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Western Reserve Rowing Association Our Plan for 2012 – 2014

June 2012



**Western Reserve Rowing Association (WRRA)
Our Plan for 2012 – 2014**

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Western Reserve Rowing Association (WRRRA)
Our Plan for 2012 – 2014



I. About WRRRA:

Mission: Western Reserve Rowing Association provides and promotes adult competitive and recreational rowing for the Northeast Ohio community through quality programming.

The history of rowing on the Cuyahoga River, which goes back to 1855, and the intertwined formation and growth of the Western Reserve Rowing Association (WRRRA) provide a rich backdrop and context for a sport that is simultaneously steeped in tradition and ever-evolving – much like the WRRRA organization itself. The WRRRA website provides interesting reading and important background to the organization’s development and enlightens how WRRRA came to this 2011 – 2012 strategic planning process. To read the full history, please visit: <http://www.westernreserverowing.com/about-us/club-history/>. The website highlights the organization’s robust and varied partnerships over the years and hints at opportunities and great potential for the future. Furthermore, the Board of Directors of WRRRA is to be commended to its proactive commitment to exploring these opportunities through a comprehensive strategic planning process, especially considering the increased interest in the sport of rowing, increased activity on and around the Cuyahoga River, and new downtown development today. To facilitate the strategic planning process the Board also retained the services of Janus Small of Janus Small Associates.

II. The Planning Process:

There are many factors that determine just how in-depth any given strategic planning process should be, for example:

- An organization’s resources (time, money, people)
- Leaderships shifts within an organization
- Level of satisfaction of those being served by an organization and those providing the service
- Significant shifts within the internal organization and/or external community
- External requirements (funding agencies, etc.)

A planning process can be designed to be comprehensive and thorough, both on a variety of levels. Therefore, it is most important to develop a process with a scope matching the needs of an organization at a given point in time. For the WRRR planning process, Board President, Jeffery Zabor, Board member Joanne Montagner-Hull, and WRRR member Patricia Poole served as the planning “lead team.” The three-member lead team along with an additional 15 dedicated WRRR members who stepped up to the President’s call for volunteers made up the Strategic Planning Committee:

- Kate Beckenbach
- Frank Campbell
- Gary Clark
- Nikki DiFilippo
- Sally Fahrenholz
- Michelle Gallagher
- James Mack
- Tim Marcovy
- Jennifer Prugh
- Bill Rickman
- Sharon Romilly
- Rachel Stanley
- Gloria Story
- Karin Trimble
- Kathy Whitford

With on-going input from the lead team, the consultant structured a planning process best suited to the current capacity and needs of the WRRR as follows. Following the consultant’s in-depth review of selected WRRR materials (programmatic, budgetary, marketing/public relations, code of regulations/by-laws, past Board meeting minutes, etc.), the planning process formally began with a meeting of the lead team on October 21, 2011. This was followed by a series of five planning sessions with the full Strategic Planning Committee held on November 19, 2011, January 7, 2012, February 25, 2012, April 17, 2012, and May 9, 2012. The lead team also met an additional three times on November 11, 2012, January 27, 2012, and April 24, 2012. Please note that to complement the work completed at the planning sessions and in line with the Committee’s commitment to transparency and broad input, the Strategic Planning committee and the consultant were actively involved in collecting significant external information between planning sessions. This included for example: a WRRR member, coach and coxswain survey (Appendix A); a survey to former WRRR participants (Appendix B); a survey to WRRR Learn to Row participants (Appendix C); and research on various boathouses around the country (Appendices D and E).

III. Key Focus, Goals, and Guiding Principles

The planning sessions – boisterous, passionate, and stimulating – addressed a number of critical strategic questions based upon Planning Committee and survey input.

After much dialogue and thought, a 36 month strategic plan was developed to: **strengthen the operational culture and structure of WRRRA, support growth in satisfaction and service, and provide long-term sustainability.** The strategic plan is based on five strategic goals:

- Goal I: Enhance member experience.**
- Goal II: Strengthen communications throughout all parts of the WRRRA.**
- Goal III. Achieve consistency in quality of programs.**
- Goal IV: Build visibility for WRRRA.**
- Goal V. Develop the infrastructure of WRRRA.**

Key to successful implementation of the strategic plan will be the organization's adoption of and commitment to guiding principles for WRRRA developed by the Planning Committee to support the mission statement as follows and guide WRRRA in all aspects of its work:

WRRRA Mission*:

Western Reserve Rowing Association provides and promotes adult competitive and recreational rowing for the Northeast Ohio community through quality programming.

