

Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee

Operating Procedures

Adopted by BAC on March 23, 2022

I. Purpose of the Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee

- A. The Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee (WWBAC) is established to provide advice and recommendations to the Tri-Sovereign governments (State of OR, State of WA, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation [CTUIR]) on the implementation of the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan and the general management of waters within the Walla Walla Basin.
- B. The WWBAC will:
- Be comprised of diverse representation.
 - Rely on consensus decision-making.
 - Engage in education and outreach to the interests they represent and to the broader community.
 - Work to build partnerships and connections to ensure outcomes that benefit the entire basin.
 - Develop advice and recommendations to the Tri-Sovereigns to meet these **desired future outcomes**:
 - ✓ Ensure long-term Walla Walla Basin watershed health.
 - ✓ Retain quality of life in the basin.
 - ✓ Achieve meaningful fish recovery.
 - ✓ Effectively invest public water resources and public funding for both instream and out-of-stream needs.
 - ✓ Manage surface water & groundwater in a coordinated and consistent manner across the bi-state Walla Walla Basin.
 - ✓ Plan for and adapt to climate change.
 - ✓ Assist and support in implementation of the WWW 2050 Strategic Plan

II. Membership

- A. The WWBAC is comprised of a diverse membership, with each member representing a larger interest group and not simply their own interests.
- B. Membership of the Committee can be found [here](#).
- C. **Alternates**
- Each seat will have one alternate. Either the member or the alternate may sit at the table for WWBAC meetings, but not both.

III. Roles and Responsibilities of WWBAC members

- A. WWBAC members will:
- Actively participate in all WWBAC meetings and contribute to discussions. Consistency in attendance is important. Remote participation will be allowed.
 - Respect and consider diverse perspectives and work to find common ground.
 - Work between meetings to educate themselves on issues. Members accept the responsibility to come to meetings prepared for the discussion.
 - Actively participate in at least one Working Group.
 - Work cooperatively with each other, the facilitator, and staff to accomplish the purpose of the WWBAC (see section I.)
 - Keep other members of your interest group informed of AC efforts, solicit input on issues discussed, and share this input with the WWBAC as a whole. This is a key responsibility of members; it is important that members represent the broad perspectives of their interest group.
 - Work to build partnerships, connections, and enthusiasm for long-term commitment to watershed health and recovery.
 - Follow the discussion Ground Rules included in Appendix A.

IV. Decision Making

- A. **Quorum:** A minimum of eleven (11) WWBAC members is necessary to constitute a quorum. A quorum is necessary for the WWBAC to make decisions or recommendations. If a quorum is not present, the meeting may continue with no actions being taken.
- B. Committee members shall abstain from decisions if they have a vested personal financial interest in the matter.
- C. The WWBAC will use consensus-based decision-making and will not rely on parliamentary procedure.
- D. The WWBAC will make all decisions with full consensus. Details on the consensus process are included in Appendix B.
- E. If any member does not consent to a decision with one of these levels of consensus, the action will not go forward. Further discussion will be encouraged to resolve disagreements and reach consensus.
- F. The meeting summary will record decision outcomes as well as member statements regarding their decisions.
- G. A member or the designated alternate must be present to participate in decisions, although remote participation will be allowed. Proxies will not be permitted.

V. Tri-Sovereign Governments

- A. The Tri-Sovereign governments are the State of Oregon, the State of Washington and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)
- B. It is the intent of the Tri-Sovereign governments to:
 - Build on decades of collaborative planning in the basin.
 - Take into account lessons learned to date.
 - Facilitate and incorporate diverse input from local, regional, state, tribal, federal, agriculture, industry, environmental, and recreation representatives.
 - Provide year-round sufficient instream water for ecological function, fish, and aquatic habitat.
 - Provide reliable water supplies for agriculture and cities in the face of climate change.
 - Advance the WWW 2050 Strategic Plan, Bi-State Flow Study, and USGS Basin Study.
 - Work towards positive outcomes for instream and out-of-stream uses.
 - Provide leadership to guide complex legal, technical, and funding challenges.
 - Maintain and improve trust between water managers and water users.
 - Promote equitable solutions to long-standing water and land management issues
 - Consider strategic plan adaptive modifications.
- C. The Tri-Sovereigns seek consensus-based advice on these efforts. The Tri-Sovereigns commit to:
 - Meeting quarterly to discuss Walla Walla watershed management issues.
 - Coordinate with CTUIR Board of Trustees and Governors' Offices.
 - Provide guidance and specific requests to the WWBAC.
 - Make decisions on recommendations provided by the WWBAC. If a recommendation is not accepted by the Tri-Sovereigns, the reasoning will be clearly communicated to the Advisory Committee, and if appropriate, include a request for revisions or reconsideration.
 - Support bi-state water management options and consult with the WWBAC.
 - Provide guidance to the technical staff of each Sovereign.
- D. The Tri-Sovereigns will each assign staff to a **Coordinating Committee** to:
 - Support and guide the work of the AC.
 - Serve as a link between the consulting teams and the AC.
 - Review and provide feedback on draft materials prepared for the WWBAC and Working Groups.
 - Ensure and enable a smooth and effective process that meets the goals and timelines.
 - Coordinate to ensure that cross-state issues are identified and addressed.

