



BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group

March 24, 2003

9:00 a.m. – 2:30 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. Studies update
4. Draft study report review – R13 Recreation Visitor Survey Study
5. Debrief March Cross-Resource Workshop
6. Review Draft PSE Proposed Action
7. Set agenda / location for April 28th meeting
8. Evaluate meeting.



BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group

March 24, 2003
9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
USFS Office, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98273

FINAL 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: Andy Hatfield (PSE): email is andrew.hatfield@pse.com and phone number is (360) 853-8341.

PRESENT: Patrick Goldsworthy (North Cascades Conservation Council), Jim Chu, Ann Dunphy and Ardis Bynum (USFS), Brian Adams (Skagit County Parks & Recreation), Dave Reid, Cary Feldman and Andy Hatfield (PSE), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator and Mary Jean Bullock, notetaker (PDSA Consulting).

2003 REGULAR SCHEDULE

Apr. 28, May 19 (third Monday), Jun 23, Jul 28, Aug. 25, Sept.22, Oct 27, Nov. 17 (third Monday), December 15 (third Monday). Assume Forest Service Office in Mountlake Terrace.

THE CONFERENCE CALL LINE WILL BE OPEN DURING ALL THESE MEETINGS. PLEASE CALL 1-866-280-6429 AND ENTER PARTICIPANT CODE: 144995 #.

SPECIAL MEETING

March 28 at PSE Business Office in Mount Vernon from 8:00 – 2:30. The purpose of the workshop is to talk about cross resources conflicts among PME’s from Terrestrial and Recreational Working Groups. Members are encouraged to call in, if unable to attend. The Terrestrials will leave at noon and we will remain to edit the initial draft proposed actions.

INTRODUCTIONS

The group welcomed Dave Reed (PSE) *Government and Community Relations Program Rep.* We also welcomed Jim Chu of the Forest Service.

All meetings are from 9:00 to 2:30 unless otherwise specified.

March 24, 2003 Agenda – USFS Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Headquarters

9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Studies Results
 - Data gaps
 - Next steps
 - % responsibility for PME (USFS/PSE)
4. Debrief March Cross-Resource Workshop
5. Set agenda/location for April 28th meeting
6. Evaluate meeting

NEW ACTION ITEMS –

- ALL: Considers edits to draft proposed actions We will begin to make these edits responding to the May 1 deadline, from 12:20 to 2:30 (after the meeting with Terrestrials at PSE Office in Mount Vernon on March 28th)
- Andy: Send out draft agenda for March 28. workshop (Terrestrial/Recreation).
- Andy: Overlay proposed reservoir rule curve with actuals from 2001
- Andy: Check in with Lauri re: wildlife constraints (how to handle sensitive data reports).
- Andy: Make sure dispersed site data (questions re: descriptions of dispersed sites) is attached to GIS layer (rather than remaining in tabular form) – also make sure occupancy rates are included.
- Andy: Get out raw data from Visioning Exercise to Working Group members prior to March 28 workshop.
- Andy: Bring all available maps to March 28th workshop
- Andy: Button up with Chris re: results of Non-Highway. Vehicles Survey (NOVA) to supplement information from R9.:
- Ann & Andy: Work on Visioning roll-up and sent to PSE. Ann reviewed feedback from Kathy Ludlow on essence statements.
- Andy: Check with Tony re: R-2's study information on sites impacted by human use (Hamer's report for vegetation cover type study, rare plant, dispersed recreation). We need this for the March 28 meeting with members of the Terrestrial Working Group.
- Andy: Call Susan, Saul, Ken, and Cindy: re: March 28 workshop attendance. If they can't attend they can call in.
- Andy: See that Tony brings all relevant maps to the March 28 workshop.
- Andy: Bring Anderson maps to March 28 meeting.

-
-
- Lyn: Call Rob Mohn re: Louis-Berger Recreation liaison
 - Andy: Get commitment from Chris for April 14 deadline for all study results.

REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS

- ALL: Got Chris feedback on R12 outline by March 7.
- Brian: Checked to see when the next County Comp Plans (land use) are expected to be out. These reports are renewed every five years. The report was to be out in 2002, but an extension has been granted until 2005. Brian reported that the zoning for South Lake Shannon is one house per 20 acres. For the North of Lake Shannon, zoning is one house per 80 acres. There is a mineral overlay in Southeast Lake Shannon. All indications are that the majority of growth over the term of the next license period will be west of the town of Concrete.
- Andy: Saw that the Forest Service Plan GIS layers were included in R2's map set (ROS, VQD, scenic corridors).
- Andy: Talked with Tony about posting a zoning map (showing urban growth) along with land use maps at the cross-resource workshop. He will also see that this map is brought to the March 28 workshop.
- All: Let Andy know if you had questions re pictures/CD.
- Chris: Sent out R-12 report outline to Working Group members for review.

