



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 Ira McDaniel (PSE); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Theresa Mathis (USFS); Mike Wolten and Emily Wirtz (Sauk-Suiattle); Shauna Hee (USFS); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Bob Nelson by phone (RMEF); and Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA).

DECISIONS TODAY: None

2014 TRIG MEETINGS

Quarterly on first Thursdays: March 6, June 5, Sept. 4, Dec. 4, 2014 with conference calls as needed

OTHER UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Jan. 23 Article 505 Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group – *Full* Proposal presentations
- Feb. 6 Article 505 Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group – Funding Decisions
- April 23 BRCC

ACTION ITEMS

- Tony Send out TRIG representative list to all for review / update
- Haley Send the Legacy Wood recommendations to the full TRIG
- Jacob Coordinate a Baker Meeting FTP site for presentation distribution before meetings
- Scott & Jacob Clean up / organize the existing FTP site
- Tony Incorporate today's edits into the TRIG Norms, send out to full TRIG
- Haley Send out the document flow chart presented today
- Tony Incorporate today's edits into the EMIP, send out with two-week notice for adoption
- Tony Send attendees the parcel map for the property considered today (confidential)
- PSE Add to the list of considerations / uncertainties related to the parcel considered today
- Ira Work with Ray to meet with the landowners to explore the questions raised today
- Tony Schedule TRIG conference call for Ira to report out and for the TRIG to decide about next steps
- Haley Schedule a meeting with Emily and Theresa to work on 502/514 Song Bird Monitoring
- Tony Call Devin (SRSC) to talk about logistics and costs for road decommissioning

PREVIOUS / ONGOING ACTION ITEMS:

- Haley Talk with Emily re: frequency of song bird monitoring and tie-in with management actions
- Stan Coordinate mtg between PSE and the Tribes re: access on acquired lands (still in the works)

SAFETY MOMENT

Theresa reminded folks to leave a little extra time to get where you want to go so you aren't stressed by winter weather and holiday traffic. Jacob reminded parents in the group to listen to their parental instincts ... especially when thinking about setting your small child on a family member's large animal.

BRCC / LICENSING UPDATE

Tony shared a few highlights from the recent BRCC meeting, pointing out the record-breaking fisheries work, the near completion of the major capital projects, and a celebration of *10 years without a lost-time (injury) accident!!* He also invited TRIG member to contact him if you'd like to tour the recently completed work at Snoqualmie, including the beautiful historic building (former carpentry shop) that the BRCC met in. He also updated the group on a couple personnel changes at PSE. Jacob Venard is stepping into the role of License Program Manager, and our own Scott Heller will be taking over the role of team lead for the Article 505 Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group. Folks congratulated both of them.

Proposed change to the annual reporting schedule: At the last BRCC meeting, PSE proposed streamlining the annual reporting cycle. The BRCC responded favorably to the idea and asked that each resource group also review the proposal. Jacob walked the TRIG through the current calendar of monitoring and annual reports, noting that PSE would like to adjust the reporting schedule to reduce redundancies, minimize the lag time, and streamline work for everyone. He shared a possible alternate reporting schedule for the group to consider. The proposed schedule eliminates the second round of review for annual reports, aligns the reporting seasons with the calendar year (except for an aquatic report that is aligned with fish brood years), gives all the reports the same review / comment window, and expands that review window to 60 days to give folks more time since there is just the single review. There was support for the proposal. As the group talked about removing the second review period, some said the second review is not needed, others like the second review opportunity but noted that they usually don't have time to make use of it. Stan also commented that all parties still retain the option of commenting directly to FERC if they feel that their comments are not appropriately included / addressed. *WDFW likes the new, longer 60-day comment window.* If the other resource teams are also comfortable with an updated schedule, PSE will work with FERC to determine the whether this change would need to be handled as an amendment to the license or if there is another approach.

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 April 23, 2014 in Burlington.

ARTICLE 505 ARHWG UPDATE

Scott gave a brief overview of the recent Article 505 ARHWG meeting. Four proposals were presented; it looks like at least three of them will move forward to provide a complete presentation in January. USFS also shared information about a scope change to their previously approved project. More information about that will be presented at the next ARHWG meeting, which is scheduled for January 23. Funding decisions will be made February 6.

