

Bullet Points for IRWM Workshop by Director Ron Ringen
Relationship between WAC and the Board

- ✓ The understanding I have, is the IRWMP (Integrated Regional Water Management Plan) was an idea/‘program’ of sorts that came out of DWR (Department of Water Resources) as a better plan/vehicle to distribute Grant funds in a more effective and useful way, and to get those funds to the most deserving and needed projects.
- ✓ Although I missed the first few original T-Stan IRWMP formation meetings, I’ve been to every single one of them since almost the very beginning, and I can tell you first hand that the formation of the T-Stan IRWMP was a tad messy and tedious the first couple of years. But, the people who were attending from the various groups and entities during that time, could, in my opinion, see the value and good that might be possible if the T-Stan IRWMP were to succeed.
- ✓ I believe those participants who ‘hung in there’ through the difficult formation period were people who had the common good and well-being of our communities, residents and environment at heart, even though there were also many different viewpoints and sometimes even agendas.
- ✓ When the JPA (Joint Powers Authority) was formed to provide the legal and financial footing the T-Stan IRWMP had been grappling with, a ‘partnership’, for the lack of better words, was formed between the JPA and the WAC (Watershed Advisory Committee) that basically required a ‘leap of faith’ in trust among all members. A promise was made when the JPA was formed that all issues (except those specific to the board such as fiduciary issues) will go to the WAC first for development of all recommendations to the board, although it was also agreed the WAC cannot bind the JPA in any way.
- ✓ The WAC members represent a broad range of interests and includes technical staff. Recommendations are developed from ideas, concerns and area ‘needs’ that are considered from many perspectives. The WAC also spends considerable time becoming familiar with many aspects of issues and, at times, brings in experts to help them become better educated on emerging topics and issues relevant to, or might affect our region.

- ✓ When the board receives a recommendation from the WAC, they know it has been well vetted. The board is also informed as to how the WAC voted, which to my knowledge has up to now always been complete consensus. The JPA board, in turn, has moved forward with every WAC recommendation it has been given with only minor clarification or minute 'tweaking' in a couple of instances.
- ✓ There have been occasions when the JPA board asks the WAC to explore ideas and bring them back to the board for further consideration. This is a further example of the partnership, trust and acknowledgement of the WAC value and participation in the overall process by the JPA.
- ✓ Trust has been established by holding to this promise over time and the board has benefited greatly from the work the WAC has done and continues to do.
- ✓ This hard work and collaboration through this trust/partnership used within the T-Stan IRWMP has also reaped benefits of huge value in addition to the incredible amount of grant money that has been brought to our area for badly needed projects (12 million dollars plus). There has developed within DWR and other agencies, an awareness and respect of our area's vastly diverse agencies, groups, and entities who come together for the common good of the area. That is HUGE, and will become even more valuable as time goes on!
- ✓ Although I'm speaking as an individual here, I believe everyone involved with the T-Stan IRWMA would agree with me, that we are extremely proud of what we have accomplished so far for our two counties, and looking forward to further collaboration with other areas/IRWMPs within the state in the future. I believe we all are also looking forward to many more years of this cooperative collaboration in order to make our region sustainable, healthy, economically and environmentally sound, all of which results in a great and desirable place to live, raise our families and just plain call our home!