

RRG Final Meeting Notes

June 17, 2014 / 9:00 – Noon / Skagit Service Center, Burlington, WA 98233



Baker River Project License Implementation

Recreation Resource Group Meeting

Draft Meeting Notes

June 17, 2014, 9:00 am – Noon

Team Leader: Tony Fuchs, PSE (tony.fuchs@pse.com)

Facilitator: Lyn Wiltse: 425-890-3613 (call if running late or if your plans to attend the meeting change)

Website: <http://pse.com/aboutpse/HydroLicensing/Pages/Baker-River-Licensing.aspx>

PRESENT

Tony Fuchs, Pam Garland, Tom Flynn, Scott Heller, by phone, and Elizabeth Dubreuil (PSE); Nikolai Ferrell (USFS); Brock Applegate (WDFW), Corrina Hart (Town of Concrete); and Lyn Wiltse, facilitator and note taker (PDSA Consulting).

DECISION: None today.

NEXT 2014 RRG MEETING DATE

October 21 (RRG in the morning and LEP in the afternoon to debrief Recreation season)

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Pam Ask WDFW's Ryan Valentine to coordinate with the Forest Service about prep for the season.
- Tony Send out a Doodle Poll for 2 hour RRG document refresher.
- All Let Tony know if interested in a Snoqualmie tour the week of July 14.
- Scott Send Tony revised drawings and Scope of Work for EarthCorps (SA 302 – Aesthetics) to distribute to the RRG.
- Tom Ask Jacob to contact Ann (no sooner than the week of June 23) about using stumps as LWD. PSE now owns the property where the LWD will be stored.

ONGOING ACTION ITEMS

- All In addition to the above dates, please continue to reserve the third Tuesday of each month from 9:00-11:00am for possible additional meetings or conference calls. Tony will send out an email prior to each date asking if anyone sees a need to meet.
- All Let Tony know of any updates to the contact list for your organization.
- Tony Continue to coordinate cross-resource group collaboration (e.g., I&E) – ongoing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- There will be a public tour of the Baker River Hydro Plant on July 26. All are welcome to attend!

- The next public meeting for the Skagit General Investigation (GI) will be Thursday, June 19 at the Skagit Transfer Station Community Room., 6:00-8:00 pm,
- With this meeting Pam is handing the reins of the leadership of the RRG to Tony. She will continue to handle Recreation matters local to the Baker River Project, including water safety and the annual Law Enforcement contracts. Tony will handle all the email communications with the RRG and the LEP and also lead these meetings. He will also help with administrative and license compliance work, including annual reports.
- Rich Phillips has retired from WDFW. We will miss his dedication, attention to detail, and humor. We wish him well!
- Director Paul Wetherbee has taken a different assignment at PSE – will now be leading the PSE Budget Group. A new director of Hydroelectric Resources will be named soon.
- The following decision was approved via email on March 14. There were no dissenting votes. “Shall the RRG approve allocation of funding from the RAM in the amount of \$231,865, for expansion and upgrade of Panorama boat launch and parking area, including paving?” Note: This includes accelerating (to Feb, 2015) \$25K of the \$50K payment regularly scheduled for Oct., 2015.
- Nikolai explained that both Carol (on a temporary assignment) and Ann would be back for our October meeting. We extend condolences to Ann on the death of her father.
- Nikolai reported the Forest Service is still down one LEO (with Jeremy gone). They will be relying heavily on the contracts. The seasonal rec staff is on board. Some are getting LE training. He will check with Carol to make sure they are covered.

REVIEW OF AGENDA AND MEETING NOTES

The February 25, 2014 notes were finalized after the meeting via email and will be posted on the PSE website.

LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION / BRCC UPDATE

Tom announced that the next BRCC meeting will be at the PSE Snoqualmie plant on October 22.

Highlights of other License-related activities include:

FERC Orders

- Regarding the 6 inch daily constraint for reservoir elevation change: FERC approved the change in reporting - PSE will only report anything in excess of 1 ft/day. FERC also ordered PSE to modify Aquatics Tables 1 and 2 to remove the rolling 24-hour period. PSE will continue to set up daily operations with the 6 inch rule in mind. The rest of the tables will be intact but not in place yet because of the LB powerhouse work. LB Unit 4 is not yet finished and commissioned.
- Regarding LB Unit 4: FERC granted an extension of 1 year, so the unit needs to be in operation in October of 2015 instead of October this year. PSE will commit to making the MIF starting in October (1,000 or 1,200 cfs depending on the time of year). Brock expressed appreciation for PSE operating in the spirit of the settlement agreement before they are required to do so.

