
Goals:

- Host a technical expert panel to receive preliminary guidance on draft Strategic Plan
- Determine remaining steps before voting to adopt Strategic Plan
- Review Housekeeping Items

Members Present:

- Allan Songstad, Stop the Priest Lake Siphon
- Betty Gardner, Priest River
- Erin Plue, Trout Unlimited
- Jennifer Ekstrom, Idaho Conservation League
- Jeremmy Patterson, Fishing Guides on the Priest River*
- Jon Quinn Hurst, Selkirk Conservation Alliance *
- Kyle Maki, Idaho Wildlife Federation
- Pam Duquette, Priest River
- Paul Sieracki, Inland Empire Task Force (Environmental)
- Sean Stash, Boating Access on Priest River,

Facilitators:

- Hannah Anderson, Lead Facilitator
- Tracy Ortiz, Facilitation Support

Minutes

Welcome and Overview

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

The facilitator provided a recap of the PRWG's strategic planning process thus far. She also provided an explanation of the plan workflow and how the Strategic Plans is intended to work with the collaborative's other planning documents (future work plan(s), and Restoration Plan).

Strategic Planning – Technical Expert Panel

In early June, a preliminary draft of the Strategic Plan was sent by the facilitators to a short list of Technical Experts identified by the PRWG. Technical Experts were asked to provide high level feedback based on the structure of the strategic plan, and invited to participate in a panel discussion to provide further feedback on what makes a collaborative successful and what advice they may have on the plan specifically. At the June PRWG meeting, four technical experts attended to serve on the panel.

The facilitator went over the role of the technical experts and explained the questions the panel would be answering, which were provided to experts in advance:

- **What makes a collaborative successful?**
 - Case studies

- Lessons learned
 - Modeling after success
- *Can you provide any insight or examples of successful watershed collaboratives or processes that we should consider when writing our strategic plan?*
- **Advice on Plan specifically**
 - *Do you have any advice on the goals or objectives specifically?*
 - *What advice can you give us regarding our draft Strategic Plan?*
 - *Are there any objectives missing, or anything we are not considering?*
- **Challenges?**
 - *Common challenges for collaboratives?*
 - *Do you foresee any challenges for us in completing these goals or objectives?*
 - *Anything coming up in the next 3-5 years we can start preparing for now?*
- **Opportunities?**
 - *Potential partners?*
 - *Do you know of any opportunities that might help us achieve these goals or objectives?*
 - *Anything coming up in the next 3-5 years we can start preparing for now?*
- **What to expect?**
 - *Community/public or decision maker opinions?*
 - *Things coming down the pipeline?*
- **General Feedback or Advice**

The panel conversations and discussion was as follows:

What makes a collaborative successful?

- The panel shared examples of successful watershed groups
 - Henrys fork Watershed Council they often use their monthly meetings for team building activities to help find common ground
 - South Fork Watershed Group
 - Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
 - Diverse stakeholder and topics
 - Respectful to each other and their opinions
- A PWRG member asked if collaboratives typically have specific goals?
 - Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative was reference as having the goal to improve the way of life in the Valley
 - A good idea to is to ensure that within the collective list of goals, each collaborative member's perspective is being represented
- PRWG: What are examples of measurable metrics to determine if they are very successful or not?
 - For general progress towards goals, develop surveys for the group to take regularly to check in on how well the group is doing (how effective)
 - Clear mission statement and clear vision to guide the group
 - Internal perception of success can be qualitative
 - SMART GOALS are written to provide the group with metrics

Advice on plan specifically

- What is a good time frame for a goal; how do you create a timeframe for a goal?
 - Monetary needs can define a timeline for goals
 - Grants or funding can create a need for action
 - Goals dates should be considered for contract funding
 - The PRWG needs a restorative plan by June of 2027
- The panel asked what the main source of funding for the groups is
 - Grants are majority of the groups funding
 - More PRWG members could be involved in this
 - A funding plan is a part of the plan
 - This group does not have the ability to fund the necessary scientific studies to create a restoration project.
 - Perhaps an agency will could take an interest and provide funding
- A panel member asked a question regarding Objective C-1
 - Is there an actual plan for further education?
 - A data catalogue has been created that analyzes the resources on the website

Overall comments on the Strategic Plan

- The strategic plan is broad which is good
 - There is a lot of room to grow and build
- A PRWG member asked if they were surprised to see goals 'A', 'B', and 'C' or were they expecting something that appeared more like Work Plan
 - Panel members explained that it is good to get your feet under you before you start
 - The strategic plan helps to build a successful work plan and develop strategies
- A PRWG member asked the panel what they consider Priest Lake to be when they refer to it
 - The panel explained that they consider the whole watershed
 - The watershed can be divided into multiple sections
 - Agencies look at the whole watershed in their work
- The PRWG can develop committees that work with Technical Experts to focus on specific activities
 - The technical experts explained that the PRWG is already doing that
 - Subcommittees are needed to create a cohesive working collaborative
- What is a good division of the labor needed to write a Restoration Plan?
 - Starting with assessments of the lake it is a good baseline
 - Determine if there are already any existing watershed assessments?
 - Examine adjacent watershed assessments
 - Useful resources for watershed assessments and can provide good structure the PRWG can replicate
- Tribe would be willing to help make resources available and useful

What challenges have you seen other collaboratives face?

