



BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Meeting

July 18, 2000

9:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

U.S. Forest Service/Park Service Office
2105 Highway 20, Sedro Woolley
360-856-5700

AGENDA

- | |
|--|
| 1. Review/revise agenda |
| 2. Status report: Action items; Project Information Package update |
| 3. Issues/Interests |
| 4. Other available information? |
| 5. High level timeline |
| 6. Other issues |
| 7. Set agenda for next meeting |
| 8. Evaluate meeting |

BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group

July 18, 2000

9:45am to 12:45pm

US Forest Service Office
Sedro-Woolley, WA

Mission Statement:

“To develop alternative solutions and recommendations, addressing terrestrial and wildlife resource interests for the Baker River Project and its operations, leading to a settlement agreement that:

- 1. Accurately defines and describes the existing environment in relationship to the previous environment;*
- 2. Identifies project effects (existing and proposed)*
Leads to development of protection, mitigation, and enhancement options.”

TEAM LEADER: Tony Fuchs (Phone: 425-462-3553; E-mail: tfuchs@puget.com)

ATTENDEES:

Tony Fuchs (Puget Sound Energy), Robert Kuntz (National Park Service), Fred Seavey (US Fish & Wildlife Service), Stan Walsh (Skagit Systems Cooperative), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife), Carl Corey, (Forest Service), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

The meeting started at 9:45 a.m. and ended at 12:45 p.m.

The team reviewed the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting. Carl was representing the Forest Service, since Don Gay and Ann Risvold could not attend.

ACTION ITEMS

- All: Bring additional interests from their organizations they represent
- Tony still to find county contacts for land use

-
- Lauri: Check with Don re: availability of Mountlake Terrace for September meetings through the end of the year. She will also check re: the availability of Mill Creek office as a backup. (Team Leader note: Don has set up a meeting room at the Mountlake Terrace Forest Service office for the September through December meetings, on the regular meeting dates, from 8am until noon. Lauri confirmed that backup meeting space is available at the Mill Creek WDFW office).
 - Tony: Let Carl and Fred know when he does his final eagle and osprey survey (boat ride) so they can attend.
 - Laurel: Get state and county definitions of “noxious weed” and species list
 - Tony will send email to all members to RSVP on the Tour and their special areas of interest.

REPORT FROM PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS

- Tony talked to Rich Sluss (DNR) –too busy to attend Tony will let them know if something comes up re: their land
- Lauri will confirm the availability of alternate meeting locations. The group will meet in September at Forest Service Office, Mountlake Terrace from 8:45-11:45.
- Tony reported that working group handouts will be available (if of manageable size) on the web site. If handouts are very large, they will be referenced for all to review. They could also be made available through CDs or linked to another web site. The working group will make these decisions.

AGENDA FOR JULY 18, 2000

Forest Service Office, Sedro Woolley

Review minutes/agenda

1. Status report: Action items; Project Information Package update
2. Update on July 25 Overview Team Meeting at 10:00 at Cotton Tree Inn in Mt. Vernon
3. Itinerary for August 15 Plant Tour
4. Issues/Interests
 - Clarify inundation issues/mitigation approaches (conceptual)
5. Other available information?
6. High level timeline
7. Other issues--- Set agenda for next meeting
8. Evaluate meeting

THE JULY 25 OVERVIEW MEETING

High level timeline

Working group status

Formation of the solution team

Communication protocol

Website

Documents – CDs, limited paper copies

Email

PROJECT INFORMATION PACKAGE UPDATE

Tony reported that the Project Information Package (PIP) document is nearly complete. It contains background information on the Project. Current challenge is to standardize definitions of terms across all

sections of the document. It will be available on the website and CDs for free in the next couple weeks. There was concern raised that CDs are not the easiest way to share information. The information in the PIP will provide a foundation for PSE 's development of the Initial Information Package (IIP) or Initial Consultation Document (ICD). Working group members will be able to review and comment on that document (Team Leader clarification: I found out that the IIP/ICD is a PSE proposal, and not available for review prior to it being published. Once published it is open to review and comment, which will lead to development of the license application and environmental review). It was pointed out that having the PIP available prior to the IIP/ICP would be helpful.

PROJECT TOUR DATE AND ITINERARY

The team decided to do their tour on August 15, 2000. They will meet at the PSE office and Visitor Center in Concrete at 9:00. They will finish around 4:00 p.m. (**Team Leader Note: the team members attending the tour are now asked to arrive at the Visitor Center at 8:00am**). The tour could include:

Upper end of Lake Shannon (by boat), osprey platforms on Lake Shannon, RCG/Shoreline vegetation & habitat, start at mouth of Baker River and proceed up the watershed (drive), etc.

Tony will send an e-mail to all working group members to ask who is planning to go, and what they want to see. Then a firm tour itinerary will be set. (Team Leader note: Charles Morton, our Generation Manager for Baker, will be providing lunch for the tour at our Baker Lake Lodge).

