

*Baker River Project License Implementation*  
**Baker River Coordinating Committee**

**Tom's Contact Information:** 425.457.5868, Tom.Flynn@PSE.com

**PRESENT:** Tom Flynn, Paul Wetherbee, Arnie Aspelund, Lynda Kupfer, Haley Edwards, Irena Netik, Elizabeth Dubreuil, Tony Fuchs, Pam Garland, Caitlin Faulkner, Brian Gentry, Jory Oppenheimer, and Nathanael Overman (PSE); Carol Gladsjo and Erin Uloth (USFS); Bob Helton (Citizen); Bob Nelson, (RMEF); Steve Fransen (NMFS); Lou Ellyn Jones by phone (USFWS); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Dan Berentson (Skagit Co.); Lyn Wiltse and Jamie Riche, facilitation (PDSA).

**BRCC MEETINGS:** The BRCC meets semi-annually and reserves the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month for potential BRCC meetings or conference calls. Tom will continue to send out email updates on implementation activities to all during the months where the BRCC does not meet in person.

## UPCOMING BAKER PROJECT EVENTS

- July 12 VIP dedication ceremony to celebrate the Baker Project, Lake Shannon Pier  
Note: PSE's Ed Schild (retiring this summer) will be in attendance on the 12th
- July 20 Family-friendly community celebration, including public tours, Lower Baker Office

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- We welcomed Erin Uloth as the new District Ranger replacing Jon Vanderheyden as the USFS representative to the BRCC.
- Tom expressed appreciation for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community's invitation for PSE to attend last week's Blessing of the Fleet. He and the team leads enjoyed attending the ceremony.

**DECISIONS:** No formal decisions today, although the BRCC did agree to adopt the May 2013 version of the Project Evaluation Protocol as its current working document. See below.

## NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Tom Check with PSE tech folks re: software options for accessing Baker meetings online.
- Jory Evaluate rate change on a per-hour basis re: possible daily pool level change proposal.
- Arnie, Pam - Queue up the pool level change dialogue at June ARG and RRG meetings.

## PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEMS

- All Send feedback on the Baker License website to Andy Hunting or your resource group lead.

- All            Send updates on your organization's designated representatives to Anna Wingfield (anna.wingfield@pse.com).

## **SAFETY MOMENT**

Tom noted that the Oklahoma tornado serves as a somber reminder / opportunity to each of us to review our own emergency / disaster plans. He learned recently that scientists estimate our region's risk of experiencing a devastating earthquake (8.0 or greater) over the next 50 years at about 10%. Being prepared for 3 days on one's own may not be enough, especially if we are hit with a significant, region-wide event. SafeInTheSound.org and RedCross.org have great resources to help you plan.

## **BRCC HOUSEKEEPING**

Lynda thanked everyone for keeping the representation lists up to date. We've seen a lot of changes in personnel throughout the signatory parties, so please continue to update PSE as needed.

Tom noted that the 2011 Annual Report went out via CD to all the primary representatives. If you did not receive one and would like to, please send Tom an email. This is also available on the PSE website. The first drafts of several 2012 reports have been distributed and/or posted on the FTP site. If you have questions or need help accessing the website or FTP site, your resource team lead can help you.

## **REVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

For the benefit of new BRCC members and as a brief refresher for veteran members, Tom walked through a high-level overview of the Baker Project and the major components of the Settlement Agreement and License. Topics included an overview of articles related to the following activities:

- New hatchery facility, which is running well;
- Upstream fish passage (relates to salmon returning from the ocean);
- Downstream fish passage, including highlights of the floating surface collector to attract and sort then transport outmigrating smolts around the dam;
- Programmatic agreement regarding cultural resources, work related to the designated historic districts within the project, and protection of archaeological sites;
- Recreation and aesthetics, including partnerships with USFS and local law enforcement;
- Terrestrial resources, including significant property acquisitions at Alder Creek and Burpee Hill that support the intentions of multiple license articles (elk forage, wetlands, forest)
- Aquatic riparian habitat, with six projects currently approved and funded by the joint aquatic / terrestrial resource group;
- Osprey nest structures (10 artificial nest structures, tree modifications);
- Loon platforms (3 floating platforms installed);
- Noxious weeds and plants of special status, with plans to monitor and address each as needed;
- *Carex flava*, which establishes inventory and mapping requirements and control strategies for reed canarygrass in support of the *Carex flava* on site (it is the only *Cf* site in Western Washington!);
- Article 601, which creates the collaborative policy-level BRCC and the four working groups (ARG, CRAG, TRIG, and RRG). The BRCC is charged with policy-level decision making, dispute resolution, implementation tracking, and maximization of cross-resource opportunities;
- Article 602, which established funds for projects that may become necessary over time but were not known during the settlement/license process. He noted that all funds are listed in "2006

dollars,” which means they will be adjusted for inflation.

