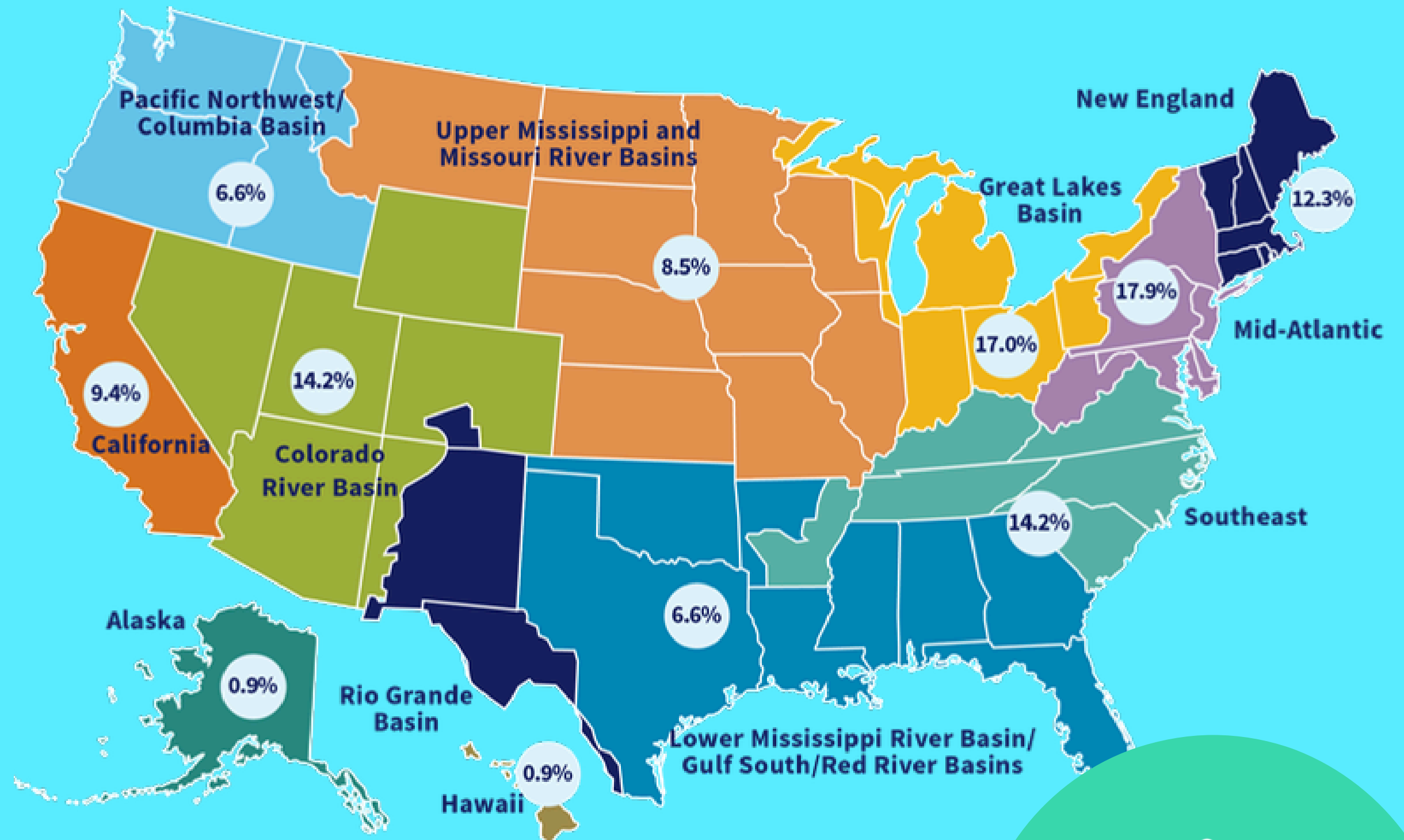
WHO WE ARE:

A Powerful Network of Water Protectors

River Network exists so that local leaders can be their own experts, bringing clean water to their communities and ensuring they're prepared for climate-related disasters.

River Network is a national network of **3,400+** individuals representing **1,000+** organizations dedicated to improving and protecting our waterways. We strengthen leaders and organizations to:

- 🌿 Cultivate Healthy, Resilient Rivers
- 🌿 Ensure Safe, Affordable Drinking Water
- 🌿 Build Climate-Resilient Communities
- 🌿 Policy & Advocacy
- 🌿 Organization & Leadership Development



An empowered movement that knows how to steward water on the ground, defend protections at all levels of power, and adapt in the face of climate change, is how we will secure clean water and healthy rivers for all.

NAME SOME CO-LEADERSHIP MODELS

LEADERSHIP MODELS

- Single leader (traditional, top-down hierarchical)
- Shared Leadership
 - Executive Director/Board Chair
 - Co-Directors
 - Executive Director/Leadership Team



WHY EXPLORE NEW MODELS?

