



Baker River Project License Implementation

ARG-TRIG SA 505

Final Meeting Notes

March 13, 2012 ~ 11:15 am – 3 pm

PSE Burlington w/ Web-X and Conference Line

Team Leader: Jacob Venard, jacob.venard@pse.com

PRESENT

Haley Edwards, Lynda Kupfer (by phone), Arnie Aspelund, Tony Fuchs, Cary Feldmann, Nathanael Overman, and Jacob Venard (PSE); Bob Helton (Citizen), Robert Franklin (Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe), Stan Walsh and Devin Smith (SRSC); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Greta Movassaghi and Phil Eidenberg-Noppe (USFS); Jeff McGowan, (Skagit County), Sue Madsen (Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group), Lyn Wiltse and Candace Wilson (PDSA Consulting).

ACTION ITEMS

- Jacob Send response letter to Skagit Delta Riparian Hedgerow Planting Project proponents.
- Jacob Schedule an agenda item for a future meeting to review the 505 proposal process.
- Sue Send Jacob State contract language used for grants.
- Jacob Set up a meeting with Sue, Devin, Greta and other interested parties to discuss contract management by April 30.
- Jacob Send email to ARG-TRIG members requesting members to send any additional questions on the proposals by March 20.
- All Review proposals and send any comments/questions to Arnie by March 20 so proponents can respond before April 5.
- Arnie Send comments/questions to project proponents on March 20.

SA 505 RFP PROCESS REVIEW

Jacob reviewed the process for Article 505. Pre-proposal requests were received last August, followed up with full proposals, which were distributed to ARG-TRIG members to review. Proposals will be presented by proponents today reviewed today, and a discussion will follow. Funding decisions will be made on April 5 at the next ARG-TRIG meeting. It was suggested that it might be helpful for project proponents to be available by phone on April 5 in case there are additional questions about their proposals. In the meantime, all were encouraged to submit additional questions to Arnie (as Jacob will be in Mexico) by March 20. Arnie will distribute the questions to the proponents and copy ARG-TRIG members. They will have a week to prepare their responses and send them out to all (through Arnie).

Proposal Process – Brainstorm of Items to Review/Include

- Address level of specificity required – refine actual project proposal (budget information)
- Address how to give feedback / reject a proposal
- Duration of award?
- Long-term sustainability?
- Addendum including similar projects done and their successes
- Process to get to agreement?

Hedgerow Letter

PSE distributed a draft response to the letter received from WDFW, the Samish Indian Nation, Skagit Conservation District, and Western Washington Agricultural Association (the Skagit Delta Riparian Hedgerow Planting Project

proponents). All reviewed the letter and agreed it should be sent to Brian Williams (WDFW) from the ARG and TRIG members. Their letter explained why they decided to withdraw their proposal from consideration for funding through the 505 proposal process.

Feedback on the response letter:

- Use of quotes for “veto”, “consensus”
- Other minor edits

Jacob will send response letter to Skagit Delta Riparian Hedgerow Planting Project proponents.

SA 505 PROJECT/CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Cary discussed implementation and accountability for projects that receive funding under 505. Accounting protocols need to be established e.g., what to do about overruns, line-items, unexpected circumstances. Greta pointed out that according to the SA, PSE is to provide contract requirements for these proposals, and the SA contains a list of topics that need to be addressed. Sue offered to provide language used by the State in their contracts involving grants. Discussion included how if a project comes in under budget, excess funds should be returned to ARG-TRIG. There was also discussion of how to structure contingency funds. Jacob will set up a meeting with interested parties to draft protocols for this process. In the meantime, Sue will send him some contract language used for grants.

REVIEW PROPOSALS

USDA Forest Service: Swift Creek – FSR 1152 Storage/Decommission (\$231,000 requested)

Project Proponents: Phil Eidenberg-Noppe, North Zone Hydrologist and Jeremy Gilman, North Zone Fish Biologist
Project Sponsor: Greta Movassaghi, Natural Resource Specialist

Phil Eidenberg-Noppe reviewed the USDA Forest Service proposal for Swift Creek - FSR 1152. The Forest Service has more roads than they can effectively maintain. They follow a NEPA process and assign a maintenance level to all roads. Road 1152 (Shuksan Creek Road) has been raised from Level 3 Maintenance Level to Level 1 (Storage), which basically means decommissioning the road. In 2009 Swift Creek Sedimentation Reduction was identified as a high priority.

Phil showed slides to indicate the location of the road, signs of erosion and drainage paths, all of which have negative effects on the watershed. Major landslides are occurring, which also could affect future access to the road.