Paul added that this is an important year for the Baker Project, because when the new powerhouse comes on line, the “Big Five” capital projects from the license will all be complete and “live.” We will spend the rest of our 50 year license together in ongoing implementation and process improvement. He thanked everyone for staying engaged in this work and maintaining the collaborative approach.

### **AQUATICS RESOURCES GROUP (ARG) UPDATE**

Arnie shared that the next ARG meeting is June 11, and continues on a quarterly basis. ARG meetings are focused on fisheries facility operations and license implementation issues. This is the third year of operations at the new hatchery. Each of those years, we have been putting 5 million fry into the reservoirs; the project ultimately has the capacity for up to 14.5 million fry. He noted that the ARG has also finalized the design to decommission the site of spawning beaches 1-3. The first year of operations is underway at the Lower Baker Floating Surface Collector (FSC) and the sixth year at the Upper Baker FSC; operational, flow testing, and biological studies are underway. A new record for outmigrating smolts was reached with more of the season yet to go.

Up next for the ARG: completion of the spawning beach decommissioning project; hill stabilization work near the hatchery to protect its water supply; article 101 funding guidelines; review of the Lower Baker FSC study; monitoring of the Sockeye return; update from the USACE Skagit General Investigation (GI); the second year of gravel monitoring (Article 108); development of allocation guidelines for Large Woody Debris (LWD); and, the 2012 cycle of annual reports.

He highlighted multi-resource group activities, which include: spawning beach decommissioning (with TRIG, CRAG); LWD collection methods / allocation procedures (w/ TRIG); review plan developed recreation (w/ RRG); and the Article 505 Aquatic Riparian Habitat improvement projects (w/ TRIG).

### **TERRESTRIAL RESOURCES IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (TRIG) UPDATE**

Tony shared that the next TRIG meeting is June 6, and continues quarterly. Highlights of the work so far this year include installation of a rebuilt loon platform on Lake Shannon and completion of the Noxious Weed Habitat Management Plan, which covers approximately 155 sites. His team is also developing the Long-Term Forest Practice Application (LT FPA) Permit through the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the recently acquired Burpee Hill property. Pasture rehabilitation work has been completed to enhance forage at the Alder Creek east parcel and a legacy wood assessment and amphibian survey have been completed at Burpee Hill. Tony has also led field trips to acquaint new TRIG members with the acquisitions and planned site work.

Up next for the TRIG: road work and legacy wood development at Burpee Hill, including willow / cottonwood planting; noxious weed treatments; *Carex flava* census; completion of the DNR LT FPA for Burpee Hill; construction of a new access road into the west parcel of the Alder Creek property; and loon, osprey, goshawk, and breeding bird surveys.

He highlighted multi-resource group activities, including: support of capital projects, including the spawning beach decommissioning and hatchery water supply projects (w/ ARG and CRAG); Article 505 Aquatic Riparian Habitat improvement projects (w/ ARG); and ongoing collaboration and reporting.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY GROUP (CRAG)**

Elizabeth shared highlights of the CRAG's work underway so far this year. This includes the excavation and treatment of old homesteads at Lake Shannon and the Swift Creek Erosion Control Project. They have also worked on historic context reporting for the abandoned Washington Portland Cement Company (WPCC) site; WPCC was the first cement company in this state and has historical significance for other projects across the nation. They have also supported the City of Concrete Heritage Museum with the collection, restoration, and scanning of 1,500 historical photos and support for the preservation and microfilming of the historic copies of *The Concrete Herald* from 1913 through the early 1970's. She noted that many of these projects are, by necessity, cross-resource projects.

Up next for the CRAG: regular annual monitoring of archaeological resources; law enforcement training about the rules for historical and archaeological sites (June 27, in collaboration with the RRG); and, development of a plan for the Baker Club House, which is an ongoing monitoring project for the historical lands around that site.