- Many groups struggle with timelines they set for themselves
- Policy changes could affect funding opportunities
- Not having a public outreach plan

- The PRWG has discussed developing a subcommittee that will handle public outreach, such as developing signage, create messaging, etc.)
- Develop a communication plan
 - Based on the list of people who have shown interest
 - Invite people to informational sessions
 - Field trips
 - Website
 - Social media
- How to account for private land in and along the watershed can be challenging when planning
 - Landowners may not allow you to access the land to conduct the assessment
 - Timber sale area(s)
 - Cooperative opportunities may be present
 - Work with the NRCS to get landowners to cooperate with erosion assessment
 - How much of the Priest River is federally owned?
 - It is hard to say
 - This would be good data for the anticipated assessment
 - Determine land and use
 - Determine ownership

Opportunities

- Bryan Witte of the Kalispell tribe offered to help with the data catalogue
- Kaniksu south timber sale may provide opportunities for restoration
- What is the best way for the PRWG to keep in touch on projects?
 - Set up a direct contact with an individual on the agency's project team
 - Weekly meeting to exchange information (such as with USFS)
- Work with the Idaho Department of Lands

The facilitator thanked the Technical Expert panel for their time, feedback, input, and participation in the meeting. She explained that the PRWG would be holding their executive session and this would now be a closed meeting.

[Break – Departure of Technical Expert Panel]

Strategic Planning – Executive Session

The group reconvened from their break to discuss the feedback received via email from technical experts, comments left by other PRWG members, and the panel discussion had that day. Based on the time remaining in the meeting, the facilitator asked the group if they would like review technical expert comments or if they would like to review comments from other PRWG members. The group chose to review PRWG member comments. Discussion occurred as follows:

- General impressions of feedback from Technical Experts
 - Members feel encouraged with this plan and the feedback from the technical experts
 - The strategic plan is like an umbrella that will help create pieces for other plans
 - Powerful document

- Review Steering Committee Comments
 - The group suggested reworking the vision statement to be more inclusive
 - The group discussed changing Goal C to include language that would include the following:
 - “Understanding for Lower Priest River and Tributaries”
 - Direct changes were made in the google document with brackets around them to indicate changes made in the meeting
 - PRWG member Allan Songstad questioned the language in Goal D. Objective D-2, requesting that language be added to indicate no harm to any part of the watershed including Priest Lake. The PRWG discussed this at length, including a note for it to be considered in proposed revisions made by the task force.
 - The PRWG discussed next steps to include creating a task force that will...
 - Explain reasoning on how decisions are made
 - Work through comments together
 - Bring back to the committee

Discuss Next Steps

The facilitator explained the Strategic Plan next steps as follows:

- Assemble a task force to address the feedback received from PRWG members and Technical Experts
- Present the Strategic Plan to the PRWG for additional review and comments
- Ask for more Technical Expert feedback, as appropriate

Housekeeping (general discussion)

The facilitator covered housekeeping items with the group as follows:

- PRWG Comment Opportunity: Use of Bull Trout, Middle Fork East River (Paul)
 - This process highlighted a flaw in the effectiveness of the PRWG in submitting comment letters.
 - It is a time-consuming process due to members adding an overwhelming amount of feedback after the task force’s review, or bringing items up for discussion late in the process, rather than at the beginning
 - The group needs to trust and respect the time and energy task force members put into these processes
 - All members are welcome to participate in task forces. It should be assumed that those who choose not to participate in particular need to be respectful of the time spent
 - Members need to trust in each other’s good intentions
 - The group would like to continue to create comment letters but a task force needs to be created for each of these opportunities in order to be efficient with labor division
- Communication
 - Emails (Mike)
 - Being mindful about reply all
 - If you have a comment or question call them regarding the issue
 - Email communication

- BCC on task force emails is not appropriate
 - Keep emails for important things to be shared
 - Dialogue amongst the PRWG as a whole should be reserved for in-person formats
- Data Catalog Reminder

Adjourn

The facilitator thanked the group for their time, the thoughtful discussion, and the collaborative spirit.