

Appendix 5 Meeting Ground Rules

Ground Rules

Summary

The Tujunga Watershed Management Plan (the Plan) will describe opportunities to: enhance water percolation; improve water quality; restore habitat; and increase urban parks and recreation opportunities in the Tujunga watershed. It will involve local and regional stakeholders in a Steering Committee (the Committee) to advise project staff, agencies/organizations responsible for implementation, and others on the development of the Plan. Completing the Plan will depend on a significant amount of time, energy, and creativity from Steering committee members.

The committee will meet periodically as the plan develops and advise project staff on the content of the plan and its presentation to the public and stakeholders. The committee will provide feedback on draft project documents leading to the formulation of the plan. Our intent is to have a Steering Committee that interacts positively and constructively to further the goals of the project and to represent the interests of the larger community of stakeholders.

The ground rules described here are intended to guide this process.

Steering Committee Members

The committee members will represent the stakeholders' interests in the watershed in the development of the plan. Stakeholder participation is strongly encouraged to enable and ensure that the committee outcomes represent the broad spectrum of the diverse community. The Committee will include participants from the following categories:

- Community Interest Groups/Individuals
- Business and Commercial Interests
- Local Governmental Agencies
- Federal and State Agencies

Ground Rules & Decision-Making Process

Because committee members represent a broad diversity of interests and viewpoints, we expect that committee members may have strong opinions on particular issues that differ from those of other members. We ask that committee members respect the viewpoints of others, so that all viewpoints will be respectfully heard and considered. We ask that Committee members listen first to gain understanding of what is being said, before judging or expressing disagreement. By following the ground rules listed below, Committee members will be able to work in an atmosphere where ideas and positions can be freely discussed, creating an environment that fosters consensus building.

Membership and Participation

1. Recognize that this effort will require significant time and commitment. Members will be required to actively participate in steering committee meetings, complete work needed for the plan, and represent and keep their respective organizations and agencies informed on the project.
2. Bring to the table the legitimate purposes, goals and agendas of their organizations. Recognize the legitimacy of the goals of others and assume that their own goals will also be respected.
3. Cooperate and coordinate with one another in constructively addressing the social, economic and environmental and public health concerns in the watershed, while respecting the mission, roles and rights of each entity.
4. Members or their designated alternate will be expected to attend at least 3 out of 5 consecutive meetings. A steering committee member wishing to leave this process will communicate with the facilitators, project manager or the steering committee as a whole to see whether another solution can be found.
5. New members who wish to join the established group agree to review all previous meeting notes, handouts and other material (such as video tapes) previously reviewed by the group, and attend a briefing session with the facilitator or other representative of the team prior to the meeting.

Meetings

1. Give the meeting your full attention. Turn off all pagers and cell phones at the start of each meeting. Commit to arriving on time, starting and ending the meeting on time, and returning from breaks on time.
2. Commit to listening carefully, asking questions to understand, and making statements to explain or educate. Allow one person shall speak at a time, with no interruptions from other members. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
3. Search for opportunities to collaborate on alternative solutions. Give the process as much strength as possible; dare to be creative and put fearless ideas on the table. Commit to giving input at each meeting, but not to dominate a discussion.
4. Understand that the facilitator has a responsibility to keep the meeting on agenda. Hence, he or she may limit the amount of time for discussion for any item. Any steering committee members wishing to continue the discussion may ask that this be placed on the subsequent agenda. Any committee member wishing to add an item to the agenda will inform the project manager 10 days prior to the meeting.

Collaboration and decision making

1. Fully commit to striving to reach consensus. Though we will try for unanimous agreement, members agree that consensus can be defined as agreement or approval by the preponderance of those present, with those who disagree willing to abide by the decision of the committee.
2. If the committee cannot achieve consensus on a particular issue after three meetings, the committee will not make recommendations on that issue, and the plan will document the lack of consensus and describe the concerns raised by the members.
3. While we will always strive for consensus, a vote may be taken for minor procedural matters such as setting the meeting time.

Participation outside meetings

1. Work to keep the stakeholders they represent informed about plan development and accomplishments. Members will actively solicit opinions and ideas from the larger stakeholder community they represent and bring those to the meetings. They will also stay informed if they miss a meeting, and educate their alternates prior to sending them to a meeting.
2. Be mindful of the impacts their public and private statements will have on the climate of this effort. To the extent possible, communication with the media concerning discussions in steering committee meetings will occur upon agreement of the group. Communications with anyone concerning discussions in steering committee meetings should be conducted in a manner that is respectful and constructive. Strive to cross-pollinate, not cross-contaminate.