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Baker River Project License Implementation

Aquatics Resource Group Meeting Final Conference Call Notes

March 9, 2010 ~ 9:00 - 11:00 am

Team Leader: Arnie Aspelund, PSE (arnie.aspelund@pse.com)

PRESENT: Arnie Aspelund, Doug Bruland, Nathanael Overman, Heidi Hansen, Cary Feldmann (PSE); Phil Hilgert (R2 Resources); Brock Applegate and Kevin Kurras (WDFW); Lorna Ellestad (Skagit County); Chuck Ebel (USACE); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Bob Helton (Citizen); Steve Fransen (NOAA), Lyn Wiltse (PDSA Consulting, Inc.)

NEXT ARG MEETING: April 13, 2010 from 9 am - 3 pm at PSE Snoqualmie Operations Center. (Directions will be included on the agenda for that meeting.) This meeting may be immediately followed by the ARHWG meeting.

DECISIONS – Notification requirements were met, a quorum is present, and proxies were noted, so we agreed that we can make decisions today. **Proxies:** none.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- All Review the ARG representation list.
- Mark Provide clarification on “working with the Corps” on consistency regarding Article 107(c).
- Doug During week of March 15, email notice of proposed fish releases from the 20K rearing program and set up conference call with interested parties to discuss the timing of the coho release.
- Arnie Send out an electronic version of the 2009 Biological Study report.
- Steve Work with Arnie to coordinate a tour to see how the hatchery is progressing. Aim for March 19 or 26. Arnie will announce the date so others can also attend.

PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEMS

- Jed Reconvene a teamlet in April / May 2010 to address sockeye fry release strategies.
- All Let Arnie know of any updates to the ARG representation list.
- Co-Managers Define the brood stock allocation protocol and send it to Arnie by end of May.

REVIEW OF AGENDA, NOTES, HANDOUTS

The notes were reviewed from the February 9, 2010 meeting and accepted with minimal changes. The agenda was reviewed. The April 13 meeting will be held at Snoqualmie Operations Center to continue the pattern of alternate conference calls and face-to-face meetings.

BRICC / LICENSE UPDATES

Cary Feldmann reported. The BRCC has not met face-to-face for several months and will meet in person in April or May at the Snoqualmie Ops Center. They continue to send monthly email updates from each of the resource groups on the 4th Wednesday of every month.

The BRCC will address a proposal regarding 602 funding to the Whatcom County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement. As the RRG was unable to reach consensus, this issue is being elevated to the BRCC for resolution. They will address this during the regularly scheduled conference call March 24 or through a separate call depending on the notice requirements spelled out in the settlement agreement.

FISH PASSAGE TWG

Arnie (Nick is vacationing in the Philippines) explained that Article 103 Upstream Fish Passage Implementation Plan has several plan components:

- The preliminary Emergency Response Plan for the Adult Fish Trap is out for review with comments due back by March 18.
- The O&M Plan for the Adult Fish Trap is also out with comments due March 30.
- The QA/QC plan should be submitted to FERC prior to construction. Comments on this are due by March 31.

PSE is beginning to prepare the annual reports for Articles 103 and 105. The Settlement reserves 30 days for official review time. PSE will acknowledge any comments that come in outside of the 30-day window as well.

Arnie reported that the FPTWG met back in September of 2009 and then recently on February 19, 2010. They discuss the schedule, siting and design updates for the Lower Baker FSC design development, they distributed the 2009 Biological Evaluation study report (at the October, 2009 ARG meeting Nick gave a report on the biological study results and other assessments underway in terms of siting for the Lower Baker FSC), discussed construction updates on the adult trap and status of Article 104 connectivity. The 2009 Biological Evaluation study is complete. Arnie will send out an electronic version of that report to the ARG.

Arnie reviewed the schedule for FPTWG meetings as it relates to the Lower Baker FSC design development. The 30% design review will occur in May. The 60% design review will be July and the 90% design review will occur in December of this year. 100% is expected in January 2011.

Heidi is the Project Manager for the Lower Baker FSC project and reported that her project team has spent a significant amount of time reviewing lessons learned from the Upper Baker FSC. The design will be very similar with changes made to accommodate the different site configuration at Lower Baker.

ADULT FISH TRAP CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Recent construction photos of the adult fish trap renovation were shown. Doug described various photos of the stress relief ponds. The concrete surfaces are smooth and very fish friendly. We also viewed the loading ramp, the entrance trash rack (testing the brushes today), and the sampling area. Construction seems to be on track. Doug is feeling confident that they will be online and ready to go by the time the

sockeye come back.

BAKER FISH HATCHERY CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Heidi walked us through a PowerPoint progress report for the ARG. All of the bathroom fixtures have been installed. Tanks and piping are being installed in the AI work room. The distribution system in the incubation room is nearly complete. She showed the color of the AI raceway. It will be a dark bluish-green. They are doing the grouting and finishing coat on AI Raceway 1 this week. Others will follow.

The 20K adult holding raceways are complete and the concrete is curing. The net support system for the 20K system is on track with the netting to be installed in early April. The formalin building is also well underway. The concrete pads have been poured and are curing for the 20K circular tanks.

Steve and Ed from NMFS are planning to visit the fish facilities for sometime later this month. They will determine some potential dates and coordinate with PSE – perhaps on a Friday.

FISH OPERATIONS

Sockeye Production - Kevin reported seeing fry fairly early. Though the numbers are still fairly small, the fish look really good. No IHN had been observed. Just over 259K sockeye are out so far. The Beach 4 operation is looking good. Loss was less than 1% (hatched out fry going from trays to pond). Egg loss was 4.3%. We will hold incubation fry and plant all fry into the lakes all at once. No predation in the lake has been noticed.

