

WALLA WALLA WATERSHED PLANNING UNIT GROUND RULES

(Revised March 20, 2002; Revised April 30, 2007)

The Walla Walla Watershed Planning Unit as developed under RCW 90.82 (the Watershed Planning Act) in Washington State is created by the Initiating Governments for Water Resources Inventory Area (WRIA) 32: Gardena Farms Irrigation District #13, the City of Walla Walla and the Counties of Walla Walla and Columbia. We agree that the official participants include voting members approved and designated by the Initiating Governments to serve on the Planning Unit and non-voting members from various federal, state, tribal, and local government and other regional, state, and local organizations.

We agree that the Planning Unit's role is to guide development, implementation and subsequent updates of the Walla Walla Watershed Plan for WRIA 32.

In order to foster a basin-wide plan for improvements to habitat, instream flow, water quality and water quantity, and economic well-being we agree to work closely with our counterparts on the Oregon side of the basin.

We agree to focus our discussions on the mission and goals of this group and avoid debating issues and concerns beyond the scope of the assignment or control of the group.

We represent a broad range of interests, each having concerns, about the outcome of the issues at hand. All parties recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of others, and expect that their interests will be respected as well.

We commit to listening carefully to each other, to recognizing each person's concerns and feelings about a topic, to asking questions for clarification and to making statements that attempt to educate or explain.

Each of us takes responsibility for getting our individual needs met, and we agree that the group must address all issues identified by any member, within existing budget constraints.

We commit to keeping our colleagues and constituents informed about the progress of these discussions, and to do so in a timely manner.

We are committed to developing standards responsible to scientific and other evidence presented.

We agree that to get maximum benefit from the group, we will create a climate that encourages candid and open discussion. In order to sustain this climate, we commit to not attributing suggestions, comments or ideas of another participant or the whole group to the news media or non-participants. We agree that the Planning Unit will preferably handle all communications with the news media on behalf of the Subcommittees.

We agree that interested observers may attend meetings. Written comments are welcome and will be shared with and considered by the group. In an effort to maintain order and accurate meeting records, a party must be recognized by the Chair prior to making an oral comment.

We will foster open discussion of issues, and will respect each other's right to disagree.

We will agree that this effort is a priority in terms of time and/or resource commitment. Each participant may provide the name of an alternate. The alternate would attend in place of the participant. It is the responsibility of the member and the alternate to keep each other informed.

We agree that anyone may leave this process and request that he/she inform the entire group why, to see if the group can address any problem.

We agree to the need for keeping meeting minutes. Minutes should not affiliate comments/statements to individuals and need not be verbatim restatements of the meetings. They need to reflect a summary of the discussions and decisions made.

We are encouraged to seek advice and information from others outside the group.

We will be advocates for the process and the decisions made herein.

QUORUM

Meeting attendees are present in one of two categories: voting members and non-voting members. A list of voting and non-voting Planning Unit members will be made available on the sign-in sheet, or upon written request.

A quorum exists for a meeting if there is a majority (50%+1) of the voting members present at any point in the meeting.

If a quorum does not exist, the voting members present may either decide to continue with an informal discussion of the agenda for the meeting or proceed with decision-making on action items by conducting a documented poll of voting members via email or telephone or US Postal Service mail.

DECISION MAKING

We will attempt to use a consensus decision-making process. The meeting minutes will report consensus decisions.

If the group is unable to reach consensus on any issue, it will consider other options:

- Refer the issue to an ad hoc subcommittee to identify options and recommend an action for the group to consider.

- Table the issue, giving time to rethink it.
- Take an advisory or “straw” vote to help the group decide what action to take next
- Present a minority report with the standards report.
- Leave the issue unresolved and note it as such.

When possible, the group will delay a vote until the next meeting on any issue or item initially discussed in the present meeting.

PROCEDURE FOR CHANGING MEMBER LIST

The Planning Unit may recommend to the Initiating Governments that any voting member who misses three or more consecutive meetings without being represented by his/her alternate will be removed from the Planning Unit. Other Planning Unit members should notify one or both of the co-chairs if he/she believes a voting member or his/her alternate has not been present for three consecutive meetings. The co-chairs will then follow the procedure below to change the member list for the subcommittee.

This procedure will also be used for adding voting members or changing the status of a voting member:

- 1) A request is made to the co-chairs to add a voting member to the Planning Unit, remove a voting member, and/or change an existing voting member’s status.
- 2) The Planning Unit co-chairs will submit the request to the Initiating Governments for approval.
- 3) Action by the Initiating Governments will be communicated to the full Planning Unit at a future meeting.

PLANNING UNIT MEETINGS

The Planning Unit will meet on the fourth Monday of January every year and will meet as needed throughout the remainder of the year. Whenever possible, meetings will be scheduled for the fourth Monday of the month.