

**From:** Feldmann, Cary

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 28, 2010 11:49 AM

**To:** 'Alice Kelly (akel461@ecy.wa.gov)'; 'Alison Evans (aeva461@ecy.wa.gov)'; Alison Studley; Applegate, Brock A (DFW); Aspelund, Arnie; Betsy Stevenson; 'Bob Carey (bcarey@tnc.org)'; 'Bob Helton (poetsmart@msn.com)'; 'Bob Nelson (nelson338@aol.com)'; Feldmann, Cary; Chris Kowitz (chinockeye\_221@hotmail.com); 'Chuck Ebel (charles.j.ebel@usace.army.mil)'; DAN BERENTSON (danb@co.skagit.wa.us); 'David Hawkins (dhawkins@upperskagit.com)'; 'Dennis London (dpgofish@verizon.net)'; Dubreuil, Elizabeth; Schild, Edward R; 'Ellen Bynum (skye@cnw.com)'; Fuchs, Tony; Garland, Pamela K; Gibbons, Amy C NWS; 'Greg Peterka (pete@skagitpud.org)'; 'Greta Movassaghi (gmovassaghi@fs.fed.us)'; 'Jack Oelfke (jack\_oelfke@nps.gov)'; Jeff Giesen (jeff\_giesen@ncascades.org); 'Jeff McGowan (jeffmc@co.skagit.wa.us)'; 'Jim Michaels (james\_michaels@fws.gov)'; 'JoAnn Gustafson (joann.gustafson@dnr.wa.gov)'; 'Jon Vanderheyden (jvanderheyden@fs.fed.us)'; 'Jon-Paul Shannahan (jonpauls@upperskagit.com)'; Oppenheimer, Jory; Maddox, Kathleen; 'Lacy Lahr (planner.concrete@verizon.net)'; Lane, Kim W; 'Larry Wasserman (lwasserman@skagitcoop.org)'; LBarson@tnc.org; 'Lorna Ellestad (lornae@co.skagit.wa.us)'; 'Lorraine Loomis (lloomis@swinomish.nsn.us)'; 'Lou Ellyn Jones (louellyn\_jones@fws.gov)'; lyn@pdsiconsulting.com; Kupfer, Lynda; 'Mark Hunter (huntemah@dfw.wa.gov)'; 'Patrick Goldsworthy (goldsworthy.N3c@clearwire.net)'; 'Ray Crosswell (shedhunt@aol.com)'; 'Saul Weisberg (saul\_weisberg@ncascades.org)'; 'Scott Schuyler (sschuyler@upperskagit.com)'; 'Stan Walsh (swalsh@skagitcoop.org)'; 'Steve Fransen (steven.m.fransen@noaa.gov)'; Sue Madsen; 'Torey Nelson (toreyn@co.skagit.wa.us)'; 'Tracie Johannessen (tracie\_johannessen@ncascades.org)'; troutunlimited@localaccess.com; Venard, Jacob A; Verretto, Nick; Williams, Scott H

**Subject:** Baker River Coordinating Committee Update for September 2010

**BRCC members**

As there hasn't been a request for an in-person meeting or conference call for this month, below is an update of the past month's Baker River Project Resource Group activities. Our next face-to-face meeting is currently anticipated to be on October 27. We have reserved the Snoqualmie Conference Center for that meeting.

Also we are requesting topics of interest for the agenda. Please let me know.

We will continue to reserve the 4th Wednesday each month for a conference call or face to face meeting as needed.

Thanks again for your enthusiastic and dedicated participation,

**Cary**

## **BRCC update for September 2010**

### **Aquatic Resource Group (ARG)**

The ARG met on September 14th at PSE's Snoqualmie & Skagit Offices with participation linked by video-conferencing and WebEx. Three decisions were on the agenda for the ARG's consideration. A quorum was present & documented.

#### **Decisions**

1. "Shall the deadline to complete the final report on the Sockeye Smolt Production Capacity Study be extended to November 15, 2010?"
2. "Shall the deadline to file Article 108 Baker River Gravel Management Plan, based on an alternative schedule, be extended to January 31, 2011?"
3. "Shall the deadline to file Article 109 Large Woody Debris Management Plan, based on an alternative schedule, be extended to January 31, 2011?"