Baker Hatchery Fish Inventory – Doug reported there are 4,800 sockeye in Raceway 1. The November release is complete – 100% adipose fin clip, freeze brand, with a spring, 2010 release to Baker Lake planned.

There are currently 8K trout in trout ponds. They will be giving some to the tribe for their derby and will also be donating to other organizations for other charity events. There will be a release in April through June to Depression Lake.

Circulars 0, 1, and 2 hold coho transferred in from Raceway 2. These are freeze branded groups two of which will be going to Baker Lake in the spring. The others will be released in the spring to Lake Shannon.

Circulars 3 and 4 hold 48K smolt coho. They will be released to the Skagit River this spring.

Sockeye and Coho incubation – 236K coho are incubating in our stacks. Next week we will have the first ponding of fry that are ready to be planted. For sockeye, they have set up fry troughs over one of the raceways, with protective bird netting. We are starting to feed those fry – will have first release to the lake as conditions improve.

Doug reported that everyone at the project is very excited about being able to get into the new hatchery.

Upper Baker FSC: Doug reported that both the LB gulper and UB FSC are online. They have been collecting fish for over a week now. They have collected over 1,000 fish – mostly juvenile coho. They are checking for debris every day. They are preparing to test 500 vs. 1,000 cfs attraction flows. They will

divide the fish they collect based on the flow. They will be using non-marked whole migration population groups with gate switching instead of using a pit tagged group. This study will be early April through the end of June.

ARTICLE 104 UPDATE – Connectivity, Native Char Study

Nathanael reported that he, Cary, and Phil met with the USFWS on February 26 to discuss management protocols for bull trout. The USFWS is moving toward a policy of moving bull trout to their location of origin as indicated by genetic testing. For bull trout entering the adult trap, fish will continue to be PIT-tagged and a tissue sample taken for genetic analysis. Bull trout will be transported to Baker Lake if Upper Baker origin, to Lake Shannon if Sulphur Creek origin, or to the Skagit River if out-of-basin origin. If the origin of a fish is unknown, it will be PIT-tagged, a tissue sample taken, and then released to the Skagit River. If it already has a PIT tag and genetic origin is not known, then it will be released into Baker Lake. For bull trout in the Lower Baker Gulper and the FSC, Upper Baker and out-of-basin origin fish will be released in the Skagit River. The protocols for Sulphur Creek origin fish are still being worked out.

Efforts will increase in Lake Shannon through angling to “seed” the population in Lake Shannon with PIT-tagged bull trout. Then when these are encountered a second time, they will be transported based on their genetic origins. Bull trout snorkel surveys will continue this fall in Sulphur Creek and the Upper Baker watershed.

Chuck announced that he is slowly acquiring funding to comply with the Biological Opinion – to develop a strategy to monitor the effects of bull trout in the drawdown zone. His 2012 budget submittal is due March 15. He will put in a large request to maybe do a radio-telemetry study. In the meantime, he can help with snorkel surveys for 3 yrs from Aug – September or October to help get data on the drawdown. He is trying to get additional information from USFWS. He will be writing up a proposal for this and getting it out to ARG members for review. He reported that he is also open to partnering with other entities in the meantime to maybe move forward with a radio-telemetry study sooner rather than later.

OTHER LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Article 107(c) - Flood Management

Arnie reported that PSE has been in the contracting process with TetraTech. They are finalizing the scope and schedule. They are beginning to move ahead now on the modeling program over the course of the spring.

Lorna requested that PSE consider asking Tetra Tech to do a presentation on the PMF to the full ARG. We agreed that it made sense to meet up north for the presentation on Article 107 in June. We might hold the meeting in Burlington or combine it with a field trip and hold it up at the Baker Project.

AQUATIC RIPARIAN HABITAT WORKING GROUP (ARHWG) Meeting

Article 505 Plan

Cary reported that the ARHWG met on March 4. They are laying out a review of the plan document. The 6.0 series contains the procedures we are to follow. They got good resolution for Marty to go forward and redraft the plan incorporating edits from the meeting. It will go out the end of the month (March) for another review. After that, a subsequent iteration will be distributed in August for the official 30 day review. The draft management plan will be submitted to FERC in October. After that time, work will continue on the local implementation plan.

When we get to the places where we need to make decisions about actions the group might take, including how projects are screened and evaluated, there will be joint meetings between the ARG and the TRIG so all can weigh in on those decisions. All agreed that the meeting on March 4 was a very productive meeting and that Marty is doing a good job of capturing people's interests.

HANDOUTS

- Agenda, Notes
- 2010 Meeting Schedule
- Lower Baker FSC Design Development Schedule – Design Coordination, February 19, 2010
- Representation Schedule and contact information
- Baker Hatchery Fish Inventory
- 2010 Upper Baker Juvenile Fish Trap Data
- Fry Production Beach #4

MEETING EVALUATION

Worked Well:

- WebEx was great for conference calling

Do Differently:

- Start on time
- Participation was a bit light
- Noticing more interference on the conf call line
- Try using mute when not speaking

TOPICS FOR NEXT ARG MEETING – April 13, 2010 Meeting

1. Review meeting notes/agenda/action items from March 9, 2010 meeting
2. BRCC and License Process Update
3. Fish Passage Technical Working Group Update
4. Baker Fish Hatchery Construction Update
5. Fish Facility Operations Updates
6. License Implementation Updates
 - Article 107(c) – Imminent Flood Management
 - Article 505 – Aquatic Riparian Habitat Plan
7. Evaluate meeting, set agenda for next meeting (May 11, 2010)