



Puyallup Watershed Initiative
Environmental Education

Environmental Education Community of Interest Working Agreement (Last updated November 2016)

INTRODUCTION

THIS WORKING AGREEMENT (“Agreement”) is made and entered into by organizations committed to the values, principles, activities, and desired outcomes of the Environmental Education Community of Interest (EECOI). It memorializes the shared understanding by organizations and individuals participating in the EECOI about how participants intend to work collaboratively to advance the community effort known as the Puyallup Watershed Initiative (PWI). The Agreement is not intended to function as a legally binding document, but rather as a mutually agreed upon system for self-governance, collaboration, and thought sharing.

BACKGROUND

The Puyallup Watershed Initiative

In 2012, The Russell Family Foundation (TRFF) launched a new 10-year commitment to work hand-in-hand with people in the Puyallup River Watershed to secure a healthy and sustainable future. TRFF’s overarching goal is to improve and protect water quality and ecological and community resilience, but the diverse watershed community must lead the way in determining how to achieve the identified goals. The PWI is an invitation to people and organizations to work together to identify social and environmental challenges affecting the watershed, decide how best to tackle them, and then do so. TRFF supports collaborations that bring together differing viewpoints to foster shared goals and understanding, which cast aside predetermined ideas, assumptions, and notions. The PWI will spark new conversations and actionable 10-year strategies.

Above all, TRFF aims to strengthen and expand the capacity of people and organizations to work cooperatively toward a sustainable future for everyone. TRFF hopes that the PWI will help create a new model for communities to come together and tackle issues that once seemed beyond reach. Rather than focusing on funding individual projects proposed by a single organization, the PWI intentionally seeks out self-defined and self-organized groups of individuals and organizations with common or overlapping interests. The groups must practice inclusivity and demonstrate openness to new ideas and partners. For the purpose of the PWI, the groups – to be known as “Communities of Interest” (COIs) – defined as groups of individuals, organizations, and/or partnerships that share specific values, interests, or concerns related to the health of the watershed and its communities.

The Environmental Education Community of Interest

EECOI members’ professions, skill-sets, and interests cover a large range of domains, including but not limited to: facilitation, stewardship, classroom teaching, lecturing, curriculum writing, specialized education, and field experiences. EECOI members are united by a belief that



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environmental education programs are a strong tool for educators to help bring environmental awareness to the residents of the Puyallup River Watershed (“Watershed”) and to reconnect people to their place in the Watershed. The EECOI is prepared to turn a disjointed, inconsistent system of watershed education into a cohesive collaboration with a whole-systems perspective that can effectively reach every audience in the Watershed with comprehensive and compelling messages. The EECOI will work to provide access for residents of all ages to discover, connect, and contribute to their sense of place in the Watershed.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE EECOI

An underlying intention of the PWI is that community organizations can come together to identify a set of shared values and operating principles. Members will uphold these shared values and principles during a dynamic process of collaboration and innovation. All COIs are built upon the shared principles of open, transparent communication; inclusivity; equity through consensus building; and adaptive management.

Additionally, the EECOI members developed the following shared values during the visioning process to guide strategies, objectives, and activities:

1. Understanding and Appreciation
2. Stewardship
3. Equity
4. Empowerment, Action, and Engagement

GENERAL OPERATIONS

EECOI MEMBERSHIP

EECOI membership is open to any resident or interested individual or organization within the Watershed. The EECOI strives to have members that reflect the diverse Puyallup River Watershed constituents. Members do not need to receive funding to be members of the EECOI. Each member will sign the Agreement as a commitment to the vision, values, and goals of the EECOI. Each member will exert all reasonable effort to:

1. Work collaboratively to ensure successful implementation of EECOI strategies, objectives, and activities.
2. Attend meetings regularly.
3. Participate on special task forces or sub-committees, as needed and able.
4. Provide feedback to the EECOI Manager on major decisions, as requested, and to the EECOI Steering Committee if needed.
5. Communicate organization and/or individual professional news to the EECOI Manager that may affect the EECOI’s ability to carry out strategies, objectives, and/or activities; such news might include policy or strategy changes, investments or funding shifts, etc.
6. Contribute to EECOI annual reports (when applicable).