NORMS REVIEW

Jamie walked the group through a review of the TRIG's meeting norms, noting that the last review and update was in 2009. Several minor changes were made throughout, updating meeting location and frequency, correcting outdated / inaccurate terms (like replacing "minutes" with "notes" and replacing "chairman" with "team lead"). The group agreed to start asking attendees to RSVP so that PSE can plan rooms and meals more accurately. The group also asked PSE to establish an FTP site for meeting materials and asked that presenters post materials before the meetings when possible. The group also noted that the availability of attending meetings remotely is a norm for the resource groups, but the *meeting technology, particularly for those participating via computer on Microsoft Link*, has been really rough of late. This needs to be better. Tony will incorporate the edits identified today and send the updated norms out to the full TRIG.

ARTICLE 502 (FOREST) PLANTINGS AT BURPEE HILL

At the last TRIG meeting, the group talked about planting black cottonwood and Sitka willow stakes at the sites where knotweed was treated in the bottomland area near the highway at Burpee Hill. Haley, Scott, and Tony did the plantings, which included 425 stakes (225 willow, 200 cottonwood). Haley showed photos of the work. Scott noted that they are planning to intermix some bare root plantings; that work will likely happen in March.

LEGACY WOOD

Haley commented that Legacy Wood work was minimal this year. She pointed out that the license calls for \$10k in funding for this article each year and noted that there is currently a buildup of \$59k in that fund. She shared a proposal for increasing the focus on this work. She suggests creating a couple conifer snags at the sites on Burpee Hill reviewed last spring as well as some alder snags in the big alder stands (which could be done strategically to concurrently create openings for more cottonwood/conifer plantings). She would also like to conduct evaluations for potential snags around the songbird monitoring locations. Haley asked for TRIG members' priorities. The group was comfortable with the recommendations presented, requesting an extra focus on riparian areas. They noted that while alder snags aren't a focus, it would be ok to create some alder snags as presented. They also asked her to coordinate legacy wood work with the planned harvest on units 5 and 15 at Alder Creek. She will email the recommendations to the full TRIG for reference and will fold this work into the 2014 work plan. Theresa offered to help with analysis. Tony suggested the TRIG plan to spend at least \$10K in 2014, and noted that we could expect to see about 30 snags, maybe a bit more, for that budget. There was support for this approach.

BOTANICAL UPDATES

Scott reminded the group that the noxious weed Habitat Management Procedures was approved last March. It includes a five-year treatment and monitoring schedule. He noted that he and his team were able to do more work than projected in the first five years (2009-13). Generally, he started in the most pristine / least disturbed areas and worked his way down toward Lower Baker and Hwy 20. Exceptions were made for high priority plants, all of which have been treated regardless of their location. He used the original five-year work plan to build the schedule for the next five years (2014-18). In 2014, many ongoing treatments will continue.

Scott also updated the group about a lichen population from the Plants of Special Status listing. Now that it is stable, it will be added to the regular five-year schedule.

The *Carex flava* census was completed in August. Scott has shared the draft report with the Botanical Teamlet for review and comment. He will distribute the final report to the full TRIG when it is available. Bottom line: Some potential risks to specific transects were identified, but we continue to have more than the required number of plants (396 in 2013 vs. baseline of 362). The next surveys will be done in 2015, 2017, and 2019.

LOON UPDATE

Haley reported that the *nesting* platform that disappeared mysteriously is being replaced this month so that it will be ready for the next loon *breeding* season. She also noted that the monitoring report will be coming out soon.

ARTICLE 514 (EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING) UPDATE

Tony walked the group through a flow chart Haley developed to show the relationship between the various license-related documents, starting with the relicensing process, flowing through the Settlement Agreement, which led to the License Articles. The flow chart shows how the Article 501 Terrestrial Resources Management Plan (TRMP) leads to management plans for each of the sub articles (502 Forest, 503 Elk, and 504 Wetland, etc.), which each lead to "Program Documents" that outline the management actions on acquired lands and "Management Procedures" that outline work in each of the other articles. Procedures Documents are the "living documents" (documents we can change locally without having to resubmit to FERC) which describe the specific work to be done and the methods to be used to complete that work. The 514 Effectiveness Monitoring Implementation Procedures (EMIP) describes effectiveness monitoring work for the actions described in the program and procedures documents for articles that don't otherwise have a dedicated budget for monitoring (articles that explicitly call for monitoring aren't addressed in the 514 EMIP since that monitoring is addressed and funded elsewhere).

