

Priest River Watershed Group
Steering Committee Meeting
September 5, 2024
4:45-6:30 pm
West Bonner Library



Present Members

Allan Songstad, Stop the Priest Lake Siphon
Amy Andersen, Selkirk Conservation Alliance
Betty Gardner, Priest River
Eric Johnson, Priest Lake
Eric Berntsen, Kalispel Tribe*
Erin Plue, Trout Unlimited
John Quinn Hurst, Selkirk Conservation Alliance*

Pam Duquette, Priest River Watershed
Paul Sieracki, Inland Empire Task Force
(Environmental)
Sean Stash, Boating on Priest River

Facilitators:

Hannah Anderson, Lead Facilitator
Tracy Ortiz, Facilitation Support

Goals:

- Learn about Bull Trout and Landowner Support in a public informational session
- Announce the adoption of the PRWG Strategic Plan to the public
- Explore methods for implementing Strategic Plan objectives through small group discussion
- Collect interest in PRWG sub-committees and task forces

Meeting Minutes

Public Session Welcome and Overview

The Priest River Watershed Group hosted a public informational session to discuss Bull Trout and the Endangered Species Act, and how local landowners can find support through the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The agenda and recording of the public session can be found on the PRWG website.

- Bull Trout and Endangered Species Act
 - Ken King, Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Helping Landowners Improve the Aquatic and Riparian Resources on their Property
 - Cindy Lewis, National Resource Conservation Service, District Conservationist
 - Brittany Morlin, USFWS, Wildlife Biologist- Conservation Partnership

Break

A quick break was taken to transition the agenda and rearrange the room for the PRWG Steering Committee Meeting.

PRWG Steering Committee Meeting - Welcome and Overview

Hannah Anderson, Facilitator, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda and goals for the day.

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Present PRWG Strategic Plan

At the August PRWG Steering Committee meeting, the group voted unanimously to adopt the PRWG 2024-2034 Strategic Plan. The facilitator briefly reviewed the contents of the Plan, its purpose, and the PRWG's intentions for using the Strategic Plan as a vehicle for ultimately producing a Restoration Plan. The Strategic Plan is now published for public viewing and can be found on the PRWG website, or by request.

Strategic Plan Implementation: Sub-Committees and Task Forces

The PRWG Strategic Plan mentions several short-term goals that may be most effectively achieved through the creation of sub-committees and/or task forces. By creating these smaller groups, the PRWG can more efficiently delegate the workload amongst members. Sub-committees and task forces also provide the opportunity for steering committee members to apply their individual skills, experiences, and interests in order progress towards the goals outlined within the Plan.

The facilitator reviewed some of the common characteristics that distinguish sub-committees from task forces:

- Subcommittees are long-term, made up of PRWG Steering Committee Members, and coordinate activities related to a topic.
- Task Forces are time-limited, focus on a single item, and may include the support of technical or community experts.

From the Strategic Plan, several potential topics for a task force or sub-committee are evident:

- Internal Processes (A-1. 3 months)
- Internal Structure (A-2. 3 months)
- Funding Plan (A-4. 6 months)
- Base Map (B-4. 2 months)
- Communication Plan (Goal C)
- Education and Outreach (C-2. 9 months)
- Work Plan Methodology (D-1. 4 months)

World Café Activity – Working Groups

To begin implementing the strategic plan, the facilitator led the group through a World Café activity to help explore the above topics and the PRWG's readiness to form sub-committees or task forces. Two rounds of small group discussion occurred. For each round, meeting participants were encouraged to pick a table by topic. The following prompts were provided to spur discussion. For each round a table participant took high-level notes. The group reconvened at the end to summarize the table discussions and share further ideas.

- How could this be a useful task force/sub-committee for the PRWG?
- What projects will this group tackle?
- How may work be divided or delegated? Are there particular roles that would be useful?
- What sort of skill-set would be helpful for this group?
- What sort of resources will this group need?

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- Are there possible challenges or opportunities?
- How often should this group meet?

Takeaways – Group Discussion and Report Outs

The following are key takeaways and next steps that each group identified during their conversations.

Round 1

Grants and Funding

GOAL: Find funding to support the PRWG and its continued existence

- Identify experts in grants and invite them
 - Help identify grants that the group qualifies for
- Identify a point person that will begin to receive notification of grants and other opportunities
- Develop a structure/chart/table to track opportunities and progress
- Should the group incorporate as 501C

Internal Structure

GOAL: Good internal structure to advance the cause of the PRWG

- Consider this could be a task force
- Include membership terms under by-laws
- Conduct internal audit every quarter
- Choose a person that would become a representative of the PRWG
 - Who should be the spokesperson
- Consider the term of facilitation
- An executive committee should be created
 - President or chairperson
 - Elected positions should have term limits
- Recruit new steering committee members
- Identify consensus protocol

Education and Outreach

Goal: Educate the community regarding the PRWG

- Create press releases
- Develop a monthly article
- Develop a pamphlet or newsletter
- Share references and studies
- Listen to community concerns
- Submit for article reviews
- Interact with the media
 - Radio stations
 - Social media
- Skillset: Writing, editing, presentation

Round 2

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- Internal Processes
 - Update protocols
 - Develop a new members process
 - Develop a conflict resolution process
 - Meet 2–3-month intervals to review the function of protocols and decision-making process with input from the steering committee and present a review to the steering committee
 - Brainstorm leadership positions
 - Officers
 - President
 - Secretary
 - Treasure

Communication Plan

Goal: Guiding plan

- Designate a representative speaker
- Plan for communication internal vs external
- Bring in an expert to develop communication plans
 - Research existing communication plans
- List media plans
- Identify talking points
 - Highlight our values and mission
- Handle updates and changes to messaging
- Manage website and printed materials

Work Plan Methodology

Goal: Make a work plan that follows our goals

- Technical experts need to be involved
- Think of SMART Goals
- Map a 10 Year vision
- Consider if the project will make a difference

Overall Next Steps

Once each table had reported out their group’s discussion, the steering committee discussed the logical next steps.

- The PRWG is ready to begin forming task forces and sub-committees as appropriate.
- The topics seem to have some overlap, and 4 main “buckets” are clear.
 - Grants and Funding + Funding Plan
 - Outreach and Education + Communication Plan
 - Internal Processes + Protocols Review
 - Work Plan Methodology + Data Catalogue
- Within those buckets, more discussion is needed to determine if a sub-committee or task force is the most appropriate next step. However, it seems as though one may lead to the other after preliminary work is done.

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- Technical experts may provide a very helpful role in this workshop setting, providing their insight into how these task forces / sub-committees can be most effective.

Next Steps for the October Meeting

- At the October meeting, the PRWG would like to hold a workshop style meeting to continue small group discussion of these topics, with the goal of creating clear next steps for each task force or sub-committee.
- The Facilitator will send out a poll with notes from today's meeting, asking steering committee members to sign up for 1 of 4 topics to participate in at the October Meeting
- Technical and community experts should be invited to participate as appropriate

6:20 pm | Housekeeping (general discussion)

- Protocols Update – Conflict Resolution Procedure
- Bureau of Reclamation Grant Request (Erin)
 - Erin Plue shared an update on a grant opportunity with the group
 - Erin provided an overview of a grant opportunity and what would cover
 - She shared the work she had done to date to complete the application

6:30 pm | Adjourn