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## **BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE**

### **Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Meeting**

**May 15, 2002 (8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.)  
(Bring Sack Lunch)**

**U.S. Forest Service Office  
21905 64th Avenue West  
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043  
425-744-3236 (office # 425-775-9702)**

### **AGENDA**

Review notes/revise agenda/action items
Solution Team Update
Report on Existing Studies
Teamlet Reports: T4, T6, T7, T15
T16 Rare Plant draft study plan – review and comments
Presentation of historic aerial photos
USFS presentation on the Baker Lake trail
New Study Requests (?), New Teamlet meetings?
Planning for June field trip/meeting, date and place for July meeting
Evaluate meeting

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## BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

### Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group

May 15, 2002

8:30 am – 2:00 pm

US Forest Service Office  
Mountlake Terrace, WA

### FINAL MEETING MINUTES

**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, tfuchs@puget.com

### ATTENDEES:

Patrick Goldsworthy (North Cascade Conversation Council), Martin Vaughn (Biota Pacific), Ann Risvold (USFS), Stan Walsh (Skagit Systems Cooperative), Tony Fuchs (Puget Sound Energy), Chris Madsen (N.W. Indian Fish Commission), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. Fish & Wildlife), Tom Hamer, Lia Kruger, Erin Colclazier (Hamer Environmental), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting, Inc.)

### SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

June 6<sup>th</sup>, July 17<sup>th</sup>

### AGENDA

**Mountlake Terrace, WA**

**May 15, 2002, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

1. Review notes/agenda/
2. T16 Rare Plant draft study plan—review and comments
3. Solution Team Update
4. Report on Existing Studies

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5. Teamlet Reports : T4,T6,T7,T15
  6. Presentation of historic aerial photos
  7. USFS presentation on the Baker Lake trail
  8. New Study Requests (?), New Teamlet meetings(?)
  9. Planning for June field trip/meeting, date and place for July meeting
  10. Evaluate meeting

#### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- ALL: Send specific mollusk and amphibian study data desires to Hamer, ASAP
- Lauri: Send Chris Elk Study model information from Lewis River relicensing effort.
- Tony: Send a copy of Forest Service/WDFW telemetry study for elk to all members that request it.
- Tony: Forward Don's write-up on methodology for goat habitat burn options to other team members.
- Tony: Bring updated Study Index to our next meeting
- Marty: Check with US Fish and Wildlife Service and Don Gay re: need to do Section 7 on Peregrine Falcon
- Lia: Ask entire membership of this WG for literature citations relevant to Analysis Species.
- Lia: Come up with some species options for deciduous forest young and shrubs by May 17 and send to Tony to forward to the group for review.
- Patrick: Research applicable early County maps
- Tony: Send out pdf format of vegetation type cover maps (when complete)
- Tony: Get list of all aerial photos to members
- Tony: Email out draft of field trip itinerary
- Lyn: Draft new norms re: back and forth in meetings and polite comments

#### **OLD ACTION ITEMS**

- ALL: Provided Tony with lists of species important to them by May 2.
- Tony: Brought historical photos to the next meeting.
- Tony: Set up photo interpretation for T7.
- Tony: Got all the list of where we are now (T4 species/habitat list)
- Tony: Convened meeting of the T15 technical working group
- Marty: Sent notice of June field trip to Stan
- Don: Checked with Chris Madsen about elk study needs in the basin.
- Don: Typed up a list of seral stage definitions to apply to the non-federal forest cover-type data, and distribute to all in the group
- Don: Prepared a presentation on the Baker Lake Trail for the next meeting.
- Lauri: Asked Chris Lawson about what information the recreation surveys can give us about recreation in the basin relative to mountain goats.
- Tom: Verified that mollusk surveys are being done in the uplands adjacent to the reservoirs.
- Ann, Laurel and Hamer Environmental: Met to initiate the writing of the noxious weed study plan.
- T15 Technical Working Group: Established deadline for the completion of basin vegetation mapping.

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### **R16: Rare Plant Survey**

The group approved this Study Plan, incorporating the changes suggested by team members. Tony will send out the revisions. We plan to finish wetland maps by the end of May. This will provide general cover type information for rare plant and noxious weed identification.

