



*Baker River Project License Implementation*  
**Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group**  
**FINAL Meeting Notes**

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

**PRESENT ON THE CALL**

Tony Fuchs, Haley Edwards, Ira McDaniel, Scott Heller, Mel Walters, and Cary Feldmann (PSE); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Stan Walsh by phone (SRSC); Marty Vaughn (Biota-Pacific); Kathy Smayda (Smayda Environmental); Bill Richardson by phone and Bob Nelson (RMEF); Patrick Goldsworthy (NCCC); and Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA)

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

- Oct. 11 ARG/BRCC in Burlington
- Nov. 3 **NO** TRIG; Tony will coordinate a 514 teamlet meeting
- Nov. 8 ARHWG w/ ARG
- Dec. 1 TRIG

**DECISION:** None today.

**RETIREMENTS:** Since the last TRIG meeting, Don Gay and Ann Risvold have taken early retirement from USFS. We wish them all the best. Greta Movassaghi will be our USFS contact. Mike Davidson of WDFW has also retired. His retirement party is 10/14; contact Mel or Brock for more information.

**ACTION ITEMS**

- Ira Coordinate with RMEF to revisit owners of previously-reviewed properties
- Tony Add detail to the Burpee Hill spreadsheet to show which activities are required in year one
- Tony Send out proposed seed mix compositions for wetlands and elk forage
- Marty Review L&I guidelines related to harvest and snag creation, give to Haley and Tony
- Tony Email TRIG to ask if there are any desired changes to the TRMP or related plans (incl. link)
- Tony Generate a list of the local (implementation) plans that are subject to regular review or update, note any timing requirements in terms of update frequency or timing
- Tony Schedule Dec. 1 TRIG meeting (Bothell preferred); coordinate 514 teamlet for Nov. 3
- Tony Send out an email, separate from the meeting notes, listing upcoming meeting dates

**PREVIOUS - STILL RELEVANT - ACTION ITEMS:**

- Cary/Greta Update TRIG re: accounting process for Late Seral Forest money and TERF fund
- Tony, Haley, Scott - Compile list of suggested monitoring goals and activities related to Article 514, develop a draft plan for TRIG to review / edit (Tony: elk; Scott: wetlands; Haley: forest)
- Marty Modify pre-acquisition data collection forms to include percent cover estimates for dominant overstory trees on potential elk forage forested stands, as well as notation of other overstory and understory species (for use in legacy wood). Modify understory data collection to include estimates of percent cover of salal, sword fern, Oregon grape w/in elk forage stands.
- Ira, Tony Prepare “straw dog” proposal for access on acquired lands
- Cary, Stan Coordinate meeting between PSE and the Tribes regarding access on acquired lands

### **Update on previous action / decision items**

1. **Late Seral Forest thinning, monitoring, and funds distribution:** At the end of their fiscal year, USFS will do a complete accounting of their Article 515 Late Seral Forest thinning work and the follow-up monitoring (approved by the TRIG at its May 5, 2011 meeting). Remaining funds will go into the TERF fund. Cary and Greta are meeting monthly and will coordinate this transfer.
2. **Alder Creek Brush Management:** Tony learned that RMEF needs more notice to assemble volunteers. He will coordinate with them next spring.

### **BRCC / LICENSING UPDATE**

PSE provides monthly email updates on Resource / Working Group activities to members of the BRCC. The fourth Wednesdays are reserved for BRCC conference calls as needed. In-person meetings are scheduled semi-annually. The next in-person meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11, with the ARG meeting.

The BRCC has not met since the TRIG's last meeting. Cary provided a high-level review of the most recent BRCC monthly email update. The joint Law Enforcement and RRG meeting is scheduled for Oct. 18. The Article 505 ARHWG Request for Proposals is out. Cary reminded the group that requests could be submitted and considered at any time. The invitation asks for submissions by Oct. 7 and asks project sponsors to attend the ARHWG meeting Nov. 8.

### **TRIG BUDGET UPDATE:**

The Forest Article gets its first infusion of money (\$458,380) this month and can pay the Elk fund \$279,520 (\$60k for Alder Creek; \$219,520 for Burpee Hill), thus leaving it with \$178,860.

After acquisitions and related costs, the Elk Capital fund currently has about \$492k. With the Forest payment, the Elk fund will stand at a little over \$770k. When the Wetland Article is funded in October 2012 (Capital "acquisition" funding), it owes the Elk Article \$298k (\$280 for Alder Creek; \$18k for Burpee Hill). This means that the Elk Capital Fund has about \$1-million to work with next year. PSE's next infusion (\$1.25 million) into the Elk Capital fund is due in 2013. *These numbers will be verified by Will Wharton and "final" numbers will be shown in future quarterly financial reports.*

After repaying the Elk fund, the Wetland acquisition fund will have about \$100k.

As of the end of September, the Elk O&M fund has about \$18,400 remaining, minus any additional invoices that have not yet been processed.

