

Sustainable Governance Worksheet

Answer these questions in each box below:

1) How is this currently decided? (Intentionally or by default)?

2) Who currently decides?

3) When in your annual calendar should a decision be made?

Setting Long Term Direction: Review Strategic and/or Watershed Plan

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Setting Annual Priorities (both Internal & Programmatic)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Evaluating Effectiveness of Organization

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Setting and Monitoring Budget

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Setting and Implementing Fundraising Plan

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Recruiting, electing and orienting new Board Members

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

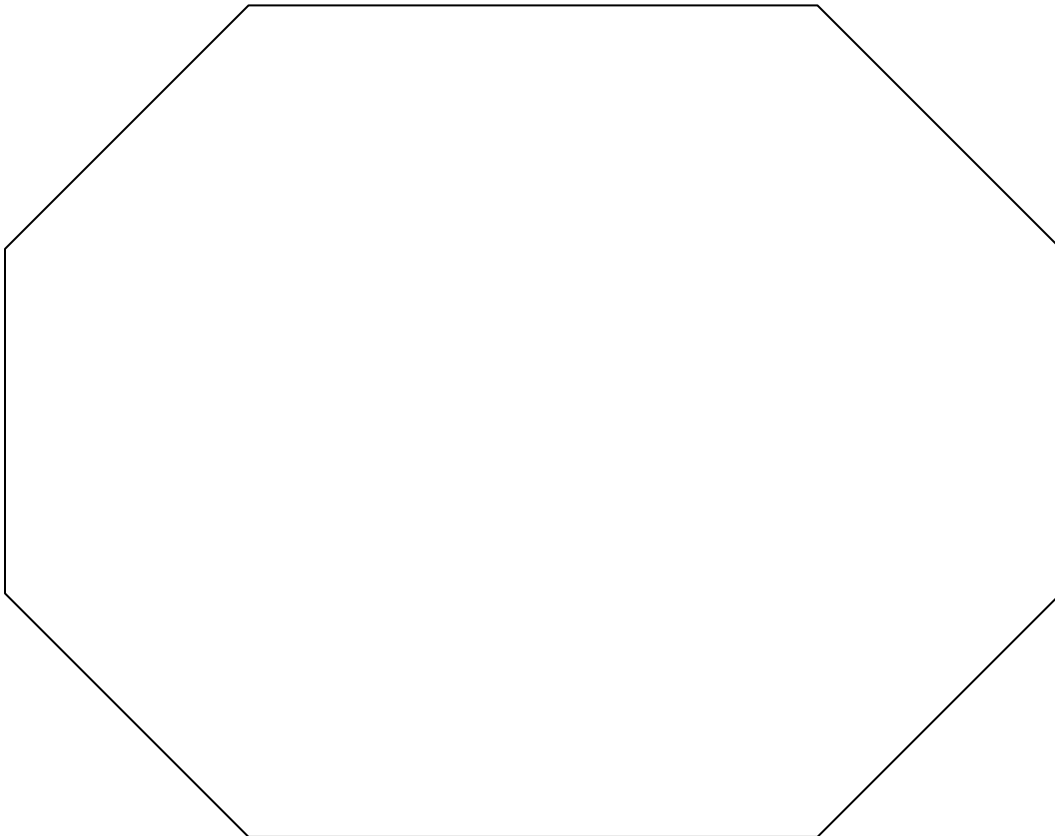
How does our current system limit our development?

What one governance decision should we strengthen in the next year?

What committees could help us get it all done?

- Budget/ Finance
- Fund Raising / Development
- Nominations Committee
- Outreach Committee
- Program/ Planning

Activity: Make a calendar of agenda items that cover all of your governance decisions.



What is in a governance decision?

1) Setting Long Term Direction

Determine what strategies you will use to achieve vision. Groups usually use a Strategic Plan, or a Watershed Plan, or a combination of both.

The 1995 Watershed Innovators process combined 300 years of watershed group experience to define River Network's *Swift River Principals*:

1. Use both top down and bottom up partnerships.
2. Consensus changes behavior better than coercion.
3. Local control of the watershed conservation plan adds to government resources.
4. No cookie cutter processes – be flexible to local ideas.
5. Early involvement of stakeholders. *Goal = Credible “co-leadership” by competitive interests.*
6. Focus on retailing ideas about what individuals can do.
7. Use creative financing.
8. Use science, but don't worship it – it isn't perfect.
9. Educate the public – don't overestimate their knowledge base.
10. Be a broker, a problem-solver and a leader more often than a bomb-thrower.

2) Setting Internal and Programmatic Priorities and/or Annual Plan

Each group develops its own way to set priorities. Possible questions for your board include:

- Where does the board want us to be a year from now?
- What organizational milestones do we want to use?
- What is our “biggest rock in the road” right now?
- What priority activities would help us “kill two birds with one stone”?

For staffed organizations, the board should approve an official “Annual Plan.” It should include information on what's funded through restricted funds, who is responsible for each program, what they are to accomplish, and how much priority each program will have to use unrestricted funds.

3) Evaluating Effectiveness of Organization and Programs

Potential Evaluation Topics for Board Meetings:

- ***Programmatic.*** Do we understand what our programs accomplish? Do we have a strong program that implements our vision and strong community support for our program?

- **Leadership.** Do we have strong and experienced leaders on our board or governing body?
- **Structural.** Do we have a clear structure and decision-making processes for board, staff, and volunteers to work within?
- **Fundraising.** Do we have enough unrestricted income to support basic operational costs, and adequate resources to allow growth?
- **Managerial.** Do we have efficient and effective administrative systems?
- **People Power.** Do we have skilled and satisfied staff (if it is a staffed organization) or volunteers who are excited by the mission of the organization?

4) Budgeting and Fiscal Oversight

A budget should include total projected expenses and income, a comparison of this to the previous year's actual expenses and income, and details on which programs are fully-funded and which are not. Updated projections should be available to board members (without them having to ask) and reviewed against the budget every quarter. Board members should know how and where funds are invested, assure adequate fiscal safe guards are in place and have an annual financial review (or audit).

5) Fund Raising Planning and Implementation

A fundraising plan includes specific information about appeals to be made to each prospective donor and includes dollar amount goals, a timeline, who is responsible for each task, and how much "seed money" will be required. It should include three elements of diversity - diverse sources, diverse approaches, and diverse "askers". See www.rivernetwork.org for fund raising plan templates and suggestions.

6) Board Nominations, Elections and Orientation

- *Nominations* is a "must have" committee.
- *Election* process less important than the *recruitment* process.
- Make it a goal to have competition for open seats.
- Orientation and appropriate board training are crucial.

Sample Annual Board Agenda Plan

