**PRWG Steering Committee Meeting**
**January 18, 2023**
**Virtual**

*Attendees:* Erin Plue, Jennifer Ekstrom, Amy Anderson, Jon Quinn-Hurst, Allan Songstad, Eric Johnson, Hank Jones, Jeremy Patterson, Sean Stash, Paul Sieracki, Cody Montgomery, Kyle Macki, Mike Lithgow, Ken Haagman, Jill Cobb, Betty Gardner, Pam Duquette

*Facilitation*: Alexis Gibson

**Next steps:**
- The next Steering Committee meeting will be in February (virtual); Alexis will send out a Doodle poll to schedule
- The Committee will start to review bylaws as they are developed during meetings
- Identify a standing meeting time

**Agenda:**
1. Welcome and introductions
2. Developing Steering Committee ground rules
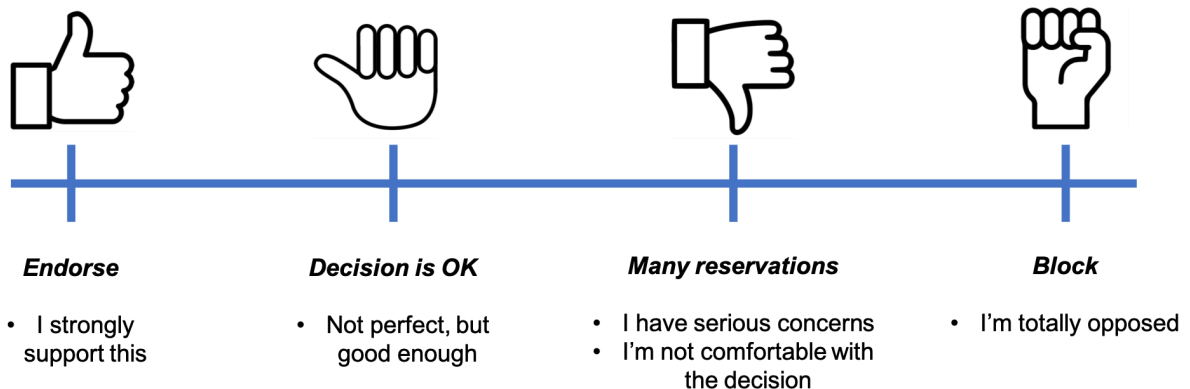3. Understanding consensus decision-making and reaching closure
4. What's next

**Developing Steering Committee Ground Rules**
- The group discussed the documents that were shared in advance of the meeting – *Collaborating Consciously* and on collaboration key concepts.
- The group developed a list of ground rules to provide behavioral norms – ground rules will be added to the bylaws and a physical copy will be signed by all Steering Committee members (pending final wordsmithing).
- Ground rules:
    - Only one person will speak at a time
    - Each person will strive to maintain a sense of humor, listen well, and be open minded
    - We are responsible for the success of this process and outcomes
    - Be ready to engage in respectful, constructive dialogue
    - No personal attacks or blaming others for actions or outcomes
    - We will not attribute ideas or comments made by participants to others outside the process
    - We will try to stay on track and avoid digression and grandstanding
    - No side conversations – give your full attention
    - See challenges as an opportunity
    - Have a sense of compassion for others
    - Start on time and end on time to be respectful to everyone's time
    - Don't take disagreements personally
    - We think it is possible to change our minds and positions

- Several procedural questions and requests came up during the discussion that will be addressed in future meetings:
  - What information will be shared outside the group? How will we handle media?
  - Have a flip chart for saving ideas/questions that aren't ready for discussion yet
  - Discussions need to be transparent to the public
  - Need to agree on structures for how decisions are being made and what is being posted/shared
  - How will we handle additions/subtractions for the working group?
  - Need to be mindful of how information is presented
  - Have one voice
- For now, Erin and Alexis will be the main points of contact. Materials will be shared and approved by the committee before they go out to the public.
- The committee discussed how they will enforce their ground rules and how the facilitator can support them.
  - Members will bring up when they see someone violating a ground rule and try to model the behaviors in their own actions. The use of humor is appreciated.
  - The group asked the facilitator to point out when they are not following ground rules and to remind them of the rules before each meeting (physical copy at in-person meetings, sharing at the start of virtual meetings).

**Understanding consensus decision-making and reaching closure**
- Alexis gave a presentation on consensus decision making, consensus building, using the gradients of agreement, and presented an option for what to do if the group reaches an impasse. See the presentation slides.
  - This group will operate by consensus and will strive for unanimous agreements that meet that the interests of all participating stakeholders.
- The group will use the following scale/signals to assess support during check-ins and to determine if they are ready to reach closure.



| Endorse | Decision is OK | Many reservations | Block |
|---|---|---|---|
| • I strongly support this | • Not perfect, but good enough | • I have serious concerns<br>• I'm not comfortable with the decision | • I'm totally opposed |

- The group was not in agreement around what to do if they reach an impasse while seeking unanimous support for a proposal.

- o Proposed decision: *Settling for non-unanimity will be used only as a last resort. Group will be willing to accept overwhelming agreement (consensus minus one) in the face of an impasse.*
- o Some members expressed concerns that settling for non-unanimity will undermine the process. Reasons included that building consensus can take a long time, that later agreements/discussions can change earlier agreements or dissent, and that having this option could lead the group to override important concerns and/or try to shortcut addressing substantive issues.
- o Several members expressed that they weren't ready to decide on the question of non-unanimity until the Steering Committee makes decisions about attendance and whether consensus/unanimity extends to the entire watershed group.
- o There was also interest expressed in having a lower bar for "overwhelming agreement" that would be more than 1 person dissenting.
- o Members agreed to hold this issue until a later meeting.

**Next steps**
- ● The plan is to meet monthly. The next meeting will be held virtually in February.
  - o A Doodle poll will be shared with members to determine the best time to meet.
  - o Alexis suggested taking a meeting to learn more and discuss watershed groups. There was also interest in making more progress on bylaws.
  - o The current plan is for the March meeting to be held in-person. Some members would like the March meeting to be virtual given the weather/road conditions.
- ● There is interest in settling on a consistent standing meeting time ASAP so people can plan to participate.
- ● The group would like to see a document capturing bylaws that can be edited/advanced between meetings to ensure agreements aren't being lost.