



Baker River Project License Implementation **Baker River Coordinating Committee**

Cary's Contact Information: 425.462.3088, Cary.Feldmann@PSE.com

PRESENT: Cary Feldmann, Paul Wetherbee, Arnie Aspelund, Jacob Venard, Lynda Kupfer, Haley Edwards, Nick Verretto, and Nathanael Overman (PSE); Greta Movassaghi and Jon Vanderheyden (USFS); Bob Helton (Citizen); Steve Fransen (NMFS); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Lorna Ellestad and Dan Berentson (Skagit Co.); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Lyn Wiltse and Jamie Riche, facilitation (PDSA)

BY PHONE: Lou Ellyn Jones (USFWS)

BRCC MEETINGS: The BRCC meets semi-annually and reserves the 4th Wednesday of each month for potential BRCC meetings or conference calls.

DECISIONS: none today

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Arnie Distribute USFS Memo on 4(e) process re: coordination of work on NFS lands to the BRCC with these notes.
- Arnie Send out BRCC Meeting norms along with Agenda for spring meeting so they can be reviewed and revised as necessary at the next BRCC meeting.
- Cary Send Lorna emergency exclusion reference in the Settlement Agreement / License (related to post-IPP power outages, discharges).

PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEMS

- All Send updates on the designated reps for your organization to Anna Wingfield (anna.wingfield@pse.com).
- All Continue to reserve 9-11 a.m. on the 4th Wed. of each month for potential BRCC calls.
- Cary Continue to send out email updates on implementation activities to all during the months where the BRCC doesn't meet in person.
- TRIG/ARG members will continue to look for partnership opportunities for land acquisitions.

REVIEW BRCC MEETING PROCESS

Lyn asked if the process of meeting semi-annually with monthly email updates is working for BRCC members. Steve responded that the process is working well for him. The reports are robust and useful, and maintaining a monthly placeholder for a phone conference if needed feels like a good backup measure. Jon V. concurred with Steve, thanking Cary and the Resource Group leaders for their efforts to keep BRCC members updated on implementation activities.

BRCC HOUSEKEEPING

Lyn reminded all the signatories about the importance of making sure PSE knows has the correct, current name and contact information for your representatives to the BRCC and Resource Groups. PSE's Anna Wingfield is the "keeper of the list," so please send any updates to her at anna.wingfield@pse.com.

USFS DRAFT 4(e) PROCESS

Greta reminded the group about the terms and conditions associated with the USFS 4(e) process. For all proposed projects on National Forest Service (NFS) lands, USFS needs a package of specific information, documented in particular ways, as outlined in Appendix B to the Settlement Agreement.

In particular, they require a minimum of one year's advance notice of all activities proposed for National Forest Service (NFS) lands and a regularly-updated, "rolling" two-year schedule of proposed projects. This is necessary because USFS has extremely limited staffing and therefore needs increased notice of upcoming work in order to get projects into their very full schedule. Commencement of habitat or ground-disturbing activities on NFS lands can only begin after a written notice to proceed is issued by USFS.

Greta referenced an April 29, 2009 memorandum titled, "Procedures for Baker River Project Coordination in Accordance with Forest Service 4(e) Terms and Conditions." This document outlines responsibilities and process requirements for USFS, PSE, and any other project proponents related to Baker Project activities on NFS lands. Arnie will distribute the memo with these notes. This memo will be updated at a meeting with PSE on Nov. 15.

SOCKEYE FISHERIES AND RECREATION

Greta disclosed that the Baker Project's success in propagating fish has resulted in a noticeable increase in recreational users. There were often 300 or more boaters per day in the basin this last season. Parking and recreational facilities haven't caught up with the newly increased demand (there are parking spaces for 80 vehicles). In addition to the parking issues, there have been conflicts between folks who primarily want to fish and folks who want to use the camping facilities.

There is a Law Enforcement meeting following the Recreation Resources Group meeting next Tuesday. They will conduct a lessons learned review and plan for next year's season.

UPDATES ON MAJOR PROJECTS

Fish Passage: Nick shared that the Lower Baker Floating Surface Collector construction is underway next to the boat launch. There will be a tour after the FPTWG meeting tomorrow; all are welcome. In mid-November, they will begin to build the Net Transition Structure (NTS); he expects that to be in place early next summer. The FSC will be launched mid to end June of next year. We will see if we can coordinate the June ARG meeting around the launch to give ARG members an opportunity to observe the launch.

Nick noted that the temporary repairs of the Upper Baker net are holding up well. They are planning to use that net for one more season and replace it for the 2013 season. The replacement net will take advantage of lessons learned and design elements from the Lower Baker net design, including replaceable panels and a stronger material.