In addition to the projects already mentioned, Elizabeth highlighted the following multi-agency projects: the Lower Baker Compound project, which is a redevelopment of the Lower Baker area for offices and equipment staging (which happens to be in the midst of the WPCC historic district); work related implementing an MOU for the construction projects' impacts to the hydro historic district; and, an update to the Lower Baker Visitor Center.

### **RECREATION RESOURCES GROUP (RRG)**

Pam noted that the last RRG / LEP meeting was held in February and they will meet again in June. The Recreation Management Report has gone out for review and the Water Safety Plan has been developed. The Lower Baker Developed Recreation Plan is under review with the ARG and Skagit County. They drafted the Law Enforcement Implementation Plan, including contracts with WDFW and Whatcom County Sheriff's Office to address impacts from the Sockeye fishery.

Upcoming 2013 projects for the RRG include: Recreation hazard monitoring by boat; annual report distribution for Articles 301-318; and completion of the Article 312 Recreation Monitoring Plan. She also noted the Law Enforcement training coming up next month and the end-of-season process improvement meeting with Law Enforcement scheduled in the fall.

In addition to the already mentioned projects involving other resource groups, Pam highlighted upcoming cross-functional work with the Baker team to implement the LWD plan. She also noted some challenges involve managing recreation in light of record-breaking fisheries. In 2011, there were 290 officer hours (equivalent of 36 full days) spent on the lake, keeping the space safe and fun for everyone, "from boats to goats" (And even goats IN a boat ... literally. Photographic evidence provided!)

### **PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS FOR USE OF BAKER SA 602 FUNDS**

Tom shared the May 17, 2013 draft project evaluation process document and Brock's editorial suggestion to provide increased flexibility in the up-front plan of work. The group agreed that adding "if known" to the page 2, subsection (B) reference about project subcontractors and sub consultants would be appropriate and potentially helpful since it is common for the bidding process to happen after project

approval.

Stan asked if language in the Project Review and Approval Section is intended to give PSE an opportunity to pre-screen potential projects. Tom and the resource team leads clarified that the intention is to vet the completion of the application, not to pre-evaluate the merit of the proposal. Resource groups would be responsible for evaluating the merits, and PSE could certainly weigh in with an opinion at that point, but they would not stop a proposal from going forward to the resource group level. The group agreed that no language changes would be needed related to this clarification.

He also expressed concern about the extent and cost of progress reporting outlined in the draft. Requiring progress reporting at the 30/60/90/100% levels could eat up an entire budget for small projects. He suggested that the resource groups could establish an appropriate reporting schedule on a project-by-project basis. The group agreed to delete the included e.g. in order to meet that intention. With those changes, the group agreed by consensus of those present to adopt the May 2013 draft as the approved working document. It is called a working document because the BRCC can update this document at any time as needed without needing to submit anything to FERC.

#### **SPAWNING BEACH DECOMMISSIONING UPDATE**

Caitlin shared an update on the decommissioning project of spawning beaches and restoration of the site per the USFS special use permit and SA 101. She showed an overview map of existing conditions and the plan for conditions at project completion. The only thing that has changed since her last presentation is the plan to keep the USFS spur road in place.

She also shared highlights of the construction schedule. In-water work, is scheduled to begin July 16 and will be completed by August 16; the project is scheduled to be complete in November of this year!

#### **LOWER BAKER UNIT 4 POWERHOUSE UPDATE**

Tom updated the group on the 30 megawatt powerhouse, which is co-located with Unit 3. Work began on the tailrace in August 2012. The Unit 4 turbine will be watered up later this month and the project is scheduled to be commissioned this summer. He showed photos of the construction progress, including images of the equipment, the synchronous bypass valve testing, the tailrace breakthrough to the river, and current views of the Powerhouse.

#### **LOWER BAKER FLOATING SURFACE COLLECTOR UPDATE**

Tom reported that construction was completed this spring and the FSC has been operational since March 1, 2013. He showed photos highlighting the screen clearing apparatus, the sorting facilities and fish transfer / transport equipment. Recent focus has been on management of spilling, screen balancing work, and the first season of FSC operations.

