

Baker River Project License Implementation

Baker River Coordinating Committee Conference Call FINAL Meeting Notes

June 08, 2010 ~ 10 am – Noon

Deleted:

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PRESENT

Cary Feldmann, Kim Lane, Ed Schild, Arnie Aspelund, Elizabeth Dubreuil, Tony Fuchs, Mel Walters, Haley Edwards, Mark Killgore, Jory Oppenheimer, Scott Williams Doug Bruland, Lynda Kupfer, Kellie Anderson, Anna Wingfield, and Nick Verretto (PSE); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Lou Ellyn Jones (USFWS); Steve Fransen (NMFS); Lorna Ellestad and Kara Symonos (Skagit Co.); Phil Hilgert (R2 Resource Consultants); Brock Applegate, Brett Barkdull, and Mike Barber, Tom Burns, Dave Collins, Susan Cierebiej (WDFW); Chris Maynard (WA DOE); Bob Helton (Skagit County Citizen), Craig Olson (NW Indian Fisheries); Greta Movassaghi (USFS); Chuck Ebel and Dan Johnson (USACE), Lyn Wiltse (PDSA Consulting)

NEXT SCHEDULED BRCC MEETING

October 22, 2010 (meeting semi-annually) with potential BRCC meetings or conference calls potentially from 9-11am on the 4th Wednesday of each month.

DECISIONS – none today.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Kim Set up place on PSE Baker website where all final studies and reports are posted. Coordinate with Cary.
- Kim Send out sample support letter for license amendment relative to new Powerhouse.
- All Let Kim know if you would like any additional copies of the new proposed powerhouse location.
- Arnie Have Jacob let everyone know when the next ARHWG meeting will be.

PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEM

- All Continue to reserve mornings of the fourth Wednesday of each month for potential BRCC meetings.
- Cary Continue to send out periodic email updates on Baker License implementation activities to all for months where we don't meet in person.
- Kim Create standardized simplified template for reporting budget status.
- TRIG / ARG members to work with other groups (Skagit Watershed Council and others) to leverage partnership opportunities for land acquisitions.

BRCC LOGISTICS

Cary explained that at the last BRCC meeting we agreed to add a meeting norm stating that in advance of a decision being taken team members will agree whether it makes sense for that meeting to be face-to-face.

RESOURCE GROUP REPORTS

Article 107 – Flood Storage: Mark reported that at the May 11, 2010 ARG meeting Jay Smith of Tetra Tech walked the group through a PowerPoint presentation on the study of potential operational protocols to drawdown the Baker Project to target elevations consistent with Article 107(c). The proposed study methodology will address the feasibility of using buffer zones to potentially provide some additional storage at Upper and Lower Baker to mitigate for some of the larger high water events while attempting to minimize environmental effects. An Imminent Drawdown Teamlet was formed last year. Participants were briefed on some preliminary modeling last fall.

PSE is also continuing to work on communication protocols within PSE and with the USACE and other agencies including the ARG relative to water management in advance of high flow events. PSE is also continuing to support the Skagit County Flood Control Zone District

Advisory Committee– working with Skagit County and the USACE on Skagit General Investigation Study. Ultimately, the Water Control Manual (WCM) and the license need to line up.

It should be noted that the Corps of Engineers is the lead agency relative to flood regulation. PSE performs a water management function ahead of flood events and then operates under the Corps direction during actual flood events and after flood events to restore the flood storage requirement in accordance with the WCM.

Recreation and Aesthetics Resource Group (RRG): The RRG last met in person on April 20. They plan to meet again by conference call on June 15 at the PSE Skagit Service Center in Burlington.

The formal review periods for the Aesthetics Management Plan (AMP, SA 302) and the Law Enforcement Plan (LEP, SA 318) are complete. PSE and AECOM are responding and adding comments to Final Plan. Both plans are on track to be e-filed with FERC by June 30. The VanDeVanter Group is currently working on a draft design for visual screening at the Upper Baker project, as per the Aesthetics Management Plan. Annual reports are in process for 2009. Tear sheet maps are in draft design for the Water Safety Plan (SA 304).

Aquatics Resource Group (ARG): Arnie Aspelund, Team Leader of the ARG, reported that the ARG last met for an in-person meeting at the Snoqualmie Operations Center on May 11. At that meeting PSE provided the latest updates on the Hatchery and Adult Fish Trap construction projects.

