

Laramie County Control Area Steering Committee The Role of the University of Wyoming Ruckelshaus Institute

The Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming has entered into an agreement with the Laramie County Commission to facilitate the meetings of the Laramie County Control Area Steering Committee.

Our Mission

The Ruckelshaus Institute advances the understanding and resolution of complex environmental and natural resources challenges and supports stakeholder-driven solutions to environmental challenges by conducting and communicating relevant research and promoting collaborative decision making.

Our Role

Our goal is to guide the Steering Committee through a collaborative decision-making process that results in actionable recommendations to the Wyoming State Engineer for corrective control of the High Plains aquifer system. The Ruckelshaus Institute will carry out two tasks toward the objective of managing Steering Committee meetings. These are:

1. Conduct A Situation Assessment to Gather Information about Issues, Stakeholders, and the Potential for Mutual Gain. Ruckelshaus Institute staff will interview Steering Committee members to gather information about the issues that that are important to resolve, key concerns regarding reduction of groundwater withdrawals, ideas for resolving these concerns that might be acceptable to all parties, and perspectives of a successful outcome of these meetings.

The Ruckelshaus Institute will compile and assess the information collected through these interviews, and will issue a brief convening report to the Laramie County Commission. The report will contain recommendations about how to structure committee meetings to increase the likelihood that all parties can derive value from participating, and groundwater withdrawal objectives can be met.

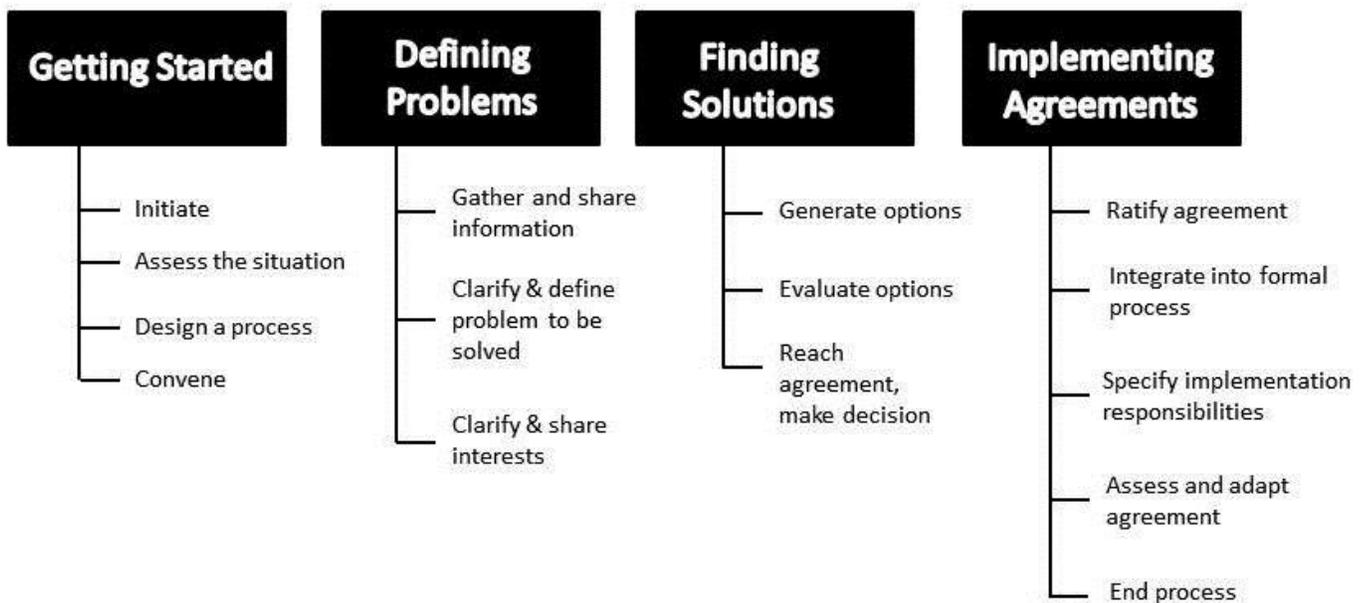
2. Organize and Facilitate Ongoing Steering Committee Meetings. Based on the information gained from the assessment, we will propose a meeting format and deliberation process, and create a detailed meeting plan for the committee meetings. This plan will be approved by the Steering Committee before we proceed. We will then plan, coordinate, facilitate, and summarize each meeting of the Steering Committee. In addition, we will create a dedicated stakeholder website to be hosted on the University of Wyoming server.

Our Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Ruckelshaus Institute include:

- a) preparing each meeting;
- b) managing the group's agenda;
- c) keeping a visible record of the meeting;
- d) helping the group stay on task and on process;
- e) balancing discussion;
- f) managing information generated by group members and technical resource people during the meetings;
- g) helping members reach consensus;
- h) recording and disseminating meeting notes;
- i) serving as a clearinghouse for reports, presentations, and other information; and
- j) managing between-meeting communications.

Collaborative Decision-Making Process



The Ruckelshaus Institute will guide the Steering Committee through a collaborative decision making process similar to the one illustrated above. Generally, the work of the committee will be concentrated in the two columns labeled “Defining Problems” and “Finding Solutions”.

We will strive to create a process that yields the following outcomes:

Fair Agreements

- The process is open to public scrutiny
- All parties are given access to the technical information they need
- Everyone has an opportunity to express his or her views
- The people involved are accountable to the constituencies they represent
- There is a means for due process complaints to be heard at the conclusion of the deliberation

Efficient Agreements

- A climate for collaboration is made possible
- Parties have the opportunity to work toward win/win solutions
- The process is expedient yet fair

Wise Agreements

- “Advocacy science” is avoided
- The most relevant information is brought to the table
- An environment is created that accommodates the best possible technical evidence, regardless of which “side” that evidence supports
- An environment is created that allows for a “collaborative inquiry”

Stable Agreements

- Agreements reached by the committee are feasible and can be carried out by the State Engineer
- Commitments made by each party are realistic

- Parties take responsibility for cultivating support for the agreement from their constituencies
- Parties take responsibility for meeting all restrictions and protocols specific to their own organizations
- Time tables for implementation are realistic
- Provisions are made for renegotiation if necessary
- Good working relationships among the parties are fostered