

MIDDLE SNAKE BASIN PLANNING UNIT GROUND RULES

General

1. The existence and authority of the Middle Snake Basin Planning Unit is pursuant to the Watershed Management Act (Chapter 90.82 RCW). As such, the Planning Unit will guide and coordinate the watershed planning effort in WRIA 35.
2. As members of the Planning Unit, we are here to identify and solve water resource management issues and share this common interest and responsibility for the group's progress. Members shall be "solution oriented," demonstrating dedication and commitment to this process.
3. We will foster open discussion of issues by listening carefully to each other, recognizing each member's concerns and feelings about the topic, asking questions for clarification, and making statements that attempt to educate or explain.
4. We commit to no personal attacks directed at individuals and/or organizations.
5. We take personal responsibility for raising issues of concern, and agree that the group, mindful of existing budget and time constraints, must address all relevant watershed issues identified by any member.
6. 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.
7. We agree to focus our discussions on the mission and goals of this Planning Unit and avoid debating issues and concerns beyond the authority of this group.
8. We are committed to developing standards responsible to scientific and other evidence presented.
9. We will be advocates for the process and the decisions made herein.
10. Technical and other advisory committees may be established by the Planning Unit to provide reports and recommendations on specific issues. Committee members do not have to be Planning Unit members.

Member List

11. We agree that the official participants include voting, technical/advisory (non-voting), and interested parties (non-voting). The Asotin PUD shall keep up to date the official member list reflecting these designations.

12. Each participant may provide the name of an alternate. Attendance at each meeting is the responsibility of each member or his/her designated alternate. The member and alternate shall keep each other and their constituents informed of issues, progress, and decisions made at Planning Unit meetings.
13. Any member may leave this process at any time. However, we request that he/she inform the group of the reason for leaving to see if the group can address the issue. If a member chooses to leave the Planning Unit, they will be removed from the official member list (see Item 16 below for process for adding or removing Planning Unit members).
14. The Planning Unit will 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. Planning Unit members are responsible for notifying one of the co-chairs if he/she believes a voting member should be removed.
15. These steps will be used to add or remove a voting Planning Unit member:
 - A request is made to the Planning Unit Chair (or co-chair) to modify the Planning Unit member list.
 - The Planning Unit Chair (or co-chairs) will submit the request to the Initiating Governments for approval.
 - Action of the Initiating Governments will be communicated to the full Planning Unit at a future meeting.

Procedural Details

16. A Chair (or co-Chairs) will be selected for the WRIA 35 Planning Unit and for any established subcommittees. Chair responsibilities include the following:
 - Review meeting agendas prior to the meeting and provide the facilitator with any agenda modifications.
 - Conduct meetings with assistance from the facilitator. Agenda items may be added or dropped by agreement at the beginning of the meeting for which the proposed agenda applies. This includes allowing time for a non-committee member (i.e. interested party) to address the committee. The Chair is responsible for recognizing non-committee members to speak at the appropriate time during a meeting.
 - Cancel a noticed meeting in the event of weather, unavailability of facilities, etc. via mutual agreement of the Chair.
 - The Planning Unit Chair (or co-chairs) is responsible for responding to news media requests regarding planning unit activities. Chair comments will be limited to discussing planning activities and not include opinions or unsubstantiated information.
17. Meeting notes shall be kept for each Planning Unit meeting (including subcommittee meetings), summarizing meeting attendees, meeting topics addressed and highlighting any decisions made while not affiliating specific comments or statements to individuals. Meeting minutes will be distributed in draft form to the Planning Unit for discussion and approval at the subsequent meeting.

18. Consensus will be emphasized in decision-making. Consensus is defined as a decision that allows every member to say, "I can live with the decision and accept it, even though it may or may not be exactly what I want."
19. Consensus will be used by the Planning Unit to approve the final watershed plan and for any other intermediate decisions needed during the watershed assessment and plan development phases.
20. A quorum must be present for decisions to be made. A quorum exists for a meeting if there is a simple majority of the voting members present at any point in the meeting. If a quorum does not exist, the members present shall decide whether to continue with an informal discussion of the agenda for the meeting.
21. When possible, the Planning Unit will discuss any issue in at least two meetings, to allow time for members to discuss issues with their alternate and constituents.
22. If the Planning Unit is unable to reach consensus on any issue, it will consider other options:
 - Refer the issue to a subcommittee to identify options and recommend an action for the Planning Unit to consider.
 - Table the issue temporarily, and revisit it during a subsequent meeting.
 - Take an advisory or "straw" vote to help the committee decide what action to take next
 - Leave the issue unresolved and note it as such.
23. If consensus cannot be reached, a voting process may also be used to resolve issues. Voting will occur by a hand-count. Each member will be identified in meeting notes by name with their vote. An affirmative vote will be based on 2/3 approval of the voting members present, except for those actions related to recommending minimum instream flows. See Item 24 for process for Planning Unit approval of recommended instream flows.
24. Consensus and approval of the Planning Unit for recommending minimum instream flows to be adopted by rule by Washington Department of Ecology shall be consistent with RCW 90.82.080 requirements, which is that minimum instream flows must be approved unanimously by all government and tribes invited and accepted on the planning unit present for a recorded vote at a planning unit meeting, and by a majority of nongovernmental members present for a recorded vote at the same planning unit meeting.
25. All meetings will be open to the public. In an effort to maintain order and accurate meeting records, a party must be recognized by the chair or facilitator prior to making an oral comment. Written comments are welcome to be shared with and considered by the group.
26. Administrative documents such as the Mission, Planning Goals, and Ground Rules can be modified. Any member requesting a change can present his/her request to the Chair, including proposed language. The item will then be included on the agenda of the next meeting for review by the full Planning Unit.
27. Periodic review of the Mission, Planning Goals, and Ground Rules will occur at least once every six months.