

Priest River Watershed Group Steering Committee Meeting Notes

January 11, 2024 from 4:30 – 6:30 pm

West Bonner County Library with Zoom option

Members Present: Erin Plue (TU); Sean Stash (boating); Paul Sieracki (IETF); Pam Duquette (PR); Allan Songstad (PL); Hank Jones (fishing guide); Betty Gardner (PR); Mike Lithgow & Eric Berntsen (Kalispel Tribe)

Members Present Virtually: Jennifer Ekstrom & Karissa Huntsman (ICL); Amy Anderson & John Quinn-Hurst (SCA), Kyle Maki & Cody Montgomery (IWF); Ken Hagman (Priest Lake Community)

Guests: Hannah Anderson (The Langdon Group)

Meeting Notes & Action Items:

Facilitator Update: The Langdon Group submitted the winning proposal to serve as facilitator/coordinator for the PRWG. Hannah Anderson, the project manager, introduced herself to the present members. The Langdon Group will begin facilitating the group at the February meeting.

Website Update: Erin walked the group through the first draft of the website. She will take edits and consider suggestions for this site up until the end of the day January 19th.

To access the site please click on [View your site draft here](#).

Use the sign-in for the username and PW: watershed / watershed

Erin also introduced the group to a GIS map that will be linked to the map on the front page of the website. This map had layers for property ownership, BURP sample sites, bull trout critical habitat, and TMDL listed streams. This link may or may not work for you, but feel free to give it a try and poke around. Please submit any ideas for additional layers for the map to Erin.

<https://trout.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=743eeca2ba64476aa89a84049cc5e701>

Erin encourages PRWG members to share these materials specific to the Priest Basin – links or the document files- with Erin so she can organize them and add them to the website:

- Planning documents
- Data or reports
- Projects that have occurred in the basin in the last decade or so.
- Pictures

Processes for changing proxies, adding members, removing members: ICL is interested in changing proxies from Brad Smith to Karissa Huntsman. **The group voted in favor of allowing**

Karissa to serve as the new proxy for the ICL (universal thumbs up) and decided to attend to changes like this on a situation-to-situation basis.

There was discussion about how to manage situations in which members miss more than two meetings in a row. Erin will follow up with a member who has violated this agreement in the PRWG Protocols and this topic will be discussed again next meeting.

In-person mandatory vs. hybrid option discussion: A discussion ensued about offering meetings, only in-person or always hybrid. The conversation led to the ideas of having most meetings be available as hybrid, but keeping a limitation on the number that can be attended virtually (needing at least four in-person meetings a year). The idea of having some mandatory in-person meetings when hard decisions were to be made or activities required in-person attendance. Consensus was not reached on this topic and it will be visited again next meeting.

Moving forward: Erin brought up a recent meeting she had with IDL Hydrologist Joel Clark and USFS Fish Biologist, Brandon Glaza. This led into a discussion about choosing one or two of the critical tributaries to the Lower Priest River to hone in on for development of watershed restoration plan. The East River was discussed as a candidate. There was also discussion about choosing one of the drainages that will be included in the Kaniksu Forest Project that is in early development. Focus on one of these drainages would allow for the group to offer project suggestions to the Forest Service before NEPA is completed for the Kaniksu project which will likely lead to easier implementation of the restoration projects.

Next steps will be to bring IDL (Idaho Department of Lands), NRCS (National Resource Conservation Service), and the USFS (US Forest Service) to the table at the March meeting. This will allow for one meeting for The Langdon Group to work only with the steering committee, but then the intention would be to open the meetings up to the public with specific invitation to the entities listed above.

Planning a didymo float next summer: Erin spoke a little about her desire to get expert documentation of the didymo presence on the Lower Priest River. This led into discussion of two potential field trips next summer (not specific to didymo, but more general):

- A field trip specific to the Middle Fork East River
- A float of the Lower Priest River (we can invite an expert in aquatic invasive species if desired)

Next meeting date is currently set for February 1, 2024.

Meeting ended at 6:30 pm.