



Baker River Project License Implementation **Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group**

Team Leader: Tony Fuchs (PSE), 425-462-3553, tony.fuchs@pse.com

PRESENT

Tony Fuchs, Jacob Venard, Scott Heller, Haley Edwards, and Joel Schleppi (PSE); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Doug Couvelier (Upper Skagit); Theresa Mathis (USFS); Emily Wirtz (Sauk-Suiattle); Shauna Hee (USFS); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Bob Nelson (RMEF); and Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA).

DECISIONS TODAY: Does the TRIG approve of using the available funding in the SA 602 TERF fund for the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe's proposal for capturing four (4) elk on the Alder Creek property, attaching GPS collars, and tracking them for up to three years? (Decision postponed.)

2014 TRIG MEETINGS

Quarterly on first Thursdays: Sept. 4, Dec. 4, 2014 with conference calls as needed

ACTION ITEMS

- Brock Send Emily Chris' questions re: 602 proposal
- Emily Update proposal with responses to Theresa and Chris, send to Tony for distribution
- Tony Distribute the updated 602 proposal and queue up a decision
- Haley Coordinate loon survey dates with interested TRIG members
- All If interested in loon surveys, let Haley know
- Scott Ensure the Noxious Weeds HMP uses the correct and consistent USFS acronyms
- Tony Send an invite/reminder re: 7/17 doc review / process refresher
- Tony Create some laminated regional and property (AC, BH) maps
- Tony Queue up conference call decision re: Property G
- Joel Let folks know when you plan your site visit to Property G
- Haley Follow up with USFS re: Goshawk nest and harvest plan on BH units 4.1 and 6
- Tony Follow up with DNR re: Goshawk nest and harvest plan on BH units 4.1 and 6

PREVIOUS / ONGOING ACTION ITEMS:

- Tony Talk with Andy about the FTP site issues, coordinate continued clean-up with Scott
- Haley Send Theresa info about current raptor nests around the project
- Stan Coordinate mtg between PSE and the Tribes re: access on acquired lands (still in the works)

SAFETY MOMENT

Jacob talked about a rear-ender on 405 that caused a multi-mile back up this morning, and the group used that story as a reminder to pay attention to driving and leave plenty of space.

BRCC / LICENSING UPDATE

Jacob noted that the recent BRCC meeting had a relatively light agenda focused on updates from the resource groups. The proposed change to the annual reporting schedule was sent out to all parties for review last month; comments are due tomorrow. Assuming the proposed change is accepted, TRIG annual reports will come out each April 30 for a 60-day review (5/1-6/30) and will be submitted to FERC Sept. 30.

The fourth Wednesdays will continue to be reserved for BRCC conference calls as needed. In-person meetings are scheduled semi-annually (spring and fall). The next in-person BRCC meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2014 in Burlington.

ARTICLE 505 ARHWG UPDATE

Scott updated the group about the status of projects approved in the recent round of 505 funding. Contracts are complete for the Mid Skagit project and Emily's project. The USFS 1152 road-decommissioning project has had scope and budget changes. They plan to open the road to the slide area by July, and then complete more engineering and survey work to finalize the work plan. They will follow a similar path, within the original allocated budget and will come forward with an updated proposal for additional funding based on what they learn in the engineering and survey work. He also updated the group on the Little Sandy Creek project. USFS thought maybe one bridge and two culverts would need to be replaced, but it turns out there are three bridges that need replacement. The project sponsor felt that the changed scope would have pushed the costs too high relative to the habitat benefits, so they completed design work to make future work easier and stopped there.

The Hanson Creek project appraisal is complete. Joel reviewed the process; call him if you have questions.

Scott will schedule a 505 meeting this summer to talk about how to address scope / cost changes in the future. Tony suggested it may be helpful to encourage folks to make use of the planning dollars allocated within 505 and perhaps present proposals in phases (phase 1 study / project scoping using planning dollars, come back with a phase 2 proposal for the work based on what's learned in phase 1). The group agreed that it is great to be moving forward on projects!

SA 602 Funding – TERF Fund Proposal

Tony noted that Article 602 is largely about funding for unanticipated needs / adaptive management. The TRIG's 602 fund is called the TERF fund, and is to be focused on studies or enhancement projects. The license calls for PSE to deposit money into that fund in year 10. The money that is in there now is left over from the USFS SA 515 late seral forest work. Tony sent the "project evaluation process for 602 funds" to the TRIG via email to help in their evaluation of Emily's proposal.

