

# **GORGE WATERWAY INITIATIVE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Updated March 2018**

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The Gorge Waterway Initiative (GWI) is a collaborative, community-driven group of organizations dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural features of the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and surrounding watersheds. The mission of the GWI is to maintain, protect and enhance the health of the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet, their watersheds and communities, for the enjoyment and well-being of present and future generations. The vision is for a healthy environment in perpetuity for all life in the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and surrounding watersheds.

These terms of reference define the vision and goals, purpose, role, geographic area, membership and membership selection process, meeting schedule and subcommittees of GWI.

## **Vision**

A healthy environment for all life in the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet, their watersheds and communities for the well-being of present and future generations.

## **Goals**

- Provide a forum for the exchange and sharing of information regarding the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and their watersheds
- Promote education and awareness programs on appropriate land and water use
- Establish and encourage activities that show care and concern for the natural environment

## **Purpose**

The purpose of GWI is to bring together organizations and individuals with an interest in Portage Inlet, Gorge Waterway and the surrounding watersheds to pursue a common approach to the environmental stewardship and management of the waterway.

## **Role**

The main roles of the GWI are to:

1. Provide a forum for the exchange and sharing of information regarding Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and their watersheds among community and local government representatives.
2. Conduct community education and outreach regarding the values of the Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and their watersheds, and the associated environmental concerns, potential impacts and solutions.
3. Pursue a common approach to the environmental management of Gorge Waterway, Portage Inlet and their watersheds by community members, landowners and regulatory agencies.

## **Geographic Area**

The geographical focus of the GWI is the Portage Inlet, Gorge Waterway and their surrounding watersheds. This includes the lands draining into Colquitz River, and

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Craigflower, Gorge, Hospital and Cecelia creeks and those lands that drain directly into Portage Inlet and the Gorge Waterway.

### **Coordination**

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Initiatives Coordinator provides coordination and logistical assistance to the GWI.

### **Financial Management**

An annual work plan prepared by the Coordinator, will be presented at a regular meeting of the GWI in January of each year. The GWI committee will review and approve the work plan and prioritize the actions/projects identified in the work plan.

In many instances, external funds may be required to implement projects identified in the work plan. External funding applications should be vetted through the GWI committee or funding subcommittee.

The Coordinator will manage the budgets of the GWI using the CRD's financial management system.

### **Meetings**

#### Meeting Schedule

The meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every other month starting in January at 7:00 pm at the Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club, 355 Gorge Road West.

#### Attendance

The member representatives or their alternates are involved in discussions and decision making. If both a member representative and his/her alternate are present, only one person can be involved in discussions and decisions. The meetings are open to any interested members of the public to observe. From time to time, speakers may be invited to make presentations to the GWI.

#### Facilitation

The GWI meetings are run by a rotating facilitator chosen by the representatives. The facilitator can be either a representative of a member group or his/her alternate.

The facilitation schedule is determined in advance by all members.

The facilitator guides but does not take part in the consensus-based decision making process.

When a facilitator, who is a representative of a particular group, is scheduled to run a meeting, that group's alternate representative may take part in the decision making of the meeting.

The role of the facilitator is to:

- Encourage full participation
- Promote mutual understanding
- Foster inclusive decisions

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- Keep the meeting and discussions on track and on time
- May document actions, decisions, and other important points of discussion on a flip chart

### Development of the agenda

The GWI Coordinator is responsible for issuing a call for agenda items approximately 14 days before the meeting. All agenda items are sent to the coordinator before the meeting and the agenda is sent out approximately 7 days before the meeting. Additional agenda items may be added at the meeting if time permits.

A typical agenda framework would include:

- Introductions around the table
- Review agenda
- Review decisions and action items from previous meeting
- Presentations, discussions
- Break
- New business
- Partner Updates
- Adjournment

### Quorum

Quorum for making decisions at the GWI is 10 with at least six representatives from community-based groups (i.e., not municipalities and not members of municipal advisory committees).

### Meeting actions, decisions and notes

The GWI Coordinator prepares the actions, decisions and notes from each meeting. These are sent out as a draft approximately 21 days after the meeting. At the following meeting, the meeting notes are approved by the members of GWI.

### Decision making

One representative per organization is responsible for making decisions on behalf of that organization. The GWI operates using consensus.

