



**Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance
Technical Working Group**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Adopted August 29, 2013
Amended March 3, 2014
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Background

The Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance (SSIWPA) was created in 2012 to provide a coordinated approach to watershed management and the protection of freshwater resources on Salt Spring Island. SSIWPA is comprised of agencies and government organizations with responsibility and authority for the management, regulation, and distribution of water from watershed reservoirs in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area.

SSIWPA identified the need for a Technical Working Group (TWG) to provide objective and technical assessment to member agencies regarding freshwater sustainability as directed by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is responsible for governing and providing direction to the TWG, including but not limited to work planning, deliverables, public engagement, and milestones.

SSIWPA Steering Committee decision-making is enriched by the contributions of volunteers who serve in its working groups, and would like to express its appreciation and acknowledgement of the wisdom, passion and professionalism of present and past volunteers.

These Terms of Reference (ToR) outline roles and responsibilities of the Technical Working Group for the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance. The TWG ToR may be amended by the SSIWPA Steering Committee if required by changes to scope of work, membership, timeline, or other matters. For additional context, refer to the Terms of Reference for the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance.

Purpose

The purpose of the SSIWPA Technical Working group is to provide scientific and technical support to the SSIWPA Steering Committee.

Objectives

1. To collect primary data as directed by the Steering Committee.¹
2. To assemble and collate data and conduct literature reviews as directed by the Steering Committee.
3. To identify data gaps to the Steering Committee.
4. To provide technical support for the projects identified in the SSIWPA work plan.
5. The Technical Working Group's tasks and activities are to be directed by the full consensus of the SSIWPA Steering Committee.

Membership

Membership will be determined by consensus of the SSIWPA, in consultation with each member organization. All member agencies will be invited to delegate a staff member to a position in this group.

Members appointed by SSIWPA will have experience or expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Limnology
- Aquatic Biology

¹ Following standard operating procedures, quality assurance and quality control measures while respecting privacy considerations for data source and data-sharing agreements.

- Soil science
- Environmental Restoration
- Environmental Science
- Watershed Hydrology
- Groundwater Science
- Geoscience
- Biogeography
- Environmental Instrumentation Technology
- Geographical Information Systems
- Drinking Water Science and Operations
- Watershed management
- Chemistry
- Toxicology
- Water resources Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Mathematics
- Environmental Engineering

Invitations to apply will be extended, but not limited, to representatives from Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Provincial Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Forest, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, Capital Regional District, Vancouver Island Health Authority, North Salt Spring Waterworks District, Salt Spring Island resident experts, and academic institutions.

New members will be appointed to terms of twelve months and at least two of the members will be appointed for terms of two years, as specified by SSIWPA at the time of appointment. Thereafter, membership is for a two-year term, with the possibility of renewal.

Members are to serve without remuneration.

Chair

At the initial meeting of the TWG, and then every 6 months, as determined by consensus of the TWG, a Chair of the committee will be elected. The chair may serve additional terms, up to a maximum of six consecutive years. The chair is to serve without remuneration.

The Role of the TWG Chair is to include:

1. Liaise with the SSIWPA Steering Committee Chair, Coordinator and TWG members to set agenda topics.
2. Ensure distribution of TWG meeting notes to TWG members through the SSIWPA Coordinator.
3. Liaise with SSIWPA Coordinator, SSIWPA Steering Committee, and Islands Trust to effectively facilitate and coordinate the TWG.
4. Provide TWG progress reports in monthly SSIWPA meetings.

SSIWPA Coordinator will act as facilitator and recorder for all TWG meetings, unless otherwise arranged and agreed to by both SSIWPA Steering Committee and TWG. TWG Chair and Coordinator may agree to work together to facilitate TWG meetings, to better allow the TWG Chair to participate in the discussions and technical proposals. The SSIWPA Coordinator assists TWG with its group process functions within and outside of TWG regular meetings, to the extent that coordination resources allow.

Guidelines for Decision-making

Decision-making is by consensus. Consensus is defined as agreement by each member, and is achieved through an iterative process: a) proposal, b) clarification and discussion stage, c) proposal modification (with assistance by those suggesting change; as necessary), and finally, d) agreement by consensus, or withdrawal of proposal, by consensus.

TWG decisions and recommendations will be made by unanimous consensus whenever possible.

When consensus is not reached at the close of the discussion about a proposal, the following options exist:

- i. The group consents to drop the proposal.
- ii. The group elects a subcommittee to refine proposal for re-consideration by the Technical Working Group.
- iii. A decision favoured by the majority is adopted with unresolved concerns listed. Those who stand aside from the decision are recorded, along with their concerns.
- iv. A decision on proposal in it's current form is blocked. A concern substantial enough to justify a block to consensus must be based on or demonstrate that the proposal is in contravention of the purpose and/or objectives of this Technical Working Group.

Meetings

TWG will hold public meetings a minimum of four times per calendar year. Quorum is 50% of TWG membership. Some or all of the TWG members may meet informally to discuss science and technical matters, but not to make decisions or recommendations to SSIWPA, as frequently as required, at a location mutually agreed to by TWG committee members.

Notice of Meetings and Minutes

Notice of the date, time and location of all formal TWG meetings will be posted by the Coordinator to the TWG and SSIWPA Steering Committee Chair by email, and will be posted publicly on the SSIWPA website.

Agendas and adopted minutes will be posted to the SSIWPA website on the TWG agendas and minutes page.

Communications

1. TWG will communicate about its decisions, and progress on action items regularly with steering committee by way of monthly TWG Chair progress reports and by way of written memos or TWG reports as they become available by full agreement of the TWG.
2. TWG members will not represent the TWG, or SSIWPA, in any public communications unless previously agreed by SSIWPA steering committee (including, but not limited to reports, presentations, media releases and interviews).

Conduct

TWG members and observers will be expected to behave with due decorum. That is to say:

Meetings will be conducted with decorum, and generally follow Robert's Rules of Order as interpreted by the Chair and/or Facilitator;

Communications at all meetings will be respectful, considerate, honest, and issue-focused;

All viewpoints will be encouraged, respected, and considered;

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Participants will make every effort to resolve issues at the table, and will avoid seeking alternative decisions outside this process;

Participants should have a common understanding of the mandate of SSIWPA and the TWG, and demonstrate mutual respect to other participants.

Funding

It is anticipated that the representative agencies of SSIWPA will contribute funding for a SSIWPA Coordinator, to work with the TWG, as well as SSIWPA. As appropriate, the representative agencies will also provide additional funding in support of agreed to initiatives for the TWG, and in-kind administrative support like meeting rooms, communications, and secretarial services. Other funding will be pursued opportunistically and as required.

Conflict of Interest

TWG members must take a precautionary approach to ensure that issues of potential or perceived conflict of interest are clearly identified as part of the process.