



BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Meeting

October 17, 2000

8:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

U.S. Forest Service Office
21905 64th Avenue West
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043
425-775-9702

AGENDA

Review/revise agenda
Status report: Action items
Issues/Interests: Stakeholders will get together to work on issues and interests in the form of INTERESTS/ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM/POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS from 8:45 to 9:45.
Evaluate if Biota Pacific and Hamer Environmental can meet the needs of this working group - Discuss access team members will have to the consultants.
Other available information?
Other issues – Clarify inundation issue/conceptual mitigation approach.
Set agenda for next meeting
Evaluate meeting

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MEETING NOTES

Mission: “To develop alternative solutions and recommendations, addressing terrestrial and wildlife resource interests for the Baker River Project and its operations, leading to a settlement agreement that:

1. accurately defines and describes the existing environment in relationship to the previous environment;
2. identifies project effects (existing and proposed) leading to development of protection, mitigation, and enhancement options.”

Team Leader: Tony Fuchs (Phone) 425-462-3553 (E-mail) tfuchs@puget.com

ATTENDEES

Tony Fuchs (Puget Sound Energy), Bob Kuntz (National Park Service), Patrick Goldsworthy (North Cascades Conservation Council), Fred Seavey (US Fish & Wildlife Service), Stan Walsh (Skagit Systems Cooperative), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife), Carl Corey (Forest Service), Regina Rochefort (North Cascades National Park), Bill Rogers (Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board), Marty Vaughn (Biota Pacific), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

The meeting started at 8:45 a.m. and ended at 11:45 a.m.

OLD ACTION ITEMS

- Ed Schild to invite WUTC to give “process” presentation to working groups and possibly join Economics Working Group.
- Bob will check with Bruce Freet re: making copies of “Collaborate Process” article for working group members.

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- Don will reserve conference room at Mountlake Terrace location for first few months of 2001.

October 17, 2000 Agenda

9:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. at Mountlake Terrace Forest Service Office

Note: Stakeholder Caucus from 8:45 – 9:45 a.m.

1. Review agenda
2. Status report: Action items
3. Issues/Interests
4. Evaluate if Biota Pacific and Hamer can meet the needs of this working group- Discuss access team members will have to the consultants
5. Other available information?
6. Other issues---clarify inundation issue/conceptual mitigation approach.
7. Set agenda for next meeting (November 21)
8. Evaluate meeting

REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS

- Don reserved the conference room at Mountlake Terrace location for first few months of 2001.

CAUCUS REPORT

Stakeholders (without PSE and the Facilitator) met for the first hour and half of the meeting to create a list of interests. They made a lot of progress on interests. They requested using the entire November 21, meeting time to finalize the interests.

USE OF CONSULTANTS

Tony explained PSE's current use of Biota Pacifica & Hamer Environmental. Since studies have not yet been defined, it is difficult to say exactly what type of work they will be doing. Where appropriate, they will sub contract to technical experts. There was discussion over the role of Biota Pacific. Marty explained that his role is not as PSE's advocate. He advocates for the process, making sure that decisions are made by facts and data to ensure the credibility of the working group recommendations. (Team Leader Note: Marty is serving not just as an advisor to PSE, but is also assisting PSE in developing a creative and credible approach to terrestrial resource issues that is acceptable to the Working Group, the Solution Team, and ultimately the FERC).

The question was raised about team member access to consultants. It was suggested that a fair and consistent approach might be for PSE to hire one large consulting firm with expertise in the various resource areas. The continuity provided by that approach would be beneficial. Team members have to date had no voice in selection of consultants. There was consensus that the working group should drive the study process. (Team Leader Note: after the meeting, members of the group suggested that we didn't have complete consensus, and that we need to discuss the use of consultants and the study process further in upcoming meetings). Tony mentioned that PSE has certain studies that they would conduct regardless

of working group input, since the studies are needed to provide information required for development of licensing documents.

There is a potential need for consultants to research issues off-line and come back to the Team with a “White Paper.” This is a role that Hamer environmental would fill. Hamer environmental has been retained by PSE to prepare study plans and potentially to act as the consultant overseeing implementation of studies. Biota Pacific serves as a technical support to PSE and the working group. Team members have access to consultants. The team expressed discomfort over the consultant they use to develop studies also advising PSE.

PSE STUDIES UPDATE:

Tony described PSE’s budgeting process. They have proposed the 2001 budget to the PSE Budget Committee. The Committee will accept/reject the budget by the end of the year. Tony should have a good idea of what amount of funding will be available for 2001. He will share which studies will likely be approved for funding at the December 5th meeting.

