

RRG Final Meeting Notes

February 17, 2015 / 9:00 – Noon / Skagit Service Center, Burlington, WA 98233



Baker River Project License Implementation

Recreation Resource Group Meeting

Final Meeting Notes

February 17, 2015 from 9:00 am – Noon

Co-Team Leader: Tony Fuchs, PSE (tony.fuchs@pse.com)

Co-Team Leader: Pam Garland, PSE (pam.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

Tony Fuchs, Pam Garland, and Elizabeth Dubreuil (PSE); Ben Joseph and Kevin Joseph (Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribal Community), Carol Gladsjo, Debra Paul, Seth Greenfield, and Ann Dunphy (USFS); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Corrina Hart (Town of Concrete); and Lyn Wiltse, facilitator and note taker (PDSA Consulting).

DECISION: None today.

2015 RRG MEETING DATES

June 16 (RRG in the AM, possibly followed by a field trip including LEPs?)

October 20 (RRG in the morning and LEP in the afternoon to debrief the recreation season)

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- All Let Tony know by the end of February if you would like to attend a document refresher and he will set up another one to accommodate.
- Tony Send out BRCC update email (from Jacob) to all.
- Ann By March 10, email Pam the additional info PSE needs on the FERC Form 80. They need to know how many campsites at each location, and the attributes of the sites, etc. by the end of March.
- Tony Ask Jacob to let Debra (USFS) know of the deadline FS implementation actions for 2014 for recreation. Remind Teresa of deadline for Terrestrial implementation actions.
- Tony Send out a Doodle Poll by the end of February to set up the Rec Monitoring teamlet. Specify Seth, Ann, Pam, Ann, and Brock and copy the RRG. Note: Article 312, calls for recreational monitoring at developed campsites (Swift Creek, Horseshoe Cove, Bayview, and Panorama.) starting in year six after license approval. The Monitoring teamlet will determine what will be monitored in addition to what the FS is already monitoring.
- Debra Email templates for signs and layouts to Pam by February 20.
- Tony Send Debra PSE color palate by February 20.

- Tony Follow up with Arnie, Nick, Jacob, and Tom with feedback on the Depression Lake net.
- Tony Re-send the LB Trail Construction Plan to Corrina, Brock, and Ben.
- Tony Talk with Tom about possibly using 602 funds for aquatic invasive species checks at Baker Lake.
- Ann ASAP send email to Tom Flynn (mentioning John Chandler) requesting the reservoir drawdown to accommodate FS work on the Bayview Campground and Panorama boat launch drawdown.
- Elizabeth Send a link to the current draft versions of the videos to so RRG members can provide feedback before they are made final. All are welcome to attend the CRAG meeting tomorrow (Feb.19) at this location.

ONGOING ACTION ITEMS

- All Let Tony know of any updates to the contact list for your organization.
- Tony Continue to coordinate cross-resource group collaboration (e.g., I&E).
- Tony Forward Jacob's email outlining the activities of the various resource groups to all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- This was Carol Gladsjo's final meeting with us as she is retiring in nine days! We thanked her for her many contributions and wished her well in her new life in Alaska! Congratulations Carol!

REVIEW OF AGENDA AND MEETING NOTES

The October 21, 2014 notes were finalized after the meeting via email and are posted on the PSE website.

LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION / BRCC UPDATE

Tony announced that the next BRCC meeting will be in Burlington on April 22. It is open to all and will provide a comprehensive review of all of the license articles. It is an excellent opportunity for newcomers to the Baker License Implementation working groups to gain a good understanding of potential cross-resource areas of conflict and opportunities. He will send out an email update of recent activities in each of the resource working groups.

Cultural Resource Advisory Group (CRAG)

- Elizabeth reported the short documentary videos about the Baker River Project are approximately 90% complete. They will be posted to PSE.com and PSE's YouTube channel. They will be shared widely. They might also be played at visitor centers, the museum at Snoqualmie Falls, maybe local public television, etc.
- Video 1: "Life on the Baker River," is a PSE / Baker River system overview, including history of settlers and American Indians and a look at early Baker River fisheries.
- Video 2: "Homesteading the Baker River" is about the two dams (engineering marvels type piece), picking up the story in the 1920's and covering the shift to electric power.
- Video 3: "Sustaining Life on the Baker River" is the roughest of the three, and is focused on eight decades of continuous improvement.