Cary and Paul reported on the progress at Lower Baker's Unit Four. The excavation of the base has been

completed, and the contractors are currently about two weeks into an eight week tunneling project. They just completed testing and analysis project in order to ensure accurate coordination between Units Three and Four with regard to ramping rates. There will be a new controller for both units allowing one operator to run both. They expect to be online in 2013, a year ahead of the settlement agreement's timeline.

Paul reviewed the historic and recent slope instability issues in the Lower Baker area. He reported that there is a monitoring program in place now.

Bob asked about computer / controls security related to dam operations. Paul reported that PSE is fully compliant with NERC/WECC (North American Electric Reliability Corporation and Western Energy Compliance Council) reliability standards, including cyber-security.

Arnie reported that the spawning beach decommissioning project continues to move forward.

Jon reported that the bridge repair project on the Baker Lake Highway above Channel Creek has been rescheduled for early next June (weather dependent). This will eliminate access above Channel Creek for a period of about three weeks. This could affect the spawning beach contractor.

RESOURCE GROUP UPDATES

Haley reported that the **Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group (TRIG)** met last Thursday. They have completed Part One of the DNR's Long Term Application process on the Alder Creek property. They are developing seed mix recipes for both wetland and elk forage areas and legacy wood prescriptions have been developed. The property's Program Document will be updated when the DNR application process is complete.

The Burpee Hill acquisition is complete; the WDFW gate has been moved and a PSE gate installed. The TRIG is developing a list of actions that will occur in the first year, and has already completed a treatment of the patches of Giant Knotweed on the site.

Tony working on the 501 Terrestrial Resource Management Plan report; that will be out soon. Haley working on the Loon report (some loons observed, no nesting attempts, no observed fledglings). The Carex Working Group has completed their study and the *Carex flava* management plan will be out soon for TRIG review.

Cary reported that the **Recreation Resources Group (RRG)** is scheduled to meet next week. The Law Enforcement Team meeting mentioned earlier will take place after that to debrief the season, review lessons learned and plan for the next recreational season.

The **Cultural Resources Advisory Group (CRAG)** is also meeting next week. They are working on reviews at the Alder Creek property, work at the clubhouse on the Baker compound, and the spawning beach decommissioning project.

In addition to the major projects reviewed earlier, Arnie reported that the **Aquatics Resources Group (ARG)** continues to meet monthly either in person or by phone. PSE is following the IPP (Interim Protection Protocol). The 107c report was submitted to FERC yesterday after three rounds of review and comment. In terms of general fish operations, this is the fourth year of operations at the UB FSC and

records are being broken right and left. This spring had the fifth highest out-migration on record, and this fall saw the largest Sockeye return on record. He noted that they are producing more Sockeye from the hatchery than ever before (5 million last year!), and now that both the spawning beach and hatchery are in full operations they are expecting even more fry next spring (2012).

LICENSE AMENDMENT PROCESS

Section 3.5 – 3.7 of the Settlement Agreement outlines the potential reasons for amending the license.

Any of the signatories (except PSE) may suggest an amendment to the Settlement Agreement. The process would start at the resource group level and would then continue into the BRCC. Changing the Settlement Agreement requires unanimous agreement of all signatories. PSE would be obligated to submit the amendment to FERC, where it would then be up to FERC whether or not to approve the requested change. Depending on the nature of the amendment, there may be a need to update the 401 Water Quality Certification, USFS 4(e) conditions, and/or Biological Opinion. If the amendment to the Settlement Agreement would change conditions in the license, there is a process for amending the license, too. There are also provisions for exiting the settlement if it is amended in a way that is counter to any signatory's interests.

THANK YOU, ARG MEMBERS!

Paul noted that this is the start of a new water year, new license year, new federal budget year, and a recent reorganization at PSE. He thanked the state and federal agencies, tribes, and other organizations who work with the Resource Groups and BRCC. He and his PSE colleagues appreciate their time and dedication toward the successful implementation of this new license. He assured everyone that he is leading an effort to apply lessons learned and continually improve license implementation activities.

Specifically, Paul thanked Lorna for her dedicated participation in the Baker Relicense process. Her position with the county sunsets at the end of the month and she is looking forward to traveling to Arizona for a while. The BRCC gave her a round of applause and wished her well in her next endeavors.

MEETING EVALUATION:

Went well:

- Out early
- Great sandwiches

Do differently:

- Distribute norms with the agenda a week ahead of the spring meeting
- The group missed that Southwest Chicken Chowder
- Please include diet soda options