

Pend Oreille County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

Work Group GROUND RULES

(Updated Draft March 12, 2018)

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

1. **Respect for Interests** – The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Work Group (the Work Group) members represent a full range of interests related to protecting critical areas and sustainable agriculture in Pend Oreille County. Suspend assumptions, listen carefully, and speak to educate.
2. **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.
3. **Communications with media** – No individual member will speak to the media as a representative of the Work Group without the consent of the group.
4. **Decision-making** – All members are expected to participate in all phases of discussions and decisions. The Work Group will work together to achieve consensus on VSP work plan elements. The Work Group will operate by consensus. Consensus is defined as a decision that falls within the “endorsement” to “formal disagreement but will go with majority”.
 - a. A simple majority is required for a quorum per the WA Open Public Meetings Act ; informational meetings can still be held without a full quorum present
 - b. A simple majority quorum must be present (a person may participate remotely by phone or internet also) for decisions to be made. A quorum exists for a meeting if there is a simple majority of the Work Group present for the meeting. If a quorum does not exist, the members present shall decide whether to continue with an informal discussion of the agenda for the meeting.
 - c. Agendas will be distributed in advance, and all items where a decision or vote is needed must be officially added to the agenda.
 - d. If the Work Group is unable to reach consensus on any issue, it will consider other options:
 - i. Table the issue temporarily, and revisit it during a subsequent meeting.
 - ii. Take an advisory or “straw” vote to help the Work Group decide what action to take next
 - iii. Leave the issue unresolved and note it as such. The option of providing a minority report is available as an option.
 - e. If consensus cannot be reached, a voting process may also be used to resolve issues. Voting will occur by a hand-count. Each member will be identified in meeting notes by name with their vote. An affirmative vote will be based on simple majority plus 1 approval of the voting members present.

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- i. State government and Federal agency representatives are Ex Officio members, and as such will not be voting members.