



Baker River Project License Implementation
Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group
Final Meeting Notes

January 24, 2013 ~ 9 am – 11 am
PSE Burlington w/ Web-X and Conference Line

Team Leader: Jacob Venard, jacob.venard@pse.com

PRESENT

Jacob Venard, Arnie Aspelund, Scott Heller, Tony Fuchs, Tom Flynn, Ira McDaniel, and Haley Edwards (PSE); Brock Applegate and Wendy Cole, (WDFW); Stan Walsh, Steve Hinton, and Devin Smith (SRSC); Sue Madsen (Skagit Fisheries); Jeremy Gilman and Theresa Mathis (USFS); Rick Hartson, (Upper Skagit Tribe); Jeff McGowan (Skagit County); Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA).

ACTION ITEMS

- Jacob Work with SRSC to clarify the funding request within their proposal, including total estimated project cost, total set-aside requested from Article 505 funds (capital and/or planning funds), anticipated partners (SERF Board, others?), and proposed / estimated project staging

TODAY'S AGENDA

- Welcome; review previous notes, action items
- Process review
- Proposal Presentations (3 submitted)
- Next steps

REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS

Ira reported on his and Sue's exploration of the idea presented last meeting of contracting with the Skagit Land Trust for identifying and proposing land acquisition options for the ARHWG to consider. PSE's license term creates a complication because the Skagit Land Trust's focus is on protecting land in perpetuity. Formalizing a partnership with the Skagit Land Trust does not seem to be likely at this time.

Sue added that she and Ira continue to talk about a variety of acquisition scenarios, which are really a continuum from sole ownership to partnered ownership to protective easements. Since Skagit Land Trust does not typically deal in acquisitions, they have decided to step back for now. The question remains for ARHWG as to who will identify potential lands for acquisition.

PROCESS REVIEW

Jacob briefly reviewed the process. He noted that three proposals were received this year and the project proponents are in attendance today to present their proposals and answer any questions in advance of the ARG and TRIG funding decisions February 12.

With some new faces around the table, the group briefly reviewed the decision process, which – like the rest of the resource groups, is by consensus. Stan clarified that if consensus isn't achieved, there is a process spelled out in Article 602 for attempting to achieve consensus and if consensus remains elusive, the proponent has the option of elevating the issue to the Baker River Coordinating Committee (BRCC) for review and a possible vote.

He noted that three projects were approved last year at a cost of \$752,950, leaving \$1,696,973 available in the Article 505 Capital fund. There is also \$266,638 in the planning and site development fund.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Baker Lake Fish Barrier Replacement Project, proposed by USFS

This project would replace three fish barrier culverts on Rd 11 (two barriers) and the Boulder Creek campground (one barrier) in Baker Lake, improving unnamed tributaries to Little Sandy Creek. Access to a large wetland complex is inhibited by one of the barrier culverts; the other two pipes in question are on the same stream and create fragmented habitat connectivity.

2. Riparian Improvement, proposed by Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

The proposed project would involve riparian plantings and invasive plant control on a 45-acre parcel purchased by the Land Trust in 2012. Michael Kirshenbaum from the Skagit Land Trust had noted at the last meeting that the Land Trust sees the intrinsic value of this parcel as well as its role within a larger restoration effort.

As is customary during the Baker working group meetings, details about the potential acquisitions are not included in public notes. If you have questions about this proposal, please contact Jacob, Ira, or the project sponsor.

3. Possible acquisition, proposed by the Skagit River System Cooperative

As is customary during the Baker working group meetings, details about the potential acquisitions are not included in public notes. If you have questions about this proposal, please contact Jacob, Ira, or the project sponsor.

POSSIBLE FUTURE PROPOSAL

Sue took the opportunity of having the ARG and TRIG together of bringing up a possible future project to explore the group's interest level and potential areas of concern. The project relates to an opportunity to restore off-channel habitat function, enhance in-stream habitat, restore the riparian zone, improve public access, and create a low-impact recreation area near the Lower Baker alluvial fan. Sue asked if this group would be open to a off-schedule proposal for planning/project development. Others agreed this might be a good fit for the planning money. There are a number of constraints related to this project. Sue will continue to follow up on this and may submit an proposal. We'll stay tuned.

NEXT STEPS

- ARG / TRIG conference call Feb. 12 – vote on proposals for funding and notification to applicants

PARKING LOT/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Clarify the ARG's and TRIG's philosophy and preferences for use of planning funds
- Continue clarifying the process for getting to acquisition