UPCOMING RECREATION-TERRESTRIAL WORKSHOP

This workshop will be held Friday, March 28, 2003 at the PSE Office in Mount Vernon, from 8:00-noon. There will be representatives from both Working Groups. Cary Feldmann will cover the fish perspective.

- Need to be able to look at dispersed campsites in terms of cover type
- Cultural Working Group will review suggested changes to the initial draft proposed actions.

The purpose of the workshop is to talk about cross resources conflicts among PME's from Terrestrial and Recreational Working Groups. Members are encouraged to call in, if unable to attend. The Terrestrials will leave at noon and we will remain to edit the initial draft proposed actions.

STUDIES UPDATE

R-9 Electronic Monitoring

Andy reported that Chris is investigating some apparent anomalies in the data. Expect the report out by March 28.

R-12 Site Inventory

Suggested changes to outline: We need discussion of the data in terms of clumps of dispersed sites. We also need to display these sites and discuss their characteristics in an interactive way.

R-13 Visitor Survey

The draft report was out last week in CD form. Andy expressed concern that the sampling may be somewhat disproportionate in terms of Kulshan/Resort data. Concern was that "other" was the #1 response without a listing of what was included in this category (e.g., p. 4-35).

Concern was also expressed re: the interpretation of the word "important". For some, the original lake was important and they may not visit the present day reservoir, so they are not represented in our survey.

Others may have been staying away due to dissatisfaction with reservoir levels. The graphs were also difficult to understand (e.g., 4-45, etc) because the categories were not clearly/obviously defined. We need to know how Chris lumped the data, e.g., Does *PSE users* include Kulshan and the Resort? (Yes).

It was also noted that prior information about facilities/characteristics of certain sites with help set expectations and limit surprises among users.

In general, the graphs (are an easier way to guide interpretation of the data, compared to the tabular displays of data. Larger graphs would be easier to read. NOTE: It was suggested that Baker Lake be referred to as Baker Lake Reservoir).

All were asked to get additional comments to Andy by April 28.

R-14 Secondary Data

This will feed the Needs Analysis (R-16) which should be out by early April. There are no plans to issue this as a separate report. A bibliography will include what data are being incorporated.

R-11/15 Capacity/Suitability Analysis

This report should be out in April. Andy will check with Chris Lawson re: when exactly we can expect it.

R-16 Needs Analysis

This report is due out the first week in April.

MARCH 4-6 CROSS REFERENCE WORKSHOP

FERC announced that they are requiring that we submit our Settlement Agreement (in license article lingo) along with the license application on April 30, 2004.

They won't be granting extensions.

To the extent we make that deadline, we will be able to maintain local control over decisions. All Working Groups have committed to produce a second draft of proposed actions by May 1 (hence our meeting with members of the Terrestrial Working Group this Friday, March 28, to brainstorm how to resolve cross-resource conflicts). We are on the critical path. Currently our attention is on the measures and not the costs. NOTE: We need to take special care to *date* all versions of documents going forward.

REVIEW OF DRAFT PROPOSED ACTIONS

Improve Recreational Safety and Resource Protection

Water based actions

Safety issues seem self evident.

Relating to water levels (operating regime), we need additional information as to how much of what we do have will be influenced by the rule curve. We will look at specific sites once the rule curve has been established.

Land-based Safety actions

Regarding law enforcement support: What would PSE do besides providing housing (and support through taxes). USFS suggested that the housing doesn't have to be in the PSE compound.

Concern was expressed that sheriffs are not visiting often enough to please people there. There was also concern that lack of additional enforcement may compromise future sites/facilities.

PSE might provide for funding (Whatcom/Skagit Counties) for this additional support. Enforcement, education, facilities designs, site control, etc. are all key issues here.

We could also look at the level of enforcement that the tax base currently buys and how that might be altered to provide better support. The communication system must function in concert with law enforcement.

Fire Control in the Basin

There is a call for increased levels of patrol. This may tie to law enforcement.

Access Control

This seems well written. We'll discuss this further with the Terrestrial Working Group members on March 28th.

Improve and Manage Dispersed Recreation Sites

The list of sites looks pretty good at first glance. We need to consider this from the terrestrial perspective. This evaluation will take into consideration appropriateness of sites in terms of impact on resources and the overall quality of experiences provided at each site.

Our Visitor Survey results show that dispersed campers are seeking either a secluded site, an economical site, or a combination of the two.

Dispersed camping is a big part of the Forest Service identity. There is some disagreement about how this should be managed. We need to be sensitive about the level of control. This will be site specific and will be an iterative process.

Note: Lower Sandy seems to be a popular site (view, etc.). It looks like it may conflict with wetlands and elk forage.

