

RRG Final Meeting Notes

February 25, 2014 / 9:00 – Noon / Skagit Service Center, Burlington, WA 98233



Baker River Project License Implementation

Recreation Resource Group Meeting

Final Meeting Notes

February 25, 2014, 9:00 am – Noon

Team Leader: Pam Garland, PSE (pamela.garland@pse.com)

Facilitator: Lyn Wiltse: 425-890-3613 (call if running late or if your plans to attend the meeting change)

Website: <http://pse.com/aboutpse/HydroLicensing/Pages/Baker-River-Licensing.aspx>

PRESENT

Pam Garland, Tom Flynn, Tony Fuchs, Jacob Venard, and Elizabeth Dubreuil (PSE); Nikolai Ferrell, Carol Gladsjo, and Ann Dunphy (USFS); Corinna Koenig (Town of Concrete); and Lyn Wiltse, facilitator and note taker (PDSA Consulting).

DECISION “Shall the RRG authorize funding in the amount of \$261,065 to the USDA-DA for Panorama Boat Launch Upgrades?”

NEXT 2014 RRG MEETING DATE

June 17 (RRG only) at the PSE Skagit Office in Burlington.

October 21 (RRG in the morning and LEP in the afternoon to debrief Rec season)

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Pam Send out call for decision via email on Feb. 28 for two week review. “Shall the RRG approve allocation of funding from the RAM in the amount of \$231,865, for expansion and upgrade of Panorama boat launch and parking area, including paving?”
 - Includes accelerating (to Feb, 2015) \$25K of the \$50K payment regularly scheduled for Oct., 2015.
 - Excludes wooden toilet replacement (will be considered at a later date).
- Pam In above email, include request for proposals for RAM funding for the 2014 season (and beyond).
- Jacob Let Ann know if the stumps they seek to remove can qualify as LWD.

ONGOING ACTION ITEMS

- All In addition to the above dates, please continue to reserve the third Tuesday of each month from 9:00-11:00am for possible additional meetings or conference calls. Pam will send out an email prior to each date asking if anyone sees a need to meet.
- All Let Pam know of any updates to the contact list for your organization.
- Pam Continue to coordinate cross-resource group collaboration (e.g., I&E) – ongoing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- We welcomed Nikolai Ferrell of the Forest Service to the group. He will likely be taking on some duties related to recreation and attend some of our future meetings.
- We congratulated Pam on her new role as Upper Baker O&M supervisor. She will continue to be the go-to person for onsite recreational issues. Tony Fuchs, the original leader of the RRG, will step back into that role for future meetings. He will help with the administrative and license compliance work. Tom wants to make the transition as clear as possible. Pam, Tony, and Tom will update us on the transition as soon as the details are worked out.

REVIEW OF AGENDA AND MEETING NOTES

The October 15, 2013 notes were finalized after the meeting via email and are posted on the PSE website.

LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION / BRCC UPDATE

Tom explained the next BRCC meeting will be at the PSE Service Center in Burlington on April 22.

Highlights of other License-related activities include:

Aquatics Resource Group (ARG)

- LB Unit 4 continued to have vibration issues that are reducing PSE to 50-60% output and rendering them unable to meet the license flow constraints. The contractor is building a physical model and may need to remanufacture some of the components of the unit. This summer PSE will meet with stakeholders and the ARG to see what to do for flows during this interim period.
- FSC will be operational for the season. They are currently dealing with some fry release issues.
- Daily pool level constraint is not changed. The ARG approved a constraint in the FIP – will just modify the reporting requirements so that they report an exceedence if the reservoir elevation level varies by more than a foot per day. Any deviations from the plan would be because inflows were off the forecast. The Forest Service is pleased with this approach which no longer involved a license amendment.
- Spawning beach decommissioning is largely completed. There is some re-vegetation that still needs to occur this year. The Forest Service is coordinating with PSE on this.

Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group (TRIG)

- They have approved effectiveness monitoring procedures
- A new (and improved!) loon platform has been installed to replace one that went missing.
- They are working on draft management plans for Alder Creek and Burpee Hill properties.
- Completed a timber harvest at Burpee Hill to create more elk forage.