### **LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

Ira and Brock updated the group on the property that Ira brought forward at the last TRIG meeting. WDFW said the main property is too close to Hwy 20 and developed properties, but the parcels to the north of this parcel would be acceptable. Per the conversation at the last meeting, Ira and RMEF plan to revisit some of the owners of land TRIG has reviewed in the past.

### **POST-ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES, ALDER CREEK**

**DNR LTA:** Tony reported that Part I of the DNR Long-Term Application (LTA) has been submitted and was quickly approved. The DNR's Interdisciplinary Team conducted a site visit and only suggested one change, which is to abandon the lower road on the north side of the western parcel rather than keep it as low maintenance. The work can be scheduled over time and does not impact the TRIG's ability to manage the site as intended, since this road leads to land that isn't harvestable anyway (very wet). Brock shared that the DFW folks who attended the site visit with DNR's Interdisciplinary Team were impressed with the quality of the work done for the LTA. Part II of the DNR LTA requires identification of harvest units, roads and proposed management, and a description of activities along typed streams.

**Harvest Units:** Tony showed the DNR-required spreadsheet of harvest units and reviewed the proposed actions for each unit with the TRIG. He noted that the trees are pretty young in many areas. Within the 15 year window of the LTA, some areas may provide merchantable trees to help pay for the more specifically forage-related harvests. Marty pointed out that the DNR LTA gives us more flexibility than is afforded to the “big land owners” since the DNR’s permit will give us permission to harvest any time within the 15-year LTA. Stan reminded the group that one of the harvest considerations discussed at previous TRIG meetings is to time our harvests so they do not coincide with other harvests in the general area (thus staggering the creation of new forage areas). Bob pointed out that the market will also influence our ability to do the work.

Tony noted that the DNR might have difficulty approving a full-scale blading to create a large pasture. The TRIG may need to plant herbaceous vegetation around stumps. After some questions, he clarified that creating forage is not a problem; it just may need to be gyro-tracked rather than bladed with a bulldozer. Bill confirmed that gyro tracking can work, depending on the type of machinery used and the fineness of the remaining materials, and can be overplanted successfully. Actual allowable methods for developing forage will be determined with the issuance of the LTA permit.

**Replanting Seed Mix:** Tony is working with Scott to develop a seed list that can be purchased in bulk for replanting activities. They are using RMEF and others’ guidelines (modified for the west side) and are ensuring the list is consistent with state and federal plant lists. Tony projected the draft list onto the screen over lunch. After discussion, the group agreed that it would be better to have two mixes: one for wetlands and one for upland elk forage (dry land). Tony will email this to the TRIG for review and feedback.

**Legacy Wood:** Haley walked the TRIG through the proposed Legacy Wood plan for Alder Creek, management unit by management unit. She pointed out that the plan generally does not create snags from Cottonwoods since the goal is to promote these trees for the neo-tropical birds. Haley will send the document out for review and comment. She noted that the Legacy Wood plan for Alder Creek will get incorporated into the Alder Creek Program Document when the Program Doc is updated.

**Historic Properties:** The CRAG has a list of sites to review at Alder Creek. All are historic sites (old logging R/R grades, a campsite, and a few old fruit trees), and no Native American cultural sites have been identified.

## **POST-ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES, BURPEE HILL**

**Access Road:** Tony showed pictures of the access road and gate that was constructed to bypass the WDFW property. The WDFW gate was moved about 20’ to the south and a new gate installed. Approximately \$19,600 was charged against the Elk acquisition budget for the two gates and the road construction.

**Giant Knotweed:** Over lunch, Scott showed photos from the Giant Knotweed treatment approved at the last TRIG meeting. Due to the plant’s presence on the Skagit Valley plan, treatment is mandatory; and, per the 508 plan, the cost will be charged to the Deciduous Forest Article.

**Year One Actions:** Tony reviewed the notes from the 9/1/11 Burpee Hill Teamlet meeting. The group added more detail to the spreadsheet list of upcoming O&M activities and identified which projects needed to be done in 2011-2012. Due to the number and cost of studies needed for the parcel’s Program Document (local implementation plan), and the DNR’s LTA, any management activities (that would be charged to the elk O&M budget) over the next year or two would likely need to pay for themselves. Some additional adjustments to the schedule and accounting (where projects are charged) still need to be done. The current list of first-year activities for Burpee Hill alone comes to about \$73k in 2012, and the Elk O&M budget gets \$53k and the Wetland O&M gets \$10k in January. We will need to cut down on some of the scope of these activities to stay within budget.

Brock expressed an interest in seeing management activity on the ground at Alder Creek. The group agreed that it would be good to get more clarity around which activities must be done at the Burpee Hill site in year

one (with notations for rationale, ex: required for Program Doc, required for DNR LTA, etc). Tony will add that data to the spreadsheet so the group can evaluate the relative priorities and determine which activities could reasonably be pushed into a future budget year. Marty pointed out that the Burpee Hill LTA is not time-sensitive unless TRIG wants to start on related activities.

Tony also pointed out that all of the Alder Creek work to date has been charged against the Elk O&M fund. The TRIG could consider charging some of the studies or activities against other O&M budgets if appropriate.