#### **HATCHERY HEADWORKS WATER SUPPLY UPDATE**

Tom updated the BRCC on work to stabilize the hillside near the hatchery in order to minimize the risk of interruption and/or debris intrusion into the hatchery's water supply. The hatchery is down for its annual maintenance at this time, and they are using the opportunity to work on this hillside project. They will clear debris, remove trees, re-grade the hillside, and install a graded filter over the top of the spring from where it daylights to where it enters the headworks, in the hopes that future slides could slide harmlessly

over the top of the water supply. Tom noted that this plan represents a lot of collaborative work with agency partners and he thanked everyone involved.

Stan reiterated the co-managers' hope for a back-up well to provide additional security against interruption in the hatchery's water supply and provide further protection against the possible worst-case scenario of a lost brood year.

Erin noted that the USFS is invested in seeing a long-term solution to the hillside stability issues and shared information about potentially related issues around the USFS road near the top. Tom added that there are significant issues around water rights and water quality related to a possible well and noted that PSE's focus is on completion of this project first. He expects there will be ongoing conversations about this issue at the ARG.

### **POSSIBLE DAILY POOL LEVEL CHANGE**

Tom reminded folks of the agreements in Aquatics Table 1 regarding flows and reservoir elevations. Maintaining Baker Lake pool level within a 6-inch variation in a 24-hour period is very challenging due to relatively large uncertainty in weather forecasts. PSE would like to discuss this item with the USFS and RRG.

Steve noted that, from a fisheries perspective, the rate of change per hour would be as important as the overall window of allowable pool levels. He asked Jory to evaluate the maximum rate of change per hour. Irena noted that this possible adjustment would not impact the agreed upon reservoir level limits, but is specific to the amount of variation allowed within a 24-hour period. Erin asked PSE to bring a proposal forward so the agencies could consider it in detail. She also asked whether making this change would require opening the entire agreement to renegotiation. Tom clarified that a non-capacity license amendment would likely be required. In Tom's informal conversations with FERC, they are supportive of Baker's collaborative process and would likely view such an amendment favorably as long as the proposal went through the resource group / agency review process and received signatory support.

Erin then asked PSE to run this proposal through the ARG as well as the RRG in order to be sure potential fisheries impacts can be considered. Lyn noted that both of those resource groups meet in June, and the BRCC agreed that this would be the right place and time to start the conversations. Arnie and Pam will add this item to those agendas.

### **ANNUAL REPORTS**

Tom shared PSE's thinking about shortening and reducing the number of steps in the process between the end of each year and the completion of annual reports. He projected a graph showing the various annual report timelines, which generally include a first draft of annual reports getting distributed in July following each calendar year, followed by two rounds of drafts culminating in final annual reports available in the April that is 16 months after the end of each calendar year. In some instances, this timeline does not meet FERC's own reporting requirements, causing PSE to create duplicate reports: one to FERC on FERC's timeline, then a final report following the approval through our reporting cycle.

Stan noted the irony that FERC approved the settlement agreement with the timelines that it now rejects. He also reminded folks that part of the planning for these timelines was related to spreading out the

reports so signatories aren't overwhelmed with too many reports at once. Tom commented that this is not an urgent issue from PSE's perspective, but would be nice to simplify; Lynda noted that, since the schedule has been incorporated into the License, the "informal" first draft has essentially become as formal as the second, thus creating two "formal" draft reviews. The team leads noted that there are rarely additional edits between the preliminary and final draft reviews. Steve expressed support for the opportunity to improve efficiencies and the group suggested PSE bring forward a proposal for the BRCC to consider in October.

#### **NEXT BRCC MEETING:**

October 23, 2013 at Snoqualmie Operations Center.

#### **DRAFT AGENDA TOPICS**

- Confirm Official Representatives to the BRCC and Resource Groups
- Working Group Updates
- Updates on Major Projects
- Review the new Project Evaluation Protocol in light of RRG's experience
- Possible Amendment re: Daily Pool Change Proposal
- Possible: Reporting Schedule Proposal
- Update on General Investigation, Preferred Alternative ("GIPA" ☺)

#### **MEETING EVALUATION:**

##### **What Worked Well:**

- Good job resource group team leads – great format (what's done, what's next, cross-resource focus)
- Appropriate level of discussion / detail
- Thank you, Lou Ellyn, for your patience and endurance with the technology today!
- Great participation
- Welcome, new friends!
- Facilitation: Finished early and thanks for the chocolates!
- As a new BRCC member, Erin reflected on the positive, collaborative environment

