
Present Members

Eric Bernsten, Kalispel Tribe
Eric Johnson, Priest Lake Cabin Association
Erin Plue, Trout Unlimited
Jennifer Ekstrom, Idaho Conservation League
Jon Quinn-Hurst, Selkirk Conservation Alliance
Amy Anderson, Selkirk Conservation Alliance
Kyle Maki, Idaho Wildlife Federation
Cathy Gidley, Trout Unlimited

Facilitators

Hannah Anderson, Lead Facilitator
Tracy Ortiz, Facilitation Support

Meeting Goals:

- Learn from the Kalispel Tribe's process to make progress towards fulfilling the goal of creating a Restoration Plan.
- Collaborate to determine preliminary components of PRWG ranking matrix and East River planning process
- Review housekeeping and routine agenda items

Meeting Minutes

PRWG Steering Committee Meeting - Welcome and Overview

Hannah Anderson, Facilitator, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda and goals for the day. She introduced the structure of the meeting and the ground rules for the workshop panel and discussion, as well as explaining virtual attendance procedures. Hannah explained that the purpose of this meeting was to make progress preparing for the August full group workshop.

Kalispel Tribe Projects Matrix, Eric Berntsen

Eric explained the background and need for Tribe Matrix, how the Tribe plans projects, lessons learned from the planning process, and provided a map of the Kalispel Aboriginal Lands. Highlights from his presentation are listed below:

Background and Need

- The Kalispel Tribe relies heavily on partnerships.
- In 2013, Eric realized the Tribe was more reactive in nature, rather than take a preventative or planning approach for conservation outcomes.
- Much of the Tribe's work is focused on reviving landscapes and providing appropriate levels of species.
- Eric shared an overview of watershed processes and how proper function of flow regime and other factors contribute to species health in watersheds.

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- There are four dimensions of rivers: lateral, longitudinal, vertical and temporal.
- Eric explained the importance of topographic evidence in River-Wetland Corridors, such as carbon dating sediments.
- A map with changes in virgin forest cover within the continental United States was provided.
- Eric explained how historical timber rafting routes have impacted floodplains and the environment.
- Beavers are a good example of species / habitat importance and how decrease in beaver dams has impacted how water and sediment moves throughout the United States.
 - Without dams, sediment and valley bottoms resettle. The trapping of beavers has significantly impacted watershed utilization. Beaver dam analogs have been used on projects to mimic the dams of beavers.
- Watersheds are prioritized for restoration. Eric provided an example of dwindling Bull Trout populations becoming a priority for watershed restoration.

Kalispel Tribe Matrix Creation Process

- Hughes Meadows grizzly bear spring foraging and Bismark Meadows by Priest Lake were helpful examples used to create the matrix.
- Prioritization in watersheds includes considering factors that are culturally important, endangered species, etc.
- The Tribe worked with a stakeholder group to develop the matrix. A key lesson learned was the importance of having local folks involved as well as agencies. The combination of local experts and local knowledge was highly important in determining what is important.
 - Shared a paper “Planning for Restoration: A Decision Analysis Approach to Prioritization.”
 - The Coeur d’Alene Tribe was also consulted to share information on similar projects.

Overview of Tribe Matrix

- There are 8 prioritization criteria (PC) used in the Tribe’s matrix, noted in the first column. (labeled PC1, PC2, etc.)
 - Description is the short-hand term for each PC.
 - Weight denotes how important a particular PC is.
 - 3 additional Ranks, or subclasses, further define how to categorize the project’s impacts. These are labeled as 1, 2, and 3. (Low, Medium, High).
 - A Score is calculated by multiplying the Rank(s) by the weight assigned.
 - Eric led the group through each of the PC, providing additional context:
 - Some include references to data
 - Some use language like “weight is based on professional judgement”
 - Some of these are qualitative, but it was important to include verbiage to provide “sideboards” on these so that interpretation isn’t too ambiguous.
 - Discussion:
 - Question: Explain floodplain connection laterally and vertically (P-6)?
 - Answer: Floodplain corridors act like channel connections that operate year-round (image shared earlier in ppt). So when valley bottoms (which are good for
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farming, building houses, etc.) disconnect stream channels, it down cuts and reduces the good functions of the floodplain connections. Natural floodplains are going to connect pretty frequently, for a lot of time throughout the year.

- Question: When talking about priority to distance of priority reach, is that related to upstream or downstream?
 - No, we didn't make that distinction, but that's a good observation. Great feedback.
- Question: Struggling with whether focus is on bull trout or high-priority fish?
 - It could be with whatever you (PRWG) decide! Whenever we've used it, its usually bull trout, but it could be anything.

Example of applying the matrix – Ruby Creek

- First Step – assessment first to identify areas /projects we want to run through the matrix
- Second Step – determine project type
- Step 3 – Run through matrix to calculate score (apply 1, 2, or 3 rank for each of the criteria)
- Question: Clarification on the PC-1 Reach Prioritization?
 - Answer: Its essentially a way of determining species impacted. Essentially, is there bull trout in the area?
 - PRWG member comment: It seems like having the “species to benefit” makes sense, but maybe remove it from the reach prioritization score since it has its own category.

