

BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group

June 20, 2001

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

USFS Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Headquarters
21905 64th Ave. West
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

AGENDA

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review action items
3. Review interests
4. Review study plans for study requests R14 and R9
5. Status report on site inventory (R12) and survey study (R13)
6. Data analysis for site inventory and survey studies
7. Next studies: R-5, R-11, others?
8. Set agenda, location for July 23 meeting and location for August meeting
9. Evaluate meeting



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DRAFT 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,
clawson@huckellweinman.com

PSE Contact: Tony Fuchs: (425) 462-3553, tfuchs@puget.com

PRESENT

Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates, Inc.), Dan Haas (National Park Service), Susan Rosebrough (National Park Service), Ann Dunphy (U.S. Forest Service), Ardis Bynum (U.S. Forest Service), Jim Eychaner (Interagency Committee for Recreation), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. Fish & Wildlife), Andy Hatfield (PSE), Tony Fuchs (PSE), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

INTRODUCTION:

The group welcomed Susan Rosebrough of the National Park Service who was with us for the first time and will be the Park Service representative for this group.

NOTE: SCHEDULE CHANGES

9:00-2:00 **July 23, at Baker Lake Lodge** (subsequently moved to PSE Mt. Vernon Business Office)

9:00 2:00 Move August meeting to **Monday, August 20, USFS Mountlake Terrace, WA**

June 20, 2001 Agenda

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at USFS office, in Mountlake Terrace, WA

NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda/ location?
2. Review Action Items
3. Review interests
4. Studies: R-9, R-14
5. Status Report: R12 and R13
6. Update on survey work
7. How are we analyzing the data?
8. Next studies: R-5, R-11, others?
9. Set agenda/review schedule/location for July 23 meeting and location for August 20.
10. Evaluate meeting

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF SCIENTIFIC STUDIES (PSE)

Tony distributed a PSE prepared document explaining their interpretation of case law and FERC rulings re: what PSE is required to do according to FERC. It explains PSE's views concerning project baseline conditions, ongoing impacts, etc. and is not necessarily the same as interpretations by other entities.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- ALL: Get additional Study Requests for 2002 season drafted as soon as possible..
- ALL: Get "final" comments on R-9 and R-11 to Chris by June 30.
- Chris: Secure Park and Recreation contact from Whatcom and Skagit Counties
- Ann: Get Rockport State Park use data to Chris
- Ann: Mail "Meaningful Measures" Table to Chris

REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS:

- Ardis/Chris revised survey information sheet down to single page.
- Andy worked with Ann to set up additional drop boxes at PSE Visitor Center and Sedro-Woolley ranger station (nearly complete)
- Chris reviewed existing site inventory data re: wetlands. Of the individual site records he reviewed, he didn't see any wetlands called out. He was not surprised because existing wetlands might not be easily observed, and the dispersed recreation sites were almost exclusively on or very close to reservoir/stream shorelines, which would be recorded as the closest body of water.
- Tony sent Don's Mountain Goat Study Request Form to team members.
- Tony checked with Cheryl re: July meeting at Lodge. It's available!
- Ann let Andy know that Panorama Point will be hosted this season.
- Chris gave Ann a copy of field procedures for all the different survey activities.
- Chris got additional feedback from Nancy re: surveys

HANDOUTS:

- Relicensing Issues – Scope and content of scientific studies, June 19, 2001 FERC Project No. 2150
- Revised draft of drop box survey instrument

R9: RECREATION USE SURVEY – ELECTRONIC MONITORING

Chris sent out preliminary study plan on June 7. The plan called for installing one permanent counter on Road 11, North of Road 12 junction past Rocky Creek. A second counter would be a roving counter shifted among four locations: Road 11; Road 1118 going to Horseshoe Cove; Road 1106 to Baker Dam; and on Anderson Creek Road (1107). There's also a section on field calibration and a discussion of operation. The biggest challenge will be separating recreation from non-recreation traffic.

Chris will be meeting in the field with a representative from Trafficount this Friday. They'll set up temporary counters at each of the five locations. This will allow us to capture traffic flows over the July 4 holiday period, and have simultaneous data for all five locations for several weeks. The plan will be to purchase and install equipment for our long-term program by mid- to late July.

Chris will update the study plan schedule to reflect the "trial runs" with Trafficount and send the updated version of the study plan for members to review. Members will give Chris additional comments by June 30. At that time, Chris will send out a revised "final" Study Plan for this group to officially approve at our July 23 meeting.

R5: Visuals and Aesthetics Study:

Deferred for discussion at our July 23 meeting (plan for 2002).

R11: Recreation Capacity and Suitability Analysis

This was tabled at our February 26 meeting since it wasn't seen as critical to complete in 2001. We will discuss this at our August meeting. Any feedback on the current study request should be submitted by the end of June. Chris will work with Lauri on further development of the study request and subsequent study plan.

