

*Washington Forum on Monitoring*  
*September 11, 2009*

**AGENDA Item # 3**

**Forum Business Rules**

**Presentation by:**

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**Problem/Issue Statement**

The Forum operates primarily as a coordination body, but under several circumstances it is required to adopt policy positions or make formal recommendations as a body. This includes the requirements under RCW 77.85.250 to make recommendations to OFM and the legislature on agency budget requests related to monitoring, and to adopt high-level indicators and protocols.

While the Forum developed an initial charter document in 2004, it has not addressed business rules governing procedures to reach formal positions with regard to recommendations, endorsements, or policy positions.

**Methods/Solutions Proposed**

RCO staff presented a first draft of proposed business rules at the June 24 meeting. That draft has been revised to incorporate comments from the ensuing forum discussion.

**What decision is asked of the Forum?**

Approve the revised set of business rules and decision procedures (with or without additional edits) to support the Forum's required policy functions.

# Washington Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health

## Charter and Operating Guidelines Adopted September 11, 2009

### **Purpose of the Forum**

The Forum provides a multiagency venue for coordinating technical and policy issues and actions related to monitoring salmon recovery and watershed health.

The Forum is directed by state law to implement the *Washington Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy and Action Plan for Watershed Health and Salmon Recovery*. 2SHB 2157 (2009), amending RCW 77.85.250.

### **Statutory Membership**

State law says the Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health (Forum) is composed of the following organizations:

- Department of Ecology
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board
- Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Department of Natural Resources
- Puget Sound Partnership
- Washington Conservation Commission
- Washington Department of Agriculture
- Washington Department of Transportation
- Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
- Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board
- Snake River Salmon Recovery Board
- Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board
- Hood Canal Coordinating Council
- Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership

### **Membership by Invitation**

The forum shall invite the participation of federal, tribal, regional, and local agencies and entities that carry out salmon recovery and watershed health monitoring (RCW 77.85.250(5)). Invitees will have full rights as voting members of the forum, or may elect to serve on an *ex officio* basis as need be, if voting creates a conflict of interest or conflict of authorities. A list of invited members shall be kept current by RCO staff.

**Representatives**

Each member of the forum shall designate a single representative. If the designated representative is unable to attend a forum meeting, the forum will allow a substitute to participate as a full member of the forum if the representative or the representative's organization so directs.

Representatives serve until replaced by their organization.

**Forum Members' Responsibility**

Forum members are expected to have a representative at each meeting. Forum representatives are expected to bring their agency or entity's perspective and position to the meetings, and to communicate the results of the meetings to the agency or entity they represent.

**Quorum**

For the Forum to take official action, a quorum of voting Forum members must have a representative present in person or by telecommunication. A quorum is a majority (51%) of the voting members. A meeting of a quorum, whether in person or electronically and, depending on the nature of the meeting, may be subject to the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act. If a quorum is not present, the only actions that may legally be taken are to fix a time of adjournment, adjourn, recess, or take measures to obtain a quorum.

**Actions of the Forum**

The Forum will work to meet the requirements of RCW 77.85.250, as amended by 2SHB 2157. These include (but are not limited to):

- Making recommendations to the office of financial management and the appropriate legislative committees on agency budget requests related to monitoring salmon recovery and watershed health. The goal of this review is to prioritize and integrate budget requests across agencies.
- Adopting general high-level indicators for salmon recovery and watershed health in Washington, and protocols for monitoring these high-level indicators that will enable state-conducted or state-funded monitoring efforts to be capable of reporting results that will ensure reporting consistency and agency compliance under the consolidated reporting requirement of RCW 77.85.020.
- Indicating how the general high-level indicators are consistent with, and complement, the more detailed regional and local metrics used to measure watershed health and salmon recovery. High-level indicators shall inform a nontechnical summary of key metrics that indicate the state of salmon recovery and provide an index of watershed health in Washington.

**Decision Making**

In doing its work, the forum will operate by consensus as much as possible. For the purposes of the Forum, consensus is defined as a lack of opposition of all representatives. Representatives should express their reservations, and then express their willingness to “go along” with the majority whenever possible. The Chair will ensure that every representative has had a chance to voice his or her opinion before declaring that a consensus has been reached.

Consensus has not been reached if more than one representative is unwilling to support the decision or if more than one member expresses active opposition to the decision. If consensus cannot be reached, voting according to Robert’s Rules of Order will be used if a majority of the members present agree. If so desired, a minority or dissenting opinion will be included in the official record of the forum and any report or recommendation adopted by the forum by vote rather than consensus.

The forum may designate types of decisions that require consensus, a simple majority vote, or a super majority vote. Each statutory or invited member organization has one vote except any invited members serving in an *ex officio* capacity.

**Agreements**

All agreements or recommendations are tentative until the end of the process, at which time the Forum will review them in whole before finalizing them. During the process, recommendations will only be revisited by agreement of the Forum.

**Ethics**

The requirements of state ethics laws apply to all Forum representatives operating in their Forum role. (See RCW43.52 and the reference resources at the website for the Executive Ethics Board, <http://ethics.wa.gov/>.) The laws include prohibitions against conflicts of interest, acceptance of most gifts, and release of confidential information. The Forum will strive to maintain full awareness and compliance with these requirements in the conduct of its work.

**Travel and Other Reimbursement**

Forum representatives are expected to seek reimbursement of travel and other expenses from their respective organizations.