Arnie walked us through a schedule and described the status of each of the Aquatics-related plans and reports including when reviewed by the ARG and when they need to be filed with FERC. Cary explained that the plans tend to be fairly high level. Everything else is nested under that. Each discipline is broken into specific articles. General plans that deal with processes and Best Management Practices go to FERC. When we started this process we were not sure how FERC would respond to this general approach. So far, they have adopted our “playground and games approach.”

Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group (ARHWG): Haley reported that the ARHWG met on June 3, mainly to discuss the implementation document. Topics for discussion included types of actions to be funded, specification of timelines, contracts, management of SA 505 funds, land acquisition process and criteria, and land ownership (vs.. easement or joint ownership). The Aquatic Riparian Plan will be ready for distribution within the month and is due to FERC in October. Also in October, the first \$2 million of funding will become available, and the group plans to begin reviewing proposals at that time. (The process is outlined in the Plan.) Next steps are to finalize the draft Plan after comment and review, develop the implementation document, and develop application and contract formats. Jacob will be sending out an email announcement of the next meeting date along with draft meeting notes from the last meeting by the end of June.

Cultural Resource Advisory Group (CRAG): Elizabeth Dubreuil, Team Leader of the CRAG, reported that the CRAG last met on May 12 at the Skagit Service Center. They are in the final stages of finalizing Article 404: Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP). This is a comprehensive document. Three agencies, three tribes, and PSE have been working together as a core group to implement this article. On July 2 they will be sending out the final draft for official 30 day review. There have been new surveys of the historic district (eligibility issues). PSE

will use these to complete the final HPMP. This will be sent to CRAG for final 30 day review prior to submission to FERC by September 30th.

Project field trips have included the Lower Baker FSC, Powerhouse, and Dam Crest Improvement. An Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the FSC was agreed to and the discussion centered around looking at the Historic District components in whole. Cultural surveys in these projects will begin as necessary. The next CRAG meeting is scheduled for August 18.

Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group (TRIG): Tony Fuchs, Team Leader of the TRIG, reported the TRIG last met on June 3rd from 9 A.M. until noon, followed by the ARHWG teamlet meeting, at the PSE Skagit Service Center in Burlington. FERC has accepted all submitted management plans – the TRMP (Article 501 and all its appendices, i.e., all of the terrestrial article plans) and Article 410 without changes, so they are good to go for implementation of the plans. The initial comment period is over for the first batch of draft annual reports. The next set of drafts will be out the end of July for formal review. The TRIG is working the management program document for the Alder Creek property, and the process for searching for and acquiring additional properties.

ALDER CREEK LAND PRESENTATION

Tony walked us through a slide show of photos of the newly-purchased (and newly named) Alder Creek property. It was purchased with TRIG elk funds primarily for elk forage. It contains approximately 276 acres of multiple types of habitat and is surrounded by DNR lands being managed for rotational timber harvests. As only elk funds we available for use to purchase the property, and other habitat types (wetlands, deciduous forest) were also purchased in the acquisition, when wetland and forest funding becomes available the elk fund will be paid back from those budgets (according to TRIG agreed upon amounts). Tony explained that they have created various management polygons, including areas that may be modified to create permanent elk forage areas. They also may harvest some timber to create elk forage. So far they have been engaged in mapping and creating a management program document – nothing yet on the ground. Let Tony know if you want to go out there to look at the property.

NEW POWERHOUSE PROPOSAL AND AMENDMENT PROCESS

Kim Lane explained that PSE is pursuing a license amendment to allow the powerhouse to be relocated from the original site with a single unit providing 1500 cfs instead of the two 750 units that are called for in the license. Kim has sent a description of the proposed settlement amendment to accommodate these changes to Settlement Agreement parties along with a request for a letter of approval for this simple modification to the license. The proposed new location of the Powerhouse from the site of the previous Units 1 and 2 to the location on the gravel parking area to the South of the existing Unit #3 was also discussed. He will also send a draft support letter upon which members may base their letters of support to PSE. The 60 day comment period on the suggested amendment to the Settlement Agreement ends July 9, 2010. Kim requested that signatories submit their letters of approval to PSE by July 2, 1020.

The License Article 407 Flow Continuation Study was also discussed. The study recommends installation of a bypass (independent synchronous) valve which will allow PSE to meet all instream flow requirements even if the turbine / generator is not operating. All downramping sequences, under typical outage conditions, can be met with the new flow continuation / bypass valve. As an added environmental benefit, the valve allows for system load balancing instead of firing up a combustion turbine without affecting flow.

HANDOUTS

- Agenda for this meeting and draft meeting notes from March 24, 2010 conference call