



Baker River Project License Implementation **Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group**

Team Leader: Tony Fuchs (PSE), 425-462-3553, tony.fuchs@pse.com

PRESENT

Tony Fuchs, Scott Heller, Haley Edwards, Mel Walters, Tom Flynn (PSE); Theresa Mathis (USFS); Peter McBride (Swinomish); Doug Couvelier (Upper Skagit); Brock Applegate (WDFW); and Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA).

DECISIONS TODAY: None

2014 TRIG MEETINGS

Quarterly on the 1st Thursday: June 5, Sept. 4, Dec. 4, with conference calls as needed

OTHER UPCOMING MEETINGS

- April 22 BRCC at the Skagit Service Center (Note the date change.)

ACTION ITEMS

- Tony Talk with Andy about the FTP site issues, coordinate continued clean-up with Scott
- Tony Forward the confidential acquisition email to attendees who requested it (done!)
- All Please be intentional about saving TRIG communications to reduce re-sending requests
- Theresa Send Tony and Haley the link to the remote monitoring equipment discussed today
- Tony Send Brock the Goshawk broadcast survey protocol
- Tony Bring proposal for Alder Creek thinning / forage development to next TRIG meeting
- All Contact Tony if you'd like a personal review of the SA, License, and TRIG docs (Peter, Doug, and Theresa expressed interest today)
- Haley Send Theresa info about current raptor nests around the project
- Tony Send out a proposed harvest map for Burpee Hill units 4.1 & 6, including the proposed buffers

PREVIOUS - STILL RELEVANT - ACTION ITEMS:

- Stan Coordinate mtg between PSE and the Tribes re: access on acquired lands (still in the works)

SAFETY MOMENT

Today's safety tips were all about driving. Tony shared a story about finding downed trees / large limbs just after a blind bend in the road, reminding folks to be extra cautious after storms. Theresa reminded folks that the springtime brings out cyclists and motorcycles, so please use extra caution; if you aren't looking for them, they are small and can be easy to miss.

BRCC / LICENSING UPDATE

Tom shared a review of the latest resource team updates. The Aquatic Resources Team (ARG) met this Tuesday and, among other things, established fry planting plan for 2014. They talked about the screen issues at the Lower Baker Floating Surface Collector (LB FSC); PSE is working closely with NMFS to study the issue and identify potential fixes. The Cultural Resources Advisory Group (CRAG) met in February; their biggest focus right now is the historic area near the LB construction site. The Recreational Resources Group

(RRG) met in February. They also considered a USFS request to use RAM (Recreation Adaptive Management) funds to expand the boat launch and parking lot. The Law Enforcement Group also met to start planning for the busy season.

The old spawning beaches are being decommissioned; most of the work has been done, but there are still some punch list and planting work that needs to be done for the project to be complete. Once the site is fully decommissioned, it will necessitate a new project boundary. PSE suggests drawing the boundary at elevation 733, the same as the elevation around the rest of the facility. Theresa clarified *that USFS representatives are recommending to the Responsible Official to wait until all aspects of the Spawning Beach decommission is complete before they sign off on the updated boundaries.* Tom understands the USFS interests.

The next BRCC meeting will be in Burlington on April 22 (Earth Day).

505 Update: Since the last TRIG meeting, the SA 505 Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group (ARHWG, which is comprised of interested ARG and TRIG members) met January 25 to hear project proposals and had a conference call Feb. 6 to finalize funding decisions. Scott reported that two projects were approved for funding: the Middle Skagit Riparian Stewardship project (proposed by the Skagit River System Cooperative) and the Protection and Enhancement of Cavity Nest Sites project (Sauk-Suiattle Tribe). The USFS road decommissioning project is currently on hold pending review of updated site information. Some of the key players are on leave, so this will remain on hold for at least a few more weeks.

BOTANICAL UPDATE

Scott updated the group on botanical activities since the last TRIG meeting. The Noxious Weed Habitat Management Procedures (*HMP*) document is due for its regular 5-year update, so the version that Scott reviewed is for the years 2014-2018. It *includes a schedule that covers all sites requiring treatment.* He reviewed the major changes to the document, which include updated plant listings and statuses based on the latest state noxious weed list and updated information about treatments completed in the first five years (2009-2013). Scott pointed out that 17 weed *sites* have been eradicated since this work began! (WhoHoo! And the crowd went wild!) *Next steps will be emailing the updated HMP to the TRIG for a 2-week review and adoption as the latest working version.*

NATIVE VEGETATION RELEASE WETLAND ENHANCEMENT

Scott shared a PPT making the case for the need to remove blackberries *at specific locations* on the East Parcel of Alder Creek, Wetland Unit 14.0, in order to release trees and shrubs from being overrun. This work would improve native plant diversity, benefit amphibian breeding habitat and wildlife use, and provide more large woody debris. He has researched the best way to approach this and suggests cutting back the blackberries in June, followed by a retreatment with another cutting or herbicide application in September. Attendees agreed.

LOON PLATFORM REPLACEMENT UPDATE

Haley reported out on the work to build a new floating nest platform to replace the one that went missing last fall. She showed photos of the new platform and installation that happened February 11.

FOREST HABITAT BARE ROOT PLANTINGS

Haley reported on work to replant the area at Burpee Hill Forest Habitat Management Unit 2 where knotweed was removed. Tony, Haley, and Scott went on-site yesterday to install bare root plantings of hemlock, spruce, and cedar (25 each) as well as cascara and ash (10 each).

LEGACY WOOD UPDATE

Haley, Scott, and Tony went on-site at Burpee Hill to identify some cedars (approx. 32 - 39 DBH) that would make good snags. Haley will then work with the contractor to ensure they can be snagged safely and to coordinate the work.