Background for the decisions was provided by PSE:

1. R2 presented interim results of the Sockeye Smolt Production Capacity Study. The draft report is under development. A revised schedule for completion of the study was proposed, because additional effort was necessary to incorporate results from a previous relicensing study (Mazumder, 2004) and the information would help interpretation of study

results.

2. The request for extending the deadline to complete the gravel management plan under Article 108 requires a 60-day review. The plan is under development, but requires additional time to complete. The time horizon is not critical (no activities in the near future).
3. The request for extending the deadline to complete the large woody debris management plan under Article 108 requires a 60-day review. The plan is under development, but requires additional time to complete. The time horizon is not critical (no activities in the near future).

Consensus was reached by the ARG and decisions taken to approve revised schedules for all three articles.

PSE reported on the construction progress to modify Sockeye Spawning Beach 4. Substantial work is complete. PSE has received a preliminary scope of work (SOW) from the USFS for decommissioning Sockeye Spawning Beaches 1-3. PSE will use the SOW to hire a consultant to develop the decommissioning design. Approval of the design and decommissioning plan by the USFS is required before work commences. The USFS will be seeking input from the ARG and will be discussed at the October 12 ARG conference call.

Hatchery start-up operations are going well. PSE requested that the fish co-managers provide the annual fish production plan to direct 2010-11 operations at the hatchery. The co-managers will provide the plan to PSE by September 30.

The next Fish Passage Technical Working Group meetings are October 6 and December 1 to review 90% and 100% Lower Baker FSC design documents.

PSE is now releasing flows from Lower Baker in accordance with Interim Protection Plan rules which went into effect September 15. PSE has also been applying best efforts to maximum generating conditions during the spawning season beginning September 1. Unusually high inflow conditions to the Baker over that past month have caused the generation limitations to be temporarily released to permit restoration or retention of IPP flood storage to protect listed species.

PSE provided updates on the status of the ARG-related plans and reports currently underway. Several plans and reports have been completed or are underway: Article 103 final emergency response plan for the upstream trap has been submitted for 30-day review and comment, due October 11; Article 101 plan is complete; the 2009 annual report is due to the ARG for draft review in October; Article 106 annual report is due November 30; Article 505 plan and implementation document are complete and the plan will be submitted to the FERC end of September; PSE is soliciting project recommendations for Article 505, the request for pre-proposals for 505 projects was made on September 14 and pre-proposals are due October 8; Article 107c analysis of historic floods continues.

All the 2009 annual reports will be compiled and a summary document (with all the reports, comments and responses to comments) will be submitted to the ARG for additional 30-day review in February. Comments will be addressed and the final report submitted to the FERC in April. The next ARG meeting is scheduled for October 12 as a conference call and with WebEx participation.

## **Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group (TRIG)**

The TRIG met on September 2nd, with the meeting held at the Snoqualmie PSE offices using WebEx, conference call.

Tony Fuchs (PSE) distributed a spreadsheet that shows the current and scheduled capital funds for articles 502, 503, 504 and 505. It also showed the expenses to date from the Elk acquisition fund. At this time, \$1,503,882 remains in the Elk land acquisition fund. Tony reminded folks that the Forest and Wetland articles will reimburse the Elk fund for their portions of the Alder Creek acquisition when their funds become available. The Forest article will deposit \$60k into the Elk fund next year and the Wetland article will contribute \$280k when that article gets funded in year 4 (2012).

Don Gay (USDA- FS) reported that the thinning work related to the Late Seral Forest article (SA-515) is underway and

scheduled to be completed in November. It was a favorable bid climate, and there will be \$25k-\$30k left over when the project is complete. USFS proposes using some of this money to monitor the area. After discussion of the proposal and the correct process to follow, TRIG agreed that Kim and Greta will work together on the accounting process for putting this into the TERF fund (SA-602). USFS could then bring the proposal forward for the TRIG to consider and Tony would cue up a TRIG decision to allocate funding from TERF. It was agreed that this could be done in time to allow monitoring to begin next summer if approved by TRIG.

