

Final RRG Meeting Notes

October 18, 2011 / 9:00 – Noon / Skagit Service Center, Burlington, WA 98233



PUGET SOUND ENERGY

The Energy To Do Great Things

Baker River Project License Implementation

Recreation Resource Group Meeting

Final Meeting Notes

October 18, 2011, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Team Leader: Pam Garland, PSE (pamela.garland@pse.com)

Facilitator: Lyn Wiltse: 425-890-3613 (call if running late or if your plans to attend the meeting change)

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PRESENT

Pam Garland, Scott Heller, and Haley Edwards (PSE); Ann Dunphy, Greta Movassaghi, Carol Gladsjo (USFS); Brock Applegate (WDFW); and Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

FUTURE RRG MEETING DATES

- Hold 9:00 – 11:00 am on the second Tuesday of each month as placeholders for potential meetings or conference calls: There will be no meetings on November 15 or December 20, 2011.
In-Person Meetings: Dec. 15, 2011 (in person or conference call), Jan. 17, 2012 (LEP only: 2011 season wrap-up / data review and pre proposals for 2012 season); Feb. 21 (RRG and LEP), June 19, 2012 (RRG only) and Oct. 16 (RRG and LEP) at the PSE Skagit Office in Burlington. We will provide Web-Ex capability for these meetings to facilitate remote attendance.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Pam Look into extending the buoys at Swift Creek so the swimming area is wider and deeper. Check also the condition of the decals (seem to be wearing out).
- All Check out PSE website (go to PSE.com, About PSE, Hydro Relicensing) and give Pam feedback.
- Pam Look into paving of lower lot and boat launch area (additional parking).
- Cary Send out new org chart.
- Pam Ask fish biologists if fish guts in the reservoir is a big deal (related to IHN outbreak?).
- Brock Get catch data and share with all.
- Greta Give Pam data sheets from LEOs.

ONGOING ACTION ITEMS

- All Let Pam know of any updates to the contact list for your organization.
- Pam Continue to coordinate cross-resource group collaboration (e.g., I&E) – ongoing.

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES

We reviewed and approved the draft June 21 RRG meeting notes. They will be marked as final and posted to the PSE website.

LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION / BRCC UPDATE

PSE Reorganization

Pam explained that Cary is not in the role of License Implementation Manager. Kim Lane has joined PSE's Project Management Department. Irena Netik is now the PSE Hydro Operations Manager. She will be the go-to person for issues related to flows, etc. She and Cary report to Paul Wetherbee who had replaced Ed Schild (now Director of Electric Operations) as Director of Hydro Generation. Irena is very familiar with hydro operations at Baker as she was heavily involved with the HYDROPS model as a consultant during the relicensing process. Mark Killgore is no longer with PSE.

FERC Boundary Update

Pam explained that the revised FERC boundary has been filed with FERC. It encompasses new projects and lands that PSE has funded. Greta explained the Forest Service's interest in making sure that as sites are developed they get incorporated into the boundary. Is a function of the rent that PSE pays the federal government. This changes with respect to other groups (lands acquired by TRIG, Shannon boat launch, etc.)

2011 BAKER LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW / PREVIEW OF 2010 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Pam provided brief updates of the following license related activities:

- 301: Draft Annual Report is coming out for 60 day agency review at the end of this year. This will roll into the 601 report due to FERC Apr. 1, 2012. All reports went out to 30 day agency review. Pam is currently in the process of responding to comments received.
- 302: Aesthetics: This plan approved in 2010 – approved screening plan for Upper Baker. FERC now has asked us to develop an implementation plan. There is no hard due date. Pam will have this complete for RRG review on Apr. 1, 2012. Planting of the Upper Baker screening is set to occur in 2014. Pam will be working with Scott Williams on procurement for this. The Lower Baker Visitor Center also has some landscape requirements.
- 303: Baker Lake Resort: Ann reported that Swift Creek Campground is up and running. They are receiving generally positive feedback from the public. The sockeye season has strained the capacity of the newly designed campground particularly the launch and dock area (not enough boat dock and temporary boat tie up areas). They averaged 53% capacity (full on weekends and partially full on weekdays). Most of the major infrastructure is complete and functional. RAM funding was used for shelter (went smoothly). Parking and CXT work is complete. They have not yet completed all trail adjustments. ADA upgrades have been made for faucets, ramps, and toilets. The special gravel they are using is not holding up as anticipated and will need some retrofitting. Boat ramp up and running. Day use area was very popular and widely used. The grand opening of the campground was held on June 24 and was a big success. Unfortunately, the plantings for the grand opening were compromised by extreme heat and sun. Improvements for 2012 will include more safety features and fencing. Due to the extremely successful fishing season, the Forest Service plans to expand the dock to increase its capacity. They will also do more work on the surfacing of the ADA trails up front and finish those in back. Want to put together another RAM proposal for installing the remaining picnic shelter and concreting the floors of the shelters for ADA and funding to purchase additional dock. They plan to install more picnic tables near the swim area (which will be expanded) which are up to ADA standards as well. They will work on

replanting the islands and continuing to grow stock up for these areas.

- 304: Water Safety: We completed the water safety maps in time for the season this year. Plans for 2012 include setting the buoys back farther to make the swim area approximately twice as deep. Put up water safety bulletin boards and boxes with fishing regulations (from WDFW). The host at Kulshan kept them filled up. He was really happy to be able to supply these. Walk-away maps were well received. Seemed to contain the right information.

