



Integrated Management Group Charter

Background

Floodplains for the Future—Puyallup, White & Carbon Rivers is a cross-sector and inter-organizational partnership hosted by Pierce County in order to recover floodplain functions and to protect the health and safety of communities around them. Floodplains for the Future works to balance farm, fish, and flood management values, to provide a safe place to voice varied opinions and needs, and to advance integrated floodplain management solutions in the Puyallup, White, and Carbon Rivers. The Floodplains for the Future *Integrated Management Group* (IMG) is a group of stakeholder organizations taking direct action in furtherance of the following Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision Statement

Restored connections between rivers and land improve habitat for salmon, protect communities and critical infrastructure from flooding, and provide new opportunities for recreational and cultural uses while preserving agricultural lands in the Puyallup River Watershed.

Mission Statement

To encourage shared leadership in a trusting and transparent environment in order to plan, fund, and implement multi-benefit floodplain projects in the Puyallup, White, and Carbon River floodplains.

Charter Purpose and Need

Floodplain management in the Puyallup Watershed has not kept pace with our growing communities. At the same time, no single group is alone capable of achieving the Floodplains for the Future Vision. Public and private organizations, decision-makers, and technical experts recognize that a balanced, collaborative, and innovative approach is needed in order overcome the complex challenges of floodplain management and improve the health of floodplains in the Puyallup Basin.

The *Floodplains for the Future—Puyallup, White & Carbon Rivers* IMG has formed in order to address this need. Participants have developed a long-term vision that includes floodplain reconnection and habitat restoration efforts, agricultural land preservation, community outreach, and monitoring. The IMG works together in order to help advance and improve these important projects and to ensure that farm, fish, and flood values are equally represented through all stages of implementation, including planning, construction, and monitoring.

This Charter is intended to preserve the aspects of the group that have contributed to its successes while also clarifying the advisory role that the Floodplains for the Future Integrated Management Group plays within and between organizations.

Guiding Principles

The following *Ecological Principles* guide the work of the IMG:

1. River flooding and channel migration are natural processes.
2. Actions in the upland and upstream portions of watersheds impact flooding, channel migration and water quality.
3. Flood damage creates financial costs, both public and private. Effective flood hazard management can reduce long-term damage costs.
4. A river and its valley floor, including adjacent floodplains, floodways, and potential channel migration areas, constitute a corridor through which floodwaters flow and within which opportunities exist for various and compatible land uses, including agriculture, flood storage, salmon habitat, recreation and open space.
5. Restoring, preserving, and enhancing natural processes are essential to improving the beneficial functions of floodplains and rivers, including ecological function, flood attenuation, and sediment transport.

The following *Process Principles* guide the work of the IMG:

1. Always encourage the free flow of thoughts and ideas about floodplains and how they should be managed.
2. Success requires trust, and trust should not be taken for granted.
3. Building and maintaining trust requires that we learn about one another's values and develop the confidence that we all make decisions with those values in mind.
4. Projects should be designed and implemented with future conditions in mind.
5. Multi-benefit work should be monitored in order to demonstrate lift across interests.
6. Successful projects embed the public into decision-making so that people feel a sense of ownership over project outcomes.
7. It is important to identify milestones and celebrate success together.

Meetings and Participation

Meetings are facilitated by the Puyallup Floodplain Reconnects Coordinator, occur approximately every month, and are open to all who wish to attend. Participation in IMG meetings is voluntary. Participants in meetings typically include representatives from Pierce County, tribal governments, municipalities, Pierce Conservation District, the WRIA 10/12 Lead Entity, PCC Farmland Trust, Forterra, the King-Pierce Farm Bureau, the Port of Tacoma, the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, American Rivers, State agencies, drainage districts, and consultants under contract to perform work on behalf of project sponsors. Meetings are also regularly attended by affected landowners, farmers, and other farm- or community-based organizations.

Minutes will document: The agenda; changes to the agenda; an overview of dialogue that occurs through the course of the meeting, and instructions for accessing presentation materials and other relevant resources. Comments from individual participants will generally not be attributed and a verbatim record of the meeting will not be prepared.

IMG participants agree to:

- Speak one at a time – refrain from interrupting others.
- Share the oxygen – ensure that all participants who wish to have an opportunity to speak are afforded a chance to do so.
- Provide specific local expertise, including identifying emerging local issues;
- Attend all meetings possible and prepare appropriately;
- Relay information to their constituents after each meeting and gather information/feedback from their constituents as practicable before each meeting;
- Articulate and reflect the interests that other participants bring to the table;
- Encourage opportunities to collaborate with agencies and groups on making recommendations for projects;
- Conduct additional public meetings necessary to inform and engage the community;
- Provide reasons when deviations are taken from IMG recommendations.

Collaborative Decision Making

The IMG is a collaborative body that plays an important advisory role for Pierce County and other project sponsors. However, the IMG does not itself have decision-making authority or alter the responsibilities or mandates of participants. Rather, the IMG provides a space for project sponsors and stakeholders to learn and work alongside one another in order to deliver better project to our communities.

Collaborative processes may be either encouraged or required by agencies that fund floodplain projects. As such, The IMG may provide input and feedback on funding proposals and related work plans under specific grants. For example, IMG participants have worked collaboratively to articulate a long-term vision for floodplain restoration in the Puyallup Watershed. This vision and the specific projects associated with it are aligned with Pierce County’s Rivers Flood Hazard Management Plan and have helped to secure funding from the Floodplains by Design grant program, which supports collaborative and multi-benefit floodplain projects. After receiving an award offer, IMG participants provide input on grant work plans, deliverables, scopes of work, and contracts for this grant.

Straw polls may be asked for during the course of IMG meetings. Such polls are meant only to expedite or encourage group discussion—to “take the temperature” of the room—and do not require scheduling.

When an issue arises that cannot be easily resolved, IMG participants agree to:

- Remember that controversial projects are unlikely to receive funding, so the intent of all parties is to resolve issues so the project can be funded.
- Determine if the issue should be resolved within or outside of the IMG and participate however is appropriate.
- Ensure the appropriate decision makers are at the table to resolve the issue.

Updates

This document will be reviewed and updated annually, or when deemed necessary.