

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHARTER**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Farmland Preservation</b>
<b>REFERENCE:</b>	<b>RCW 79A.15.130; WAC 286-27</b>
<b>RCFB POLICY MANUAL:</b>	<b>#10f - WWRP – Farmland Preservation Program</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	<b>December 15, 2011</b>
<b>SUPERSEDES:</b>	<i>May 12, 2008 version</i>
<b>APPROVED:</b>	<i>[Signature]</i>

PURPOSE

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Farmland Preservation Advisory Committee (advisory committee) advises the Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) director regarding issues that affect the WWRP Farmland Preservation grant program, including:

- ▶ Policies;
- ▶ Procedures;
- ▶ Project Selection;
- ▶ Legislative Issues; and
- ▶ Statewide Planning.

TASK and FUNCTION

In order to accomplish its purpose, the advisory committee:

- ▶ Assists in the development and application of program policies and procedures;
- ▶ Provides counsel on legislative issues and statewide planning;
- ▶ Provides recommendations as needed on allowable uses of grant project sites;
- ▶ Provides technical counsel on project merits; and
- ▶ Evaluates and ranks grant requests for funding.

The advisory committee uses the project selection process adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) to evaluate and rank grant requests. The director considers the advisory committee's grant evaluations as advice when recommending projects to the board.

ADMINISTRATION

The director assigns a liaison to the advisory committee to provide administrative support, including arranging meetings, writing meeting summaries, and providing information on issues and grant requests.

## MEMBER DUTIES

Advisory committee members represent the interests and views of their respective farming or ranching organizations or interests. Members also help to achieve program policies, goals, and objectives as established in this charter, the program manuals, and other relevant rules and documents.

Advisory committee member tasks are limited to those requested by RCO. Members must not use committee time to advocate for personal goals. Members do not represent RCO or the advisory committee in external forums or deliberations.

## STANDING and COMPOSITION

Advisory committee members have equal status and shall share fully in all activities and duties. The advisory committee shall have 14 members:

- ▶ One position: agricultural professional representative;
- ▶ Up to 10 positions: farming or ranching representatives;
- ▶ One position: professional knowledgeable in land transactions and planning;
- ▶ One position: representing the Washington State Conservation Commission; and
- ▶ One ex-officio position representing the US Department of Agriculture.

Along with farming or ranching expertise, RCO's Director will work to ensure that appointees represent the full range of Washington's geographic, cultural, gender, physical ability, and age characteristics. The director may appoint additional ex-officio members and special study or advisory committee members as necessary.

## ETHICS

Advisory committee members must uphold a high ethical standard. It is extremely important to avoid both the appearance and actual conflicts of interest.

A conflict of interest occurs when a member has a private interest that may benefit from that member's actions, or when a private interest could interfere with the member's duties on behalf of RCO. Such interests do not need to be financial. Members must not make decisions in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Members can avoid conflicts of interest and other ethical problems by being aware of statutory restrictions, adhering to such restrictions, using good judgment, and being fair and equitable in decision-making. Carefully review Chapter 42.52 RCW, the statutory Code of Ethics for Public Officials.

Because RCO is involved in making grants, it is a "section 4" agency, which means that the stricter provisions of the ethics law apply. Limitations are summarized below (see RCW 42.52.150 for full reference). Staff and members of the advisory committee may accept only very limited items from a person seeking to provide goods or services to RCO, or a person who is a grant sponsor or potential sponsor. The limited items that may be accepted are:

- ▶ Unsolicited promotional items of nominal value (e.g., pens) or tokens of appreciation (e.g., plaque or wall memento); and
- ▶ Informational material, publications, or subscriptions related to the member's performance of official advisory committee duties.

Members are not allowed to accept:

- ▶ Payments for expenses incurred in connection with a speech, presentation, or appearance made as an advisory committee member; and
- ▶ Payments for seminars and educational programs; or
- ▶ Flowers, plants, and floral arrangements.

On occasion advisory committee members may represent an agency or organization that brings an application before the advisory committee for evaluation. In this circumstance the advisory committee member's organization or agency must have other staff present the project. The advisory committee member must score all projects including its own using RCFB adopted criteria.

#### ATTRIBUTES

RCO shall seek advisory committee members who:

- ▶ Are available for, and have a high interest in, advisory committee participation;
- ▶ Are knowledgeable and experienced in the activities and issues that relate to the respective RCO program;
- ▶ Demonstrate an ability to be creative in seeking solutions;
- ▶ Have an interest in public policy issues; and
- ▶ Work for the greater good of the program.

#### OUT OF STATE APPLICANTS

Unless specifically approved by the director, only Washington state residents may serve on this advisory committee. Proof of residency<sup>1</sup> includes any of the following:

- ▶ Home utility bill or related work order (such as gas, electrical, water, landline phone, or cable media) listing only the applicant's name and dated within the last 60 days;
- ▶ Tribal identification listing current residence; or
- ▶ Washington state driver's license, instruction permit, or identification card.

In considering waiving the residency requirement, the director considers such factors as:

- ▶ The number of qualified in-state candidates for the vacancy;
- ▶ The candidate's unique or especially relevant experience or qualifications;
- ▶ The candidate's familiarity with the issues addressed by this committee;
- ▶ The candidate's in-state associations, including:
  - ▶ Amount of time spent in-state, including participating in recreation;
  - ▶ Whether a residence is maintained in-state;
  - ▶ Relevant memberships, affiliations, and interests; and/or
  - ▶ Expressions of support (letters, petitions, etc.).

#### APPOINTMENTS

The Director appoints members based on an assessment that includes:

- ▶ Advice from RCO staff and other parties;
- ▶ Applicant attributes (as described above);
- ▶ Endorsements from organized groups;

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<sup>1</sup> For a more comprehensive listing, visit <http://www.dol.wa.gov/> (proof of identity and residency).

- ▶ Previous performance history (meeting attendance, participation/contributions); and
- ▶ Review of the application for advisory committee membership.

#### TERMS

Members will serve a term of four years. Member terms will overlap to ensure continuity of experience on the committee. The director may reappoint members to one additional term, for a maximum of eight years of service. Any additional years of service will be at the discretion of the director. Members who work for other state or federal agencies serve at the pleasure of their agency head.

#### REMOVAL

The director may dismiss any advisory committee member for reasons including, but not limited to, lack of participation in committee activities, an unexcused absence from annual meetings, and actions that are contrary to RCO's mission, the advisory committee's charter, or RCO statutes and policies.

#### MEETINGS

Typically, RCO staff facilitates advisory committee meetings. Advisory committee decisions are made by general agreement. While RCO staff members do not vote, their participation is encouraged.

#### PROJECT EVALUATIONS

RCO's goal is to have at least ten advisory committee members available for review and evaluation of project applications.

Individual committee members' project evaluation scores are not reported with the funding recommendation that staff presents to the board.

#### REIMBURSEMENTS

Advisory committee members receive no pay for committee participation. However, reimbursement for travel and per diem costs commensurate with state employee rates may be available for citizen members and those local agency representatives whose agencies cannot absorb the cost. Reimbursement is typically not available for state or federal government representatives without expressed approval of the director or deputy director.