

Long Tom Watershed Council Charter

*Prepared by the Charter Team in meetings and discussion from April 8 to July 8, 1998.
Presented to the Council at interim stages by mail & at meetings from April through July.
Reviewed and edited by the Interim Steering Committee in June and July.*

Full draft submitted to the Council by mail in July.

At the July 28th Council meeting, an enthusiastic and full consensus of the people present approved our Charter.

Mission and Goals

Mission

The Long Tom Watershed Council serves to improve water quality and watershed condition in the Long Tom River basin through education, coordination, consultation, and cooperation among all interests, using the collective wisdom and voluntary action of our community members.

Purpose

The Council will provide opportunities for people who live, work, play, derive benefits from, or are affected by the Long Tom watershed to cooperate in promoting the health of the watershed and communicating the social and economic benefits to the community.

Vision

A healthy watershed that ensures water quality and riparian and wetland habitat for fish, wildlife, and native plants while recognizing the importance of peoples economic livelihood and quality of life.

Goals

1. Maintain and improve water quality.
2. Enhance habitat, especially riparian and wetland habitat, for fish and wildlife.
3. Encourage communication, learning, and participation among people with interests in the watershed.
4. Promote continued benefits from a healthy Long Tom Watershed.
5. Help people get the assistance they need for watershed enhancement plans and projects (educational, technical, financial, etc.).
6. Gather, verify, and share information on current and past watershed conditions.
7. Recommend ways that citizens, organizations, and local, state, and federal governments can help achieve the goals of the Long Tom Watershed Council.
8. Educate, motivate and provide feedback to all interested persons in the watershed working toward these goals.

Organization

Council

The Council is an ever-changing group of interested people from the Long Tom watershed, including related community, business and government groups, who meet to work toward the Mission and Goals as defined by this Charter. A varying number of smaller groups (teams and committees) exist as subsets of the Council to help handle organizational matters, on-the-ground projects, and outreach and education.

Long Tom Watershed Council membership is fully inclusive and open to anyone who lives, works, plays, derives benefit, or is affected by the watershed and its resources. A member is someone who participates in council activities. After each meeting the sign-in list is used to put newly interested members on the mailing list. This list confers membership.

Being a member is simple and not restrictive. It indicates an interest on a person's part in receiving the newsletter, an interest in taking part in activities of the council, and a willingness to consider local Council involvement as a way to achieve meaningful improvement in watershed conditions. Council membership implies support of individual and group efforts to improve watershed conditions in the Long Tom River basin. The Council recognizes and supports the right of Council members to make decisions about their own actions and property. The Council will work to create a supportive community atmosphere by encouraging communication, learning, and participation among members.

The Council will focus on encouraging small groups to form and tackle an issue, project or task, and encouraging people to participate with time and energy in Council activities as they see fit. The Council will offer general calls for volunteers at meetings and in mailings as well as directly requesting people to volunteer based on skills they have. All members will have opportunities to participate in making decisions by consensus.

Steering Committee

The Long Tom Watershed Council is guided by a standing Steering Committee. The Steering Committee supports and ensures communication among people of the watershed, maintains continuity among Council activities, and monitors progress toward the Council's Mission and Goals. The Steering Committee also gives feedback to the coordinator, makes staffing and operating decisions, oversees any fiscal operations, facilitates team development, and serves to represent the Council. The Steering Committee reports back to the Council on their topics of discussion, recommendations, and decisions at the full Council meetings.

The Steering Committee is a diverse group both geographically and by interest. Potential Steering Committee members volunteer from the Council membership and are affirmed by the full Council. Ideally, there will be a group of eleven serving on the Steering Committee: three people from each sub basin, and two at large. Each member of the Steering Committee serves to bring a perspective of a different part of the watershed to the table as well as keeping in mind the big picture, which is serving all the members of the Council as we work toward the Mission and Goals.

The geographic diversity on the Steering Committee is organized as follows: three people from each of the main sub-basins of the watershed (Upper Long Tom, Lower Long Tom, and Amazon), and two at large people. The diversity in interests in the watershed will be tracked by utilizing the tally sheets compiled at the Council meetings on which people self-identify their interests.

Steering Committee members will serve for a term of two years. Rotation of members will be staggered to maintain continuity. Terms will transfer the day after the Annual Meeting and Celebration or upon affirmation of the new Steering Committee. Vacancies will be filled with full Council approval. To begin the staggered terms the first year, one person from each sub-basin and one of the At-large people will serve for only one year.

