
BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group

October 22, 2001

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

USFS Mt. Baker Ranger District Office
810 State Route 20
Sedro-Woolley, WA

AGENDA

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review action items
3. Studies updates: R9, R14, R12, R13
4. Study requests/pending study plans:
 - R11, Capacity and Suitability Analysis
 - R5, Aesthetics
 - R16, Needs Analysis
 - R15, Trail Routing and Feasibility
 - Road Access Analysis
 - Water Quality
5. Analysis of data from 2001 studies
6. Set agenda for November 19 meeting (Mount Vernon), confirm location for December 17
7. Evaluate meeting
- 8.

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FINAL MEETING NOTES

Mission: *“To develop alternative solutions and recommendations addressing recreation, education and aesthetic resources related to the Baker River Project and its operations leading to a settlement agreement.”*

Team Leader: Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates) (425) 828-4463,
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PSE Contact: Tony Fuchs: (425) 462-3553, tfuchs@puget.com

PRESENT

Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates), Tony Fuchs (PSE), Susan Rosebrough (National Park Service), Jim Eychaner (Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation), Ann Dunphy (U.S.F.S.), Ardis Bynam (U.S.F.S.), Andy Hatfield (PSE), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator, PDSA Consulting Inc.

SCHEDULE CHANGES AND MEETING LOCATIONS:

November 19 will be at the PSE Office in Mount Vernon.

December 17 meeting will be at USFS Office in Mountlake Terrace.

**October 22, 2001 Agenda – Forest Service/Park Service Building At Sedro-Woolley, WA
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Studies updates: R9, 14, 12, 13
4. Study requests/pending study plans
 - R11, Capacity and Suitability Analysis
 - R5: Aesthetics
 - R16: Needs Analysis
 - R15: Trail Routing and Feasibility
5. Analysis of data from 2001 studies
6. Review Parking Lot (added to agenda at beginning of meeting)
7. Set agenda for November 19, meeting (Mount Vernon) confirm location for 12/17
8. Evaluate meeting

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- All: Send comments on R15 Draft Study Plan to Chris by November 5.
- Lyn: Call Ken, Curt and Saul re: attending these meetings
- Chris: Secure contact from Whatcom and Skagit Counties.
- Chris: Create initial draft of Needs Analysis (look at items from R-1 and R-2).
- Chris: Contact Engineering firm in Bellingham re: installing permanent traffic counters.
- Ardis: Continue to discuss Water Quality study with Greta.
- Tony: Bring climate data prepared by Fluharty.
- Tony: Research ownership of dispersed recreation sites around Lake Shannon.
- PSE: Get professional help in managing data collected (accessible resource areas).
- Ann: Chase down fish data from Brady (trout, etc.)

REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS

- Ann and Ardis: Create study request for Road Access Analysis (travel).
- Ardis: Asked Brady to crunch WDFW data re: What caught (species and numbers). It appears that these data do not answer these questions related to trout. Ann will continue to investigate.
- Chris: Reviewed Rockport State Park use data he received from Ann, but has not begun any analysis.
- Andy: Double checked dispersed site mapping with Nancy; field crew is checking and refining inventory records; results will be coordinated with Tony and R2.
- Tony: Distributed a list of all different studies going on in the different Working Groups.
- Tony: Noted that summary of water quality data gathered by PSE (see *Water Quality* below) is included in the Water Quality section of the draft Initial Consultation Document (ICD), which will be released soon.
- Tony: Talked with Nick and Arnie re: water quality (see *Water Quality* below).

HANDOUTS

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- Preliminary study plan for Recreational Trail Analysis (Study Request R-R15)- 10/17/01.
 - List of studies being conducted by other resource Working Groups.
 - Aesthetics excerpt from Volume III Settlement Agreement, Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Rapids Hydroelectric Projects (FERC No. 2058 and 2075)...February, 1999
 - Aesthetics excerpt from Settlement Agreement, North Umpqua Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 1927-008) ... June 13, 2001
 - Study Request Index-Recreational/Aesthetic Resources Working Group

WATER QUALITY

The water quality study request is on hold in the Aquatics Working Group, pending clarification of the scope. Bob Barnes is making additional refinements to the water quality data presented in the ICD (Initial Consultation Document). Tony brought a draft copy of the Water Quality section of the existing conditions chapter of the ICD; he could not distribute copies because the material is draft and currently undergoing review, but allowed the group to look at his copy. Stay tuned...