NEW REPORTING SCHEDULE

FERC has approved our request to shift to a more compressed reporting schedule. For the RRG, all level 300 reports will be out for draft review by May 31 for a 60 day review period. Instead of sending this into FERC on Dec. 31, the final versions will be submitted to FERC by Sept. 30.

DISPERED RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ann reported that the USFS is moving forward with this plan. There are currently two people working on the plan, starting with the background information. It will be a comprehensive plan with a focus on implementation. The part that is reported to FERC will be a smaller subset of what the Forest puts together for their purposes. They will take the baseline data they have from the study and update it.

She further explained that the FS is doing its own internal review for all proposed activities and will discuss those here with the RRG. Issues will include human waste, dealing with regulation, how best to inform / control people regarding proper behavior, what triggers action, etc.

I&E PLAN

Debra explained that the goal of this plan is to enhance the visitor experience in the Baker Basin through Visitor services, Education, and Interpretation. There was a broad audience analysis on the demographics of visitors and their interests when they are in the basin. Resulting topics were used to develop theme-based interpretation when preparing for delivery of programs and interpretive media development. They also performed an inventory of current rec sites and facilities to identify locations for I&E services and products.

Goals and objectives of Baker Lake I&E purpose and need:

- Interpretive services strategy and Region 6's Valuing People and Place
- Nature matters
- Nature provides
- For the Greatest Good
- In the Community

“Creating intellectual and emotional connections between people and their natural and cultural heritage thereby instilling respect and appreciation for America's public lands and fostering their protection and stewardship through time.”

The plan will focus on methods and media including live programming, one-on-one contacts, group interactive and experimental learning experiences. Interpretive media includes kiosk, trail-side sign panels, publications, web apps, audio and visual.

5 Year Action Plan

- Develop improved signage for key sites in the Baker Lake Basin – incorporate template for placement of sign panels
- Develop rec material or media and programs / present programs to the public
- Develop resource materials for campground hosts and others involved with public contact.
- Develop self-service visitor info station at entrance to Baker Lake Basin, recommended sites, Koma Kulshan Guard Station project to include development of onsite VIS signing and interpretive media
- Partnership development for I&E

Current Focus – Media

2014-15: Development of Kiosk and wayside self-guided signing. They are looking at new and larger boards at the major sites. They will also reduce clutter and redundancy that exists currently with many postings that have resulted at “one-offs”. They will include context and reasoning to some of the rules. Maybe add a board or kiosk in the PSE Day Use site? It could include some cultural information as well. Successful implementation of the I&E Plan includes a collaborative approach!

NEW RULES FOR DEPRESSION LAKE FISHING

Concern was expressed about non-native trout getting into Baker Lake after being planted in Depression Lake so PSE plans to install a barrier net. Ann was concerned about the placement of the net as it will create problems for recreation. This was not a budgeted item. PSE is planning to install a used net as a stopgap measure. Perhaps a simpler solution would be to stop stocking Depression Lake altogether. It was observed that this is a popular fishery and is one of the only places kids can successfully catch fish from the shore. PSE used to plant 20-30K rainbow trout into Baker Lake. Under the SA they decided not to put them into Baker Lake anymore because the trout are a competing non-native species. Recreation concerns: There are around 15 trails leading into the west end of Depression Lake. There are also many hemlock mortalities up there. The Forest Service has been doing a lot of hazard tree removal. The FS is looking at building 2 toilets there. WDFW is open to any option to ensure the trout don't make it into Baker Lake. Tony will follow up with PSE folks planning to implement the net and express these recreational concerns.

BAYVIEW CAMPGROUND PROJECT

The FS is planning to go to contract award in early June for this project, with construction beginning later this year. In 2016 there will be a late opening of the campground to allow for a spring construction season if it is needed. It will include the construction of a golf cart / pedestrian bridge. They will be moving from a group to a single site campground at Bayview South and small group campground at Bayview North. They will also be installing a trail from Bayview North to the south along the shoreline and from Bayview North up to a view point. They are fast tracking this project. Bayview campground will be closed this year. They are planning to request the reservoir elevation to be 716' from Sept. 20, 2015 – April, 2016 (for foundation and for the footings). Perhaps the Panorama boat launch construction can be performed during this same drawdown. Ann will follow up with Tom Flynn to see if this can be accommodated.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Tony explained that the review period for 2013 is already over. These reports will be finalized in April.