ISSUES/INTERESTS

	Wildlife & Terrestrial Resources Working Group
1.	Noxious (non-native) Species – characterize problem (need more information on what and where) Issue (1) - Non-native species can outcompete/displace native species and change processes in the ecosystem or habitat. Issue (2) - Non-native species/potential for non-native species exists in the vicinity of the Baker River Project. Interest (1) – Fear of extinction of certain plant/animal species. Interest (2) – Determine Baker River Project contribution to the invasion of non-native species in the area. Interest (3) – Controlling/eliminating non-native species in the vicinity of the Baker River Project.
2.	Loss of rare plant habitat Issue - Maintaining and restoring rare plants and their habitats in the Basin Interest - We may have lost rare plants/have lost rare plant habitats or we may lose them in the future
3.	Wetland, riparian habitats (ecosystem process) Issue – Reservoir (rather than river) disrupts plant dispersal and plant community dynamics Interest – Protecting, maintaining and enhancing wetland and riparian functions (plant & animal)
4.	Inundation habitat loss - wetlands, riparian, deer & elk winter range (e.g. Oregon spotted frog) Issue (1) – Project operation/fluctuation of reservoir Issue (2) – Continued loss of habitats inundated by reservoirs.Direct loss of previous habitat Issue (3) – Importance of low gradient/low elevation riparian habitat inundated by continued existence of hydro-power project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects to low elevation grizzly bear spring foraging habitat. • Effects on forest carnivore habitat (e.g. fisher, wolverine, cougar, lynx). • Effects on resident and neo tropical migrant songbirds habitat (specifically species dependent on cottonwood overstory and willow shrub habitats). Issue (4) – Deer and elk winter range forage

	Interest (1) – Addressing habitat loss Interest (2) – Evaluating impacts on species of concern/interest Issue (5) - May have lost connectivity to habitats within the park itself Issue (6) – Possibility that loss of continuity between upstream and downstream habits adversely affects populations. (reservoir creates recruitment barrier)
5.	Issue: Fluctuating water levels —botanical aspects; wildlife aspects
6	Issue: Project impacts on the LSR impacts: 1) Size of contiguous habitat patches is limited by the reservoir 2) # species that can be supported (due to reservoir) 3) Connectivity and edge effect on habit quality
7	Issue: Recreation impacts 1) Direct impacts from Project induced recreation (e.g., disturbance to nesting birds, etc.) 2) Indirect impacts from Project induced recreation. (e.g., providing more campground services; more people taking day hikes, disturbing mountain goats, etc.)
8	Issue: Want more fish biomass into the ecosystem (watershed) • Nutrients and forage
9.	Issue: Potential Project induced recreational impacts to rare plants, habitats, and species
10.	Issue: Are there increased impacts from the Project (now/future) on collection of plant species that the public would want to harvest?
11.	Issue: Public Environmental Education & Outreach—Terrestrial issues
12.	Issue: What amount of increased recreation impacts can be attributes to the project vs. no project
13.	Issue: Current/future project impact on ability to administer DNR's HCP

CORE INTEREST (By Organization)

PSE Interests:

1. Stay in business
2. Maintain competitive rates for customers
3. Earn allowed rate of return on shareholder in investments
4. Maintain and expand distribution business
5. Maintain good relationships with public and agencies
6. Assure certainty around license conditions

USFS:

USFWS:

NPS:

WDFW:

Etc.

The team expressed disappointment that the environment wasn't mentioned specifically in PSE's core interests list. Would like to see the moral issues stated more clearly such as treating people and the environment fairly.

HIGH LEVEL TIMELINE

Tony distributed a scale describing the general process flow for working groups.

PARKING LOT

- Alteration of Solution Team Mission Statement (once the team is formed)
- Length of period of relicense (30 years? 50 years?)
- *Operational definition: in reference to team mission statement: "previous environment" is defined as "environment prior to Baker River Project construction."
- Consider list of multiple meeting locations and rotation - set Mountlake Terrace as default
- Review time frame/goals of working groups/milestones
- Definitions of "Project Boundary" and "Project effects"

POTENTIAL STUDIES

- Baseline study re: present conditions and future trends of harvestable plant species

MEETING PROCESS REVIEW

Well-Dones:

Moved along well
Listened to each other
Good to "get off topic"
Build trust
Nice location

Need for Improvement

Need half-half for coffee
ID where we are (steps) at each meeting

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

September 19, 2000 (8:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.) – US Forest Service office in Mountlake Terrace.

1. Review agenda
2. Status report: Action items
3. Issues/Interests (Ed Schild, Director PSE's Energy Production and Storage to speak?)
 - Clarify inundation issue/conceptual mitigation approach
4. Evaluate if Biota Pacific and Hamer can meet the needs of this working group- Discuss access team members will have to the consultants
5. Other available information?
6. Other issues?
7. Set agenda for next meeting, October 17,2000

8. Evaluate meeting