Cultural Resource Advisory Group (CRAG)

- PSE will be doing some excavation work near the concrete silos.
- They also plan to remodel the Baker Club House and are working with the CRAG to do an MOA with FERC and SHPO.
- Swift Creek: The design changed enough on the erosion control project that the CRAG will have to do a report. They are looking at completing that before that project starts.
- They are continuing to work on the same projects as last reported including the LB compound and annual monitoring.

REQUEST FOR RAM FUNDING TO IMPROVE PANORAMA BOAT LAUNCH AND PARKING AREA

We lacked the quorum since no tribal members were present and none of them sent a proxy so we were unable to make a decision at this meeting. Brock emailed Pam that he was in support of the proposal.

Ann walked us through a PPT explaining the proposed Panorama boat launch and parking lot upgrades. They were intentional about putting together a complete package for us to consider. The thoroughness of their approach was much appreciated by all. This funding would fund the upgrade of the single-wide boat ramp and create a double-wide ramp. There would also be a parking lot expansion – nearly doubling the capacity. If there are savings in the contract costs, it would forward paving the parking lot area and replacing the current wooden toilet.

Panorama is the most popular ramp on Baker Lake. With the sockeye fishery being such an attraction since 2010, use has tripled from historic use.. Typically on the lake there are about 300 boats on the lake. The FS does annual maintenance on both the boat launch ramp and the parking area.

Cost Summary

Double wide lane for boat launch = \$127,888

Parking Lot expansion = \$48,360

Total = \$176,240

Option 1 Pave Parking area = \$55,625

Option 2: Replace toilet = \$29,200

Total is \$261,065

After some discussion, the RRG and the USDA-FS arrived at a revision of the proposal. The revision excluded the funding of \$29,200, for the toilet replacement. The new proposal **“Shall the RRG approve allocation of funding from the RAM in the amount of \$231,865, for expansion and upgrade of Panorama boat launch and parking area, including paving?”** was reissued to the RRG, who will have until March 14, 2014, to reach decision.

Tom suggested PSE accelerate to February half of the \$50K (*2016 RAM funds), scheduled to be funded in October (2015). This would create \$231K available to be spent in 2015 which is when the Forest Service anticipates doing the construction. Everyone thought this was a fine idea.

If approved, the funding will be as follows:

RAM Fund Summary

\$144,590 currently available January 1, 2014

Plus \$6K (est.) escalation in February 2014

Plus \$50K (available in Oct., 2014 for use in 2015)

Plus \$6k (est.) escalation in February 2015

Plus first \$25k of 2016 RAM made available in February 2015, instead of October.

Totals ~ \$231,590K

*The second half (\$25k) of 2016 RAM funding to be funded to account in Oct 2015, for use in 2016.

The Forest Service is currently in the process of doing scoping for NEPA which they will finish in fall of 2014. They would put out the contract in winter and schedule implementation in the fall of 2015. They will absorb all of the costs related to the NEPA and administrative costs in support of this proposal.

Next steps: Pam will email out the new call for a decision and give RRG members 2 weeks to approve. She will ensure she gets a response from Stan so we will have a quorum to support the decision.

DISPERSED RECREATION SITES

Ann walked us through yet another PPT and explained in 2013 they developed a GPS/GIS-based field inventory tool to be used in the 2014 season. It integrates GPS positioning, geo referenced photos, inventory database, and occupancy date.

New sites are being created at an increased rate due to over crowding of existing sites in the Upper Basin. They are noting the trend of larger sized groups and longer stays. This is likely related to the sockeye fishery. Ann reported that these campers bring tons of stuff with them and use the dispersed sites for a week-long fishing stay instead of just a weekend. She also announced that the Forest Service purchased a boat to keep up the amount of maintenance and contact they have on Baker Lake.

