The working members of the coordinating committee may or may not be the signatory individuals. The individual who was the official signatory to the agreement usually delegates authority for coordinating committee activities to someone in the organization who is closer to the actual functioning of the unit. The Service's working representative to the coordinating committee is a unit supervisor from headquarters in Washington, D.C. The university representative is usually a dean, department head, or program- or school-director within whose organization the unit is assigned. The state agency representative is often the research division director but may be the director or the deputy director of the agency or another of the director's designees. Members of coordinating committees must be able to legally commit their organization to the expenditure of funds or other in-kind support for unit activities.

The Wildlife Management Institute has a standing invitation to meetings of the coordinating committee but may not always be represented. The role of the Wildlife Management Institute in the Cooperative Unit Program is, in most instances, directed at the program as a whole rather than focused on a particular unit.

The coordinating committee provides specific guidance to units. Each unit operates under a broad directional statement that the unit leader develops with guidance from the cooperators. The direction statement reflects the capabilities of the unit personnel and the types of activities (mainly the types of research) the cooperators wish to have emphasized. The direction statement for the unit is reviewed annually at the coordinating committee meeting to assure that the direction reflects current needs and wishes of the cooperators.

The direction statement provides the umbrella guidance for research activity of the unit. Unit supervisors in the Washington headquarters may use the direction statement as a reference for answering questions from the Congress and others about which units are best equipped for conducting particular types of research.

Scheduling and preparing for meetings of the coordinating committee are the responsibilities of the unit leader. Coordinating committee meetings usually have two parts—a general information and guidance session and an executive session. The general information and guidance session is the main business meeting and is open to all interested parties. An executive session is optional and, when held, is attended only by official coordinating committee members because it usually relates to personnel matters.

After the unit leader negotiates a date for the meeting, the leader is responsible for the preparation and distribution of information materials. Carefully prepared agendas, budgets, summaries of research, statements of direction, and past accomplishments must be sent to participants well in advance of the meeting. The agenda should indicate topics that must be addressed by the various attendees (see Appendix D for a prototype agenda of a coordinating committee meeting). Pre-meeting materials provide a basic understanding of what will be presented so attendees are ready to discuss