Wakulla Springs Alliance
Communications
Policies and Procedures

Last updated: 12-7-20

Introduction

Excellent internal and external communications will advance the Wakulla Springs Alliance's mission, inspire its stakeholders, and increase its impact. The Alliance aspires to engage members, decision makers and the entire community in impactful dialogue, problem solving and action. The Alliance aspires to the highest ethical and professional standards with regard to communications that exhibit transparency, fairness and honesty.

1. **Interpersonal Communications -** Alliance Officers, Directors and Members will build positive relations with each other, public officials and the community and address conflicts and controversies by:

    1.1. Asking yourself "What is best for me, the Alliance, Wakulla Springs/watershed and the whole community?"
    1.2. Addressing issues and misunderstandings directly with the person or people involved first.
    1.3. Listening to others' hopes, ideas, beliefs, opinions and stories.
    1.4. Confirming your understanding of the others' perspectives with them, before expressing your own perspectives.
    1.5. Speaking respectfully, compassionately, and empathetically.
    1.6. Affirming others' rights to their opinions, values, and beliefs.
    1.7. Clarifying and honoring confidences.
    1.8. Committing to work together to shape shared understandings and solutions.
    1.9. Seeking assistance of experts and neutral facilitators to help resolve differences and seek consensus.
    1.10. Honoring the decisions of the Alliance Board and Members; seeking to revisit prior decisions only when new substantive information arises.
    1.11. Being open to self-evaluation, criticism and change.

2. **WSA Meeting Communications** – The meeting chairs and participants share responsibilities for thoughtful discussions, problem solving and consensus seeking.

    2.1. Share in shaping and keeping to the agenda
    2.2. Listen actively and respectfully. Ask questions and verify assumptions.
    2.3. Acknowledge others' perspectives, feelings and underlying values or desires – confirm that you understand them correctly before seeking agreement.
    2.4. Participate fully – success depends on hearing all individual voices.
    2.5. Speak from your own experience; use "I" instead of "they," "we," and "you".
    2.6. Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions -- focus on ideas and refrain from personal attacks.
    2.7. Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words.
    2.8. Be focused and concise - balance participation.

2.9. Incorporate all parties' interests into a shared statement that addresses everyone's concerns about an issue before the Board.
2.10. Identify initial solutions and generate new options.
2.11. Seek agreements that optimize all interests and minimize negative impacts. Test for acceptability of all options using this Scale: 3 = Great, 2 = Concerned but can live with it and 1 = Opposed. Clarify concerns, refine options and test acceptability until all agree on the best approach.
2.12. Make sure the written record of the meeting is accurate

3. Website and Facebook Communications

3.1. The Alliance Board will designate one or more individuals to create, maintain and manage content on the Alliance website and Facebook page.
3.2. The Alliance will not publish content that would constitute discrimination or harassment of any kind, defamation or threats, profanity or similarly inappropriate language, or content that violates copyright and trademark law, promotes illegal activity, or commercial sales.
3.3. The Alliance will adhere to laws regarding spam, copyrights and trademarks. Use of photos from the internet without consent from the photographer and/or proper attribution could be an infringement on copyrighted material.
3.4. The Alliance will honor donor requests for privacy and anonymity. The IRS requires the names and addresses of donors even if they elect to be publicly anonymous. IRS Form 990 Schedule B is not a public record, only the tax preparer and IRS are given the information.

4. In-Person, Email and Social Media Communications

4.1. Per the Alliance's Bylaws, official Alliance position statements, letters and actions must be approved by the Board of Directors. The Board may delegate authority to draft and deliver messages to the Executive Committee, ad hoc committees or individuals with clear guidance on the purpose and content. Alliance Officers, Directors, and Members may use these approved messages in communications with others but shall make it clear that any explanations, elaborations or other messages that go beyond those approved messages are their personal opinions and not those of the Alliance, including in meetings, phone calls, email exchanges and responses to media inquiries.
4.2. The Alliance will only send electronic communications and updates to people who have acquiesced to being included on an email list and will provide them with a way to unsubscribe from future communications.
4.3. The Alliance will send electronic communications that include the organization's name and contact information, valid "From" information and clear subject lines.
4.4. The Alliance will provide the public with methods for providing input that are clear and easy to access (e.g., meetings, email, web form). The Alliance will promptly and respectfully respond to comments, suggestions and grievances from stakeholders.
4.5. Alliance Officers, Directors and Members will treat e-mail and social media as means for civil, public discourse.

5. Administrative Communications

5.1. The Alliance will make the following information publicly available upon request: applicable IRS Form 990 for three most recent years (Schedule B notwithstanding); IRS Form 1023; application for exemption; any documents submitted with the application;

any letters or documents issued by the IRS with respect to the application.

5.2. The Alliance will make available upon request all records required for retention under Florida Law (§§ 496.481 and 617.1701 Florida Statutes), such as meeting minutes, financial records, member lists, and incorporation documents.