

RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL
Public Meeting
Friday, June 26, 1998

Watershed Council Purpose and Mission

- The Council must be able to make decisions and influence policy and budgets, not just be advisory.
- We need to move beyond “business as usual;” must be willing to compromise.
- What about projects and issues that need addressing right now? We can't wait for the Council to get started to address these.
- The Council should base its decisions on sound science.
- The Council should develop policy and enforcement strategies.
- The Council should be concerned with a comprehensive review of decisions on the watershed, including agency permitting and regulatory decisions. There is a concern about “parallel tracks.”
- Add “To decide how” at the beginning of the mission statement.
- Provide a forum for interests to communicate and collaborate.
- Include educating the community about river issues.
- Include a long policy timeframe for recommendations.
- The Council should develop principles to screen policies and projects to ensure the functioning of the watershed (and gain the commitment of agencies to use principles).
- The Council should create a 100-year vision for the River.
- Realize that there is no economy without a healthy ecology.

Watershed Council Structure

- Create focused groups for tributaries.
- What is the timeframe for this Council?
- Do ex officio members have commitment of their agencies? If not, it seems pointless to have them there.
- The Council should choose its own staff.
- Need a commitment to a long, sustained effort, not a one-time deal.
- Call this the “Watershed Management Group.”
- Use a consensus-based process.
- We need a scientifically-based facilitation and conflict resolution process.
- Create decision systems to move Council toward consensus.
- Ensure even representation of environmental and economic interests to “force” compromise.

- The Council should not be dependent on agency funding; should develop funds that don't limit its autonomy.
- Include public agencies on Council to ensure coordination. And agencies commit to bringing all decisions to Council.
- Agencies should compose no more than 2% of the group.
- Don't limit the size of the group.
- Expand interest groups' numbers.
- Include property owners.
- Include River Runners and Eel River issues.
- Include educators.
- Eliminate "public" members.
- Keep "public" as "unaffiliated" members.
- Address geographic split.
- Include cities outside Santa Rosa.
- Look at interest groups competing for water.
- Create opportunities for the public at large to keep informed/attend meetings/view community access television/visit web page.
- Recognize and build on the work of the local RCDs. We don't need a centralized process.
- Workgroups should be both Council-initiated and self-initiated.