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## **BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE**

### **Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group**

April 22, 2002

9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

USFS Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Headquarters  
21905 64<sup>th</sup> Ave. West  
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

### **AGENDA**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review action items
3. R16 Visioning Exercise
4. Detailed Review of 2001 Data
  - Site inventory
  - Visitor use observations
5. Set agenda and location for next meeting (May 20)
6. Evaluate meeting
- 7.

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USFS Office, Mountlake Terrace, WA

### FINAL MEETING NOTES

**Mission:** *“To develop alternative solutions and recommendations addressing recreation, education and aesthetic resources related to the Baker River Project and its operations leading to a settlement agreement.”*

**Team Leader:** Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates) (425) 828-4463,  
clawson@huckellweinman.com

**PSE Contact:** Tony Fuchs: (425) 462-3553, tfuchs@puget.com

### PRESENT

Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates), Tony Fuchs (PSE), Nancy Smaridge (Huckell/Weinman Associates), Earl Dierking (Skagit County Parks and Recreation), Lauri Vigue (WA Department of Fish & Wildlife), Ann Dunphy (Forest Service), Andy Hatfield (PSE), Kristen Schuldt (PSE)

### SCHEDULE CHANGES AND MEETING LOCATIONS:

Other 2002 dates: May 20 (at Mt Vernon or Sedro-Woolley), June 24, July 22, August 26, Sept. 23, October 28, November 18, December 16.

**NOTE:** *Be prepared to report on action taken on Action Items at our next meeting.*

### AGENDA FOR APRIL MEETING

**April 22, 2002 Agenda –USFS Office in Mountlake Terrace.**

**9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

**NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review action items
3. R16: Visioning Exercise
4. Detailed Review of 2001 Data
  - Site Inventory
  - Visitor use observation
5. Set agenda and location for next meeting (May 20)
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## **INTRODUCTION**

We welcomed Earl Dierking, Assistant Director of the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department.

## **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- Rod: Get Chris contact for electric-eye counters
- Chris: See if PSE Mt. Vernon location is available for our May 20 meeting
- Chris: Secure contact from Whatcom County.
- Chris: Get with teamlet of Ann (with Ardis and Jim as backups) re: integrating market analysis into needs analysis.
- Chris: Contact Mark McFarlane of WDNR re: relevant data
- Ann: Find out Forest Service direction, and send Chris a copy of the Forest Service ATM plan
- Chris: Draft study plan for aesthetics study.
- Ann: Send Chris electronic copy of historical lake levels summary prepared earlier by FS
- Tony: Schedule HYDROPS model demo for May or June meeting.
- Tony: Get Chris contact information for the Audubon Society
- Chris: Check with Jessie Piper in Cultural Working Group for appropriate tribal representative for R16 Visioning Exercise.
- Teamlet: Hold conference call or meeting for further planning on R16 Visioning Exercise
  - Tony Fuchs, Ann Dunphy, Earl Dierking, Chris Lawson

## **REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS**

- ALL: Reviewed visioning example in R16 Study Plan
- ALL: Came with questions for 2001 data analysis
- Chris: Contacted Ann re: availability of FS Sedro-Woolley office for May 20. Sedro-Woolley was not available. Will check Mt. Vernon (PSE) location is available for our May 20 meeting, with a Skagit County facility as a backup
- Chris: Talked to John re: re-installation of electronic traffic counters. Will try to do installation this week.
- Ann: Not sure which version of ATM plan to provide. Will find out Forest Service direction, and send Chris a copy of the forest-wide ATM plan.
- Tony: Received boat ramp photos from Andy, had Kristen burn them on CDs and handed them out to team members. Chris has two extra copies for people who did not attend today.
- Chris: Invited Nancy to our April meeting

