Steering Committee Meeting
May 7th, 2026 | 4:00-6:30pm
West Bonner Library District
118 Main St, Priest River, ID 83856

PRWG
PRIEST RIVER WATERSHED GROUP

**Members Present**
Erin Plue, Trout Unlimited
Amy Anderson, Selkirk Conservation Alliance
Caitlynn Embree, Idaho Conservation League, Proxy
Hank Jones, Fishing Guides on the Priest River
Kyle Maki, Idaho Wildlife Federation
Eric Berntsen, Kalispel Tribe
Sean Stash, Boating Access on Priest River
Allan Songstad, Stop the Priest Lake Siphon

Hannah Anderson, Lead Facilitator
Tracy Ortiz, Facilitation Support

**Members of the Public**
Bryan Witte, Kalispel Tribe
Todd Higgens, IDEQ
Joe Cronrath, Kalispel Tribe
Michelle Richman, IDWR
Bill Cresse, IDWR
Bill Lillibridge
Susan Drumheller

**Facilitators**

**Meeting Goals:**

- Identify 2026 Summer field trips
- Review and discuss online resource database create by Bryan Witte
- Hear presentations on Outlet Dam Operations for 2026 and Westslope cutthroat trout on the Priest River
- Q&A Session after presentation

**Agenda**

**4:00 pm| PRWG Steering Committee Meeting – Housekeeping**
The Steering committee discussed scheduling for the summer months.

- The group decided to take a break for the summer months, based on a history of low attendance in the summer due to busy schedules and member vacations. The group will reconvene for regularly scheduled meetings in September.
- In the meantime, steering committee members can use the time to look for opportunities to promote PRWG visibility and awareness in the community by attending public events as appropriate, and considering opportunities for membership recruitment. Interested members should contact a member of the Education and Outreach Subcommittee to coordinate attendance and staffing.

The steering committee discussed options for a field trip in late July/early August.

- Erin will do some research into opportunities and will provide more details to the steering committee in June.
- Tour / Float in June – Sean will continue coordinating.

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Erin provided a recap of the technical team meeting that was held in early May. The meeting was a success, and it was encouraging to have so much support and encouragement from agency partners. The meeting with technical team members highlighted how important PRWG's role is to convening multi-agency coordination around projects.

- Now that a first round of projects have been ranked, the group considered what next steps may look like.
    - PRWG can continue working with F&W and NRCS to identify what the funding opportunities are and what the possibilities are.
    - Brook Trout (particularly in the north) may be a topic of focus for the PRWG to consider next. Work being done on Binarch Creek will provide a lot of additional data come the fall, which may help inform next steps.
    - Grant funding is a key component in the PRWG's commitments towards action items. The PRWG's grant funding source specifies Restoration Planning as the central driver, which may help guide the group in focusing on opportunities for funding, weighing design options, etc.

Caitlyn Embree provided an update on the status of the PRWG public survey. She will work with Erin on revisions provided by members to date, then re-send the survey to the steering committee for review.

Bryan Witte, Kalispel Tribe, provided an overview of the work he has completed on updating the Resource Database which was started by the PRWG previously.

- Bryan explained that many links had expired, so much of his work involved verifying resources sources and ensuring that all information was up to date.
- The PRWG provided feedback that ideally, the resource database would be available on the PRWG website for the public to access.
- The group found alignment on the goals of the resource database:
    - Posterity
    - Reference material to support project investigation
- Todd Higgins may be able to provide the "integrated report" resource
- The ability to search by key words may also prove useful.

*The PRWG Regularly scheduled business concluded, and the meeting shifted to an informational session format. Guest speakers presented the following topics. A live recording was captured.*

**4:30pm | Presentation on 2026 Operations of Outlet Dam**
Michelle Richman and Bill Cresse with Idaho Department of Water Resources

**5:30pm | Presentation titled "Priest River Migratory Westslope Cutthroat: An Overview"**
Joe Cronrath from the Kalispel Tribe

**6:00pm| Presentation: Q&A**

*PRWG Steering Committee meetings are open for public observation. To ensure efficiency of agenda items, discussion will be reserved for PRWG steering committee members with priority.*

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- Q&A Session

**6:30pm | Adjourn**

*The first 30 minutes of the meeting will be a standard PRWG monthly meeting. The group will then transition to the presentation portion of the meeting at 4:30pm*