The Steering Committee will have a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. These people will be chosen or reaffirmed by the first Steering Committee at their first meeting after annual changes in the Committee.

Search Committee

The Search Committee is an ad-hoc group responsible for identifying candidates willing to volunteer for the Steering Committee. Each year before the Annual Meeting and Celebration, the Steering Committee will appoint at least three people to the Search Committee and announce vacancies on the Steering Committee. The Search Committee includes people from each of the sub basins, and works to ensure a diverse slate of candidates to recommend for affirmation at the Annual Meeting and Celebration. Selection and endorsement work sessions will be held at the two full Council meetings prior to the Annual Meeting and Celebration for sub basin discussion and endorsement of candidate Steering Committee members.

Technical Team

The Technical Team is a standing committee comprising people with scientific backgrounds or technical expertise. Its function is to help the Council meet its goals regarding improved watershed conditions through enhancement plans and projects. The Technical Team will review projects presented to the Watershed Council for feasibility and appropriateness. If any prioritizing is needed for funding requests, equipment or technical assistance, the Council will make those decisions based on the recommendations made by the Technical Team and the Steering Committee.

Other Committees and Teams

Any members of the Council can form groups as suggested here: 1) *Project Teams* who have a specific task (such as a stream restoration project or a fair booth); 2) *Ad-hoc Committees* or teams which are short-term groups involved in council organization or other activities (such as a Charter Team, Staff Selection Team, or Annual Meeting and Celebration Committee); or 3) *Standing Committees* which are long-term groups involved in council organization (such as Steering Committee) or with specific interests (Education Committee). To be recognized as part of the Council, these groups must communicate their focus, general time-lines, meeting information, and membership to the Steering Committee and share their recommendations and activities at Council meetings.

Meetings

Meetings of the full Council are held monthly except for December. The meeting location should rotate among the three sub-basins to allow for rotation of the Annual Meeting and Celebration venue and hosting responsibility as well as to provide people with limited transportation an opportunity to attend at least some Council meetings near home.

An Annual Meeting and Celebration will be held to celebrate work accomplished, honor those involved, affirm new Steering Committee members, review the Council membership, and amend the Charter as needed. Agenda items for discussion should be submitted to the Steering Committee no later than the last Council meeting prior to the Annual Meeting and Celebration.

The Steering Committee will meet as often as necessary to conduct the business of the Council, and ad hoc committees will meet as often as necessary to complete their tasks.

All meetings are open to anyone interested in attending.

Decisions

Matters of substance, such as Council direction and project prioritization for grant funding will be discussed by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will make recommendations to the full Council for discussion and decision by consensus of those Council members present.

General operating decisions, including staff and fiscal decisions, will be made by the Steering Committee. Steering Committee decisions will be made by consensus of those present. A quorum is two thirds of the Steering Committee membership. All Steering Committee decisions are recorded at their meetings and made available at full Council meetings for review.

All decisions made by the Council or any sub-group, committee or team, are made by a consensus of those present. If a consensus is not reached during the first discussion, the issues of conflict will be identified by the Council and an ad-hoc team will form to address those points. This team should involve at least one of those who did not support the decision and those who are willing to discuss it or have skills that would be helpful in making progress. Attempts will be made to re-frame the question, issue or problem and recommendations can be made to consider bringing in a professional to assist the group. The ad-hoc team will meet and report back at the next main meeting when a consensus will again be called for. In the event of continued conflict, this process will be repeated but after two unsuccessful attempts for consensus, the group will vote by super-majority (70%) to choose whether to: a) decide the issue by super-majority vote or b) table the decision with suggestions on ways to make future progress.

Information

Agendas will be sent to all Council members before Council meetings as long as funding or in-kind services allows. All pertinent information received or generated on behalf of the Council will be kept in places accessible to the public and efforts will be made to share that information and help people find answers to their questions.

Amendments

Amendments to the Charter are to be proposed in writing to the Council or Steering Committee any time up to two months before the Annual Meeting and Celebration. If the change is substantial, presentation to the Council of the proposed amendment by the person submitting the change is encouraged. An Ad-hoc Charter Team will form to review the changes and present them at the Annual Meeting and Celebration along with their recommendations. Amendments to the Charter are approved by consensus of the Council members present.