##### **To Do Differently:**

- The new "Lync" online meeting participation software is not nearly as good as WebX. Could it be possible to bring back WebX for meetings which include external (non-PSE) stakeholders? Elizabeth will process check at her Bellevue meeting to see if the issue may be related to the Burlington wiring.
- Include a listing of 2013 accomplishments at the October meeting
- Allow unscheduled time at lunch for collaborative conversations
- Erin: give us a couple "Alaska stories"



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*The Energy To Do Great Things*

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**Team Lead:** Tom Flynn, 425.457.5868, Tom.Flynn@PSE.com

**PRESENT:** Tom Flynn, Jacob Venard, Paul Wetherbee, Arnie Aspelund, Lynda Kupfer, Elizabeth Dubreuil, Tony Fuchs, (PSE); Carol Gladsjo and Erin Uloth (USFS); Steve Fransen (NOAA); Lou Ellyn Jones (USFWS); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Dan Berentson and Kara Symonds (Skagit Co.); Lyn Wiltse and Jamie Riche, facilitators (PDSA Consulting)

**BRCC MEETINGS:** The BRCC meets semi-annually and reserves the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month for potential BRCC meetings or conference calls. Tom will continue to send out email updates on implementation activities to all during the months where the BRCC does not meet in person.

**2014 BRCC Meetings:** April 23 in Burlington and October 22 in Snoqualmie

**DECISIONS:** None today.

### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- None today

### **PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEMS**

- All Send feedback on the Baker License website to Andy Hunting or your resource group lead.
- All Email updates on your organization's designated reps to Anna.Wingfield@pse.com).

### **SAFETY MOMENT**

- 'Tis the season ... to winterize your car. Check your tires for tread wear.
- Wipe off your headlights and taillights when you fill up your gas tank so you stay more visible.
- And if you're thinking wistfully about new snow in the mountains, start attending to your physical fitness now so you'll be ready for injury-free enjoyment of winter sports.
- Days are short; watch for cyclists and kids playing, walking along roads before and after school.

### **BRCC HOUSEKEEPING AND PERSONAL UPDATES**

Tom welcomed attendees to the historic Carpenter Shop at Snoqualmie, part of the facility originally built in 1898 (in just 16 months under incredible circumstances! Watch the PBS special, "The Power of Snoqualmie" for more background). He gave Elizabeth and Tony kudos for their work to develop the beautiful, informative, museum-like space. He noted that this is PSE's first big meeting here and welcomed feedback from the participants with ideas for ongoing improvements.



Our friend and thoughtful participant in the relicensing process, Patrick Goldsworthy, has passed away. His service will be held Sunday, November 24, at the Mountaineers Club at Sandy Point. Lyn will be going with former BRCC member, Arn Thoreen. Contact Lyn if you would like more information.

Jacob Venard is stepping into the role of License Program Manager. He is just a month into the new role and in the transition process; attendees congratulated him and welcomed him to the role.

Former PSE License Manager and friend to many here, Cary Feldmann, has accepted a position with HDR in Anchorage, AK. He and his wife, Nancy, have been there a couple weeks and are getting settled in. He sends his best regards to all of you.

Pam Garland will be moving into a new position, O&M / Safety Supervisor for the Baker Project. PSE is still determining how some of Pam's work with the Recreation Resources Group (RRG) will transition to other PSE staff, but they assure it will be a seamless transition.

Paul noted that this is a milestone year, with PSE at the end of the five year capital projects cycle related to the relicense. Five major projects have been completed in this time: Upper Baker Floating Surface Collector (UB FSC), completed 2008; Upstream Fish Trap, completed 2010; Hatchery redesign / construction, completed 2010; Lower Baker (LB) FSC, completed March 2013; and the LB Unit 4 Powerhouse, largely completed 2013. There was not even one "lost time" work accident over the duration of these projects and their associated operations. In addition, PSE will be celebrating ten years at Baker without a "lost time" accident on Nov. 20!

2014 will be the first full year of operations for all the new fish propagation and power generation facilities. He thanked the agency representatives that partnered with PSE to move these projects forward.