Aquatics Resource Group (ARG)

- 1 million outmigrants were achieved on June 10 (the day the ARG met)! There was great rejoicing. The 2013 outmigration number was around 850K. The year before was 500K. Much of this is attributed to the LB FSC. There are also more fry in the lake and the UB FSC continues to be very productive. This year, they also produced 6.5 million fry!
- Skagit GI by the USACE: The Tentatively Selected Plan has been identified, and the draft Feasibility Report / Environmental Impact Statement (FR/EIS) has been released for review.. The next public meeting is June 19 at the Skagit Transit Station. WDFW is predicting a sockeye run of 35,377. The sockeye fishery opens on Baker Lake on July 10.

Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group (TRIG)

- PSE is looking at acquiring a piece of property along Burpee Hill in the next few months. 100% of the funding will come from the elk budget (for elk foraging). The TRIG will have a conference call June 19 to discuss this. They are no longer considering acquiring the property on Finney Creek due to the amount of uncertainty due to chemicals and derelict structures on the property.
- 160 loons were observed on the reservoirs in May. The last highest count was 46. The many smolts in the lake likely had something to do with it. New real estate rep is Joel Schleppi as Ira McDaniel has moved on to another position at PSE.
- The TRIG has been part of the North Cascades Elk Herd Management process. Partly, the interest in maintaining the herd levels is for tribal and recreational hunting. PSE is working with the tribes on access agreements. They have one in place with the Upper Skagits and have draft agreements for the Sauk-Suiattle and the Swinomish tribes. Some keys have been given out for gates at PSE's wildlife properties. Hunting season begins in September. PSE will only restrict vehicle access to their properties. The property immediately around Vogler Lake will be closed to hunting as that access road is an easement for administrative access – not for public access.

Cultural Resource Advisory Group (CRAG)

- The CRAG last met in May 14. Their next meeting is August 20 at this location. They are working on the LB Compound redevelopment – work that will take the next couple of years. This includes converting the Clubhouse to a new Visitor Center. They are also providing signage and viewing areas for silos, etc. They are currently dealing with the challenge of where to put the buildings because of some issues with the soil there.

2014 Implementation Schedule

Tom reported the change in reporting schedule has been approved by FERC. It will be finalized by the BRCC in October and go into effect next year for 2014 reports.

PREPARATION FOR THE SEASON

Law Enforcement Contracts

- WDFW: Pam met with WDFW's Ryan Valentine yesterday. He has a good understanding of PSE expectations. They will still be storing their boats at the Baker Project. Just need to get the access worked out. Their contract is all set up. Pam requested extra emphasis on invasive species checkpoint. Maybe RAM funding could be used for this?
- Whatcom County: Contracts are complete.
- Skagit County: Corrina gave Mason's information to Skagit County last week. Pam has also met with Skagit County and has had an open dialogue with them about what PSE would like to see from a Project perspective. The contracts are not yet complete.

Water Safety Maps

Map changes will be made next year after Bayview is completed. In the meantime, Pam is making additional copies of the existing map as needed. Next year we will also coordinate with the TRIG and ARG to make sure they include any other needed updates.

Wildlife-Resistant Containers

We used Adaptive Management funds for the purchase of wildlife-resistant containers. This has been very helpful.

DISPERSED RECREATION PLAN

This plan is being developed by the Forest Service. It is a local plan. There is no requirement to send it to FERC for approval. At our last meeting Ann reported they were developing a GPS/GIS-based field inventory tool to be used in the 2014 season. It would integrate GPS positioning, geo-referenced photos,

inventory database, and occupancy data. We look forward to a more comprehensive review at our October meeting. Nikolai will check with Ann to see if an early draft of the plan can be attached to the notes.

INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATION (I&E) PLAN

The I&E Plan is close to being complete. Susan Paul of the FS has been working on this. Nikolai will check on the status of this and we will discuss its status at our next meeting in October.