WRRRA Guiding Principles:

- *Provide quality programs that align coaching, equipment, and structure to meet the wide range of rower skills and goals.*
- *Develop a sense of community that fosters collaboration, respect, ownership, and friendship among members.*
- *Enthusiastically share rowing knowledge and experience with the Northeast Ohio community.*
- *Recognize that each individual member is equally important to the organization's current and future success.*

**The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed and re-committed to the organization's mission statement as part of the planning process.*

IV. Next Steps:

Beginning on page seven, please find a table delineating the five goals and related objectives along with suggested implementation leads (“Committees”). It is recommended that next steps are:

- Executive Committee will review existing committees in line with what committees are necessary to move the strategic plan forward, form any new committees, and ensure appoint of all committees.
- Committee Chairs will populate their committees.
- Committees will develop specific action steps to move each objective forward to meet Board determined benchmarks.
- Executive Committee members will keep in touch with Committees regularly to address any challenges being encountered.
- Committee Chairs will present progress reports on their portion of strategic plan implementation at Board meetings at least quarterly.
- Executive Committee will share strategic plan updates reports with membership at least two times per year.
- Board will make any revisions to strategic plan for presentation at the annual meetings.
- If additional dollars are available, the strategic planning committee recommends that the Board consider using these dollars towards staffing including compensation, new equipment, and increasing staffing.

V. Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Leads (Color coded by Implementation Leads)*:

Goals	Objectives	Implementation Leads
Goal I: Enhance member experience.		
	IA. Review and revise volunteer requirements and clearly communicate and monitor expectations.	Volunteer Committee
	IB. Refine and communicate membership / program categories, options, and expectations.	Membership Committee (this might be ad-hoc?)
	IC. Facilitate communication from individual members to club leadership.	Communication Committee
	ID. Create in members a sense of identity and connection to the club.	Executive Committee with all Committees
Goal II: Strengthen communications throughout all parts of the WRRRA.		
	IIA. Implement procedures to efficiently, effectively, and regularly share information among members, coaches, Board, and other key groups of internal stakeholders.	Communication Committee
	IIB. Clarify what needs to be communicated and to whom.	Communication Committee
	IIC. Determine how to communicate the messaging ("what") defined above to each defined audience (what tools, vehicles, frequency, etc.).	Communication Committee
	IID. Create formal process for communication between WRRRA Board of Directors and Cleveland Rowing Foundation.	Executive Committee
Goal III. Achieve consistency in quality of programs.		
	IIIA. Develop plan to fairly assign resources – coaching, physical space, and equipment	Board of Directors
	IIIB. Periodically evaluate existing and potential new programs to meet desires of membership.	Program Standards Committee
	IIIC. Define what constitutes quality for each program. Establish a mechanism to establish quality for each program and to evaluate the efficacy of the established quality.	Program Standards Committee
Goal IV: Build visibility for WRRRA.		
	IVA. Engage in activities with other organizations (within CRF as well as outside partners) to support the river, city and sport of rowing.	Executive Committee

	IVB. Develop an external media press kit, create an implementation strategy for dissemination of the press kit, execute strategy	Communication Committee
	IVC. Create partner advocates within the Northeast Ohio and towing communities	Executive Committee
	IVD. Understand current demographics of membership, and create a library of media avenues and the demographics and event which they reach	Communication Committee
Goal V: Develop the Infrastructure of WRRRA.		
	VA. Formalize Committee documents, organize and automate for both governance and programmatic committees	Board Development Committee
	VB. Develop mechanism for defining and measuring "success" for all aspects of the work of the organization.	Executive Committee and Board
	VC. Create mechanism to consider growth.	Executive, Finance, Fund Development Committees
	VD. Create committee structure and committee operating guidelines that support the work of the organization and distinguish between Board governance committees versus programmatic committees; add Fund Development and Board Development to the list of governance committees.	Board Development Committee
	VE. Create a 3 year incremental staffing plan.	Finance and Fund Development Committees
*	VF. Consider and revise Code of Regulations; include adding a provision to increase the size of the Board.	Executive Committee and Board
	VG. Evolve Board development process (recruitment, orientation, engagement) to support changing operations and role of the Board	Board Development Committee

**A sample implementation worksheet will be found in Appendix F on page 38 of this document. It is recommended that the name/committee shown in the Implementation Lead column develop specific action steps to move each objective forward including delineating timing and benchmarks for each action step as shown on the worksheet.*

When developing timing, be aware that this is a three year plan. Implementation of some action steps may take days or weeks to complete while other steps may take months and even years to complete. Many of the action steps suggested to begin in the first years will carry over into subsequent years. Some action steps may not even be slated to begin to be implemented until the second or third year of this plan.

"Implementation Leads" are responsible for beginning to move objectives and action steps forward. Other individuals and/or committees will likely be involved in some aspects of implementation.