Paul also mentioned the favorable outcome from the recent WUTC power rate case and was asked for a little background. He described the process, starting from the time that PSE negotiated and signed the Settlement Agreement (SA, precursor to the license). In the SA, PSE agreed to costly obligations, like all the capital projects mentioned earlier. The WUTC does not give approval for those expenditures in advance. PSE must follow through on those commitments / expenditures first, then must go to the commission to demonstrate the prudence of its actions. Essentially, in a rate case PSE tells the WUTC that its expenditures were prudent and necessary to generate reliable power for its customers. It is then up to the commission to determine if those expenditures (among many other factors) were in fact appropriate and then set PSE's power rates accordingly. Paul was pleased to report that the WUTC accepted the Baker relicense as a package deal and viewed PSE's rate case favorably, with the license as one piece of evidence.

Paul also briefly updated the group on PSE efforts to sell its Electron power generation facility to a private small hydro developer. The 10-mile long flume on this facility is old and in need of replacement; the buyer has a business plan for rebuilding the flume and plans to sell power back to PSE. Under this agreement, PSE will be able to buy power back from the developer for less money than it would have cost them to make the capital investment and generate the power themselves. The sale is contingent upon the new owner being able to enter into an operating agreement with the Puyallup Indian Tribe; that work is ongoing.

### **Aquatics Resources Group (ARG) Update – Arnie Aspelund**

Arnie reported that the ARG continues to meet quarterly. Agendas usually involve operational details around the five major projects Paul discussed (third paragraph of p. 2 of these notes), as well as implementation activities related to aquatics articles. Arnie showcased a slide of ARG highlights since the last BRCC meeting:

- 4<sup>th</sup> operating year of hatchery, 5.3 million sockeye fry through this year
- Repairs to hatchery headworks water supply
- Decommissioning Spawning Beaches 1-3 in full swing (started July 16)
- 2013 Sockeye return to the trap: 12,528
- LB FSC 1<sup>st</sup> year, UB FSC 6<sup>th</sup> year, studies, sampling ongoing
- Record outmigration of Sockeye: 758K (total outmigration: 828K)
- Plans to FERC: Downstream Final Emergency Response Plan (June), Upstream Post Construction Evaluation Plan (Aug)
- Unit 4 commissioning, testing, operating per IPP
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year, SA 108 Gravel surveys and monitoring
- 1<sup>st</sup> Large Woody Debris collection, inventory per SA 109
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year / round of ARG-TRIG SA 505 ARHWG (Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group), Six restoration projects underway (heard pre-proposals Nov. 12; proposals due to PSE Jan. 15)
- Annual reports

### **What's next for ARG?**

- 2014 ARG Meetings: 1/14, 3/11, 6/10, 9/9
- Major projects complete SB decommissioning
- Continue Sockeye enhancement
- 102 Aquatics comprehensive annual report, January 2014
- Results of LB FSC studies, develop 2014 study species protocol
- 104 connectivity consultation, February 2014
- Unit 4, complete repairs, additional testing, implement Aquatics Table 1
- USACE Skagit General Investigation (GI) update, January 2014
- Swift Creek Campground SA 110 Shoreline Erosion, October 2013
- ARG-TRIG SA 505 Application 1/15 proposals due, 1/23 meeting, 2/6 decision

### **Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group (TRIG) – Tony Fuchs**

Much of this team's work is around acquired properties. Highlights of TRIG work since the last BRCC meeting include:

- Loon platform monitoring is ongoing; no nesting observed yet, one platform disappeared and will be replaced
- Osprey surveys complete. Osprey moving into the natural nesting structures and out of the old artificial nest platforms (which now house geese)
- Burpee Hill property, acquired in 2011, is 405 acres; developed management plan within the first year. We also received approval of the 15-year Dept. of Natural Resources Long-term Forest Practices Application (FPA)
- Completed road work at Burpee Hill, new road at Alder Creek to allow access for management
- Mowed the rehabbed and replanted pasture for elk forage at Alder Creek

- Neotropical bird monitoring in deciduous forest areas and Northern Goshawk surveys completed
- Noxious weed treatments (wild chervil, knotweed, various sites around reservoirs)
- Burpee Hill willow and cottonwood plantings in knotweed management sites
- *Carex flava* census, rare plant surveys