ISSUES/INTERESTS

	Wildlife & Terrestrial Resources Working Group
1.	Noxious (non-native) Species – characterize problem (need more information on what and where) Interest (1) – Non-native species can out compete/displace native species and change processes in the ecosystem or habitat. Issue (2) – Fear of extinction of certain plant/animal species. Interest (3) – Non-native species/potential for non-native species exists in the vicinity of the Baker River Project. Issue – Determine Baker River Project contribution to the invasion of non-native species in the area. Issue (2) – Controlling/eliminating non-native species in the vicinity of the Baker River Project.
2.	Loss of rare plant habitat Issue (1) - Maintaining and restoring rare plants and their habitats in the Basin Interest (2) - We may have lost rare plants/have lost rare plant habitats or we may lose them in the future
3.	Wetland, riparian habitats (ecosystem process) Issue (1) – Reservoir (rather than river) disrupts plant dispersal and plant community dynamics Interest (2) – Protecting, maintaining and enhancing wetland and riparian functions (plant & animal)
4.	Inundation habitat loss – wetlands, riparian, deer & elk winter range (e.g. Oregon spotted frog) Issue (1) – Project operation/fluctuation of reservoir Issue (2) – Continued loss of habitats inundated by reservoirs. Direct loss of previous habitat Issue (3) – Importance of low gradient/low elevation riparian habitat inundated by continued existence of hydro-power project: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effects to low elevation grizzly bear spring foraging habitat.• Effects on forest carnivore habitat (e.g. fisher, wolverine, cougar, lynx).• Effects on resident and neo tropical migrant songbirds habitat (specifically species dependent on cottonwood overstory and willow shrub habitats). Issue (4) – Deer and elk winter range forage Interest (1) – Addressing habitat loss Interest (2) – Evaluating impacts on species of concern/interest Interest (3) - May have lost connectivity to habitats within the park itself Issue (4) – Possibility that loss of continuity between upstream and downstream habits adversely affects populations. (reservoir creates recruitment barrier)

5.	Issue: Fluctuating water levels —botanical aspects, wildlife aspects
6.	Issue: Project impacts on the LSR impacts Size of contiguous habitat patches is limited by the reservoir—could affect # of species supported. Connectivity and reservoir edge effect on habitat quality. # species that can be supported (due to reservoir) Connectivity and edge effect on habitat quality
7.	Recreation impacts – Direct impacts from Project –induced recreation disturbance to nesting birds, etc. Indirect impacts from Project induced recreation. (e.g., providing more campground services; more people taking day hikes—disturbing mountain goats, etc.)
8.	Issue: Want more fish biomass into the ecosystem (watershed) • Nutrients and forage
9.	Potential project induced recreational impacts to rare plants, habitats, and species
10.	Issue: Are there increased impacts from the Project (now/future) on collection of plant species that the public would want to harvest? What amount of increased recreational impacts can be attributed to the Project? Versus no Project Issue: Current/future project impact on ability to administer DNR's HCP.
11.	Issue: Public Environmental Education & Outreach—Terrestrial issues
12.	Issue: What amount of increased recreation impacts can be attributed to the project vs. no project
13.	Issue: Current/future project impact on ability to administer DNR's HCP

PARKING LOT

- Alteration of Solution Team Mission Statement (the team is meeting for the first time on October 25th, and their Mission Statement is on the agenda in the initial meetings)
- Review time frame/goals of working groups/milestones
- Definitions of “Project Boundary” and “Project Effects”
- How do we handle “latecomers” to this process?

POTENTIAL STUDIES

- Baseline study re: present conditions and future trends of harvestable plant species

MEETING PROCESS REVIEW

Well-Dones:

Being flexible in approach

Need for Improvement:

Tried to cover too much

Need more time on consultant issue--- Wait and see?

NOTE: November 21, 2000 meeting will be 8:45-11:45a.m., for non PSE stakeholders only to finalize list of interests (Facilitator and note taker will also not attend).

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

December 5, 2000, 8:45 a.m. -1:45 p.m. at Mountlake Terrace Forest Service Office

Bring sack lunch, work through lunch

1. Review notes/agenda
2. Status report: Action items
3. Debrief training
4. Interests and Issues from Stakeholder Caucus
5. Other Issues:
 - Clarify inundation issue/conceptual mitigation approach
 - Other?
6. Time Lines/Schedule: Field season 2001, 2002, etc.
7. PSE proposed studies and budget discussion
8. Set agenda for next meeting (January meeting)
9. Evaluate meeting

OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE MEETING

- “Hydro 101” presentation by Bob Barnes
- Studies Criteria
- Process/policy presentation of how to approach impacts due to inundation
- Use of Consultants
- WUTC to give “process” presentation