STUDIES UPDATE

R9 RECREATION USE SURVEY – ELECTRONIC MONITORING

During the week of October 5, TrafficCount reinstalled two counters for an indefinite period. PSE and TrafficCount will work out how to maintain the counters if they remain in place into the winter (e.g., remove tubes for plowing, etc.). Chris reported that the Bellingham engineering firm that was requested to provide an estimate for installing two permanent counters recently replied that they would not provide an estimate after all. He will continue to work on resolving this issue.

R7 +R8 = R14: SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

Nothing to report (work will begin in winter.)

R12 DEVELOPED AND DISPERSED SITE INVENTORY

Nancy and Steve have been double-checking the dispersed site inventory records that were entered in the spring. They should be finished by the end of the month.

R13 RECREATION VISITOR SURVEYS

The number of completed surveys has dropped off significantly since the last report (at the September meeting):

- 39 new Baker Lake Drop Box Surveys (probably over half of these came back in the mail)
- 1 new Lake Shannon Drop Box Survey
- 45 Baker Lake Interviews (44 were roadside intercepts – Kudos to interviewers!)

Cumulative Totals to Date: 411 Drop Box Surveys
294 Interviews
705 Total (probably 80-90% from Baker)

A challenge in interpreting the data will be to determine what the under-served market might be. We also want to note which sites are being used in overflow conditions. We should also review input on recreation needs from participants at early PSE public meetings with state-wide and Forest Service data to look for trends/needs.

ANALYSIS OF STUDY RESULTS

We need to compile and tabulate the inventory data we've collected. The analysis that comes from this will feed into R11: The Recreation Capacity & Suitability Analysis as well as the upcoming Needs Analysis (R16). We all need to be thinking about how to "slice and dice" the data in meaningful ways. PSE is looking at using the Access database program to hold and manipulate the data. We hope to have input of all 2001 inventory data by year-end.

STUDY REQUESTS/PENDING STUDY PLANS

R11: RECREATION CAPACITY AND SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

On 10/17, Chris distributed an updated and more complete version of this study plan. The geographic scope is the same as described for the site inventory. It was suggested we include sites such as Park Creek (which could be interpreted as outside the scope as presently written). The description will be modified accordingly. We will also be looking at including Everett Lake.

Chris reported that Lauri Vigue had e-mailed him some comments on the draft study plan. The group agreed that Lauri's comments should be entered into the meeting notes. They are as follows:

- p. 2, Study Objectives, please keep in mind that carrying capacity has to consider the term of the new license, i.e., 30 or 50 years.
- p. 2, bullet list of objectives: please include "discussion of project effects on recreation resources, recreation capacity and enhancement opportunities."
- p. 3, Coordination with other studies, first paragraph: other working groups such as wildlife and aquatics will provide the important GIS data as well.
- p. 4, Study area: the project area and adjacent lands scope is fine as long as PSE isn't proposing expanding recreation lands outside of this area, for example Lake Shannon. If so, it should be included. In other words, this study should include all potential recreation development areas.
- p. 5, Table 1, Under Ecological, please include riparian areas with wetlands
- p. 7, Task 4, bullet list, please include fish habitat and riparian habitat

Ann pointed out that we need to be careful in applying ROS (Recreational Opportunity Spectrum), that it is okay for addressing experience types, but may not be applicable with respect to capacity. She suggested we add *access*, *communication*, and *education* to the list on page 5. She also suggested looking at slopes of 0 – 5% and 5 – 10% as separate classes.