Implement Adaptive Management

There was a question about the RAM fund (Recreation Adaptive Management). The Baker River Coordinating Committee (BRCC) would function as an umbrella organization to cover each of the resource areas. The concept is seen as good. The details need to be worked out. Will the RAM be sufficiently funded? This fund is provided as a place holder for things going forward. It wasn't intended to be an excuse for not taking specific actions. Conversely, the intent behind the fund is to ensure that specific actions are taken.

Availability of Data

Andy will get a commitment from Chris Lawson that all Study results will be out by April 14. After our April 28 meeting, we will set up two teamlet meetings (PSE and USFS and PSE and Skagit County) to come up with a recommendation for this Working Group to review re: the percentages of shared cost responsibilities, going forward.

Continuing/Ongoing Impacts

The continuing/ongoing impacts discussion will be listed as "hot" to share with the Solution Team. We will ask them to recommend how to resolve this.

Develop and Implement a Scenery and Aesthetics Management Plan

We need to consider all project-related facilities (some campgrounds on the lake where erosion is a

concern, etc.)

Re: PME Option 220.1, Patrick stated that it was the interest of the North Cascade Conservation Council that it read "... on or affecting National Forest, National Park, Wilderness, and roadless area lands within the Baker River Basin".

Construct, Operate & Maintain Trails & Trailheads

There is a creation piece and an O&M piece. A Forest Service aim is to take impact off of wilderness areas. The Forest Service would like to see trails that are multi-benefit, multi-use. Mountain bikers are under-served.

NOTE: Well maintained trails with proper information posted tend to discourage "wanderers". There are differences in priorities in terms of what should be done when. Part of the original vision included a trail from the town of Concrete to Baker Lake. Private land ownership may be a constraint here. This could be continually tracked through the RAM. The same goes for Baker Lake west side trail.

Provide and Maintain Public Road Access

Andy stated that there wasn't time to flesh this out much.

Members are happy that steps are being taken to gain legal public access to Lake Shannon boat ramp –or alternate site with suitable/ "equivalent" (similar) opportunities (something that meets the need).

Re: maintaining access over Baker Dam, it is important for the Forest Service to have access across the dam for a variety of reasons.

Construct, Operate & Maintain Information, Interpretive & Educational Services & Facilities

Looks great! Suggestion: Have signage include USFS and NPS lands. We need a comprehensive plan that is well integrated with all facilities. The Forest Service is considering establishing a site just off the National Forest Land on the Baker Lake Highway. They are struggling with securing an easement for that land (owned by Crown Pacific).

Construct, Operate & Maintain Developed Recreation Facilities

Developed Campgrounds

There is a need to discuss percentages of shared responsibilities here for O&M, bringing campgrounds up to standard is included in PME #240.11.

There is a need to discuss the trigger for Bayview as well as the disposition of the Resort. The Forest Service would like more certainty around triggers and development of future programs as well.

Skagit County will suggest wording for 240.18. How does this overlap with use and needs data?

Visitor Day Use Facilities

The use seems to mirror campground use. We might want to include this in the percentages for campgrounds since they function together. We need to make a list of what facilities would be included here.

Boat Launch Ramps

This needs to be looked at within the context of the reservoir rule-curve. No extensions seem necessary as recreation needs were taken into consideration in the setting of the rule curve. It would be helpful to overlay the rule curve with actuals from 2001 for Shannon Lake and Baker Lake. Andy will do this for us.

We also need to be sure to address the quality of existing boat ramps.

HANDOUTS (handouts to be posted on the web will be bolded)

- PM&E Option/PSE Draft Proposal Cross Reference Sheet
- Draft of R-13 Recreation Visitor Survey

PARKING LOT

- Presentation of National Forest Plan
- Land management
- Forest Service presentation of SMS
- Hold periodic “outreach” meetings for feedback from other groups (hiking, horseback riding, etc.)
- Field trip- summer 2003?
- Review USFS Roads Analysis Report- 2003?
- Tie education piece to ALL Working GROUPS
- Access Management Study

EVALUATION OF MEETING

Things Done Well

- Covered a lot
- Welcome to Jim, Dave and Patrick
- Facilitation helps
- R13 looks great!

Do Differently Next Time

- Got out late
- Missed Jim E., Lauri, Saul, Susan, Cindy, Ken
- Time crunch
- Lots of work to do

What’s Hot?

- Continuing/Ongoing Impacts Philosophy (ies)
- Fleshing out Resource Management Plans (with tight schedule and lack of data)
- Lack at Study results

Studies Update for Solution Team

- Still waiting for Study results
- Got draft report for R-13 Visitor Survey
- Need Needs Analysis

TENTATIVE AGENDA

**April 28, 2003 Agenda – USFS Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Headquarters
9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Discussion of Studies Results
4. Debrief March 28 Cross-Resource Workshop
5. Determine Next steps to meet May 1 deadline
6. Set agenda for May 19th meeting
7. Evaluate meeting