DECISION-MAKING BODY/PROCESS

The EECOI consists of many members as well as robust strategies and objectives developed through the visioning process. In order to progress strategies, objectives, and efforts towards achieving the EECOI vision the decision-making process includes a Steering Committee and entire EECOI component. The Steering Committee will operate under the bylaws attached to the



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Agreement as Exhibit B (“Steering Committee Bylaws”). The entire EECOI will review the Steering Committee Bylaws and Working Agreement annually to ensure the documents continue to provide the appropriate level of guidance for successful self-governance.

Decision-making by the entire EECOI shall be through consensus to the extent possible, with final decisions made by majority vote through in-person or online voting. There is no minimum attendance to vote as a member of the EECOI, but a member must sign the Agreement prior to voting on a given item(s). The entire EECOI shall make decisions on the following:

1. Approval of Steering Committee Bylaws;
2. Approval of annual work plans submitted to TRFF for funding determination;
3. Approval of EECOI Steering Committee members (not including unscheduled vacancy appointments, see Exhibit B for more information);
4. Approval of funding change requests within an annual work plan approved by TRFF previously;
5. Approval of year-end report compiled for TRFF; and
6. A general clause?

Members vote as individuals, not as representatives of the organization in which they are a part. For example, if there are several EECOI members from one entity (e.g. Pierce County), each individual receives one vote, rather than the entity receiving one vote comprised of all individual members present.

To the extent possible, the items identified above for vote by the entire EECOI will take place through in-person voting, but when necessary and appropriate, decisions on items identified above may be made through online voting. All votes shall be considered open, except Steering Committee member elections (see Exhibit B for more information), unless a member requests a closed (or “secret”) vote. In general, votes received after the identified voting period will not be considered. The following details the procedures for in-person and online voting.

1. **In-person Voting:** Members will receive at least ten (10) business days notice prior to EECOI meetings in which voting will take place to allow for the largest representation of the entire EECOI. Members will receive a final agenda and any necessary documents for decision-making at least five (5) business days in advance of the scheduled meeting date. The EECOI Manager will accept online comment during the five (5) business days leading up to the scheduled meeting for contribution from members who are unable to attend in-person. A majority of the members in attendance will constitute a quorum for all meetings of the entire EECOI.
2. **Online Voting:** All members will receive at least ten (10) business days to place a vote through the online process. The majority of member votes placed during the voting period shall determine the results. Decisions allowing members to select more than one item (i.e. Steering Committee member elections) shall be determined by the items that receive the highest number of votes during the voting period.



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COI OPERATIONS

The entire EECOI will convene for at least four (4) meetings per year. Meetings of the entire EECOI can be facilitated by a neutral, third party entity, when requested. The meeting agendas will be determined through input provided by project leads, the Steering Committee, and EECOI Manager.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Any joint intellectual property and promotional materials or products, such as written reports or briefs, created for the purposes of the EECOI are considered open source. The EECOI's goal is to encourage sharing and collaboration rather than proprietary ownership and competition.

Materials and products will be available to other COIs specifically for the purpose of learning, replication, and use towards completion of the COI's own objectives.

TERMINATION

While the members to the Agreement agree, in good faith, to pursue the purposes of the EECOI as outlined in the Agreement, all parties recognize that a member may determine their strategic interests are no longer in alignment with the EECOI. In that event, the member may sever its relationship with the EECOI. To do so, the terminating member agrees to:

1. Meet with the EECOI Manager
2. Give notice in writing to the EECOI Manager at least ten (10) business days in advance of severing the relationship;
3. Return any and all unspent funds under the member's control to the grants administrator, if applicable;
4. Make available to the Steering Committee all documents and communications, which may be necessary for the EECOI to complete set strategies and objectives.



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Exhibit A
AUTHORIZATION
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY OF INTEREST MEMBERS

I have read and agree with terms of the EECOI 2017 Working Agreement and Steering Committee Bylaws. By agreeing to these terms I am able to vote on EECOI's decisions online or in-person.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

* Email address provided will be used only for distribution of online voting opportunities and other pertinent EECOI materials and announcements.