2014 RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

- SA 301 – Final 2012 Annual Report was filed with FERC in April, 2014. Lead folks all got a copy in the mail. It will eventually be posted on the PSE website and is also on the FERC website.
- SA 302 – Aesthetics – This part of the plan to be planted this year is a vegetation screening project at UB. The plan was approved by the RRG in 2010. Scott explained that the funding for this is now available (\$110K). The landscaping around the LB Visitor Center was completed in 2012 (all native plantings). PSE has contracted with EarthCorps to do vegetation screen (800 native plants) at the UB facilities. Some grass will be removed along the fence line across from the Kulshan campground where mulch will be put down. There will be more screening around the UB boat launch and at Depression Lake. The rocky soil will provide some challenges. They will do the screening as proposed, with the exception of removing some Douglas fir from the drawing to provide view opportunities. EarthCorps will perform the work October 6-10, 2014. Scott will share the drawings and the scope of work for EarthCorps (approx. \$38K) to do the work. There will also be consultation on the colors (switching to earth tones) used the next time the large blue crane and the pump house are painted.
- SA 304 – Water Safety-Recreation Hazard Monitoring calls for monitoring for recreational hazards, specifically for launching and retrieving boats and the swim areas. Pam reported that to date, they have done one monitoring run with a boat and one land survey where crews looked at Swift Creek, Horseshoe Cove, and checked the buoys and swim lines. There have been some corrective actions. PSE received Notice to Proceed from the FS. This will last for two years. If debris removed qualifies as LWD, they will proceed accordingly. They will consult with the TRIG, ARG and the CRAG in doing so. They have maps and bulletin boards in place.
- SA 305 – LB Developed Recreation Plan was filed with FERC in October, 2013. There is still no word. Looks like construction would begin in 2018. In the meantime they will be using that area for laydown for LB dam crest.
- SA 312 – Developed Recreation Monitoring and Funding was filed with FERC on Oct. 2013. No word yet. Note: PSE didn't receive any feedback on this or comments during the comment period. Pam is aware that the Forest Service collects some useful information. If use through the week (Monday through Thursday) during peak times exceeds 60% then it will allow the Forest Service to say that additional work needs to be done. The FS will provide us with their info for this year. Pam has counts for Visitor Center. We have to rely on anecdotal information for Lake Shannon. The FERC Form 80 required this information over a 12-month period. We need this in January for the collection year 2014 as PSE has to file it in April of 2015.
- Kulshan boat launch – PSE will be using non-license related funds to add a boat launch lane and dock. This project is in the permitting phase and they plan to do the construction in late September / early October of this year. This will help with the parking situation and make the process faster and people will be happy they no longer have to beach their boats. Elizabeth reported they are doing a geo-technical review and don't anticipate any issues. The initial thought was to pave the parking lot. PSE is looking at putting something on the ground to encourage a circulation and parking pattern that make sense. Corrina knows of some sources for fire hose to delineate parking in case PSE wants to go in that direction.
- SA 311: LB Trails – This is LB where there is an opportunity to add 2 miles of trail. As we do the LB development, we might want to send a request to FERC saying that the trails would be part of that plan. There are no specifics of what the trails would look like. PSE has to file a LB construction plan in 2019.
- LB development is slated for 2018.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR RAM FUNDING (AVAILABLE IN 2016)

- Increased monitoring for invasive species
- Updating boat ramps on Baker Lake and combining possibly with a fry planting site

RESOURCE GROUP / OTHER GROUP UPDATES

- The Forest Service wants to do some of the short trail process this summer. They are considering Horseshoe-to-dam trail options, including wildlife viewing opportunities. We will get an update on this at our next meeting.
- The Forest Service is working on scoping and EIS for the Bayview project.
- Town of Concrete: Planning continues for the new Life Safety building at the Fire Station. It should be up and running in late spring. The future of the Superior building is still uncertain. It may be torn down. They are looking for grant funding for a Water Park / Silo Park. It will be like Burlington's. They are looking at also creating an amphitheater and possibly an indoor swimming pool.
- RRG: Tony suggested scheduling a 2-hour session with whomever is interested in reviewing all the documents relative to the RRG. This would include studies, the Settlement Agreement, the License, Management Plans, and Implementation Plans. The TRIG is going to do this with their documents on July 17. It can serve as a refresher for "old" folks" as well as an orientation to "new" folks. Tony will send out Doodle Poll for a 2-hour meeting.

SAFETY MOMENT

When we injure ourselves we have to shut it down and take time to heal. Stay hydrated to help avoid cramping.

MEETING EVALUATION

Well Done:

- Got out early
- Good discussions
- Passing of the baton as team lead from Pam to Tony
- Appreciate Nikolai being here to represent the Forest Service

Do Differently:

- Missed Ann and Carol

OCTOBER 21, 2014 RRG MEETING TOPICS

- Review of 2014 Recreational Season
 - How well were we prepared?
 - Any unanticipated needs / surprises?
 - What can we carry forward based on lessons learned from the 2014 season?
- Update on Dispersed Recreation Plan
- Update on Draft Interpretive & Education Plan
- FS Plans for Trails
- Suggestions for future use of RAM Funding
- Review of 2014 Implementation Schedule
- Evaluate Meeting

HANDOUTS

- February 25, 2014 Final RRG Meeting Notes
- Draft Meeting Agenda for June 17, 2014