He outlined proposed treatment, which would consist of:

- Removal of road surfacing
- Culvert removal / stream restoration
- Sidecast pullback
- Road re-grading and decompaction
- Rocked rolling dips

This treatment would reduce sediment to Swift Creek, Morovitz Creek, and an un-named stream, potentially benefiting several fish species and ecological processes. There is additional potential benefit to additional species of mammals and birds.

There were questions about the project scope. The project has not been designed, and specific locations of culverts and other work have not yet been determined. The road would be treated in such a way as to ensure that no work would be required in the future. The budget is based on an average estimate per mile of road (4.5 miles). Devin recommended that more specificity about the projects be requested in the proposals in the future.

There were questions about whether the project could be partially funded, and what would happen if it is not approved. Phil indicated there is no other funding to work on this road. The NEPA process itself costs \$50,000 per road. Breaking the project into parts, i.e. planning and design, may not be as efficient as doing the project as a whole. If conditions on the road were considerably worse than expected, it is most likely that the Forest Service would return to ARG-TRIG to discuss the situation. Cary asked if there is evidence that this area is negatively

impacting fish; Greta responded that the project is founded on a standard based on science, but specific studies have not been done on this road. Phil responded that the project is proactive to help prevent a catastrophic event.

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group: Lower Day Creek Slough – Faber Property Restoration (PSE Request: \$201,950; Total Project Cost: \$340,399)

Project Proponents: Sue Madsen, Restoration Ecologist, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Brian Faber, private landowner

Project Sponsor: Sue Madsen, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

The Faber property lies within the Ross Island Reach of the Middle Skagit River, which was ranked as the highest priority area for restoration in the recently completed Middle Skagit Assessment. The surrounding area has already been the focus of other restoration work. The SFEG has been working in this area on fish habit restoration since 2005; potential restoration projects were identified in 2006.

Sue outlined details of the proposal, which have changed as a result of feedback at the pre-proposal meeting.

- Design and permitting
- Bridge construction (must be done August-September)
- Riparian planting
- Maintenance for 3 years minimum, depending on funding

She also outlined a proposed timeline for the project.

Bob Barnard, WDFW Water Engineer, made a site visit and evaluated the area downstream for risk. PSE funding is sought for planting to restore habitat along Lower Day Creek Slough. Additional funding is being sought from other agencies to extend this restoration project in the same area.

Restoring the riparian habit in this property is expected to improve fish access to off channel habitat, and provide connectivity to existing protected lands / functional riparian forest. Skagit flood flows overtop this property and may affect planting success; bridge design will need to take this into consideration. Matching funds will be needed to complete the project; if full funding is not received, project tasks will need to be prioritized.

This land is currently not restricted under the County CAO regulations as it is grandfathered for agricultural use, but once planted the property will fall under CAO regulations that prevent future harvest/plant removal.

Skagit River System Cooperative: Upper Skiyou Slough Floodplain and Riparian Restoration (PSE Request: \$317,000; Total Project Cost: \$642,000)

Project Proponent and Sponsor: Skagit River System Cooperative

Partner: Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

Devin outlined details of the project proposal. The property is located in a high priority reach in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. The 220 acre site has problems with cattle access, extensive weed development, rip-rap at inlet, road fill crossing, road crossing without culvert, water quality, and more.

Project activities:

- Remove existing road fill and install a temporary log stringer bridge (bridge to be designed by USFS)
- Inventory habitat and water quality, and scope alternatives for restoration
- Install gates and fences to restrict cattle access
- Develop planting plan
- Control invasive species and plant native vegetation along 52 acres (24 acres from PSE funds, 28 acres with outside funds)

The proposed restoration of the property is more extensive than initial funding will cover. Areas have been targeted for initial riparian planting. It is likely they would remove weed growth from the entire area, and maintain the planted areas for 3 years. Devin outlined a timeframe for the project. Local plants will be used.

There was discussion about species to be planted, sources for plantings, phasing of the project if total funding is not received. Devin outlined the roles project team organizations will take.

Next Steps:

- Discussions on the projects are to take place informally in the next three weeks
- Funding decisions on the proposals will take place at the next joint meeting April 5, 2012
- A review of the proposal process will follow (with the aim of improving the process)

MEETING EVALUATION

Worked well:

- Good discussions
- Got out on time
- Lots of leftovers
- Comedic relief

Do Differently:

- We did not have a broad representation

NEXT MEETING – Joint meeting with TRIG on April 5.