- I allow my contact information to be shared with other EECOI members.
- I allow my contact information to be shared with The Russell Family Foundation.

EXHIBIT B

BYLAWS

Environmental Education Community of Interest Steering Committee

Purpose

The purpose of the Environmental Education Community of Interest (EECOI) Steering Committee (“Committee”) is to provide oversight and guidance for efforts undertaken by the EECOI as part of the Puyallup Watershed Initiative funded by The Russell Family Foundation.

Membership

The Committee shall have an odd number of members, either nine (9) or eleven (11), and, as much as possible, representation on the Committee shall reflect the diversity of the people and organizations participating in the EECOI.

Election

Any EECOI member may be nominated for the Committee. Nominees must approve such nomination. Elections will be held yearly in December with all EECOI members eligible to vote electronically. Statements from candidates will be solicited for this purpose and circulated.

Terms

Members will serve three (3) year terms. Members shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Attendance

Members are required to attend at least 60% of all EECOI meetings, including Committee meetings and whole EECOI meetings. Members who do not participate in at least 60% of all meetings may be removed from the Committee.

Resignation/Removal

A Committee member, may resign from their position should it become difficult to carry out the duties described. Resignations shall be in writing to the EECOI Manager, and if possible at least one month in advance of vacating the position.

Any member of the Committee may be removed through a two-thirds vote of the Committee members. Grounds for dismissal may include lack of significant participation in the duties of the Committee, inappropriate use of their authority as a member/, or behavior that is deemed to interfere with the success of the EECOI mission. Grounds for removal shall be communicated to the leadership of the Puyallup Watershed Initiative in a confidential form.

Funding

If a Committee member resigns or is removed, the portion of the stipend for the uncompleted term must be returned to the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation or designated fiscal entity. These unused funds will be reallocated to the new member.

Vacancy

The Committee may fill any unscheduled vacancy on the Committee without a vote of the EECOI members as a whole, and members who fill a vacant Committee position shall serve for the remainder of the term of the member replaced. This shall be in accordance with the Membership guidelines above and shall require a majority vote of remaining Committee members. If a majority cannot be reached the Committee will continue discussions until a majority can be reached. If this does not result in a decision than a vote may be sent to the whole EECOI to fill the vacant position.

Duties

The Committee who shall use their best efforts to set direction, define the EECOI's future, serve as a link from the EECOI to the community, and support the EECOI. In general, the Committee's duties include:

- Put the EECOI's interests before any Committee member's personal, business or financial interests,
- Hire/dismiss, support, and evaluate the EECOI Manager and staff,
- Ensure the EECOI has appropriate operating policies,
- Participate annually in evaluating and improving Committee performance
- Assist in Committee development through relationship building and cultivation of future Committee members,
- Build the EECOI reputation and be an advocate in the community
- Develop agendas for EECOI meetings

Meetings

Meetings of the Committee shall be held monthly at such times and places as the Steering Committee may choose. Options for attending via teleconference or similar means shall be provided if feasible and appropriate to the Committee agenda. A draft agenda will be circulated five (5) business days in advance of any Committee meeting by the EECOI Manager and proposed additions to the agenda may be submitted in writing.

Committee Actions

Decisions of the Committee will be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the agreement of a super-majority, three-quarters of the Committee members present, shall be necessary to approve an action of the Committee.

Quorum

A majority of the Committee members will constitute a quorum for all meetings of the Committee.

Minutes

A written record (minutes) of all Committee meetings shall be made available to all EECOI members in electronic format.

Staffing

The Committee may designate/hire personnel to serve as staff to the Committee. Such staff shall implement the decisions of the Committee and perform duties that may be assigned by the Committee. The Committee shall solicit applications from as diverse and geographically broad a group as possible for any such positions.

Amendment to Bylaws

Amendments to these Bylaws may be initiated by a majority of the Committee or by petition of at least ten percent (10%) of active members in the EECOI. Proposed amendments shall then be considered by the Committee, which will make a report and recommendation for a vote by the EECOI as a whole.