At Swift Creek Campground and the other campgrounds, we will add a brochure rack to lower area of the bulletin boards. Once we have developed an information map, it can be posted on the website and posted throughout the basin. The map at Kulshan is really out of date. Ann said will take Hoodoo info off the board and put loon information up. USFS will reevaluate the arrangement of signs on the bulletin board. We aim for consistency in how things are displayed (USFS and PSE). Lone Tree on Lone Tree Island is not doing well. It is an important marker. Loon Platforms: People anchoring their boats overnight on the lake without having lights on making it hard for other boaters to see them in the dark. Haley reported that buoys have been replaced and the anchor is reinforced with chain instead of rope to be more permanent. The platforms are hazards for boats. Haley will consider adding reflecting surface to the platforms and bouys.

- 305: Lower Baker Developed Recreation Plan: Pam explained that the plans to look at this site development in conjunction with the Lower Baker FSC development have been halted since the recent reorganization. Due to the initial design work last winter we know what we need for permitting. In 2015, will begin the permitting process and finish the construction drawings. In the meantime, PSE will do a partial restoration (protective measures). They are exploring the possibility of working with Skagit County to make it a temporary recreation site and then do full construction when funding is available according to the license (to be complete in 2016). Drainage has already been added. Skagit County is in favor of PSE moving forward with this project ASAP. They are looking to alleviate impacts at Grandy Lake. They may come forward with a RAM proposal to start this work sooner.
- 1106: Roads Maintenance Funding: Year 6 funding for paving was moved into end of 2010. Follow-up items on 1106 still need to occur. With all the changes in personnel and some glitches in communication, USFS never actually issued a notice to proceed on this. Greta is following up with Scott Heller on this. She expressed concern about how deep the mulch is. Scott plans to purchase containers by the end of this year. Greta is concerned about December plantings – may get snowed out. Scott will coordinate with Greta and Wendy (WDFW) on this. Another issue: Is there going to be a gate for access if there is a need to work on the power lines? If a gate is installed, it must be up to FS standards. Originally, there was to be a rustic road with the standard. FS gate (costs \$5K and can't be vandalized). This is an operations issue. Pam will follow up with Operations folks and send Greta and email (stating that PSE will fund the gate and they need the appropriate specifications).

Still to be determined is the PSE maintenance of the road. Alders and Salmon Berry are growing up in the mulch and the gravel. Orange temporary fencing is currently up there. What are we doing with the front end of it? If are going to plant the berm, may want to use a larger stock on the front

end. It needs to be something very visible. Ann believes the temp fencing needs to stay up until the new vegetation gets established. There is also a safety issue for people who haven't been up there for a long time and are used to taking that road. We will evaluate this in the spring. The revegetation plan for this project should be consulted and implemented.

2011 SOCKEYE FISHERY

We reviewed the counts from the field crew on the days they monitored, showing a total for the season. They covered most of the weekends from July 22 until Sept 12. Ann reported the first couple of weekends were the peak – especially Saturdays. She walked us through a spreadsheet showing peak counts: Trailers, cars, overflow. The peak for all vehicles was 437. The peak season lasted through Aug. 7. Here were nearly 4,000 vehicles total estimated for the whole season – 2700 for all FS sites and 1300 for Kulshan. Revenues (including some day use) collected by FS were approximately \$15K. Pam reported that visitor use at Kulshan was much heavier than prior years. No vehicle use fee is charged for Kulshan. To address the increased use PSE added extra toilets and dumpsters.

The pre-planning we did was critical to how well things went. The WDFW presence was very helpful. They wrote some illegal parking tickets. Closing Shannon to boat trailers other than campground folks worked well. Signage for Shannon worked well. Road parking at Panorama also went well. That was the one area that we thought had physical space to increase parking. People were unhappy with the boat launch there. This needs to be looked at. This is the worst boat launch on the lake – doesn't hold up very well.

PSE revenues were up \$4K from previous years. This seems to be a result of the sockeye fishery. This helped offset the costs of managing the higher numbers. Ann noted the increase in campers – especially in dispersed. This included cleaning their fish in shallow water at the boat launch and on the east shore. The increase in bear activity seemed to be related to this. We need to address this in the coming season. Greta notes at Ross Lake there is a fish cleaning station. We may want to consider whether we want to have designated fish cleaning stations – a floating dock or on the land. First we would want to try some education on this.

Safety: boats running at night without lights – at relatively high speed in relatively low light. Can be hitting dead heads, logs, other boats, sand bars around Horseshoe Cove, Lone Tree, etc. This is an awareness issue. If the catch was good and people come to expect a strong fishery, the peak season will become even more defined.

WDFW is anticipating a very strong fishery next year as well. The timing of the run is variable. The distribution is impossible to predict.

Suggestion from PSE campground host: Distribute and information sheet to campers. Include some reminders on fires, fishing, boating. Use big letters and short bullets. Include notes about fish cleaning and bear awareness.

To discuss with LOEs:

- Issues with safety or accidents based on boats running at high speed in low light
- Accidents – Issues relative to safety
- Observations from patrols

- Awareness of and compliance with fishing regulations
- Loon platform enforcement issues?

OCT 18, 2011 RRG at SKAGIT MEETING TOPICS TO INCLUDE

- BRCC Update
 - Project Evaluation plan for RAM funds
 - Review updated FERC Boundaries
- Update on Construction Plans for FSC
- Lower Baker Development Update
- Update on Aesthetics Plan (out or review Oct.1)
- Status of Annual Reports
- Other Topics?
- Evaluate Meeting

The LEP Meeting will follow.

HANDOUTS

- October 18, 2011 RRG Meeting Agenda
- June 21, 2011 RRG Draft Meeting Notes

MEETING EVALUATION

Worked Well:

- Made efficient use of time
- Good prep for LEP
- Electronics worked well
- Pam's leadership

Do Differently:

- Meet Dec. 15, Feb 21, June 19, Oct 16
- Strive for broader participation
- Stories (less "organic")