

## **PrairieCat Engagement Committee Minutes August 20, 2026**

The Committee met from 10:00 am to 11:00 am via Zoom. Registration link: <https://prairiecat-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/2R60ehygQOKlMlhbZqaeDw>

Charge: The Engagement Committee works to actively engage members at all levels, to create connections and advance the organization through activities like PrairieCat's annual conference PUG Day, peer networking opportunities, and more.

Meeting Frequency: Bi-monthly meetings in even-numbered months. August, October, February, April, June. 3rd Thursdays at 10 am via Zoom.

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

Present: Elizabeth Smith (PrairieCat), Shelby O'Hara (PrairieCat), Chelsey Knippel (PrairieCat), Dana Fine (PR), Brianna Rodgers (MX), Victoria Blackmer (CV), Kathy Peschang (RD)

Absent: Katelynn Clark (FR), Amy Fry (SL), Austin Nord (WO), Madison Ward (YK), Karrah Kuykendall (RP), Emily Schaub (FP), Melissa Landis (PrairieCat)

### **2. Upcoming Member Events**

Smith (PrairieCat) stated that we have our Back-to-School event next week for our school library members. There will be a quarterly New Directors Welcome in September. O'Hara (PrairieCat) will be leading a new Vega Customization Cohort starting in October. This will be an opportunity for a small group of around six to learn from each other and see what customizations others are doing on their Vega sites.

### **3. PUG Day 2026**

#### **3.1. Review program / schedule**

Smith (PrairieCat) reviewed the PUG Day 2026 program/schedule. There will be 15 total sessions across Thursday and Friday, though one marketing session from Manhattan Elwood was cancelled due to staff changes. She reviewed current registration numbers

which show solid attendance for various sessions including AI topics and IPLAR sessions, though some specific sessions like the radio book club have lower numbers. We will follow up with presenters to collect resources and review Zoom procedures, while continuing to promote registration through email, newsletters, and social media.

### 3.2. Review survey

Smith (PrairieCat) shared the survey that will automatically populate at the end of each session. We kept it simple and session specific: please rate the presenter, please rate the quality of the information, and how likely are you to attend future sessions.

## 4. PUG Day 2027

Smith (PrairieCat) stated the last time we were in the Rockford area for an in-person PUG Day, we utilized NIU Rockford as the venue. Smith reached out to Stephanie Nissen, the Director at Rockford University, and asked about venue options in the area and Nissen indicated that NIU Rockford would be the best option. The Committee agreed to proceed with NIU Rockford as the location for PUG Day 2027, with an estimated budget of \$16,000 for FY28. They agreed to implement a registration system to better manage seating capacity and session popularity, though the specific logistics of when to collect this information remains to be determined. Peschang (RD) suggested that the Committee might need to spend more time thinking about/planning for overflow and signage for popular sessions.

Smith stated that NIU Rockford is saving a couple of dates for us, August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. We are moving PUG Day 2027 up to August versus September due to ARSL conference being held in Milwaukee from September 15-18<sup>th</sup>. The Committee agreed on holding PUG Day 2027 on Thursday, August 26, 2027.

## 5. Mentoring Program

Smith (PrairieCat) brought up the suggestion from a previous meeting of a mentorship program, but the Committee decided to table the discussion until the next meeting.



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6. Questions and Comments

There were no questions or comments.

**Next meeting - Thursday, October 15, 2026 10 to 11am**