Consensus is a general agreement where all parties accept a decision that was reached through a consensus process. Consensus stresses the cooperative development of decisions. Characteristics of a consensus-based process include:

- An environment where everyone is equal
- Equitable and fair to all
- Takes everyone's ideas into account
- Recognizes people's differences
- Full participation of the group

Members of a consensus decision making process must share an attitude of:

- Agreement seeking
- Cooperation
- Mutual understanding and respect for each other
- Trust
- Inclusivity
- Respecting diversity

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- Openness
- Flexibility

Decision-making ground rules include:

- Respect everyone's right to be heard
  - listen without interrupting
  - share the floor
  - speak concisely
  - respect agreed-on time limits
- Respect everyone's views
  - listen without judgement
  - ask questions to clarify
  - use respectful language — avoid put-downs or insults
- Seek common ground
  - look for areas of agreement
  - focus on and build on shared views
  - explore alternatives
  - avoid getting stuck in apparent conflict
- Use plain language
  - avoid acronyms (alphabet soup)
  - don't use jargon
  - provide definitions
- Respect the time available
  - start promptly and return from breaks on time
  - share the time available
  - be willing to move on to the next agenda item

Consensus is a good decision-making process for the GWI because:

- There is a unity of purpose
- Each person on the GWI represents a larger group, so a simple majority vote (51%) would exclude a lot of people from the decision
- Generally, the group is not going to be faced with “make or break” decisions
  - if everyone agrees with a proposal, the group will do it
  - if everyone does not agree with a proposal, the group can:
    - develop a better proposal that more people agree with
    - tease off parts of the proposal so that everyone can agree
    - implement the proposal with just those groups that want to do it
    - not implement the proposal at all

### **Strategic Plan**

The GWI strategic plan will be revisited, evaluated and revised periodically as decided by the committee.

### **Work plan**

A work plan will be developed annually.

### **Membership and Selection**

#### GWI Committee

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The **GW committee** consists of representatives from community and environmental groups, local governments and local government advisory committees. Collectively, the representatives act as a community-based, multi-stakeholder body working to address environmental issues in Portage Inlet, Gorge Waterway and their watersheds.

Each group represented on the GWI has one primary member at the table and an alternate who can take the place of the primary member when necessary. All meetings are open to any member of the public.

Groups with a direct interest in Portage Inlet, Gorge Waterway and their watersheds may approach the GWI to become a member. Criteria for membership include:

- representatives should be from groups whose geographic area of interest includes Portage Inlet, the Gorge Waterway and/or their watersheds
- representatives should be from groups whose mandate is consistent with the vision and purpose of the GWI
- representatives should be from groups who support the goals and objectives the GWI is working to achieve.

The following agencies and organizations presently have representation on the GWI (March 2018):

<b><i>Community Groups</i></b>	<b><i>Local Government</i></b>
Burnside Gorge Community Association	Capital Regional District
Esquimalt Anglers	City of Victoria
Esquimalt Residents Association	District of Saanich
Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Park	Township of Esquimalt
Friends of Swan Creek Watershed	Town of View Royal
Friends of Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary	
Gorge Swim Fest Society	
Gorge Tillicum Community Association	
Gorge Waterway Action Society	
Peninsula Streams Society	
Portage Inlet Protection Society	
Portage Inlet Sanctuary Colquitz Estuary Society	
Seaquaria in Schools	
South Island Aquatic Stewardship Society	
South Island Sea Kayak Association	
Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club	
Victoria Golden Rods & Reels Fishing and Social Club	
Victoria West Community Association	
World Fisheries Trust	

**Subcommittees**

All decisions are made by the GWI committee but considerable work may be done by sub-committees. Subcommittees are formed on an as needed basis. A smaller group of representatives may be formed to work together to research and develop options for specific issues or topic areas (e.g. Communications Subcommittee) and may be formed to implement projects or programs (e.g. Outreach Subcommittee). Representatives for subcommittees are established at regular GWI meetings. The public or other members of groups are welcome to join sub-committees.

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## Role of Members

### Community Representatives

- Information conduit (two-way)
  - Report back to board meetings, committees and general meetings of memberships (email, newsletters, oral, etc.)
  - Bring information and issues forward from groups to GWI
- Advisory to municipalities and CRD
- Decision-making
  - Need to go back to groups in some cases
  - Recognize possible conflicts of interest

### Municipal Representatives

- Information conduit (two-way)
  - Assist in communications between municipalities and GWI
  - Advisory – provide advice and expertise on projects and programs
- Projects – participate in various projects that the GWI may undertake (equipment, funding and support)
- Decision-making
  - Declare conflicts of interest (e.g. advocacy issues)
  - Take items from GWI back to municipality

### CRD Representative

- Assist with implementation coordination (financial management, some project coordination)
- Internal communications (liaison with group members, facilitator and other agencies)
- Funding liaison
- Research/policy analysis
- The GWI Coordinator will act as a secretariat for the GWI, preparing agendas, meeting notes, letter drafts, maintaining the GWI website, maintaining permanent records of the GWI using the administrative facilities provided by the CRD

### Spokesperson

All GWI representatives can speak to the media and the public about the group based on agreed standards (e.g. vision, goals) but not to provide an opinion on a particular issue.

One spokesperson and an alternate spokesperson may be appointed annually by the GWI. The spokesperson speaks on behalf of the GWI. The criteria for the spokesperson are:

- Representative or alternate on the GWI
- Part of a non-governmental organization
- Available
- Present the GWI view (not a single group view)
- Has some media savvy