
Members Present

Allan Songstad, Stop the Priest Lake Siphon*
Cathy Gidley, Trout Unlimited, Proxy
Erin Plue, Trout Unlimited
Eric Berntsen, Kalispel Tribe, Proxy
Eric Johnson, Priest Lake Cabin Association*
Hank Jones, Fishing Guides on the Priest River
Jennifer Ekstrom, Idaho Conservation League
Jon Quinn-Hurst, Selkirk Conservation Alliance,
Proxy
Kyle Maki, Idaho Wildlife Federation
Mike Lithgow, Kalispel Tribe
Sean Stash, Boating Access on Priest River

Technical Experts

Rob Ryan, IDFG
Brandon Glaza, USFS
Colton Finch, IDL
Kevin Davis, USFS

Members of the Public

David Westen

Facilitators

Hannah Anderson, Lead Facilitator
Tracy Ortiz, Facilitation Support

Meeting Goals:

- Collaborate to refine and resolve remaining questions on PRWG Project Scoring Matrix.
- Use the Matrix to evaluate and score Restoration Opportunities.
- Discuss 2026 PRWG Work Plan.
- Review housekeeping and routine agenda items.

Meeting Minutes

PRWG Steering Committee Meeting - Welcome and Overview

Hannah welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda and the goals for the meeting.

PRWG Matrix - Collaborative Discussion & Workshop

Hannah reviewed the optimistic timeline for creation of the matrix, explaining the goal to complete the matrix during this meeting in order to identify projects that could be included in the 2026 PRWG Work Plan. She provided a recap of the work completed during the December Meeting and the items left to be completed. Each member received a copy of the draft matrix with the December work incorporated, and comments provided ahead of time by steering committee members.

The group reviewed and refined the prioritization categorization, ranked descriptions, and the assigned weights to each of the prioritization. Several technical experts were present to help provide their expert knowledge to the process. Through thorough discussions the group was able to refine and add additional criteria to the matrix.

Below is a high-level summary of the discussion the group held regarding refinement and addition to the matrix:

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- Terrestrial Species to Benefit
 - Adjust the rank descriptions to the following to reflect proper terminology:
 - (Rank 1) Project may have indirect positive effects on non-listed terrestrial species
 - (Rank 2) Project may have direct positive effects on listed species
 - (Rank 3) Project may have direct positive effects on listed and non-listed terrestrial species.
- Proximity to Bull Trout Critical Habitat
 - Adjust the description to explain type 1 and 2
 - (Rank 1) Project is not in a bull trout critical habitat.
 - (Rank 2) Type 2 "Feeding, Migrating, and Overwintering.
 - (Rank 3) Type 1 "Spawning and Rearing Habitat."
- Landowner Acceptance
 - Remove the word access from the ranks
 - (Rank 1) Strong landowner resistance
 - (Rank 2) Moderate landowner support
 - (Rank 3) Strong landowner support
- Number of Aquatic Habitat
 - Update project description
 - What are the number of actions included? (Habitat Actions as defined from Beachie's; LWM)
- Add in new prioritization criteria **Riparian Habitat**
 - Description: The degree to which this project benefits the riparian area or riparian habitat
 - (Rank 0) Degrades or simplifies riparian habitat
 - (Rank 1) Preserve existing complexity and coverage
 - (Rank 2) Moderately lasting improvements to complexity and coverage
 - (Rank 3) Long lasting benefits to complexity and coverage

Scoring Restoration Opportunities

With the refinement portion complete, the group ran several example projects through the matrix. The goal of the trial run was to understand how each criteria would be discussed when considering a real-life project, and to identify any areas that needed to be clarified. The following project was scored using the matrix:

Restoration Opportunity (RO)) - 1 - Stage-0

Stage-0 refers to a restoration project in which an incised stream channel is brought back up to its historical elevation, in turn reconnecting the stream to its floodplain and off-channel habitats that have been disconnected due to incision of the stream. The portion of Middle Fork East River from

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approximately river kilometer 1.5 to 3 appears to have potential for a stage-0 type project. The river in this section historically moved across its floodplain, leaving behind old channels that are readily visible using lidar derived images. The river now runs predominately along the southern edge of the floodplain, pushed almost up against the hillslope. Pools and instream LWD are lacking in this section. A project of this type in this portion of the river would help reconnect side channels, provide additional rearing habitat, and help retain water within the river during low water periods. Most of the land is owned by Idaho Department of Lands. A small portion at the downstream-most end is privately owned. Equipment access is easy with roads nearby and low gradients. A project of this type typically scores very high as it addresses numerous limiting factors. An alternative to a stage-0 project within this section of Middle River is identified below and deals specifically with adding LWD to increase complexity, create pools, and provide cover.

Below is a high-level summary of the discussion and questions asked through the process:

- The group should keep in mind that ranking criteria may not capture the full picture of the project and group conversations should always occur to identify any nuances.
- Consider how the rankings of projects compare to each other and what it means to be able to complete a project using the ranking system. This can help create a bigger picture of the work being done by the PRWG.
- Consider asking what the overall footprint of each project is.

Hannah asked each of the technical experts to share their feedback or provide questions to consider. Responses were as follows:

- The group should ask themselves what the primary objective of each project is.
- In each project description the group should always include what they want to achieve.
- This is a great start!

2026 Work Plan

Work Plan sub-committee members agreed to meet before the next monthly PRWG meeting to finalize the draft 2026 Work plan and have it ready to share at the February Meeting.

Housekeeping

- Sub-Committee & Task Force Updates
 - Education and Outreach subcommittee will send an email with question to the steering committee asking for feedback.
 - Grants and Funding

Adjourn

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