
BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

BAKER RIVER INTERIM COORDINATING COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL

February 14, 2006
8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

*Purpose: To transition to the Baker River Coordinating Committee (BRCC)
in support of implementing the new Baker River Project License.*

FINAL CONFERENCE CALL NOTES

ATTENDEES

Jon Vanderheyden (USFS); Jim Michaels (USFWS); Bob Helton (Citizen); Jon-Paul Shanahan (Upper Skagit Indian Tribe); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Gary Sprague (WDFW); Jason Joseph (Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe); Steve Fransen (NOAA Fisheries); Jeff McGowan (Skagit County); Rob Mohn (Louis Berger); David Hawkins (Upper Skagit Indian Tribe); Bob Nelson (RMEF); Fayette Krause (TNC); Arn Thoreen (SFEG); Chuck Ebel (USACE); Bob Fritzen (DOE); Ed Schild, Cary Feldmann, Connie Freeland, Shauna Tran, Dave Jenness, Larry Tornberg and Roque Bamba (PSE); Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting, Inc.)

TENTATIVE DATES OF NEXT MEETING (pending receipt of the DEIS from FERC)

- Tuesday March 14 (Currently reserved as ARG meeting) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at USFS Office in Mountlake Terrace or
- Tuesday March 28 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at USFS Office in Mountlake Terrace.

The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the DEIS.

ACTION ITEMS

- ALL: Hold the above dates and stay tuned in case we need to re-schedule.
- ALL: Review the attached BRICC Member list and send Connie updates for your organization.
- Connie: Attach updated BRICC member (and back-up) list to these notes and send out to all.
- Connie: Set up Settlement Agreement Review Meeting in the near future at a date and location that works for new folks joining this process and send out announcement to all.
- Lyn: Send draft notes to Connie to edit and distribute to all.

DRAFT FEB. 14 MEETING AGENDA

- 8:00 – 8:15 Welcome, Introductions
 Working Group Reports
 DEIS Review/Comment Schedule
 BRICC Reps – Need good handoffs from departing members to new members
 Settlement Agreement Substantive Review Meeting?
- 8:15 – 9:15 Discuss DEIS Process
 Discuss DEIS Review/Comment Matrix drafted by Rob Mohn
 How will we field questions from the press?
 Tentative date for next BRICC Meeting: March 14 or March 28

WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Aquatics Resources Group (ARG):

Cary explained that this group has been meeting fairly regularly to review results from ongoing studies, e.g., Bull Trout. The Interim Protection Plan (IPP) for Chinook has been in place over the last few years and is now focusing on ramping for this spring.

There are two main early implementation activities that have also been reviewed by ARG members:

1. Development of the hatchery. They estimate the design will be 15% complete by April.
2. Fish passage: Cary reported that they have re-developed the design for the Floating Surface Collector (FSC) in an effort to combat escalating costs. The Fish Passage Technical Working Group met recently and are conducting hydraulic modeling to confirm that it would be better for fish to locate the collector in a slightly different location than in the original design. They are also doing structural design work. They will be meeting Feb. 21 in Bellevue to discuss some updated design considerations. They will be meeting again in March to do more design review. They anticipate beginning construction of the FSC in July. It should be installed and operational in March 2008, on schedule.

Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group (TRIG): Cary reported that the TRIG has been working on completing the initial draft of the Terrestrial Resources Management Plan (TRMP). Also, PSE has been working with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to acquire the initial parcel of land for elk habitat.

It looks like their next meeting scheduled for Feb. 27 may be postponed if the DEIS is not out by then.

Cultural Resources Advisory Group (CRAG): Connie reported that this team is currently drafting archaeological maintenance and treatment plans and a condition and testing report. They are also drafting maintenance guidelines for structures in the two historic districts in the project area. They last met Oct. 18. At that meeting they reviewed their norms especially around issues of confidentiality since most of their documents deal with restricted information. They have established a norm that allows for “restricted” meetings where attendance would be limited when confidential issues are discussed.

Their next meeting is set for Feb. 21. The focus of this meeting will be technical and confidential (with restricted attendance) as they will be discussing an archaeological treatment plan.

Recreation Resources Group (RRG): Cary explained that this group is working on field work and general planning. There are no early implementation activities called out in the Settlement Agreement. They have a meeting tentatively planned for early March. They don't think it makes sense to meet before the DEIS comes out. Pam Garland is the new Team Leader for this team as Andy Hatfield has assumed other duties.

DEIS SCHEDULE

Connie explained we are assuming a 60-day comment period for the Draft EIS, roughly eight weeks. She suggested the following schedule to accommodate review and comments from BRICC members:

- The first week after the DEIS is received, Connie will make sure everyone has copies and Rob's matrix (see paragraph below) to capture their comments.
- She estimates 2 weeks will be required for folks to review the document on their own and/or with their respective organizations.
- The BRICC would meet during the third week to discuss the changes suggested by FERC
- All would then spend weeks 4-6 preparing comments and reviewing them.
- The BRICC would meet again in week 7, and discuss how participants plan to respond to the changes suggested by FERC. We will identify any opportunities to consolidate responses and/or where we can use the same or similar language in responding to FERC so they see we are speaking with a unified voice.
- All would send comments to FERC by week 8.

DEIS REVIEW MATRIX

Rob Mohn of Louis Berger has put together a matrix to help facilitate the DEIS review and comment process. When the DEIS is received, Rob and his team will focus on measures in the Settlement Agreement and see how they were treated by FERC. They will review the document from both a substantive and administrative/procedural perspective. They will flag any deviations in the DEIS from what we agreed to in the Settlement Agreement and attempt to explain FERC's rationale for these deviations. When Louis Berger has completed this review, they will provide their comments in the form of the matrix to BRICC members through Connie. The matrix includes a blank column for BRICC members to record their own comments/reactions/recommendations. Rob hopes the matrix will serve as a useful tool to organize everyone's comments on the DEIS.

LICENSE ISSUANCE TIMELINE

We agreed that there is a lot we don't know about when the license will actually be issued. We anticipate an annual license will be issued in April. In terms of issuance of the DEIS, FERC has indicated there is a backlog of work at FERC. We have heard that the Rocky Reach and Lewis River projects' processes will be completed before the Baker DEIS is issued. Also, we have heard that with a change the leadership at FERC, there is a marked reluctance to include in licenses elements that are outside of FERC's jurisdiction to enforce. Another factor affecting the schedule is the drafting of FERC provisions for implementing the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which Steve Hocking has been involved with.

COMMUNICATION/TALKING WITH THE PRESS

Cary suggested that we think about how we respond to the press once the DEIS is released. We expect the initial calls from the press will be fairly immediate. There will also be follow-up calls, as reporters look for a story. Discussions on how to respond with a common voice included reminding the press that we all got together to create the Settlement Agreement in the first place and we are all committed to the Settlement Agreement.

The issue of flood control will probably arise no matter how it is addressed in the DEIS. It will undoubtedly get media attention. Ed mentioned that PSE has a meeting with Skagit County coming up the end of February to discuss Article 107.

DRAFT AGENDA FOR NEXT BRICC MEETING: March 14 or March 28

9:00 – 9:05	Welcome
9:05 – 9:15	Review Notes and Action Items from Feb. 14 Conference Call
9:15 – 11:45	Review DEIS (using Berger matrix)
11:45 – 12:15	Lunch
12:15 – 2:45	Continue Review of DEIS
2:45 – 3:00	Identify next steps
	Set next meeting dates and locations
	Evaluate meeting