

WWIN Quarterly Membership Meeting 4th Quarter – June 15, 2010

WWIN – First Year Reflections; Enhance Your Participation!

Information: This is a chance to share your thoughts on how our first year has gone and provide suggestions for the coming year. This is also an opportunity to consider increasing your involvement by joining the Steering Committee or one of the existing/new Sub-committees.

To evaluate our last year, we used the WWIN ground rules as a framework for our discussion. The ground rules outline our methods for communication, participation and decision-making. We also discussed whether or not we feel we're meeting our mission.

Communication

How we communicate: at quarterly meetings and by email (emails are sent regarding quarterly meeting agendas & minutes, and for decisions needing to be made outside of meetings)

Questions asked of the group:

- ◆ Emails:
 - Do you read the emails? Why or why not?
 - What format of emails do you prefer? How are they on length and detail?
- ◆ Feedback:
 - How do you prefer to give your feedback on new projects and plans between quarterly meetings?
 - Is email working for this?

Group discussion:

- Would like more meetings if possible
- Would like meeting minutes from Steering Committee
 - Posted on the website (www.whatcomwin.org)
 - Sent through email with a reminder to visit the website
- More emails would be okay, especially with important content
- Post meeting dates on web in advance for people to schedule
- A header at the top of the email explaining what's included is helpful
- There's a good level of communication

Participation

How we participate: at quarterly meetings, on committees (Steering committee coordinates sub-committee projects and the sub-committees carry out specific actions and program needs).

◆ **Who is WWIN?**

- **The Whatcom Watershed Information Network** is a network of representatives from government agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions and citizens who are involved and interested in marine and fresh water ecosystems and natural resources education and outreach.

◆ **Organizations represented on the email list:**

- Whatcom County
- WSU Extension
- City of Bellingham
- City of Ferndale
- City of Blaine
- Sudden Valley Community Association
- Birch Bay Water and Sewer District
- Nooksack Tribe
- Lummi Tribe
- WA Department of Ecology
- WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Whatcom Public Utilities District
- Port of Bellingham
- Whatcom Conservation District
- Whatcom Land Trust
- RE Sources for Sustainable Communities
- Sustainable Connections
- Puget Sound Partnership
- Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
- Marine Life Center
- Applied Research Northwest
- Surfrider Foundation
- Soundwide Starrfish Env'l Consulting
- Northwest Indian College
- Whatcom Farm Friends
- Bellwood Acres
- Bellingham High School

Questions asked of the group:

◆ **Committees**

- How are the committees working?
- Do you feel you can become involved in a committee if you're interested?

◆ **Quarterly meetings**

- Why do you come? Motivators? Barriers?
- Time, location, length, format, announcements, agendas, minutes

◆ **General membership**

- Why did you join?
- Do you feel it benefits your organization?
- Been able to network?
- What's missing? What were you hoping for?

Group discussion:

- ◆ What are the committees? Make sure people know.
- ◆ Keep people in the loop with background info. New members may not understand the structure and scope of the organization when joining.
- ◆ Update the website and use it more
- ◆ Keep DropBox (online file sharing) for committee use and use the web for the general group
- ◆ Outreach for more participation from those already on the email list.
- ◆ Surprised to hear the number of organizations included on the email list (above).

- ◆ Why participate? To learn about new programs and resources and to collaborate
- ◆ Would like links to member organizations on the website to facilitate networking (share programs), a contact list
- ◆ Presentations at each membership meeting from participants, etc.
- ◆ Presentation from each group/organization , short, all at one meeting (annually)
- ◆ Send out a survey to increase participation
 - What will get you there?
- ◆ an evaluation (via survey) would be helpful
- ◆ define the goals of the organization to make sure communication and participation satisfies goals
- ◆ ask what members are interested in learning about

Decision-Making

How we make decisions: *Major decisions expected to be made are identified on the agenda – if a member can't attend, it's their responsibility to contact the chair with comments. All decisions will be made by consensus or, if consensus cannot be made, by majority vote.*

Questions asked of the group:

- ◆ Do you feel like you're part of the decision-making process?
- ◆ Do you feel like you can become part of the decision-making process?

Group discussion:

- Ask for more feedback on decisions and we may get more participation

Are we meeting our mission?

Our primary mission is to support and improve watershed education, stewardship, information exchange and public involvement efforts in Whatcom County.

Group discussion:

- Yes. We're following our work plan and we exist.
- Do we have a strategic plan?
- We need to increase participation
- Yes. We have information exchange, we can ask questions, we have additional resources.
- We should call other major players that we'd like to see more involved
- We need to identify the barriers to becoming involved with WWIN
- WWIN can be a vehicle for communicating common goals and objectives

- Can we get the objectives from the group as a whole?
- What is our purpose? Why?

Additional comments:

- If a survey or questionnaire is given, ask open-ended questions and give people a chance to respond to details
- Check with goals and evaluation process (from Project Design and Evaluation workshop) to make sure this group is effective
- This group could help to coordinate organizations working together on grants, so as not to compete for funding