

PRWG Steering Committee Meeting
March 2, 2023
Priest River Public Library and Virtual

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

Facilitator: Alexis Gibson

Next steps:

- The committee will review and provide feedback on draft protocols
- The April meeting time and location needs to be determined. This meeting will likely focus on information sharing/presentations on the river.

Agenda (modified based on what was discussed during meeting):

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Approving meeting minutes
3. Developing a mission/purpose statement
4. Developing principles for our work
5. What is next for the group?

Approving meeting minutes

- Discussion around what is in meeting minutes – should text/comments shared via Zoom chat be included if they weren't discussed by the group?
 - In this case, comments in the chat were part of the general discussion so they were included in the minutes.
 - The group agreed to amend the minutes so it was clear that not all ideas were discussed and that there was no formal agreement during the last meeting around what was included in the brainstorm list.
- The group agreed to continue to review and approve meeting minutes by email to allow materials to be publicly available more quickly.
 - If there are concerns around minutes, those will be addressed and a new document will be circulated for approval.

Developing a purpose/mission statement

- The committee used the results of the brainstorm from the last session as a starting point to find agreement around why the watershed group exists. Ideas were grouped based on common intent/themes, and then the committee discussed a higher-level title that could capture the underlying ideas (see image at end of document).
 - A member requested the addition of “birdwatching, nature appreciation, photography, and plant ID” be added to the idea board.
- During the meeting, the following statement was created (*this may be refined further by the Steering Committee*):
 - We exist to:
 - develop a shared understanding of current conditions,

- identify and pursue actions that preserve, conserve, and rehabilitate ecological integrity,
- maintain and improve recreational and beneficial uses,
- conserve and protect the Priest River watershed, and
- increase community connections and value.
- Other important themes identified by the group included that the group exists to:
 - Benefit the whole basin
 - Keep unintended consequences in mind
 - Work for now and the future
- The group spent time digging into:
 - The term “beneficial uses” and whether this would tie the work to a regulatory framework in a positive way, be understood and meaningful to the community, and whether the term was broad enough to capture multiple forms of use.
 - The use of rehabilitation vs restoration – which are we trying to achieve?

Developing principles for our work

- Using the draft mission statement, the committee was asked to reflect on the principles for our work. What must we do (or must not do) to achieve our purpose? Small groups initially made and refined lists to the minimum “must dos” and then the group discussed and refined a final list.
- Principles (*these may be further refined by the Steering Committee*):
 - Strive to utilize trusted data and information by seeking advice and council from those with expertise in the system
 - Strive to find common ground
 - Must come to the effort in good faith and keep moving forward
 - Take a holistic approach to the lake and river
 - Seek to do no long-term irreparable harm to the system, including from unintended consequences, and weigh risks and gains of actions
 - Take positive action
 - Consider input from the greater population
 - Stay big picture for now, developing a baseline understanding and narrowing as we work
 - Use defined and measurable objectives
 - Be open minded, respectful, transparent, and work to build relationships
 - Consider the 5Cs for healthy streams – cold, clean, clear, connected, complex
 - Involve the community in stewardship work

What is next?

- The draft mission statement and principles, in addition to the ground rules developed during the first meeting, will be used by the facilitator to draft a full set of protocols. These will be shared directly with Steering Committee members for review and feedback. The goal is to finalize these during the next facilitated meeting.
- The Steering Committee is interested in moving into the next phase of the process: creating a shared understanding of current and historic baseline conditions of the river.

- Discussion included some ideas for what people are interested in learning more about and what sources of information/people could be used to find that information.
- An initial list of potential speakers (depending on topics) included: IDFG, DEQ, Kalispel Tribe, USFS, USGS, IDWR, IDL, Avista, ACOE, the University of Idaho, the Historical Society, and work from Glen Rothrock.
- Eric Berntsen volunteered to work with Erin Plue to organize a session on historical conditions of the river.
- The group will work between sessions to identify common topics of interest and who might have information to share.
- The group briefly discussed inviting members of the Technical Advisory Committee to attend informational sessions.
- The first Thursday in April won't work for several committee members to meet. The group will use email/polling to determine a time for the next meeting.
- This is the last meeting that can be covered by existing funding. TU has secured another grant but it is unclear when that funding will be available. This could have implications for the pace of work or how meetings are held, but there were several ideas for bridge funding.

Images:

Mission statement development