We also discussed considering a broader definition of existing developed sites in Task 2 to include some dispersed sites, or old developed sites that have devolved to dispersed sites. We agreed that we want to answer two specific questions regarding dispersed sites:

1. Are some in bad locations, where they are likely having adverse effects on resources; and
2. Are some sites in low-constraint areas where they could be formalized/expanded, etc.

We will also add *hazard areas* to the list of GIS layers.

Summary of 5 tasks included in this study:

- 1) Define effects of existing recreation sites on resources
- 2) Look at existing developed sites to see if they are expandable
- 3) Conduct recreation opportunity classification
- 4) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis of opportunities and constraints
- 5) Integration and reporting

Ann suggested that we may want to re-order these tasks to be: 3, 2, 4, 1, and then 5, recognizing that some of these tasks will overlap. It would be inappropriate to wait until March, 2002 to begin some of this work.

Chris will incorporate these comments into a revised draft study plan and redistribute it for comment.

R15: RECREATIONAL TRAIL ROUTING

Chris distributed hard copies of a draft study plan for a Recreational Trail Analysis (based on Study Request R-R15); Jim drafted this study plan to be consistent with R11. Jim explained the content and background for this study plan, noting that the 1990, 1995 and 2001 (in progress) statewide recreation studies cite the need for facilities (non-motorized trails) to serve walking and bicycling (the two most popular activities indicated by surveys). The most important trail needs seem to be in or connecting communities or activity centers. Work group members were asked to review the draft study plan and give Chris feedback within two weeks (November 5).

R5: VISUALS AND AESTHETICS STUDY

We still do not have a map identifying the project viewshed, and have not prepared a study plan to review. Chris suggested we discuss this study request anyway, because the study needs to be conducted in 2002 and we need to work out a plan for conducting it. PSE is concerned that the scope and approach for this study request are not defined, and that the request could result in a costly and extensive study that would not be commensurate with the aesthetics PM&Es that might be identified. Chris distributed copies of aesthetics excerpts from the Clark Fork and North Umpqua settlement agreements that, in his view, represented examples we should not try to follow. Ann and Ardis will come up with a draft study plan (including how to cover Lake Shannon) prior to our next meeting.

ANALYSIS OF 2001 DATA

We need to analyze three types of data: inventory data, use/observation data, and survey responses. PSE is looking at using Access database software, at least for some of the data. We will want to tag data for dispersed sites specifically so we can tell what percentage of folks using dispersed sites are locals. Access is a relational database that will allow sorting by specific types (fields) of data... origin, type of recreation activity, etc. Each response needs to be coded uniquely. When in doubt, we should code the data to allow for maximum detail in slicing and dicing the data for interpretative purposes. We may need to use some statistical software for survey responses. The Forest Service expressed a desire to have access to the data to do queries on it (directly or indirectly).

PARKING LOT

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- Operationally define “project induced”
 - List authorities that this team must be aware of
 - Tie education piece to ALL Working Groups
 - Hold periodic “outreach” meetings for feedback from other groups (hiking, horseback riding, etc.)
 - Land Management
 - Forest Service presentation of SMS
 - Trailhead surveys
 - Have demonstration of Charles Howard Operational Model (this winter?)
 - SOP (sense of place) presentation (Jim)

EVALUATION OF MEETING

Things Done Well

- Out early!
- Thanks to Forest Service for hosting!
- Energetic facilitation and in good humor.
- Thanks to Jim for Trail Study Plan!
- Good exchanges – we’re listening to each other!

Need for Improvement

- Chocolate/Chocolate Milanos miss the mark

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR OCTOBER MEETING

November 19, 2001 Agenda – PSE Office in Mt. Vernon

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Update on Existing Studies (R9, 14, 12, 13)
4. Study Requests/Pending Study Plans
 - R11, Capacity and Suitability Analysis
 - R5: Aesthetics
 - R16: Needs Analysis
 - R15: Trail Routing
5. 2001 Data Analysis Update
6. Review of related studies from other Working Groups
7. Set agenda for December 17 meeting (if we need to meet), confirm location for 1/28/02
8. Evaluate meeting