### **T6: Noxious Weeds**

Laurel and Ann are working with Erin to complete this Study Plan. We hope to review and approve it at our June 6 meeting. The Noxious Weed Study form will be added to the rare plant study. We will keep it separate as its own layer.

### **Baker Lake Trail**

Ann gave a brief presentation on the history of the Baker Lake Trail and its maintenance over the years. The trail gets approximate 2,600 visitors/year. It currently extends from near Welker Creek to about 0.5 miles inside the National Park (Blum Creek Bridge.)

### **ELK STUDY**

Chris has been talking with Don Gay re: an elk study. They are currently considering doing some modeling of elk habitat in the drainage area. This would include reviewing foraging areas, escape patterns, migration patterns, etc. They hope to have a Study Request put together in the next couple of months for the group to review. Non-attending members who want a copy of the joint Forest Service/Washington Department Fish & Wildlife elk telemetry data should request a hard copy from Tony. He is sending a copy to regularly attending members.

### **SOLUTION TEAM UPDATE**

May 21 is the date of a public tour of the Baker River Project. Please let Kristen know as soon as possible if you plan to attend. Public meetings to review the Initial Scoping Document (ICD) and Scoping Document #1 will follow on May 21 and 22. A 60-day comment period will follow the public meetings. PSE expects to release the Scoping Document #1 within five days. Comments on both documents will be due July 22.

PSE plans to submit the request to FERC to pursue the alternative licensing process by the end of this week. They seem to have worked out the details re: confidentiality with the tribes. There will be a tribal council review of the Process Document and Communications Protocol the end of this week. The final revisions of these documents will be sent out to Solution Team members early next week.

PSE is asking participants in the process to send in their letters of support so they can send them to FERC along with their request to go ALP.

The next Solution Team meeting will be immediately following the Public meeting on May 22.

### **REPORT ON EXISTING STUDIES:**

#### **T-13: Survey and Manage Terrestrial Mollusk Survey**

Field work for amphibians and mollusks is complete. During this spring visit, they found no survey and managed species. Hope to have initial draft of the study results out by June 6.

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**T11: Oregon Spotted Frog Inventory**

None were observed. Field portion of study is complete. Study report out in July.

**T17: Amphibian Studies in Reservoir Fluctuation Zone**

Surveys were completed on 4-18. The spring survey targeted amphibian egg masses in the fluctuation zone. Some appeared to have been de-watered and then flooded out. Hope to have the initial study report out by July 26.

**T2: Vegetation Mapping in Project Area**

Field work was complete in early May. They are still researching some unknown plant species. They are ready to begin entering field data into a database. They hope to complete the upland portion of the final draft of the report in the next month or so. It will probably be the end of summer before we can review the full report. Erin will coordinate with Nick Verretto who is doing fish passage studies under various reservoir conditions.

**T5: Wetland Inventory Study**

Maps will be given to Joetta of all wetlands surveyed by the end of this week. Hope to have boundaries clearly defined by month-end.

**T4 ANALYSIS SPECIES TEAMLET**

This group had a very productive meeting on May 2. They came up with a rationale for including species on the official List of Analysis Species. The next steps will be a literature review and analysis, and then suggestions of studies that might be needed in order to assess project effects on specific species.

First cut for literature review will be:

- Marbled Murrelet
- Northern Spotted Owl
- Grizzly Bear
- Bald Eagle

We agreed to go forward with this draft species list. We identified species to start with within each habitat for the literature review:

**Interior Old Growth Coniferous Forest**

- Northern Spotted Owl
- Marbled Murrelet

**Deciduous Forest-Young**

- Red-eyed Vireo

**Shrub**

- Yellow Warbler

**Wetland/Riparian**

- Red-legged Frog
- Northwestern Salamander

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- Mink

#### **Grassland/Meadow/Herbaceous**

- Elk
- Savannah Sparrow

#### **Cliff/Talus**

- Townsend's Big-eared Bats

#### **Snag/Log**

- Pileated Woodpecker
- Tree Swallow

#### **Open Water**

- Common Loon
- Osprey

#### **Generalist Species**

- Mountain Goat

#### **T7: Historic Vegetation of the Upper and Lower Baker Projects**

Marty drafted a study plan for Don to review. In the meantime, Don will be reviewing GLO notes to supplement. We will map the original location of Baker River and its tributaries below Shannon from early maps (using GLO notes to verify vegetation). We will use the habitat types identified in T15.