Brock asked Emily to connect with his WDFW colleague, Chris, to finalize the plans and clarify how this project would fit with other work in the area. Emily noted that the focus would be to identify frequency of use and home range patterns. Theresa asked how this data would be used to modify our work. She also asked for GIS data so this data could be connected with other data collection efforts. Shauna asked if the data could be available real-time (almost; Emily will have to get data from excel first). Brock asked about her timeline for this work. Emily said she would like to start trapping and collaring in November / December (conditions permitting) and would need to buy the collars in September in order to have them here in time.

Theresa asked if Emily had considered the use of cameras to supplement the collar data. Tony affirmed that he would be bringing up a suggestion for the TRIG to buy cameras later in the meeting. These cameras, if approved, could be used as Theresa suggested.

Theresa asked if the TRIG would want to fund a project to collate data or coordinate data integration / availability in a centralized database. Tony noted this might not be the best use of 514 dollars, but noted that PSE will deposit \$25K into the TERF fund in 2018 and that might be the more appropriate fund. If folks want to send their elk data to Tony, he's happy to post it to the FTP site for all to access. Theresa clarified that she was thinking of actually integrating the different data sets into one database, and wondered if this work could be coordinated with Chris' work at WDFW. *(To connect all of the data, it would require collaboration with the Stillaguamish Tribe and WSDOT because they are collecting the other GPS collar information not WDFW.)*

Brock and Theresa would like more information before they vote to approve this expenditure, so the group agreed to postpone this decision. Brock wants to be sure Chris is on board, and then he could give WDFW support. He will forward Chris' questions to Emily so she knows what he is looking for. Emily will update her proposal accordingly and will also address Theresa's questions, and will send an updated proposal to Tony for distribution to the TRIG. Tony will queue up a decision, either by email or at the Sept. TRIG meeting.

BOTANICAL UPDATE

Scott reported that they are treating wild chervil again this year with direct treatments. There is so much! They got out there earlier this year, May 1 and 12; post-emergence, pre-flowing is the ideal timing. He reported that they are also treating (mainly monitoring) Scotch broom at Baker. Some sites have been eradicated; they've pulled a few sprouts at the campground. The cuttings and bare root plantings have been completed at Burpee Hill. Most are sprouting and looking good. He showed photos and will continue to photo monitor the plants. Weed treatments are planned this summer around the UB campground and Lake Shannon. Also Ivy cutting at trees near LB dam (likely September). He will be flagging trees in the Alder Creek east parcel, Unit 14 to identify areas and plan for blackberry removal. He'll also boat around Baker Lake to identify Reed Canary Grass wetlands and determine whether treatment will be necessary given the summer pool levels.

He is coordinating with Shauna re: Swift Creek erosion reduction project planned around Labor Day. Jacob has been working with Wendy at WDFW on this.

Brock asked Scott to please update the TRIG on yellow sedge and pool levels after the boat survey.

LOON UPDATE

Haley showed photos of the platforms. She'll be meeting with Baker staff at the end of the season to consider improvements and she welcomed ideas from TRIG members. She also projected a table of loon survey data. 4/16: 22 observed (12 at Noisy Creek), 5/5: 161 loons!!, 5/20: 4. Twenty observed birds is a more typical "good day;" the big numbers are probably migrating flocks. They may have been there due to record-breaking smolt out-migration. Monitoring will continue twice a month through July.

LEGACY WOOD

Haley reported that PSE created snags in the Burpee Hill forest area in the end of March as discussed in the last TRIG meeting.

502/514 SONG BIRD MONITORING

Haley walked the group through a review of her work to monitor songbirds on acquired lands. She reviewed the veg data collected at seven stations in Burpee Hill unit 2. She and Scott collected estimated veg data (total canopy cover, tree cover, shrub cover). Scott commented about how fun it was to see a BIG pacific willow. She showed results from the 5/27 survey. Upcoming surveys are scheduled for 6/10 and 6/19 (tentative).

514 ELK MONITORING

Tony proposed using 514 dollars to acquire two trail cameras with cable locks to support elk monitoring in forage areas on acquired lands. Tony has also collected sample protocols for veg / forage and pellet group surveys. He described his plans for this year as high-level visual before / after surveys with a basic component description. Theresa asked Tony to coordinate the camera work with Emily's 602 elk monitoring work. In the budget discussion later in the meeting, Doug suggested there were less expensive cameras available and then Tony could buy more than two; the group clarified that it authorized Tony to move forward with buying 2-4 cameras (not to exceed \$2k).