**Legacy Wood:** Tony asked for confirmation of the proposed approach to the Burpee Hill Legacy Wood survey (management unit walk-through rather than a more robust survey) and the TRIG agreed. The draft Legacy Wood Implementation Document has a couple of sections that speak to the rationale for this, including 5.5.1 (Field Sampling of Current Conditions) and 3.3 (General Management Considerations).

Haley noted that there will not be a separate Legacy Wood plan for Burpee Hill because legacy wood prescriptions will be included in the Burpee Hill Program Document. The only reason we created a separate plan for Alder Creek is that the Legacy Wood Implementation Document had not yet been created when the TRIG created the Alder Creek Program Document.

### **LEGACY WOOD IMPLEMENTATION DOCUMENT**

The Legacy Wood Implementation Document is our local document (does not require FERC approval for updates) and acts as a bridge between the FERC-submitted plan and the property-specific prescriptions within each property's Program Document.

Haley and Marty walked the group through the draft section by section. They will add detail and make some minor modifications based on today's dialogue and will send it out by the end of October for review and feedback. We will review any changes at the December TRIG meeting.

### **BOTANICAL TEAMLET UPDATE**

Scott shared highlights of the Botanical Teamlet's work since August 4.

- The Carex Working Group found 75 additional plants since the 2009 baseline. (WhoHoo!) Their draft final report with maps and additional detail is due Oct. 15.
- The Bull and Canada thistle survey and treatment were completed August 15-16. Scott reported that there were only small patches and everything is treated now.
- The Giant Knotweed at Burpee Hill was bent and mapped Aug. 18, and treated Sept. 13.
- The Sept. 21 Plants of Special Status survey found Goblins Gold Moss at Wetlands 18 and 24. There is one more field day to complete the 2011 monitoring for Plants of Special Status.
- The *Carex flava* Management Plan is nearly ready to distribute for review and comment. Scott is hoping to get it approved at the December TRIG meeting.
- There is quite a bit of Reed Canary Grass regrowth at Wetland 17, so the Botanical Teamlet is planning to retreat again in spring. That moves the replanting back to a later date (no planting party this fall), but the plants being grown for us can be overwintered at the nursery for a small fee.
- Scott also surveyed a site with Ivy near the Lower Baker Dam (about 75 trees, bounded by roads, unlikely to spread). Scott put treatment on the Baker staff's list of fill-in work.
- On the back burner is an assessment of Wild Chervil on acquired lands. It flowers in spring and has not been assessed yet at the Alder Creek property.

### **OSPREY UPDATE**

Mel walked the group through the history of Osprey nest structures, from the poles that were originally installed in the 1980's through to the current goal of tempting Osprey back into the trees to nest by topping suitable trees. He projected a map showing the locations of all artificial nesting bowls (10), topped trees (13), and natural nests (2).

He passed out a report on the 2011 Osprey nesting surveys, which included five boat surveys and one aerial survey. There were five active Osprey nests on Shannon and two on Baker. He noted that there was competition this year for the nest sites. Half of the bowls were occupied by geese in April; by May, all the geese were gone. This year was unusually cold and wet, so the Osprey nested later than usual, but in general, if geese continue to use of the bowls it may help facilitate the Osprey's move into the trees. Mel expressed curiosity about the potential competition with eagles, too, since there were also two active eagle nests on Shannon and three eagle nests on Baker. It will be interesting to watch the trends.

### **PLAN UPDATE SCHEDULE**

Tony reminded the TRIG that the TRMP must be reviewed annual for the first ten years of the license then every five years for the remainder of the license. Any changes will require submitting an amendment to FERC. He asked if the TRIG wants to change or update anything within the TRMP or its related plans. None were identified at the meeting. Tony will send an email to all so TRIGgers who were not at the meeting have the opportunity weigh in.

In addition to the FERC-approved plans, the TRIG also has a number of "living documents" (for example the Alder Creek Management Program Document, Plants of Special Status plan, the upcoming Legacy Wood Implementation Plan, etc). Tony noted that the TRIG has a lot of new information for the Alder Creek Program Document; he suggests formally updating this plan when the DNR LTA is complete. He and his team will generate a list of the other plans and note considerations that impact timing of future reviews / updates (for instance, suggesting annual update of the Plants of Special Status plan when the updated state / federal plant lists are announced).

### **Meeting Evaluation**

- Bothell location good (downstairs room preferred); central location is appreciated
- Good job Tony, Marty, Kathy, et al, on the DNR LTA Part I ... kudos for quality work!

### **Draft December 1 Agenda – Bothell, with Web-X, Call**

- Agenda, Notes, A.I.
- BRCC / License Updates
- Land Acquisition Updates
- Post-Acquisition Updates
  - Alder Creek: DNR Application
  - Burpee Hill: "year one" activities
- Legacy Wood Implementation Document – Review feedback
- Access Management
- Document Update Schedule (Program Docs, plans, Effectiveness Monitoring teamlet update, etc)
- Botanical Update – Approve *Carex flava* Plan