

PRWG Steering Committee Meeting
June 15, 2023 at 5-7 pm
Priest River Senior Center

Attendees: Erin Plue, Jennifer Ekstrom, Amy Anderson, Allan Songstad, Paul Sieracki, Mike Lithgow, Eric Berntsen, Jill Cobb, Betty Gardner, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Kyle Maki, Jeremy Patterson

Next steps:

- Three absent voting members will review the protocols that were accepted by the eleven members that were present at the meeting and present any concerns or dissent before June 26th, 2023 to the Coordinator (Erin Plue). If no dissent is heard then the protocols will be adopted as they are in V5.
- Steering Committee members will share contact information for videographers with Coordinator to help capture the next info sessions. Coordinator will select a videographer to film the next informational session.
- Committee members will indicate their availability for a September field trip.
- The coordinator will begin the procurement process for a professional facilitator. This process will be given adequate time to get a diversity of proposals.

Agenda:

- Protocols discussion & voting
- How to capture the info sessions?
- Developing a Communications Team
- Development of technical teams and a Watershed Assessment.

1. Welcome and review of protocols

- Erin introduced her recent thinking for next steps and the rationale for this meeting's agenda. This brought up the topics of:
 - Is there a need for a professional facilitator or a planning consultant?
 - Is our next step building a Watershed Assessment, and what will this look like and how will we do this?
- Three small changes were made in the protocols.
- Topics of conversation included:
 - Should there be set terms for the spokesperson?
 - Is the Coordinator always the spokesperson?
 - Are the soft or "fluff" parts of the protocols and ground rules important?
 - Do we need a professional facilitator moving forward and at what point?
 - Discussion ensued about what is it that we need from a facilitator and how does Erin clearly describe the Scope of Work for the future facilitator?
- *The 11 present voting members voted with "thumbs up" to accept V5 of the protocols.*

2. How to capture the info sessions?

- Discussion about the difficulty capturing the info sessions and how important it is to capture these meetings accurately for those people who were not present.
 - Erin explained that difficulties have included unstable internet connections, inconsistent sound, and the availability of venues for the times the group desires to meet.
- Discussion ensued about how this information can be captured and how it will be used.
 - High risk of different interpretations makes notes not a good option for these sessions. It was deemed that video, not reliant on internet, speaker PowerPoints and a bibliography (of studies and information that the speaker referred to) are the best ways to accurately capture the meetings.

3. Developing a Communications team.

- Erin expressed a need for support putting together external communications coming from the Steering Committee.
- Jennifer Ekstrom and Paul Sieracki offered to support communications efforts in the near term.
- Near future tasks include adding to the website and finding videographer to help capture info sessions.

4. Watershed Assessment

- Discussion about the development of a watershed assessment weaved its way through the whole meeting. Topics included:
 - Do we need a consultant to do this?
 - What would the cost be?
 - What do we need to capture to set us up for watershed and project planning?
- The Kalispel Tribe proposed to take on completing a watershed assessment that is high level (mainly desktop using existing mapping and data) and will help identify priority areas in the mainstem river and at tributary confluences
 - Eric explained that this type of assessment is a common endeavor for their team and that they are already funded to do assessments on several of the Lower Priest tributaries.
 - The Watershed Group will be brought along with this effort so that we are familiar with the information moving forward into the watershed planning phase.

Notes:

- Betty Gardner mentioned that the Priest River water levels drop rapidly about three feet each year during the first days July when Outlet Dam starts managing lake levels. She described that many creatures die from being stranded from the channel and that this leaves an awful smell of decay. She shared an open invite to the Steering Committee members to come to her house and witness this occurrence.