VI. Working Groups

- A. Working Groups will support the work of the WWBAC by identifying, researching, and analyzing potential actions and formulating draft recommendations for consideration by the WWBAC.

- B. Working Groups will be provided with specific assignments to provide information to the WWBAC.
- C. Representatives from each Tri-Sovereign government will participate in each Working Group.

VII. Public Participation

- A. Meetings of the WWBAC and the Working Groups will be open to the public.
- B. Non-WWBAC members may be asked by the facilitator to speak during a WWBAC meeting if they have knowledge or expertise related to the topic being discussed.
- C. At each WWBAC meeting, a public comment period will allow observers to offer comments related to issues at hand, subject to time limits stated on the agenda. During the public comment period, WWBAC members will listen to each comment and comments will be recorded. There will not be discussion.
- D. Written public comments may be submitted [online](#) or provided to Ecology staff or members of the consulting team at any WWBAC meeting.
- E. Working Group meetings are open to the public, all may participate, and will not include formal public comment opportunities.

VIII. Role of Facilitators

- A. The facilitator is an impartial individual who guides the process and facilitates meetings. The facilitator will:
 - Keep the group focused on the agreed-upon agenda.
 - Suggest alternative methods and procedures to move forward when necessary.
 - Encourage participation by all WWBAC members.
 - Halt or redirect dialogue that is disrespectful, off-topic, or dominating the conversation so that others are not able to effectively participate.
 - Ensure that WWBAC members and other meeting participants adhere to the ground rules found in Appendix A.
 - Prepare clear and concise summaries of each meeting

Appendix A

DISCUSSION GROUND RULES for WWBAC Meetings

In general, only WWBAC members may speak during the meeting. At times, the facilitator may invite a non-member who has specific knowledge or expertise to speak to the topic at hand. All attendees may speak during public comment.

All participants at WWBAC Meetings agree to:

1. Be Respectful

- Listen when others are speaking.
- Do not interrupt and do not participate in side conversations.
- One person speaks at a time.
- Recognize the legitimacy of the concerns and interests of others, whether or not you agree with them.
- Cooperate with the facilitator to ensure that everyone is given equitable time to state their views.
- Present your views succinctly and try not to repeat or rephrase what others have already said.
- Silence cell phones and refrain for using laptops during the meeting, except to take notes.

2. Be Constructive

- Participate in the spirit of giving the same priority to solving the problems of others as you do to solving your own problems.
- Share comments that are solution focused.
- Avoid repeating past discussions.
- Ask for clarification if you are uncertain of what another person is saying.

3. Be Productive

- Adhere to the agenda.
- Ask questions rather than make assumptions.
- Respect time constraints and focus on the topic being discussed.

4. Bring a Sense of Humor and Have Fun.

Appendix B

Consensus Decision Process

- The WWBAC will make all decisions with full consensus.
- The definition of consensus is:
Consensus is a group process where the input of everyone is carefully considered, and an outcome is crafted that best meets the needs of the group as a whole. The root of consensus is the word consent, which means to give permission to. When members consent to a decision, they are giving permission to the group to go ahead with the decision. Some members may disagree with all or part of the decision, but based on listening to everyone else's input, all members agree to let the decision go forward because the decision is the best one the entire group can achieve at the current time.
- The levels of consensus include:
 - I can say an unqualified "yes"! (*enthusiastic support*)
 - I can accept the decision. (*support with some reservations*)
 - I do not fully agree with the decision but I will not block it. (*significant reservations but believe it is the best the group can do*)
- Failure to reach consensus means at least one member votes to block the action from moving forward.
 - I oppose the decision and do not consent to it going forward. (*opposition*)
- The facilitator will ask for decisions to be made using the following process:
 - Thumbs up – approval
 - Thumbs sideways – (accept, can live with, will not object)
 - Thumbs down – disapproval/blocking consensus
 - Five fingers up – abstain
- If any member blocks consensus, the action will not go forward. Further discussion will be encouraged to resolve disagreements and reach consensus.
- Members will be allowed to make statements to be included in the meeting summary that explain their decision.
- A member or the designated alternate must be present to participate in decisions, although remote participation will be allowed. Proxies will not be permitted.