DOCUMENT UPDATES – NOXIOUS WEEDS

Scott walked through updates to the Noxious Weeds Habitat Management Procedures document. (Highlight: 17 sites have been eradicated 2009-13 and five new ones were found.) He will send a clean version out for a two-week review / decision later this month. He will also send the redline version so folks can easily see what has changed.

LICENSE REFRESHER / DOCUMENT REVIEW

Tony noted that he met last week with Joel, Doug and Peter to go through the license documents. He has scheduled another session for 7/17, 10 – noon. All are welcome.

Burpee Hill Management Program document: Tony noted changes to the site unit boundaries map. There are no proposed harvest units in wetlands or in the valley bottom. The DNR requires a 15-year harvest plan for the Long Term Forest Practices Application (LTA), so Tony highlighted all the areas that the TRIG might want to harvest in the future. He is aiming to get this updated document out to the TRIG for 30-day review this fall. The HPA is required for road retirement work (BI-1413) in the west parcel of Alder Creek; DNR only requires an amendment to the LTA to get the HPA.

ACQUISITION UPDATE

The group welcomed Joel as PSE's new real estate representative. He has worked with Tony, Ira, and Ray to get up to speed on TRIG's activities, and he updated the group on the status of several parcels.

The TRIG reevaluated a parcel that it evaluated several years ago and agreed that it is still a good fit. After much dialogue about options and possible approaches, attendees came to agreement in principle about parameters for Joel's next steps. Tony will queue up a decision for 6/19. In the meantime, Joel will conduct a site visit to confirm that conditions on the ground haven't changed. He'll let the TRIG know when he's going; if you want to join him, let him know.

The property that PSE has been looking at over the last 9 months has now been put on the "back burner" to pursue other properties that have less potential liabilities.

Have questions? Call Joel or Tony.

WORK PLANS

Tony walked the group through the summer work plans on acquired lands. Some activities have had changes in the timeline, but the budget and activities remain the same.

He brought the group's attention to the heavy thinning work planned on Alder Creek unit 5 (uniform 20-24 year-old conifer trees) to create elk forage. They will grind up shrubs and small trees, leaving current large-diameter trees for a future harvest, will scarify the ground and replant forage vegetation. \$10k has been budgeted in the 2014 Alder Creek work plan for this. Based on the contractor estimate, Tony suggests authorizing a week of thinning work plus seeds within this budget amount. There will likely be about 2-5 acres of treated area when the work is done. Haley will also evaluate the space for legacy wood.

There are harvests scheduled later this summer in Burpee Hill units 4.1 and 6. Tony pointed out the location of the Goshawk nest found three years ago. They haven't seen a bird lately, but are still determining whether it is an active nest. Regardless, the proposed harvest boundary can be drawn to leave the nest tree intact. The projected revenue of \$11-12K net/acre will be applied toward the elk management budget. Tony also suggests the TRIG use a more native seed mix here (The other re-seeding sites already contained non-native species, so a non-native mix was fine, but this site is more pristine). Attendees agreed.

BUDGET UPDATE

Tony very briefly reviewed the budget spreadsheet:

O&M Accounts:

Article 502 Forest: \$11k
Article 503 Elk: almost \$50k
Article 504 Wetlands: \$181k
Article 505 ARHWG: \$300k
Article 508 Weeds: \$88k
Article 511 Legacy Wood: \$67k
Article 514 Effectiveness Monitoring: \$103k

The TERF Fund has about \$8k

Capital Accounts:

Article 502 Forest: \$163k
Article 503 Elk: \$2.44m
Article 504 Wetlands: \$67k
Article 505 ARHWG: \$2.14m (available before this year's projects)

Meeting Evaluation – Worked Well

- Great participation – quorum present
- Thanks for FTP postings, Tony! Access issues fixed, too

Meeting Evaluation – Do Differently

- Projector woes ('algae blooms', upside down screens, oh my!)

Draft TRIG Agenda, September 4, 2014

- Welcome, Go Round, Safety, Agenda, Action Items
- License / BRCC Update
- Botanical Update
- Osprey, Loons, Legacy Wood Updates
- 502/514 updates
- 505 Update
- Acquisition Update
- Work Plan Updates, Proposal Reviews
- Budget Update