Ira McDaniel (PSE real estate) updated the TRIG about Property "J" and the challenges related to coordinating with other funders. Ira will keep us informed if anything changes. He also updated the TRIG on the status of his work on other properties. TRIG authorized him to get updated appraisal and timber cruise information for Property X. Marty Vaughn (consultant), Kathy Smayda (consultant), Haley Edwards (PSE), and Scott Heller (PSE) will update the pre-acquisition survey with estimated acreages of the property's habitat composition. TRIG also authorized an appraisal and timber cruise on Property "G."

Scott Heller showed photos from the site visit he and Kathy Smayda took to the Alder Creek property to map *Carex comosa*. He also reported on the *Carex flava* site visit he, Tony, Tim Miller (WSU extension agent), Ann Risvold (USDA-FS) and Kathy Smayda took to the NE end of Baker Lake. There were no seedlings observed, but they did see most of the previously identified plants (362 total plants in last survey). They also identified areas where Reed Canary Grass is most dense around the *Carex flava* plants with the idea of treating Reed Canary Grass in these areas in order to reduce competition with *Carex flava*. Scott also showed photos of the ivy removal work at Baker's old spawning beaches and there was celebration around the table. The next Botanical Teamlet meeting is scheduled for October 6.

Mel Walters (PSE) reported on the work that is under way to create Osprey nest trees. He showed photos of the completed work at sites 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13. The invoice for these six sites is \$8k. He will invite the contractors to a future TRIG meeting to talk more about the project and show a video of their work. Osprey surveys: There were 4 active nest sites on Lake Shannon and a non-breeding pair that Mel thinks will likely breed next year. There were 3 total active nests on Baker Lake.

Haley Edwards reported that the bald eagle night roost surveys start again in November. TRIG will talk about the protocol at the October meeting.

The gates TRIG approved at the last meeting to control access to the Alder Creek property will cost approximately \$22K (3 gates and 15- 20 ecology blocks), and the work will begin in September. Elizabeth Dubreuil (PSE) conducted a cultural review of the sites and PSE is not expecting there to be any issues.

The 8/31 version of the Alder Creek Management Plan Marty Vaughn emailed out includes the edits and comments to date. Tony projected the document and Marty led the TRIG through a review. Edits were made real-time and the group made it through Management Unit 4.

The next TRIG meeting is scheduled for October 7th at the PSE Burlington offices.

## **Recreation Resources Group (RRG)**

- Next RRG meeting will be held on October 19, 2010 at Skagit Service Center in Burlington
- A Law Enforcement meeting will be held following the RRG meeting on October 19, 2010
- FERC approved Aesthetics Management Plan, SA 302 on September 22, 2010

The Recreation Resources Group is currently working on the following projects: Water Safety Tear-Sheet maps, Water safety Swimming delineation plans for Horseshoe Cove and Swift Creek Campground (formerly the BL Resort), Aesthetics screening plan for the Upper Baker project and identification and verification of upcoming compliance tasks.

The Law Enforcement teamlet will review the enforcement activities and coverage from the 2010 recreation season and identify enforcement and equipment needs for the 2011 recreation season. Part of this discussion will be funding needs for 2011.

The FERC approved the Aesthetics Management Plan, SA 302. Implementation tasks and dates are being identified and will be entered into the compliance tracking program.

December meeting for RRG is tentatively scheduled for December 21 and will be dependent upon the need.

### **Cultural Resources Advisory Group (CRAG)**

The CRAG will have their monthly meeting on September 29th at the PSE Burlington office.

The final HPMP was submitted to FERC for approval on September 20th. Consulting parties should receive final hard copies in the next week.

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Have a nice Day,  
Cary

***Cary Feldmann***

*Manager, Resource Sciences*

***Puget Sound Energy***

PO Box 97034

Bellevue, WA 98009

Ph. 425-462-3088

Fax 425- 462-3223

cell 206-949-0415

[cary.feldmann@pse.com](mailto:cary.feldmann@pse.com)

***Cary Feldmann***

*Manager, Resource Sciences*

***Puget Sound Energy***

PO Box 97034

Bellevue, WA 98009

Ph. 425-462-3088

Fax 425- 462-3223

cell 206-949-0415

[cary.feldmann@pse.com](mailto:cary.feldmann@pse.com)