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## **BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE**

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

**January 17<sup>th</sup>, 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
Continuing Impacts Process Update
Teamlet Reports
Results of vegetation/wetland mapping (so far!)
Updated Study Requests
Update on Ongoing Study Requests
New Study Requests
Form teamlets for accomplishment of action items (i.e., finalize study requests, draft study plans).
Set agenda and confirm location for February 21 meetings
Evaluate meeting



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## BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

### Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group

January 17, 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 Conservation Council), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife), Martin Vaughn (Biota Pacific), Lia Kruger (Hamer Environmental), Bob Nelson (Rocky Mt. Elk Foundation), Don Gay, Carl Corey, and Ann Risvold (USFS), Stan Walsh (Skagit Systems Cooperative), Laurel Shiner (Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board), Tony Fuchs (Puget Sound Energy), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting, Inc.)

#### SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

*Note: We are now meeting the third Thursday of each month.*

February 21, 2002 USFS Office, Mountlake Terrace

March 21, 2002 USFS Office, Mountlake Terrace

April 18, 2002

#### AGENDA

Mountlake Terrace, WA

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**January 17, 2002, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Review notes/agenda/Action Items

Continuing Impacts Process Update

Teamlet Reports

Update on vegetation/wetland mapping

Updated Study Requests

New Study Requests

Form teamlets for finalizing study requests and draft study plans

Set agenda, confirm location for February 21

Evaluate meeting

### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- ALL: Review list of species from teamlet notes (12/18/01); suggest favorite species or species to be added/dropped (keep in mind that “closely associated with” is not necessarily the same as tied to)
- ALL: Be ready to discuss critical questions/queries for our data base and Charles Howard Operation Hydro-Model at our next meeting.
- ALL: Email comments to Marty/or others re: his Continuing Impacts Proposal by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Be ready to discuss at next meeting.
- Marty: By February 14, send out a summary of comments/edits to Continuing Impact paper.
- Don – Reserve USFS Office at Mountlake Terrace for February 21<sup>st</sup> and March 21<sup>st</sup> meetings
- Don: Prepare list of potential mountain goat enhancements. (He is currently working on a model.)
- Don: Email land bird analysis stuff to Tony to distribute
- All: Review RT-12 Study Request & identify the deficiencies/additional considerations that need to be included to make this study reference conditions.
- Ann: Get Agee map to Joetta for reference (after Don approves it)
- Ann: Get Tony forest Service Noxious Week Environmental Assessment
- Stan: Find out from Chris what Elk Study is going on
- Don: Share USFS elk study information with Tony with distribute
- Tony: Check to see if photos were taken during vegetation mapping.
- Don: Write up T15 Teamlet notes and send to Tony to distribute, especially to Joetta
- Tony: Get dates for Field Trip
- Ann: Get with Tom Hamer to discuss sites to survey for rare plants

### **TEAMLET ASSIGNMENTS**

R-T12 Grizzly: **Don**, Tony, Bob, Marty, Carl, Fred: Meet at new FS Office in Sedro-Woolley, Feb. 4, 9:00-11:30

T4 Analysis Species: **Tony**, Lia, Marty, Lauri, Don, Fred February 4, FS Office Sedro-Woolley, noon to 4:00

R-T6 Noxious Weed Assessment: **Ann**, Laurel (phone)  
Field Trip (drawdown zone)

### **REPORT ON PAST ACTION ITEMS.**

- Tony, Marty: Drafted proposal of process to implement Continuing Impacts strategy.
- Tony, Don, Lauri, Joetta: Continued work on T15

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- All: Reviewed T2 clarification differences provided by Tony & gave him feedback by next meeting December 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - Marty: Called meeting of T4 teamlet (Lia, Lauri, Fred, Bob, Don & Tony) and came up with habitats & species groups that might come into existence over 30 years.
  - Lauri: Sent Tony list of available models for HEP analysis.

### **CONTINUING IMPACTS PROCESS UPDATE**

Marty distributed a high-level outline of his “Proposal to Use the USFS Continuing Impacts Analysis Approach to Assess Impacts to Terrestrial Resources from the Baker River Project”. He used Carl’s Presentation as a basis for this paper and worked to make it more specific to the Baker Project. There were questions and concerns raised that Marty felt were largely addressed in his full length paper which he also distributed. He and Carl urged the team to keep in mind that this is just a guideline to be used to guide our approach to studies and ultimately proposing license conditions. This approach may need to be modified depending on the issue. We asked Marty to come up with a term other than “on-site”. We will review the paper and send Marty our comments prior to the next meeting. We should also be aware that this paper might be used/revised by other working groups and or the Solution Team.

### **REVIEW OF TEAMLET MEETINGS**

#### **T4: Analysis Species Assessment**

This teamlet met on December 18, 2001 to discuss habitat and analysis species within the context of continual impacts. (What would be there absent the project?) The following comprise the current version of the Focus Habitats list:

- Old growth edge effects
- Deciduous forest-young
- Shrub stage (Lia to re-name?)
- Wetlands
- Grasslands /meadows/herbaceous stage
- Cliffs/talus
- Logs/snags

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

This teamlet met on December 18, 2001. They brought maps re: vegetation zones, potential vegetation, seral stage coverage for most of the basin. The grizzly bear habitat (1986) map will be used for existing cover (with some edits made to update it). They agreed to use the Plant Associated group data for the site potential map.

The third cover type would identify the seral stage for conifers. The teamlet is considering the following sources:

- Agee data?
- Use Park Service data and “kind of” FS data
- Aerial photo interpretation of Park Service forest lands.

