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**Sent:** Wednesday, January 27, 2010 11:38 AM

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**Subject:** Baker River Coordinating Committee Update for January 2010,

**BRCC Members:**

**Below is the BRCC update for January 27, 2010.**

### **Cultural Resource Advisory Group**

The Cultural Resource Advisory Group (CRAG) met on January 20th. The CRAG spent time reviewing current Baker River projects and action items for the group. The CRAG is currently determining a date to visit the Lower Baker Floating Surface Collector Project with project managers, engineers, and biologists to discuss potential impact to historic properties. This meeting is being proposed for February. In addition, the CRAG is trying to arrange a field meeting with PSE engineers and Forest Service (FS) personnel to discuss stabilization of an area on FS lands. This meeting is proposed for late February or early March. In addition, an extension of time for submittal of the HPMP is necessary because some members were not able to meet comment deadlines. The CRAG and PSE want to address all substantive comments before a final is sent to FERC. PSE plans to send that request to FERC once all letters stating timelines could not be met are received.

The CRAG will also meet on January 27th to complete review and revision of Section 5 of the HPMP. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Feb 17th.

### **Recreation Resources Group**

The Recreation Resources Group (RRG) will have two meetings on February 16, 2010 at Skagit Service Center in Burlington. The RRG will meet from 9:30 to 12:00 and then the sub group for

Law Enforcement will meet from 12:30-2:30. The Draft Aesthetics Management Plan (AMP) was distributed to RRG and Resource group leads for preliminary review. AMP will go out for Formal 30-day review by March 31, 2010.

The Draft Baker Lake Resort Implementation Plan will go out for review this week. PSE received the letter for "Termination of Special Use Permit" and acceptance of decommissioning and cleanup for the Baker Lake Resort, from the USDA-Forest Service.

FERC approved the Baker Reservoir Recreation Water Safety Plan, SA 304.

### **Aquatic Resource Group**

The Aquatic Resource Group (ARG) held a conference call/WebEx meeting on January 12th. PSE provided updates on the Adult Fish Trap and Hatchery construction progress, and recent developments with other aquatic article activities. The adult fish trap will be closed to operation beginning January 15 through May 15 as agreed in consultation with members of the ARG to complete the final stages of construction. Start-up of the new trap is scheduled for June 1.

PSE also walked through some construction photos and highlighted the most recent construction activities at the hatchery. Construction focus at the hatchery continues on completing the hatchery building (mostly interior work), headtank/sand separator, chemical building, treatment ponds, sockeye broodstock ponds. They have started on the rearing raceways. We will begin transitioning to the new hatchery facilities in May 2010. Renovation of spawning beach 4 should be completed by the end of 2010.

There continues to be good coordination between the fish operations crew and the construction contractors. Sockeye & coho broodstock spawning is finished and efforts are around incubation and rearing at the existing facilities adjacent to construction. WDFW reported on a successful egg production take for the artificial incubation program and provided data results.

PSE received comments from WDFW, Ecology, Skagit River System Cooperative and Trout Unlimited to the draft annual reports for License SA 101 and SA 106.

Regarding SA 107(c), PSE reported that they are reviewing historic flood frequency curves as they continue their evaluation of historic events. PSE has engaged Tetra Tech to assist with this and they are currently in scoping discussions with them. They will give a presentation at one of our upcoming in-person meetings (possibly April) on how imminent flood management affects flows in the Baker and Skagit Rivers. SA 107 relates to SA 106 as there are constraints in 106 that influence conduct of 107. The ARG requested a discussion of what constitutes a power emergency and PSE's application of best efforts in managing flows and it was agreed that it would be helpful to share as much information as possible around decision making in such events. The Article 106 Plan will address this.

PSE provided a brief update on recently completed genetic analysis of Baker Char. This investigation is tied to implementing SA 104 -connectivity between the reservoirs. We will get an update on this and another study (the smolt capacity study per Article 101) at the next ARG meeting.

PSE is also planning to walk through the draft Article 505 Plan at the February TRIG and ARG meetings. The next meeting of the fish passage technical working group is likely to take place in mid-February 2010.

The next ARG meeting is scheduled as an in-person event on February 9, 2010 at PSE's Skagit Service Center in Burlington. Conference calls and in-person meetings will alternate each month throughout 2010. Subsequent in-person meetings after February are reserved at PSE's Snoqualmie Operations Center.

### **Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group**

The Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group (TRIG) met via conference call and WebEx on January 7th. The acquisition process has been completed for the property for Elk Habitat Settlement Agreement Article 503 (SA-503), which closed on December 31, 2009. The purchase of 280 acres of elk foraging, wetland, and forest habitat is the first acquisition for habitat under the terrestrial articles. The property is just west of the Baker Lake road about 2 miles north of Highway 20 in the Alder creek drainage. We therefore have named the parcels the Alder Creek property. Thanks to all that contributed to this successful acquisition! We prepared and presented to the group a GIS map of the property showing habitat and buffer polygons and their acreages for discussion related to how the property will be managed post acquisition. A draft list of post acquisition information that we may want to develop/acquire for management purposes has been distributed, which will be reviewed and then discussed at the next meeting. We discussed other alternative properties, and are planning to contact landowners soon. WDFW will be prescreening prospective properties for consistency with SA-503.

A response from PSE's attorneys was also provided related to a proposal to reallocate funds from SA-504 (Wetland Habitat) made last month. The response was included in the notes to the meeting. The group will review the response and then discuss at the next meeting.

The Botanical Teamlet continued to work on the process for native plant propagation for restoration and enhancement projects on USFS lands, and met on December 10th at the Washington Association of Conservation Districts Native Plant Material Center in Bow to view their nursery program (it looks promising as a source of plant material). The *Carex flava* baseline study report has been finalized and is available upon request.

Bald eagle night roost surveys on Lake Shannon have begun, with 2 surveys per month completed. No roosts have been identified to date.

The next scheduled TRIG meeting will be via conference call and WebEx on February 4, 2010. A short Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group meeting will take place early afternoon at the end the TRIG meeting, during which the latest updated draft of the Aquatic Riparian Plan will be introduced. We will likely meet via WebEx monthly, with the next face to face TRIG meeting to be in April.

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