

Aquatic Resource Group (ARG)

- The Aquatic Resource Group (ARG) did not meet in August. The next meeting will be a conference call scheduled for September 11th.
- PSE submitted the (draft) Flow Implementation Plan to the ARG for formal review on July 30. Formal comments were due by August 30. PSE will submit the revised (final) FIP to FERC by October 17.
- PSE reported at the July ARG meeting of the potential for a Lower Baker plant outage 15 Sept - 15 Oct to accommodate powerhouse construction work that will require dewatering of the penstocks. The work has been confirmed for 15 Sept - 15 Oct and has been permitted through the JARPA and USACE 404 processes. Work will include: installation of a turbidity curtain, in-river excavation through the armored bank, and construction of the draft tube discharge tailrace structure. With continued drawdown of Lake Shannon, instream flow through the construction period will be limited to dam leakage, which ranges between 75-95 cfs (based on an ADCP study completed September 2010). The construction period is scheduled to be consistent with the 'avoid generation period' of the Interim Protection Plan and to limit potential impacts to upstream trap operations. The trap will remain in operation throughout the construction period.
- PSE submitted the following draft plans and associated attachments August 15 to the ARG for formal review and comment: 1) Downstream Fish Passage Implementation Plan, which provides a detailed overview of Article 105; 2) Operation & Maintenance Plan, which describes the O&M program for the downstream passage facilities, 3) Preliminary Emergency Response Plan, which addresses operational contingencies and emergencies; and 4) Quality Assurance/Quality Control Plan, which identifies methods to confirm that facilities are constructed according to approved plans. In addition, PSE submitted to the Services (USFWS, NMFS) the Post-Construction Evaluation Plan for the new Lower Baker FSC, which details hydraulic and biological evaluations. Formal comments are due to PSE by September 18.
- The Lower Baker FSC and NTS were launched over the course of two weeks in late July-early August. The launch occurred without incident, but required more time than originally planned due to the complexity involved. Mooring anchors are being tested, after which both FSC and NTS will be positioned and final commissioning resumed.
- The original gulper, installed 1958, was shut down August 1 and, after removal of the guide net, towed to shore where it awaits demolition following completion of the administrative process. The floating docks have been installed at the pier, and final work continues at the access area.



After several days in the launching process the FSC floated free July 28th (left). Old gulper and new FSC (right)

- The juvenile out-migration season has concluded and the downstream passage facilities have been shut down. Preliminary numbers indicate that 2012 set new records for highest single day (94,244 at UB vs 85,335 in 2010), UB sockeye (452,612 vs 435,297 in 2010), total sockeye (469,919 vs 436,587 in 2010), and total combined (546,707 vs 525,237 in 2010). Subsampling (direct transport of a percentage of the fish) was conducted on the two highest-run days.
- Article 104- Fish Connectivity: Native char snorkel surveys in the Baker River and Sulphur Creek have begun, as has angling and PIT tagging char in Lake Shannon.
- PSE and Anchor QEA have been working on an alternatives assessment report for decommissioning of Spawning Beaches 1-3. The report reviews all the alternatives considered and summarizes alternative 5, which the ARG agreed represents the right direction for the project. There is consensus within the ARG to move forward with taking alternative 5 design to advance levels of design. PSE would like to be in a position to conduct work during the construction window of 2013. The Forest Service has final approval; the Settlement Agreement and the Forest Service's approach gives all signatories the opportunity to provide input to the process through the ARG.
- The hatchery and spawning beach facilities are in the process of receiving 2012 broodstock in accordance to the Fish Co-managers plan. In accordance to the plan 2,750 sockeye will be allocated to the AI hatchery program and 3,400 sockeye to the spawning beach. The goal has been met at the facility.
- In early August, WDFW reported that the 2012 Baker River Sockeye salmon return has experienced another record run, with a run size (fish to the Baker River Upstream Fish Trap plus pre-trap harvest) of nearly 47,000 adults. Counts to the upstream fish trap through late August:

Sockeye to the hatchery	2,752
Sockeye to the spawning beach	3,407
Sockeye to Baker Lake	16,689
Total Sockeye to Baker R. Trap	27,585 (highest ever)