#### **R-T6: Noxious Weed Assessment and Control Plan**

Tony, Ann, Laurel, Bill Rogers (Skagit Co. Weed Guy) met December 5, 2001 and reviewed the draft Study Request and made comments that have been incorporated into the new version. Much of the needed information will be forthcoming from other studies. On item G of the last page of the revised

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request, they listed data that is needed and not already included in the scope of other studies (perimeters of reservoirs, facilitated areas, Maple Grove camp area, and areas infested by noxious weeds outside the project area that come from the reservoirs.) The teamlet will continue to hammer out scope of the study. We agreed to move this Study Request to the Study Plan phase.

## **UPDATE ON ONGOING STUDIES**

### **STATUS OF:**

#### **T2: Vegetation Mapping in Project Area**

Fieldwork was completed in November. In March to April they will do the emergent vegetation in the drawdown zone. The data have been entered into the access Data Base. They are in the midst of defining queries for the database. Lia will check to see that the queries use consistent cover types with what we agreed to use at this Working Group. GIS mapping of current data is being digitized and will be completed by the end of January, and will be linked with the database at that time. After the spring surveys, the GIS mapping and database should be completed by the summer.

#### **T5: Wetland Inventory Study (Phase I)**

Tony distributed a matrix showing Baker Lake and Lake Shannon Wetland Polygons, Cowardin classification, and a three tiered classification to illustrate the relation to the project:

- A: Supporting wetland hydrology provided solely by Baker Lake/Shannon Lake
- B: Supporting wetland hydrology provided by a combination of sources, including reservoirs
- C: Supporting wetland hydrology provided by shallow ground water and/or ground water discharge (not including reservoirs)

They have digitized all the polygons and should have a draft map for our review at our next meeting. The wetland polygons will be part of the overall cover type mapping of the Project area.

#### **T13 & T17: Survey of Mollusks & Amphibians:**

Hamer hopes to start both of these surveys in March (as soon as things warm up). This will include the Oregon Spotted Frog surveys (egg masses) in the drawdown zone and stream feeders that weren't surveyed last year. Draft reports may be ready by July. Tony suggested that we monitor the effects of reservoir filling to egg masses/larvae by following the development of several egg masses to later stages throughout the spring as the water level rises.

#### **T5: Phase 2 of Wetland Study**

The aim of this phase of the study is to monitor the effects of reservoir fluctuation on wetlands. This would likely involve the using of monitor stations and recording the effects in accordance with the three tier classification shown on the Baker Lake/Shannon Lake polygon matrix (see T5 above). We may want to set up staff gages or photo monitoring to identify fluctuation across seasons and get an idea of its effects on analysis species. This may tie to Amphibian Study. We would want to choose the locations of these studies according to their potential as sites for enhancement. A first step is to have a teamlet meeting with AESI. A next step may include going out and surveying the wetlands once the map is complete.

#### **T16: Project Area Rare Plant Survey**

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The Study Plan is being drafted by Hamer Environmental. Tom questioned the aim of the study. The suggested methodology looked like it fell short of the entire stated aim of the study (doing a rare plant survey and determining project effects on rare plants). Tom suggested that the scope of this study be limited to the rare plant survey. The Working Group would then take these data and use them to determine Project effects. We agreed that Tom's methodology be concerned only with the presence of rare plants in the basin.

Tom said that from any site we'd get data from these three areas:

1. Are there rare plants (at all?)
2. Are there small numbers of rare plants?
3. Are there lots of rare plants?

We are fine with this, keeping in mind we may want to create a second phase to define potential effects.

#### **STUDIES RELATED TO CONTINUING IMPACTS:**

##### **R-T7: Potential vegetation of Upper and Lower Baker Projects**

Tony suggested we revise this study request to make it consistent with our Continuous Impacts approach. This would mean creating a forward looking (next 30 years) vs. a historical map of potential vegetation. We would likely use aerial photos of historic vegetation for reference to assist in determining potential habitats. If we use this different approach, the study methodology needs to be re-written. We'll consider having the Analysis Species Teamlet address this.

##### **RT-20: Wildlife Use in the reservoir Drawdown Zone**

We may want to do something this spring. Do we want to try to quantify positive aspects of the reservoir and try to compare them to the negative impacts?

A HEP study may be helpful here. We'll defer this until we have some impacts to focus on and we'll do this in a manner consistent with our Continuing Impacts approach.

#### **HANDOUTS:**

- Proposal to Use the USFS Continuing Impacts Analysis Approach to Assess Impacts to Terrestrial Resources From the Baker River Project
- Wetland Inventory polygon data sheets

#### **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

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## **MEETING EVALUATION**

### **Well Dones:**

- Lauri's pumpkin bread
- Got out early
- Carl's presence
- Don was amiable
- Covered a lot of topics
- Great map display!

### **Need for Improvement:**

- Missed Fred, Chris, and Bob Kuntz

## **TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR OUR NEXT MEETING**

### **Mountlake Terrace, Washington**

**February 21, 2002, 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!

1. Review notes/agenda/action items
2. Solution Team Update
3. Review/add to Tony's list of database and Charles Howard model queries
4. Teamlet reports: T12, 4, 6, 15, T5 (phase 2)
5. Come to consensus re: Continuing Impacts model/approach
6. Review of vegetation map
7. Update on Ongoing Study Plans/Requests
8. New Study Requests (?)
9. Set agenda and confirm location for March 21 and April 18 meetings
10. Evaluate meeting