- SA 302: Aesthetics – Plantings are ongoing, painting as needed.
- SA 304: Water Safety – Rec Hazard Monitoring
 - Ongoing water safety monitoring. Will be scheduling the trips for this year.
 - Lone Tree Island. Liability for hitting underwater objects cannot be completely mitigated by signage. It is a navigation issue especially at dusk or dark. We might want to put some kind of reflectors out there to help with navigation.
- SA 305: LB Development– This has been submitted to FERC and is awaiting approval. This won't happen until the dam crest project is complete. If it goes beyond 10 years, we will have to request an extension from FERC.
- SA 311: LB Trail Construction Plan – Draft was filed with RRG on October 17. Need to start construction within 12 years after license issuance. Corrina reported the Town of Concrete has started having meetings with a consultant who is knowledgeable in this area. Concrete is in the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan.
- SA 312: Developed Rec Monitoring and Funding – Still waiting to hear back from FERC. Filed this 1 ½ years ago. Tony will get this teamlet started.
- Kulshan Boat Launch / Parking Improvements (PSE funds) – Construction is scheduled for March 9. They have Whatcom County, Shoreline, USACE, and HPA permits in place. It should be a 2-week project – resulting in 2 launch lanes that extend to the lower recreational lake level of 724' and an 80' dock.

RAM FUNDING

They are currently working on a modification process for the agreement between FS and PSE – should move forward in the next week or so. It will be sent to Tom to sign and then a bill will be produced. Carol has been coordinating this with Tom. The money is there and will be released when PSE receives the invoice. That means half of 2016 funds (\$25K plus escalation) would be available in October. In the June meeting will discuss options for that funding. All were asked to consider ideas for these funds.

RESOURCE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

- TRIG: The Alder Creek property had quite a bit of hunting on it. They are doing elk forage enhancement projects on their newly-acquired Burpee Hill property between Burpee Hill Rd and Baker Lake Road by Vogler Lake.
- CRAG: Rehabilitation of Baker Clubhouse. The Dam Crest project is also underway. They have created an MOA to cover these 2 projects. They will also view the aforementioned documentary videos. Carl Burdick will be the interim alternate for recently retired Jan Hollenbeck.
- Concrete: New Fire Station (Fire and Life Safety Building) will be open the end of April – on Main St, right next to the Community Garden.
- Cross Resource Issues: Zebra Mussels - Aquatic invasive species. At the 505 Aquatic / Riparian Habitat meeting they were talking about monitoring for invasive species. Then it was agreed that prevention was more important than trying to do damage control once these species become established. The current program is ad-hoc at best with LEOs performing some spot checks of boats during fishing season. There are 602 funds that could be used. The USFS would love to be partners in the solution. They don't feel like they should be driving this and the rec. funds should not be used for this. This might be appropriate for discussion at the BRCC level. Lake Whatcom could be a model that we might consider. They inspect 100% of watercraft before they enter the lake.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR RAM FUNDING (AVAILABLE IN 2016)

- Increased monitoring for invasive species
- Updating boat ramps on Baker Lake and combining possibly with a fry planting site

MEETING EVALUATION

- Covered a lot of information
- Facilitation was superlative!
- Good discussions
- Tony feels neglected and needs more action items

June 16, 2014 RRG MEETING TOPICS

- Plan for 2015 Recreational Season
 - How well are we prepared?
 - Invasive Species Checks
 - Lone Tree Island
 - Change in Depression Lake Fishing Rules
- Update on Dispersed Recreation Plan
- Update on Draft Interpretive & Education Plan
- Suggestions for future use of RAM Funding (\$25K +)
- Review of 2015 Implementation Schedule
- Evaluate Meeting

HANDOUTS

- October 21, 2014 Final RRG Meeting Notes
- Draft Meeting Agenda for February 17, 2014