- Tony: Provided dispersed recreation site map with site location/codes and hung it up on wall.
- Chris: Checked with Ann to see if she needs help with the aesthetics study. Received email back that starting a draft study plan would be helpful. Ann indicated that the Forest Service has decided they did not need to do a full-blown SMS analysis for aesthetics. Rather, they would propose to use existing FS information (such as maps and computer-generated views) and identify appropriate viewpoints on which to base the analysis. Ann feels we are already doing a lot of the social part of the SMS analysis, and that we would want to concentrate on foreground and middleground views; it would not be necessary to include background viewpoints such as the top of Mt. Baker.
- Andy: Reviewed resort comment card information re: reservoir levels. He handed out information concerning comments from 1999 (there were none in 2000 or 2001), resort visitor numbers and 1999 reservoir levels.
- Andy: Added data field to comment cards

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department, represented (at least for today) by Earl Dierking.

### **R16: VISIONING EXERCISE**

Chris distributed copies of Section 2.9, Task 7: Visioning Exercise, from the R16 Needs Analysis study plan, to guide discussion of participants, format, timing and location for this task.

### **Participants**

The group agreed that participants to be invited to the visioning exercise should include those listed on page 13 of the January 30 study plan, which are:

- Existing members of the Recreation Working Group (now including Skagit County Parks)
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Town of Concrete
- Glacier Northwest
- Crown Pacific
- USFS recreation management staff
- Recreation Resource Management (FS campground concessioner)
- Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Department
- Whatcom County Sheriff's Department

Various members of the group suggested the following additions to the invitation list:

- Backcountry Horsemen
- Mountain biking groups
- Off-road recreation interests
- The Nature Conservancy
- North Cascades Conservation Council (N3C)
- Audubon Society
- Sierra Club
- tribal representative(s)

- USFS resource and law enforcement staff
- Skagit County/Bald Eagle Festival representative

With respect to N3C, Tony indicated that Patrick Goldsworthy had said he wanted to be added to the Recreation Working Group mailing list, and would possibly start attending group meetings.

### **Format**

Earl Dierking provided background information on the design charette that Skagit County Parks recently conducted, with the assistance of the National Park Service, for the Northern State Recreation Area master plan. That process involved 5 or 6 breakout groups addressing different issue or interest areas, with 6 to 7 members in each group. Participants were assigned to groups prior to the event, rather than self-selecting their group.

Ann mentioned that the Forest Service was working on a process called Recreation Focus, which she thought might be a suitable model for us to use for the visioning exercise. She will be attending a meeting on Recreation Focus tomorrow (April 23), and will report back on development of the process and whether it appears to be something we should consider.

After a rather lengthy discussion, Lauri suggested and the group agreed to create a teamlet to pursue further planning for the visioning exercise. Ann, Earl, Tony and Chris volunteered for the teamlet, which needs to convene prior to the May 20 working group meeting. [Members can expect an attempt to arrange a meeting and/or conference call during the week of May 6 – CL]

The group did come to a consensus that a workshop format would be appropriate for the visioning exercise. There would be a general session to inform all participants of the results of the preceding tasks of the needs analysis and provide instructions for small-group working sessions; participants would divide into small groups defined by topic areas for working discussions; and results from each group would be presented at a final plenary session.

### **Timing**

Tentative points of agreement on timing aspects of the visioning exercise were:

- We should probably target some time around second week of September for the visioning exercise
- If planning has progressed far enough by then, we should place an announcement addressing purpose, timing and format for the visioning exercise on the Kiosk at the upcoming public meeting May 21<sup>st</sup>
- A one-day session should be planned for the exercise itself, with the option for site tours in advance, possibly the day before the workshop

### **Location**

The group indicated a strong preference for PSE's Baker Lake Lodge as the best facility for the visioning exercise. The Lodge has sufficient capacity for a function of this size, and break-out space to

accommodate four or five small groups.