He then reminded the group that the TRIG has been working on the EMIP document for quite some time, literally years. It was most recently reviewed in September. Since then, the PSE team has tried to incorporate the comments shared at that meeting and via email. There have been some challenges finalizing the document electronically and Brock suggested we address this again in person today *by talking through the edits and comments in person*.

The group walked through the comments table Tony created to track the proposed and incorporated comments to the EMIP. Theresa thanked the PSE team for incorporating or providing rationale for each of her comments. She brought up a few additional questions for clarification, which were all addressed “live” in the meeting. Brock thanked Tony and Haley for the clarifications, including the document flow chart and comment table. He was happy with how most were addressed, but still has concerns with the text around buffering of internal roads.

One of the areas of greatest comment has been around buffering of roads that are internal to acquired lands. Tony noted that the existing Program Document calls for buffering roads that create visibility into the sites from public spaces. Brock believed that buffering was called for even on private, internal roads, particularly those that are likely to play host to foot traffic *because PSE’s lands remain open to walk-in public recreation*.

After much dialogue, Scott suggested removing the sentence about internal roads from page 8, section 4.2 of the 514 EMIP document. Brock agreed because it appears to contradict or at least provide arguable interpretation of the Program Document. TRIG agreed with that deletion and noted that it (the TRIG) will need to reconsider / clarify the buffering language in the property’s Program Document.

Tony thanked everyone for muscling through the differences of perspective so we could find agreement. He appreciates the thoughtfulness and effort folks have put into this review process to make sure the document represents our best thinking about the options available. He will incorporate today’s revisions and send out again with a two-week notice for adoption as our current guiding document.

ACQUISITION UPDATE

Ira updated the group on potential acquisitions, including pre-acquisition work authorized last meeting for a specific parcel. Details about potential acquisitions aren’t included in public notes. If you have questions or comments, please contact Tony or Ira directly.

502/514 SONG BIRD MONITORING

Haley will work with Emily and Theresa to develop an updated Song Bird Monitoring proposal. Anyone else interested, please contact Haley. We’ll see more on this at the spring TRIG meeting.

TRMP REVIEW

Tony asked the TRIG if there is a need for TRIG to review / update any of its FERC-approved Management Plans. TRIG agreed that there is no need at this time. Tony also asked about the “living” (locally updated) procedures documents. He noted that some are already slated for review and update, including the noxious weeds procedures. Haley noted that the Legacy Wood procedures document will likely be ready for an updated this year, and the Burpee Hill Program Document will also be up for review in spring with updated data from the DNR Long Term Application process.

WORK PLAN, ALDER CREEK

Tony walked the group through the draft 2014 work plan for Alder Creek, which includes: identify forest work sites, manage blackberries, wild chervil treatment, planning for forage prep w/ baseline monitoring on Unit 5, legacy wood work, brush out road and remove culverts to retire BI-4113-12 and BI-1413-12-13. Tony asked if the TRIG would like to consider a heavy thinning on Unit 5. Based on TRIG’s initial reaction, he will bring forward a proposal for the group to consider at the next meeting.

TRIG also talked about culvert removal. Tony suggested putting \$10-15k toward this required work in 2014. Stan noted that a lot of the cost is associated with equipment mobilization. He suggested that Tony talk with Devin about this. It may be better to save up for a few years *and remove all the culverts* at once.

WORK PLAN, BURPEE HILL

Tony walked the group through the draft 2014 work plan for Burpee Hill, which includes: legacy wood work, knotweed treatment, goshawk surveys, possible 502 monitoring (TRIG will consider a proposal on this in March), timber harvest in Units 4 and 6, plant cottonwood / willow stakes, brush out road BH-1100, and prepare / seed forage areas. TRIG will see this again in March, along with more detailed proposals indicated above.

BUDGET UPDATE

Tony briefly walked the group through the current budget spreadsheet. He noted that 2013 numbers will be finalized when the TRIG sees this again in March.

Meeting Evaluation – Worked Well

- Brock in person!
- Thanksgiving food a fun bonus
- Good dialogue, follow-through, and patience working through complexities of 514 doc
- Thanks for great ongoing agency participation / partnership
- Facilitation

Meeting Evaluation – Do Differently

- Institute an all-RSVP for more accurate room / meal planning
- Put presentations and other meeting docs onto FTP site before meeting when possible
- Provide handouts for text-heavy reviews (like the comments table for 514 doc review)
- Add detail (first Thursday) TRIG calendar in the upcoming meeting section at top of notes

Draft TRIG Agenda, March 6, 2014

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