

Priest River Watershed Group
Steering Committee Meeting
November 7, 2024
4:30-6:30 pm
West Bonner Library



Present Members

Allan Songstad, Stop the Priest Lake Siphon
Amy Anderson, Selkirk Conservation Alliance
Betty Gardner, Priest River
Cathy Gidley, Trout Unlimited*
Eric Johnson, Preserve Priest Lake
Erin Plue, Trout Unlimited
Hank Jones, Fishing Guides on the Priest River
Kyle Maki, Idaho Wildlife Federation &
Sportsmen Conservation
Jennifer Ekstrom, Idaho Conservation League
John Quinn Hurst, Selkirk Conservation
Alliance*
Mike Lithgow, Kalispel Tribe

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

Facilitators

Hannah Anderson, Lead Facilitator
Tracy Ortiz, Facilitation Support

Public Attendees

Bryan Witte
Barb Gillespie
Dave Gillespie

Goals:

- Explore methods for implementing Strategic Plan objectives through small group discussion
- Establish goals, functions, opportunities, and next steps for PRWG sub-committees and task forces
- Enlist members for PRWG sub-committees and task forces

Meeting Minutes

PRWG Steering Committee Meeting - Welcome and Overview

Tracy Ortiz, Facilitator, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda and goals for the day.

Overview of Working Group Session

The PRWG Strategic Plan mentions several short-term goals that may be most effectively achieved by creating 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 allow steering committee members to apply their skills, experiences, and interests to progress toward the goals outlined within the Plan.

Prior to the meeting, the facilitator sent a survey to the steering committee to gauge each member's interests in participating in each of the subcommittees and/or task forces. Ahead of the meeting, the facilitator used the results of the survey to pre-assign each member to one of the subcommittees so that each topic had a balanced number of people working on it. After an overview of the working group

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session, members were allowed to move to a different table or topic if they wanted to. The sub-committee and task force topics were as follows:

- Grants and Funding
- Education and Outreach
- PRWG Process and protocol
- Work Plan Methodology

Strategic Plan Implementation: Sub-Committees and Task Forces

The following prompts were provided to help the working groups think through their topic and begin to make progress towards their goals.

- What is the goal of this group?
 - How could this be a useful task force/sub-committee for the PRWG?
 - What projects will this group tackle?
 - What are your short- and long-term priorities?
- How will this group function?
 - Is this a task force, or a subcommittee?
 - How will work be divided or delegated?
 - Will one person help lead the effort?
 - Are there particular roles that would be useful?
 - How often will this group meet?
 - How/where will you meet?
- What will make this group successful?
 - What sort of skill-set would be helpful for this group?
 - What sort of resources will this group need? (technical experts, example documents, etc.)
 - What resources do we already have?
 - Where are challenges or opportunities?
- What are the next steps for this group?
 - What are the SHORT-TERM / HIGH PRIORITY tasks?
 - What are the LONG-TERM tasks?
 - Set a date/time for your next meeting.

Members were encouraged to work together for 1 hour, answer the prompted questions, and create a tangible plan for how to progress. One member from each group was asked to take high-level notes. At the end of the hour, each group provided a report out of the discussion had, and shared their plan for the next steps. Below is a summary of the reports shared by each group.

Education and Outreach

- Goal
 - Subcommittee will serve as the official liaison between the entire PRWG and public, “creating the message” with an approval process by PRWG

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- Promote understanding and awareness of the challenges of the Lower Priest River and the work of the PRWG
- Nurture public trust
- Determine short-term priorities, mid-term priorities, and long-term priorities
- Function
 - A subcommittee with room for a few more members
 - Roles
 - Chair - to serve as the primary contact and spokesperson
 - Secretary
 - Writer
 - Photographer and Local interviewer
 - Meet virtually regularly or as needed with an initial schedule of once a month
- Success
 - The skills of individual members will help make them successful
 - Challenges
 - Perceived biases and positions within the Group and within the community as a whole
 - Opportunities
 - Engage a community that cares deeply about their beautiful backyard river
 - Needs
 - Funding to share messages
 - Graphic design skills
- Next Steps
 - Schedule future meetings
 - Draft communication plans
 - Develop a budget, and present funding needs to grants and funding subcommittee

Grants and Funding

- Goal
 - Research potential opportunities to fund the goals of the strategic plan
- Function
 - A subcommittee
 - Work will be contributed equally
 - No one person will lead
 - All committee members will have the same role
- Success
 - Grant writing experience
 - Management and budgeting experience
 - Resources needed
 - Grant writer
 - Letters of support
 - Tech Experts familiar with what grants are available
 - Challenges
 - Managing multiple grants

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- Time restraints and getting applications submitted
 - Becoming a 501 C is a complicated process we may need to navigate
- Next Steps
 - Short Term and High Priority
 - Develop a spreadsheet that will be called the “Grants Tracking Calendar”
 - Long Term
 - Continuous population of the “Grants Tracking Calendar”

PRWG Process and Protocol

- Goal
 - Review processes and protocols and update as needed
 - Guide steering committee regarding protocols
 - Review notifying procedures and update as needed in protocols
 - Leadership structure: is it needed?
 - Facilitator: would a facilitator be needed to guide the process
- Function
 - Task Force
 - Meet as needed
 - Coordinate via phone, zoom, and email
- Success
 - Edit the most recent copy of the protocols
 - Present a reviewed copy of the steering committee for a formal vote
- Next Steps
 - Schedule ongoing meetings

Work Plan Methodology

- Goal
 - Develop a template work plan and fill it in
 - Short term
 - Build a template and 1-year plan
 - Long Term
 - Retain flexibility and create yearly plans
- Function
 - Subcommittee
 - Build annual plans and tracking monthly progress
 - Non-defined roles
 - Meet bi-weekly virtually
- Success
 - Good note-taking during meetings
 - Big picture thinking
 - Resources
 - Strategic Plan
 - Grants
 - Facilitator

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- Agency and Tribal help
 - Challenges
 - Limits on facilitator support
 - Time
 - Vetting through the group
 - Annual Plan
 - Planning for the plan
- Next Steps
 - 18th of November in the afternoon
 - 20th of November in the morning

Housekeeping (general discussion)

- Friends of the PRWG Task Force (Betty)
 - Betty brought an erosion project to the group and asked if the group would be willing to help and create a plan for this
 - The group discussed and agreed that, at this time, the PRWG is not capable of providing support but is willing to help find individual support for the project
- December Listening Session
 - The facilitator shared a reminder for the December meeting and the topic being discussed
- Student Assistance Opportunity
 - The facilitator shared that a group of graduate students from Georgetown University were connected to The Langdon Group and hoped to work with TLG on a collaborative project.
 - The Langdon Group recommended that graduate students perform a situation assessment focused on how the PRWG can better connect with the community
 - The student group will be conducting the situation assessment and drafting the report between November and December 2025
- Review Timeline
 - A graphic of the strategic plan's timeline was shared with the steering committee

Adjourn

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