- The Large Woody Debris Management Plan (LWDMP) for the Baker Hydroelectric Project (Project) and License Article 403 require PSE to provide the location of proposed stockpile areas to the ARG and TRIG for review and comment within one year of FERC approval of the LWDMP (August 9, 2012). PSE has identified both a temporary and permanent location for LWD storage at the Project. In the LWDMP, PSE tentatively identified an area North of West Pass Dike within Baker Lake as a staging area where LWD can be corralled and cordoned behind log booms until it moved to an upland storage site. PSE has also identified an adjacent area for upland storage of the LWD after removal from Baker Lake. PSE has initiated efforts to use these sites for staging and storage of LWD. However, both are privately owned sites and require some actions before use can proceed. Until use of this site resolved with the landowner and is available for use, PSE currently plans to continue to store LWD at a secured materials storage site known as “the bone yard” that is located near the Upper Baker Dam. Once an agreement is reached with the landowner, PSE will provide the location of the planned staging and storage site to the ARG and TRIG for review and comment. If an agreement with the landowner of the planned staging and storage site cannot be resolved, PSE will seek alternative sites for LWD storage.
- We are into the next cycle of article annual report drafts coming up to the ARG. Annual reports for 505- Aquatic Riparian Habitat and 602- Funding, were submitted to the ARG by the end of July, comments were received for 505 by August 17 and were due for 602 by August 29. Annual reports for 103- Upstream Fish Passage and 104- Connectivity were submitted to the ARG August 28 and comments are due by September 28. In the fall, will be annual reports for 101- Fish Propagation (October 31), 105- Downstream Fish Passage (November 30) and 106-Flow Implementation (November 30).
- SA505: PSE is finalizing its internal accounting processes and will establish contracts with the proponents of the selected projects as soon as possible. PSE is collecting comments on the 505 RFP process and will schedule an ARG-TRIG meeting to review the input and update the process.

Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group (TRIG)

- The Baker River TRIG group did not have a meeting during August. In lieu of a meeting they worked to continue implementation of a number of terrestrial activities. Pre-acquisition activities/surveys, including development of maps and an updated survey form, were performed for three parcels (totaling 172 acres) adjoining the Burpee Hill property. Three additional parcels were visited in the Lyman area that could be of interest to the TRIG group for elk forage properties, and a number of parcels in the area surrounding the Sauk River were also visited. Findings of the surveys and site visits will be presented at the September meeting.

- Botanical activities during August included rare plant surveys at Spawning Beaches 1, 2, and 3, additional noxious weed treatments and monitoring, and a *Carex flava* site visit with the Forest Service botanist.
- An osprey nest platform site monitoring visit was performed in August, however, the maintenance work will be completed in September. The next TRIG meeting is scheduled for September 6th, to be held at the PSE Bothell Access Center.

Recreation Resources Group (RRG)

- The Recreation 300 series 2011 Annual Reports went out to agencies for 30-day review on July 30, 2012. Comments are due back on August 31, 2012.
- The Aesthetics Resources Implementation Plan (ARIP) review was completed on July 31, 2012.
- The draft plan for SA 312, Developed Recreation Monitoring and Funding Plan (DRMFP) is in process and will go out to RRG for initial review in October.
- The next RRG meeting will be held on October 16, 2012 at the Skagit Service Center. The Law Enforcement Planning team will meet in the afternoon on that day. A review of the 2012 law enforcement implementation actions will be completed at that time.
- The Sockeye fishery has been busy and is winding down on Baker Lake.

Cultural Resources Advisory Group (CRAG)

- The CRAG met at the Skagit Service Center in Burlington, WA on August 15, 2012. Their next scheduled meeting is for September 19, 2012 if needed. As the date approaches the decision will be made if a meeting is necessary.
- During the August 15th meeting, the CRAG was given updates on the status of the MOA for the Baker River Hydroelectric Development Historic District (Lower Baker Dam, Spawning Creek Beaches, and Lower Baker FSC), the Draft DAHP Level II documentation being completed for mitigation, status of Burpee Hill cultural investigations, and the status of treatment work being completed for the Baker Club House. A brief description follows:
- **MOA:** Drafted and sent out for review to CRAG. Comments were due by July 3rd. The comments were incorporated and the draft was being finalized for execution. DAHP suggested the MOA be sent to CRAG for concurrence and sent to DAHP for execution with FERC.
- **DAHP Level II:** The DAHP Level II documentation of the historic district was sent to CRAG for final review and comment. Comments were due by July 20th. No further comments were received and it will be forwarded to DAHP and rest of CRAG as final.
- **Burpee Hill Project:** The APE was sent to the CRAG for concurrence and approved. A cultural resources survey was completed in late July-early August. PSE is awaiting completion of the report and will forward to CRAG for review.
- **Baker Club House:** BOLA sent out a memo on August 15th as follow-up to the earlier memo in February. PSE had a Hazardous Materials assessment completed on the exterior coatings of the building. Testing of the removal of the coating occurred on August 16th.

Samples of the potential coatings to be used should be received in the next few weeks. Once we have those, PSE will send CRAG information on the product and color to be used. PSE hopes to have work done prior to winter.