

THURSTON VSP GROUND RULES

Ground rules should be used at every meeting. It is both the facilitator and the Participants' responsibility to see that the ground rules are followed.

1. **Decision-making** - All members are expected to participate in all phases of discussions and decisions. Active voting members will endeavor in good faith to reach decisions by consensus on issues. Consensus shall consist of all voting members present, less the support of no more than two voting stakeholder members actively participating, to approve a decision. Those disagreeing may submit a position statement for inclusion in the records of the workgroup. Active participation for purposes of voting shall be defined as consistent attendance – not more than one unexcused absence in the previous three scheduled meetings.
2. **Respect for Interests** - The Thurston Voluntary Stewardship Workgroup members represent a full range of interests related to protecting critical areas and sustainable agriculture in Thurston County. Every idea has merit; all the members recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of the other members and expect that their interests will also be respected.
3. **Suspend Assumptions, Listen Carefully, Speak to Educate** - The members commit to suspending assumptions about each other's interests, to listen carefully to each other, to recognize each person's concerns, to ask questions for clarification, and to make statements that attempt to educate or explain.
4. **Creativity** - The members commit to search for opportunities, options, and alternatives. The creativity of the group often finds the best solution.
5. **Open Dialogue** - The members agree that they have a responsibility to discuss the issues and plan development, and to use open and candid communication with each other. The purpose of the frank discussion is to bring issues out in the open, provide greater understanding of member's perspectives, share insights, reduce hostilities, and build trust.
6. **Working with Media and Public** - No individual member will speak on behalf of the WorkGroup without the consent of the group. Press releases may be issued from time to time based on decisions of the group. Individual members are, however, encouraged to discuss the WorkGroup activities and the Thurston VSP project with others, so long as they do not claim to represent the WorkGroup.
7. **Advisory Process, Open Meetings** - All committee meetings will be open to the public. Observers are welcome to attend the committee meetings. The WorkGroup will occasionally schedule special meetings to provide information to

the public and to solicit public comment and feedback. Summaries of each meeting and important decision will be posted on the WorkGroup website.

8. **Freedom to Disagree** - The members agree to disagree. The point of our interaction together is to foster open discussion of ideas. We need to respect each other's right to disagree so this can happen.
9. **Speaking** - One person will speak at a time, and Facilitators will make every effort to assure that everyone will have an opportunity to speak. The facilitator will recognize each speaker.
10. **Attendance** - Attendance is critical to the success of this planning process. Each member will take the responsibility to get the information they missed due to an absence. Non-(poor) attendance leaves an interest without a representative. Members may waive the opportunity to participate in decisions due to lack of attendance.
11. **Vulnerability Acknowledged** - When people are candid with each other it can make them vulnerable. Members agree that what is said during the committee meetings is to bring all the issues "to the table." The information will not be used against the individual at a later time.
12. **Responsibility to meet needs** - Each member will take the responsibility for getting their needs met, for getting the needs of those they represent met, and for getting the needs of the other members met.
13. **Responsible statements** - Committee members are responsible for the statements that they make to the other committee members as well as to the public regarding the work of the committee.
14. **Start on time** - Committee members agree to start the meetings on time and end them on time.
15. **Humor & Miscellaneous** - We agree that humor is appreciated and welcome. We commit to having fun and encouraging it in others.

Unless there's an emergency responding to pagers, cell phones, telephone messages, etc. will wait until the members are on a break, or the meeting is over.