## **DETAILED REVIEW OF 2001 DATA**

### **R12 Site Inventory**

Chris handed out a set of Dispersed Site Inventory Summary Results (an Excel summary product generated from the Access database of site inventory records) and a Baker Lake Site Inventory Map (a topo map of the project area with locations of dispersed sites labeled and coded), both prepared by Nancy. The group viewed a draft of a CD that includes scanned images of the 2-page inventory record for each of the 213 sites, sketch maps of the sites, and photos for most of the sites, also created by Nancy from the inventory conducted last year. The CD record will be complete as soon as Nancy can obtain replacement photos for some of the sites, which will occur by about May 10.

Nancy and Chris fielded a number of questions about the data in the Excel summary, information on the CD, and how the field staff interpreted and recorded conditions observed in the field. The group agreed that the entries of resource interest (such as predominant cover type) in Section 3 Physical Setting, in particular, should be viewed as layperson identification of “flags” for potential follow-up by agencies, other work groups or consultants, and not as scientific inventories of natural environment conditions. As at the March 25 meeting, the group discussed whether the Section 4 inventory entries for evidence of animal/human waste and trash (which in most cases were recorded in May 2001) were sufficiently reflective of these human use conditions during the peak recreation season. Chris agreed that more evidence of waste and trash would likely be present in August, for example, but noted that the dispersed site occupancy observations for the 2001 season could be used in conjunction with the inventory data to get a more up-to-date picture of sites where more waste and trash could be expected.

### **R13 Visitor Survey Study, Use Observations**

Chris handed out three Excel summaries of dispersed site occupancy results from 2001 field observations, all titled “Dispersed Site Inventory Data” and prepared by Nancy from the database of visitor use observations. The spreadsheets are all derived from entries recorded on observation form O-3, Dispersed Site Occupancy through the R13 study during 2001. They include:

- a date-ordered listing of the number of dispersed sites (out of 213 total in the study area) occupied on each sampling date, along with figures for vehicles, boats, RVs and tents observed (O-3 Summary by Date)
- a date-ordered listing of the number and percent of sites occupied in each stratum (BE, BN, BW, SB and SR) on each sampling day (O-3 Sites Summary Occupied Only)
- a date-ordered summary by stratum (5 worksheets total) of sites occupied, vehicles, boats, RVs and tents observed on each sampling day

The remaining meeting time permitted little discussion of these handouts. Chris asked that everyone review the handouts outside the meeting and circulate observations or questions by e-mail in the near future. Work will continue on processing the observation data and refining the summaries.

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## HANDOUTS

- Baker Lake Resort Comment Card Responses
- CD of Boat Ramp Photos
- R16 Study Plan Excerpt for Section 2.9, Task 7: Visioning Exercise
- Dispersed Site Inventory topo map with coded site locations
- Dispersed Site Inventory Summary Results
- Dispersed Site Inventory Data

## PARKING LOT

- Operationally define “project induced”
- Tie education piece to ALL Working Groups
- Hold periodic “outreach” meetings for feedback from other groups (hiking, horseback riding, etc.)
- Land Management
- Forest Service presentation of SMS
- Trailhead surveys
- Have demonstration of Charles Howard Operational Model (this April?)
- Refer to April 26, 2000 Interest List.
- R5 – Aesthetics
- Water quality study (recreation induced) – Aquatics Working Group
- Presentation of National Forest Plan

## EVALUATION OF MEETING

### Things Done Well

- Earl’s presence and input/Skagit County Parks representation
- Nancy’s attendance and work to process 2001 study results

### Need for Improvement

- Missed Lyn (and her taskmaster whip) and Mary Jean
- Ran out of coffee

## TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR MAY MEETING

**May 20, 2002 Agenda – PSE Mount Vernon (?)**

**9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (or revert to 9:30-2:00?)**

**NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review action items
3. Trailhead survey needs (2001 responses on recreation locations with respect to mountain goats)
4. Local knowledge of Lake Shannon conditions (K. Howard)
5. Pending/future study requests
  - land management

- aesthetics
- 6. 2001 data analysis status and needs
- 7. Update on visioning exercise (teamlet report)
- 8. Conduct working group review
- 9. Set agenda and location for next meeting (June 24)
- 10. Evaluate meeting