#### **What's next for TRIG?**

- TRIG Meetings: 12/5/13, **2014:** 3/6, 6/5, 9/4, 12/5
- Land acquisition process, one property under negotiation (some details shared at the meeting)
- Planning for 2014 management activities and monitoring
- *Carex flava* census report
- Annual review of all Settlement Agreement (SA) 501 Terrestrial Resources Management Plan (TRMP) management documents
- Develop Effectiveness Monitoring Implementation Procedures document per SA 514
- Update Management Program document for Burpee Hill property to reflect the harvest units and work approved in the DNR LFPA
- Ongoing SA 502/514 Neo-tropical bird monitoring

#### **Cultural Resources Advisory Group (CRAG) – Elizabeth Dubreuil**

Highlights of the CRAG's work since the last BRCC meeting include:

- The largest project CRAG undertook this year was the excavations at the Edgar Homestead site, which has a lot of cultural material intact (material had been inundated by the reservoir, but remains in place). They have been working on the site since 2004. This year, they completed 52 1x1 units of excavation. They have found hundreds of great historical items, including china, glass from medicinal bottles, building materials, and personal items like a woman's barrette.
- New underwater archaeology site recorded, mapped and photographed. Turns out it was the old Baker River Shuksan Railroad. Part of the trestle remains 90-120 feet below the surface at low pool.
- Cultural Resource Law Enforcement training was provided and was well attended.

#### **What's next for CRAG?**

- The LB Redevelopment is going to impact our Washington Portland Cement Company Historic District, requiring the demolition of two buildings, decay-in-place plans for two others, and rehabilitation of the historic Baker Club House building into office and visitor center space.
- Annual monitoring work for archaeology and historic buildings
- Fine cut of 3 short films
- MOA for the Lower Baker redevelopment

#### **Recreation Resources Group (RRG) – Lyn Wiltse on Pam Garland's behalf**

Pam could not be with us today because she is facing a serious illness in her immediate family and needed to attend to some important matters at home. The group expressed condolences.

- Joint Cultural / Recreational training for local Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) was well attended. Participants provided feedback that training that involved "boots-on-the-ground" would be more relevant for LEOs.
- Sockeye fishery wasn't as robust this year compared to last year, but seemed to draw as many

people to the lake, 300 – 400 per typical summer Saturday. Logistics for welcoming those folks were much smoother this year.

- Boat safety issues were way down this year. No drug arrests. Was a great year on the lake!
- Forest Services is in the process of drafting the dispersed recreation plan. That will be coming soon.
- Interpretation and Education plan to be reviewed in February.
- WDFW delayed the start of the fishery season until after the fourth of July this year. This was very well received and will be repeated next year. Forest Service also funded an additional 50 hours of law enforcement this year (very helpful, main focus on Lake Shannon and project areas).
- WDFW appreciates the ability to store and fuel its boat up at the project; thank you, PSE.
- Looking at options for investing RAM funds, perhaps in a second launch to be installed at Lake Shannon.
- Still looking for a communication tool that would work in all areas around the lake. May investigate the purchase of a satellite phone for this purpose.
- Stan noted that the invasive species risk raised at the latest SA 505 meeting is going to be a cross-resource issue with particular relevance to RRG given that boaters are prime transporters of the little critters (zebra mollusks and others).
- License calls for a recreation plan for Lake Shannon; that plan has been developed and submitted to FERC. The space in the plan will be needed for some dam safety projects over the next few years, so expect to see recreation space move forward after that work is complete.

## **MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATES**

**Lower Baker Unit Four Powerhouse:** Tom reported that construction was completed the end of May and load rejection testing was completed in September. There have been some mechanical issues (vibration problems) with the new turbine, limiting current operations to no more than 15-20 megawatts. The manufacturer has brought in their lead research team to identify the source of the problems and suggest possible fixes (which will be their responsibility). PSE updated the ARG via email last week, and will keep the ARG informed as they get more information from the manufacturer. Per the license amendment approved by FERC, this project must be completed by October 2014. PSE is operating under interim operations in the meantime.

**Spawning Beach Decommissioning:** Arnie reported that in-water work began in July. Man-made infrastructures were removed, five LWD flow-control structures were placed, and the rest of the site was altered to match surrounding topography. An environmental services group was on-site, monitoring all the work. Plantings will proceed next. Tom noted that this project will be substantially completed by the end of 2013, with just a few final, relatively small punch-list items to be completed during the next in-water window.

