

South Fork Palouse River TMDL Advisory Group
Ground Rules and Operating Procedures
June 2008

Advisory Group's purpose and role is to advise the Department of Ecology (Ecology) on the development of Total Maximum Daily Load reports to address bacteria, temperature and dissolved oxygen and pH impairments on the South Fork Palouse River. The advisory group will accomplish this by:

- Reviewing technical findings and assumptions.
- Ensuring final report is consistent with the Clean Water Act and other applicable laws.
- Reviewing natural conditions ("natural laws") that govern water quality (such as phosphorus and nitrogen cycles and stream heating processes, i.e. temperature).
- Providing feedback on data gaps and providing local information to make technical assessment better.
- Making recommendations for the implementation strategy or plan.
- Helping with how to best divide the load allocations (TMDL pie).
- Providing common sense review.
- Providing input on local history, customs, and culture.

General

1. As members of the Advisory Group, we are here to identify and solve water quality 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.
2. 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.
3. We commit to no personal attacks directed at individuals and/or organizations.
4. We will listen to the person speaking and will avoid sidebar discussions.
5. We take personal responsibility for raising issues of concern, and agree that the group, mindful of purpose and requirements of the TMDL, resources and time constraints, must address all relevant water quality 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 Advisory Group and avoid debating issues and concerns beyond the scope of the TMDLs.
8. We are committed to developing implementation activities in accordance with the scientific and other evidence presented and with all applicable laws and regulations.
9. We will be advocates for the process and the recommendations and decisions made herein.

Participation

1. We shall take responsibility to ensure all interests are represented on the advisory group and that no interest(s) dominate the membership. Ecology staff shall keep an up to date list of advisory group members.

2. All meetings will be open to the public.
3. 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 Advisory Group meetings.
4. 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.
5. Any voting member who misses three or more consecutive meetings without being represented by his/her alternate can be removed from the Advisory Group member list.

Procedural

1. An Ecology representative shall chair and facilitate the meetings. These responsibilities include developing agendas, keeping meeting notes, notifying members of meeting dates, locations or changes and ensuring all members are given opportunities to contribute.
2. Members recognize the importance of keeping the meeting on track and will respect the role of the facilitator. Members are responsible for ensuring cooperative and productive meetings.
3. Members understand that the facilitator will remain neutral while facilitating but will also need to participate as a representative of Ecology.
4. 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."
5. The majority of decisions will be made by consensus of a quorum of advisory group members. A quorum exists when members representing at least five different interests (see list below) are present at any point during the meeting. The Advisory Group recognizes that if members want to provide input on decisions they will attend the meeting, send an alternate, or provide their input to the facilitator prior to the meeting. For purposes of a quorum the interests include:
 - Ecology
 - Washington State University
 - City of Pullman
 - City of Colfax
 - City of Albion
 - City of Moscow
 - Whitman County
 - Whitman County Regional Health
 - Landowners
 - Livestock operators
 - Agriculture (crop)
 - Conservation Districts
 - Environmental Groups
 - Idaho Dept of Environmental Quality
 - EPA
6. If the Advisory Group is unable to reach consensus on any issue, it will consider other options:
 - 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.
 - Develop a voting procedure.