- Succession Planning
- Shared responsibilities
- Prevents burnout
- Mission work reflects community and values
- Desire for collaborative leadership example



WHY NOT?

**Lack of familiarity with the model:
how they work, what's entailed, success rate**

SHARED LEADERSHIP

- Two or more people share the responsibility of running an organization
- Collaborative distribution of leadership duties, based on skills/strengths

OPPORTUNITIES:

Less isolation in leadership position, distributes workload reducing burnout. Aids in succession planning & organizational growth

CHALLENGES:

Requires a lot of upfront work and decisions, requires education of the model and how it operates; multiple points of contact can be confusing



Examples included:

- **Co-Directors**
- **E.D/Board Chair**
- **Leadership Team (splitting of operations & programming)**

CO-DIRECTORS

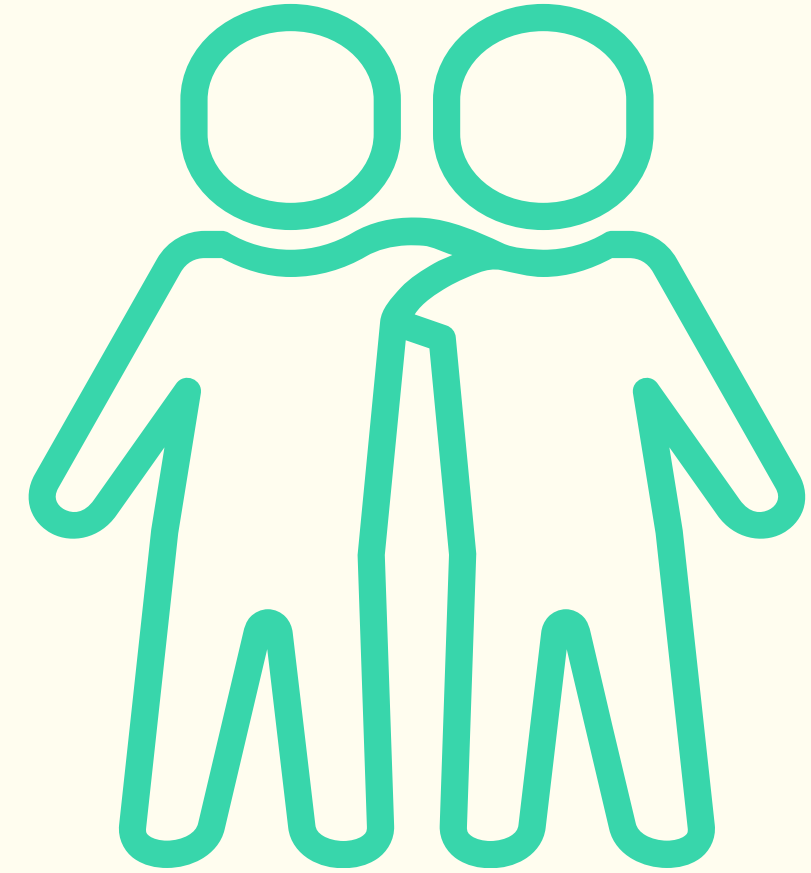
- Two or more people share the responsibility of running an organization
- Collaborative distribution of leadership duties, based on skills/strengths

OPPORTUNITIES:

Leans into strengths-based approach for both leaders, distributes workload reducing burnout. Aids in organizational and leadership resilience

CHALLENGES:

Differences in opinion/leadership style invites conflict, workload can become significantly uneven without oversight; building trust



Examples included:

- **Leadership Team**
- **Executive Team**
- **Co-Directors**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/BOARD CHAIR

- Two people share responsibility for managing the two different pieces of the organization:
 - Executive Director: staff/daily operations
 - Board Chair: The Board, visionary future

PRO:

The Board manages itself, distributes decision-making amongst more than one individuals. Frees up time and responsibility of the ED.

CON:

Poor communication could silo the Board/Org from each other. Board can become ineffective



WHAT'S NEEDED?



Clear Decision-Making Structures



Culture of Trust



Clear and frequent communication



Shared Purpose

ACTIVITY: GROUP BASED ON MODEL CHOICE

1. Break into Groups:
 - a. Executive Director/Board Chair
 - b. Co-Directors
 - c. Leadership Team
2. Speed introduction:
 - a. Introduce yourselves and why you attended this session
3. On Easel Paper, write down:
 - a. What questions would need to be answered as you explore these models?
 - b. What policies and procedures would need to be implemented?
 - c. Who would need to be involved in the conversations?

notes

REPORT OUT

SHARE



QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Why should we consider a co-leader model?
- What model makes the best sense for our organization?
- What decision-making structure will we use?
 - Consensus?
 - Majority?
- How will we mitigate conflict?
 - Explicit expectations, group agreements, etc
- How will we communicate this new structure?
- How will we manage a transition to shared leadership?

Why, Who, What

THANK YOU!

Find more
information at
www.rivernetnetwork.org

*Explore membership, resources, and join
our newsletter & online community!*