**Hatchery Headworks Water Supply:** Tom showed before and after photos of the work that was done to address the slide problem (day-lighted spring) near the hatchery, putting the hatchery's water supply at risk. Debris and damaged rebar pipe cages were removed, a multi-layered graded rock filter and geo-textile fabric were installed to cap the water channel. The recent major rain event was a good test of the completed work. There were no issues with the water supply (great!), but there were some fine sediment slides that require more erosion control. PSE is meeting with outside consultants to develop Best Management Practices for erosion control.

## **PROJECT EVALUATION PROTOCOL, AFTER ACTION REPORT**

This protocol hasn't been used, yet, so this agenda item was deferred to the next BRCC meeting.

### **SKAGIT GENERAL INVESTIGATION (GI)**

Kara Symonds and Dan Berentson provided this update. Kara started by reminding the group that the GI is a flood risk reduction study by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Skagit County has asked the Corps to evaluate the potential of additional storage at LB and changing the draw-down seasonality at UB from Nov. 15 to Oct. 15.

The goal of the GI is to reduce economic damages and risks to life and safety in the Skagit Valley. In 2012, the USACE reevaluated their hundreds of existing GI studies, cancelling most of the stalled and / or longest-running studies; the Skagit GI was one of only nine studies to make it through that review.

There are five stages involved in the new USACE process. The Skagit GI is currently in the feasibility phase. Kara noted that the corps is currently evaluating three possible alternatives, including urban improvement projects and bypass options that would require miles of new and improved levees and would impact agricultural lands. The USACE will identify their tentatively preferred alternative, probably by the end of this year. This design will be moved forward to the 30% design level. There will be an official comment period later this winter, probably in January / February. Any finally approved project will require a 35% local match by Skagit County.

Stan noted that this process doesn't include environmental studies, and he shared a variety of concerns related to changing the operating protocols (increased storage, reduced generation, and changing the seasonality of the annual draw-down). Steve noted that there would be direct impacts on project finances and risks to fish. All agreed they will continue to watch the process with interest.

We all congratulated Dan on his new role as Interim Public Works Manager for Skagit County.

### **ANNUAL REPORTS – PROPOSED SCHEDULE CHANGE**

Jacob walked the group through the current calendar of monitoring and annual reports, noting that PSE would like to adjust the reporting schedule to reduce redundancies, minimize the lag time, and streamline work for everyone. He shared a couple of possible alternate reporting schedules for the group to consider. Each resource group will also review the alternatives. If everyone is comfortable with an updated schedule, the change would be submitted to FERC either as part of its current annual report or as an amendment to the license.

Upon looking at the current calendar of updates and reports, Steve immediately expressed support for streamlining the schedule. Carol wondered if the schedule was originally developed that way to give PSE enough time to write the reports and the group agreed that this may have been the case. If that was the case, that extra time is no longer needed and is a hindrance.

Jacob then walked the group through a possible new schedule. Attendees expressed appreciation and there was wide support for removing the second comment review period. Carol and Erin asked that the RRG reporting window be adjusted to be either before or after summer (preferably before). All agreed. Jacob then noted that the next step will be to vet this possible approach through all four resource groups.

**NEXT BRCC MEETING:**

April 23, 2014 at Skagit Service Center, Burlington.

**DRAFT AGENDA**

- Confirm official representatives to the BRCC and Resource Groups
- Working Group Updates
- Updates on Major Projects
- Overview of the Settlement Agreement
- Review the new Project Evaluation Protocol in light of RRG's experience
- Daily Pool Elevation Change Proposal (?)
- Possible: Reporting Schedule Proposal
- Update on General Investigation, Preferred Alternative

**MEETING EVALUATION:****Worked Well:**

- Thanks for clear directions to this new facility
- Thanks for flexibility with moving the meeting date
- Beautiful venue, great job on the site redevelopment
- Folks prefer this venue over the other Snoqualmie room when available, supports informality, dialogue
- Olympia contingent appreciates this south-end meeting each year

**Do Differently:**

- Today's food options were not friendly for gluten-free / vegetarian folks
- Working Group updates run much longer than the allocated time; suggest adding additional time to the agenda and adjusting the reports to be higher-level
- Avoid use of abbreviations and acronyms!
- Beeping alarm was annoying
- Note: if we have a larger turn-out, would need the larger Snoqualmie facility
- Post PDFs of PowerPoints, graphs, etc. to the FTP site after each meeting so folks can share within their organizations