Next Steps:

- Have Don edit the original Study Request and add a second phase: Develop a “without-project” habitat map.(We'll request a separate Study Plan: T7b).
- If Don approves Marty's draft, distribute (with edits) to the group and move forward with aerial photo interpretation. In the meantime, Joetta will begin to digitize location of the Baker River below Lake Shannon.

#### **T15: Basin Vegetation Mapping**

Tony showed us the latest versions of the Grizzly bear and Vegetation Cover Type maps. Incorporating Crown Pacific data, the legends were standardized according to T15 designations. “Shadow” areas will be typed consistent with their nearest neighbors (most likely to the North). Tony also showed us the NWI Wetlands map. We decided to map equal to or greater than ¼ acre wetland polygons not showing on this map.

After Tony identifies any unmapped wetland polygons, Joetta will incorporate these data into our vegetation cover type map. The teamlet agreed to go forward with existing level of resolution and to increase the resolution only in areas affecting analysis species. The initial map will be complete by the end of May to review at the June 6 meeting.

#### **PRESENTATION OF HISTORIC AERIAL PHOTOS**

Tony passed around black and white photos:

- Pre-Upper Baker River photos (pre-logging): two sets from 1956—two different elevations

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- Post-Logging, pre-inundation photos of Upper Baker River and Lake Shannon from 1959
- The Forest Service and PSE have several other sets of photos. Tony will be sending out a comprehensive list of these photos to team members.

#### **NEW STUDY REQUESTS: FOR 2002**

- Without Project Habitat Map (Tony or Don get request in by June 6)
- Elk Request (by end of June)
- Forage/Habitat Value in the Fluctuation Zone (measuring existing project habitat quality). Request by July meeting (Tony)

#### **HANDOUTS**

- Summary of Amphibian Surveys in the Reservoir Fluctuation Zones of the Baker River Relicensing Project (T17)
- Summary of Terrestrial Mollusk Surveys in the Baker Lake Project Area (T13)
- WTRWG Vegetation Update, vegetation mapping in the draw-down zone (T2); Rare Plants Study (T16); Noxious Weed Study (T6)
- Baker Relicensing Terrestrial Working Group Review of Team Leader, Facilitator, Consultants
- Terrestrial Essential Components for Group Success
- Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Meeting Norms

#### **PARKING LOT**

- Conceptual Mitigation Approach (P/M/Es)
- Review time frame/goals of working groups/milestones
- Definitions of “project boundary”, “project effects”, “previous environment”, “project area”, NEPA definitions
- Watershed Analysis Presentation
- Land Management – Do study?
- Make list of all available relevant data. Create a subset of those data for Tony to always bring to meetings for group to continually reference.
- Are transmission lines in or out of FERC boundary?
- Changing Climate Patterns
- Determine land management allocations within Project boundary
- Tony to set up Wetland Field Trip

#### **MEETING EVALUATION**

##### **Well Dones:**

- Happy to have Chris here!!!
- Got out early
- Good food
- Made substantial progress
- Feel good about where we are with studies
- Photos were great
- Great maps

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**Need for Improvement:**

- Missed some key players
- More lunch-type food (soup/tater cups, organic fruits and vegetables)
- Good bagels

**TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR OUR JUNE 6 MEETING**

**Baker Lake Lodge**

**6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

PSE will supply dinner and breakfast (prior to wetland field trip on June 7)

1. Review notes/agenda/action items
2. Report on Existing Studies, Maps
  - Teamlet Reports—T16 Rare Plants, T7 Historic Vegetation
  - Go forward with T7b and T6?
  - New Requests/Plans: Elk?
3. Conform field trip itinerary to assess wetland monitoring methods
4. Evaluate meeting

**TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR OUR JULY 17 MEETING**

**Mountlake Terrace, Washington**

**8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!

1. Review notes/agenda/action items
2. Solution Team Update
  - Field trip debrief
  - Public meeting debrief
3. Report on Existing Studies
  - Teamlet Reports—T16 Rare Plants, T4 Historic Vegetation
  - New Requests/Plans
4. Review/Amend Norms and Parking Lot
5. Set agenda/location for August 21 meeting
6. Evaluate meeting