Haley reminded the group about the Legacy Wood plan the TRIG talked about at the December meeting. That plan is available to TRIG members in the FTP site (see Tony's 2/27 email for FTP access instructions).

SA 514 EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

SA 502/514 Song Bird Monitoring Plan: Haley distributed an updated protocol to monitor breeding song birds, pointing out changes since the group last reviewed the plan. Based on Haley's conversations with Emily and Theresa, the proposal calls for three surveys per season rather than just one. It also shortens the observations to five minutes per station based on experience from the first two years of surveys.

SA 514 Effectiveness Monitoring Implementation Procedures (EMIP): Tony reminded the group that the TRIG adopted the December 2013 draft as its current monitoring procedures document. This is a living document, meaning that TRIG can update it as needed without FERC review.

Tony brought folks' attention to EMIP Section 4.2.2 Open Forest, which calls for the creation of some open forest conditions on elk management units with appropriate topography. Related to this, Tony is engaging in some early planning for work to develop forage this year via a timber harvest at Burpee Hill (units 4.1 and 6.0) and small-scale experimental heavy-thinning and replanting of herbaceous plants at Alder Creek (Western parcel, Unit 5). He briefly reviewed the pre-treatment surveys he is considering. Expect to see a full proposal at the June TRIG meeting. Brock asked for a copy of the Goshawk broadcast survey protocol in advance; Tony will send that to him.

DOCUMENT UPDATES

Tony updated the group on work to update the management program document for Burpee Hill. The management units have been refined and buffers delineated for the DNR, Tony will include updated maps for this, including the proposed future harvests and roads. Since the last TRIG meeting, Tony has taken several interested folks out for site visits to the road sections slated for retirement at Alder Creek. If you would like to access any acquired lands, contact Tony for the key or a tour.

LICENSE DOCUMENT REFRESHER

Tony asked the group if it would be interested in an annual high-level review of the Settlement Agreement, License, and associated TRIG documents, similar to what is done annually at the BRCC. The group agreed that this would be good and decided that the December TRIG meeting would be the right time for this. Theresa noted that she really appreciated the opportunity to have a personal review with Tony. She found that to be very helpful. Tony agreed that a personal or small-group review is useful and offered the same to anyone who is interested. Theresa might appreciate a refresher (there's a lot to it all!), and Doug and Peter are interested, too. Tony also noted that he and/or members of his team are happy to come to you.

OSPREY NESTING UPDATE

TRIG will be receiving the draft 2013 Osprey Annual Report later this month. Mel shared highlights with the group. He projected a map of Osprey nests around Lake Shannon. He recapped the history: 10 artificial bowls were installed in the 80's and 90's. As a result of the new license, 13 topped trees were created in 2009. Now, four years later, there were no Osprey nests in the artificial bowl structures. All of the active Osprey nests are in trees, and Canada geese are the only birds using the artificial bowls.

In 2013, there were 7 active nests (adult birds observed), 4 of which were productive (adults and young observed). There was one active nest on Baker Lake and it was productive.

Haley noted that Eagles were observed around the north end of Lake Shannon. They are also making use of topped trees T12 and T13.

LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE

Tony let the group know that Ira McDaniel has accepted a new job within PSE and will no longer be supporting the TRIG's acquisition efforts. PSE is currently in the process of hiring his replacement. In the

meantime, Ray from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) has picked up extra duties to maintain contact with folks who own parcels the TRIG has considered; he will also help bring the new real estate person up to speed on our work to date.

Tony also updated the group on a couple of specific parcels. Details about potential acquisitions are not included in our public notes. If you have any questions, please contact Tony or Ray.

2014 ACQUIRED LANDS WORK PLANS

Tony reviewed the 2014 work plans for Alder Creek and Burpee Hill. He started by orienting attendees to the layout of the spreadsheet, which shows planned work divided both by month and by license article.

Alder Creek's major projects include tree grinding and site prep in Unit 5, the brush out and culvert removal for retiring roads B1-4113-12 and B1-1413-10, mowing pastures at Units 12 and 15, and noxious weed / blackberry work, legacy wood work, some planting and monitoring work.

Burpee Hill's major projects include a September timber harvest in Units 6 and 4.1, knotweed treatment, legacy wood development, Goshawk surveys, and forage planting.

Theresa asked PSE to include the full TRIG in the harvest planning process. Tony will send out a proposed harvest map showing the DNR-approved harvest units, including information about buffers and reserve trees.

The full document is available on the TRIG's FTP site.

BUDGET UPDATE

Tony shared the budget spreadsheet, pointed out that the 2014 deposits are in all the appropriate accounts. Tom drew attendees' attention to the SA 514 account. PSE was required to deposit \$100k over the first ten years of the license, and has funded the full amount early (the remaining \$90,000 deposited in October 2013, and the escalation amount (\$10,894) deposited February 2014).

Capital Accounts:

Article 502 Forest: \$154k

Article 503 Elk: almost \$2.4m

Article 504 Wetlands: \$67k

Article 505 ARHWG: \$2.14m (available before this year's projects)

The TERF Fund has about \$8k

Meeting Evaluation – Worked Well

- Welcome, new friends
- Quorum – thanks!
- Meeting time and length great
- Food great (no sandwiches = ok)

Meeting Evaluation – Do Differently

- Limit sidebars, particularly if we have phone participants
- PSE - Consider creating a laminated or otherwise reusable set of maps that can be brought to all TRIG meetings. (Helpful for acquisition conversations and conversations about activities on acquired lands)
- Some type of protein in the morning. Mixed nuts?

Draft TRIG Agenda, June 5, 2014

- Welcome, Safety, Agenda, Action Items
- License / BRCC Update

- Botanical, Loons, Legacy Wood Updates
- Acquisition Update
- Work Plan Update
- Budget Update