R7 +R8 = R14: Secondary Data Collection

Chris emailed this study plan to members on June 13. It outlines a plan for literature review and agency contacts to obtain secondary data. The schedule for this study is not time critical. We'll probably get started in late July and finish by the end of the year. Jim will share with Chris state-wide survey data on outdoor recreation, which will identify underserved recreation uses, as soon as it becomes available.

Preliminary Data from Developed and Dispersed Site Inventory (R12)

We've had typical start-up problems, with personnel/paperwork, etc. However, things now seem to be running smoothly. The first crew has been working since opening day of fishing. The second crew started work this week. Chris attributed much of the success of the site inventory and survey study to Andy's hard work and commitment.

Chris has reviewed 2/3 of the individual site records. He will review inconsistent/incomplete forms with Nancy for follow up. We have identified over 200 sites. We probably will discover a few more as the season goes on. There were no major surprises. They found more sites in "known" locations than anticipated. They were pleased to find less trash than expected. This could be due to Ann's efforts. Ann will let Chris know about some vehicular closures the Forest Service will be doing at some access points (for direct access into the lake).

Preliminary Data from other Surveys (R13) Recreation Visitor Surveys

Chris has not made any modifications to the draft study plan that was sent out May 9. He is working with Ann and Ardis to improve the actual survey instruments (for drop box and in person interviews). There was concern expressed for getting a valid survey sample size for the different users and site types. Do we need to set a quota? Our biggest challenge is getting enough in-person surveys. We decided to create distinct interview forms for Lake Shannon and Baker. The survey sampling schedule has been set and is working according to plan. The issue of public perception of water levels may be influencing the number of recreational visitors to the area. There seem to be fewer visitors than normal for this time of year. We are compiling the results from the observation surveys on a weekly basis. The drop-box surveys are being distributed by campground hosts and also by Puget folks, including Lake Shannon. We anticipate an increased response from these as we progress through the season. We've gotten feedback that the drop-box surveys are too long.

Most of the first batch of in-person surveys Chris reviewed were not completed beyond the first page. Chris is in contact with Whatcom County re: the road-side surveys. We will do the first of these surveys this weekend (at the Guard Station). The other planned location is the PSE restroom facility at the Kulshan Campground.

UPDATE ON PSE OPERATIONS MODEL

Tony Fuchs reported that they are on schedule for beta testing in August. They anticipate having the final product by the end of September. The model may not be able to explicitly deal with data needs relating to various resource areas. The model will be able to show different stage heights. It lacks an optimization function relating to specific resources. It will optimize under any scenario for power.

PROJECT AREA MAPS

Tony Fuchs reported that PSE is working toward making GIS the medium for their mapping. They are doing a digital terrain model for the reservoir fluctuation zone, in 5 ft. contour intervals. They are using digital topographical information to depict the FERC boundary. PSE is also working with Walker & Associates to create digital orthophotos (from a fly over in 1999). These show everything within the FERC boundary plus 100 meters out. Upper portions of tributaries are not included. There would have to be additional aerial photo flights to capture these tributaries. There was a request to have the relic Little Baker channel included in the area of study. Anyone wanting access to the data relating to the GIS map can make requests to Tony Fuchs at PSE : 425-641-3553. Reminder: These maps are all still in draft form and will be updated as additional data become available.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

The group finished the regular meeting at noon and spent the last two hours as a technical working group and performed a "final" edit of the drop-box survey instrument. Ardis did an excellent job facilitating this concerted effort.

PARKING LOT

- Visioning exercise
- Organizational/agency goals
- Bounce around with meeting locations
- Operationally define "vicinity", "watershed", "project induced", "dispersed", or "displaced"
- List authorities that this team must be aware of
- Look at dispersed recreation with the Project as a whole.

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- Look into getting guest speaker from Seattle City Light
 - Tie education piece to ALL Working Groups
 - Hold periodic “outreach” meetings for feedback from other groups (hiking, horseback riding, etc.)
 - Land Management
 - Get a National Park Service rep
 - Forest Service presentation of SMS
 - Need good maps of the project area
 - Consult with Jim Johnston (with WDFW)
 - Trail head surveys
 - Have demonstration of Charles Howard Model

EVALUATION OF MEETING

Things Done Well

- Participation by National Parks – Welcome, Susan!
- Ardis helping us be “ruthless” in revising drop-box form
- Stayed focused
- Finished early
- Chris’s organization and hard work.
- Feisty facilitator
- Andy organizing field crew work

Need for Improvement

- Ran over (technical working group)
- Feisty facilitator

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR JULY MEETING

July 23, 2001 Agenda

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Baker Lodge

NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Studies: R-9, R-14, R-12, R-13
4. Study Requests: R5, R3, R2, Road access analysis (travel), Non-motorized trails analysis, Creel Studies, Others?
5. Set agenda/review schedule/location for August 20 meeting at Mountlake Terrace and for September 24
6. Evaluate meeting