Findings and Recommendations

- The Tribe's matrix was developed by first coming up with a master list of criteria, notably by working with a bunch of different groups. The Pack River matrix is another good example of this.
- Stakeholders have the option to weight things differently or modify criteria based on specific projects or applications, but so far no groups have really taken that option.
- Discussion:
 - Comment: Major landscape changes like fires, etc. could cause major criteria/rank changes. Maybe there should be a way to factor in modifications for episodic events, etc.
 - Land ownership in the East River is a good example of why this would be helpful, as we (PRWG) don't know what changes could occur, because we haven't talked to all of those people yet. We may not be able to rank that effectively until we have that info.
 - A solution could be to do ranking with just 7 criteria, and then based on those criteria could decide what landowners to approach?
 - We don't want to let go of those because they are very important criteria, but maybe a way to approach it would be to look at the value of projects and then separately how realistic it would be to implement them.
 - Question: If landowners connect the land, would the water supply which is restricted by the dam be enough supply to reconnect the valley corridors /system?
 - There is a member of the Tribe working on this question.
 - Typically, with groundwater, in a lot of these systems, the water is not really that far below so there is a good chance they could easily reconnect.

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- Comment: With regards to the matrix in general, the criteria look great, and its good to know the Tribe has been using this out in the field and it has worked and been helpful.
- Comment: If there are any criteria we may want to change, it could be PC-5, just because we haven't talked to those landowners.

Collaborative Discussion & Workshop

The facilitator led the group through a workshop style session with the goal to collaborate to determine preliminary goals and components of PRWG Matrix. Several prompts were provided to help stimulate discussion, as follows:

- What is the goal of the PRWG matrix?
 - Group discussion:
 - The matrix will serve east river specifically.
 - When we move to lower river, we may need to have the same conversation and decide if a second tailored matrix would be more appropriate.
 - The group discussed that it may be a good idea to have a defined focus area at first, to take incremental steps in testing the matrix.
 - It will be helpful if the matrix is developed with some wiggle room to allow for improvements as it is used more regularly.
- How will we use the matrix?
- Discuss preferred criteria
 - Some members expressed that it seems like the Tribe's initial 8 criteria all seem good to keep, but we may just need to add more. There doesn't seem to be a need to remove any, they all seem good. Just change weights to be tailored to us.
- Discuss weighting system for criteria
 - Its good to keep in mind that there may not be "clean white lines" for each of these categories, and we likely won't know until we apply it to real projects, such as determining if something is too impactful.
- Determine next steps, goals, and agenda for full group workshop August Meeting
 - It could be helpful to use an example project as an exercise to help us refine the assigned weights in a group setting.
 - The Tribe could come up with 8-10 potential projects in the basin to use as "tests" to run through the matrix.
 - It will be important at the August session to focus on making the matrix not deciding on projects.
 - Using a fake prompt / example from another area would help the group focus on the matrix and avoid getting hung up on real-world project specifics.
 - At the August meeting, or a future meeting, it could be helpful to have some members from Eric's team to come and explain their experience from using the matrix.
 - Invitees / Technical Experts?
 - The group would like to work on this together in August before inviting technical experts.

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- Some good experts to invite at a future session could include representatives from IDL, Fish and Game, Forest Service, NRCS, Fish and Wildlife.
- The group pondered whether we are asking these people to help us create it, or just asking them to be there as a resource for us.
- Will the Tribe weigh in on this? Will there be a process done by PRWG, and then another one done by Tribe? (Redundantly running projects through the two different matrices)
 - Not in Eric's mind, he is motivated to help get these projects addressed, and happy to help provide any support or assistance.
 - View the Tribe as a partner in this process.
 - The Tribe is excited this group exists and to see what comes out of it.
- The agenda for the August meeting will tentatively include a quick recap from Eric, followed by group discussion to give high level feedback / reflections / questions, then to run through an example or two together.
- In order to be efficient the facilitator will send "homework" ahead of time, including the July meeting recording, powerpoint, and research materials.
- It would be helpful to keep this on the agenda until the end of the year to meet contractual obligations to have a full blown Restoration Plan by EOY.

6:15 pm | Housekeeping

- Education and Outreach
 - There are several backlogged tasks that the group has struggled to get approval on during the regular PRWG meetings. These should be prioritized as housekeeping items for approval at the August meeting.
 - Communication Plan – the Facilitator will send this to the group ahead of time.
 - At prior meetings, the main sticking point was around spokesperson role. This may not be an issue anymore, and we are likely to get this approved as a working document.
 - Tri-Fold brochure – the group will vote on approval at the next meeting.
 - Regarding the Join Us section, the group may not ready to advertise "invite us to speak to your group" until the group determines a clearer idea for who would present and or make materials, etc. for those community presentations.
 - Amy will make a few mock ups of the brochure.
 - Committee members needed to help produce materials and drive processes forward. Amy volunteered to join the committee. r
- Report out from Tasks Forces:
 - Dam Management Plan for IDWR
 - The group discussed that this may be too big of an issue for a small group to be grappling with in a task force setting. This topic will be brought back to the larger group setting. .
- Debrief June Field Trip
 - The field trip produced great discussion. It flowed together well and was organized.
 - Colton and Rob were really impressive teachers and speakers.

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- Members feel like they got a lot out of it.
- A huge benefit of these field trips is the opportunity for relationship building with community partners. We need to make sure we do these every year.
- If anyone took photos, please put those into the shared Google Drive photo folder.

6:30pm | Adjourn