The Forest Service has been adding infrastructure including twelve bear boxes, fire rings, ten tent pads, six box toilets, and ten bulletin boards. Note: There are no fish-cleaning facilities at any of the campgrounds. They are encouraging people to clean them on the boat and toss them into the lake if possible (fish entrails are attracting more wildlife – especially bears). They installed bear boxes at the following campgrounds: Anderson, Maple Grove, Noisy, and Silver.

They have worked with a variety of youth groups to install the bear boxes and do other work such as building tent pads. They anticipate working more on the plan this year.

I&E PLAN

Ann reported they are making sure the bulletin boards are all the right size. They have a suggestion for the bulletin board at Kulshan Campground. They are also working on interpretive signage to go on the bulletin boards. They anticipate completing this by the fall. The first phase was getting basic orientation panel and the kiosk done. The second phase is developing the stories and the interpretive themes.

2014 RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

- SA 301 – Final 2012 Annual Report will be filed with FERC in April, 2014
- SA 302 – Aesthetics – This is the screening project at UB. The plan was approved in 2010. PSE will be putting a contract in place to procure the plants. They will do the screening (as proposed) in Oct., 2015.
- SA 304 – Water Safety-Recreation Hazard Monitoring, Map updates. Will start rec hazard monitoring in March – some boat and land trips. Maps will need to be updated when Forest Service gets Bayview online (for the 2016 season).
- SA 305 – LB Developed Recreation Plan was filed with FERC in October, 2013. No word yet.
- SA 312 – Developed Recreation Monitoring and Funding was filed with FERC on Oct. 2013. No word yet.
- Kulshan boat launch / Parking improvements will be addressed with non-license related PSE funds.
- Note: The annual reports will be due in July.
- LB development is slated for 2018.

RESOURCE GROUP / OTHER GROUP UPDATES

- CRAG: LB compound area is big. There are opportunities with the LB Clubhouse when it is repurposed to become a Visitor Center. PSE is collaborating with Town of Concrete, and also the Forest Service, NPS, and Concrete Heritage Museum Association.
- TRIG: Still developing access rules for acquired lands. Have specific access agreement with the tribes. The Burpee Hill and Alder Creek properties are open for all non-motorized recreation, though this isn't being

advertised. End of June, early July will do the next osprey eagle nest site survey, PSE will also be taking recreation-related photos. Let Tony know at our June meeting if you want any particular feature to be photographed at that time. Let Tony know. June meeting: make requests.

- Fall RRG MEETING: The Forest Service wants to do some of the short trail process this summer. They may need to back up and take a closer look. They are considering Horseshoe-to-dam trail options, including wildlife viewing opportunities.
- ARG: Hatchery headworks water supply work was completed last spring and is working well. It withstood a major rainstorm in November which raised the need for additional erosion control. PSE is working with the Forest Service on this. The water supply has been secure the entire time.
- Forest Service: Fall meeting is planned for design of Bayview Campground.
- Town of Concrete: Planning for a New Life Safety building at Fire Station, Trails for Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. New Council members and a new mayor. The future of the Superior building is uncertain.

MEETING EVALUATION

Well Done:

- Got out early
- Good discussions
- Ann's presentations
- Collaborative and creative discussion of FS proposal
- Tony's knowledge of the license
- Ann's proposal using the new format was very well done!
- Nikolai being here
- Appreciated Brock weighing in on the decision in advance of the meeting

Do Differently:

- Didn't have a quorum
- Missed Ann at the start of the meeting
- Missed Brock

JUNE 17, 2014 RRG MEETING TOPICS

- Review of Recreational Season
 - How well were we prepared?
 - Any unanticipated needs / surprises?
 - What can we carry forward based on lessons learned from the 2014 season?
- Update on Dispersed Recreation Plan
- Update on Draft Interpretive & Education Plan
- Need for any Recreational Photos?
- FS Plans for Trails
- Suggestions for future use of RAM Funding
- Review of 2014 Implementation Schedule
- Evaluate Meeting

HANDOUTS

- October 15, 2013 RRG Meeting Notes
- Draft Meeting Agenda for Feb. 25, 2014
- February 14, 2014 USFS RAM Proposal, Cost Estimate and Schematic for Panorama Point Campground Boat Launch and Parking Area Improvements