



PUGET SOUND ENERGY
The Energy To Do Great Things

Baker River Project License Implementation **Baker River Coordinating Committee**

Team Lead: Tom Flynn, 425.457.5868, Tom.Flynn@PSE.com

PRESENT: Tom Flynn, Jacob Venard, Paul Wetherbee, Arnie Aspelund, Lynda Kupfer, Elizabeth Dubreuil, Tony Fuchs, and Haley Edwards (PSE); Bill Trueman (Skagit PUD); Bob Helton (Citizen); Carol Gladsjo and Erin Uloth (USFS); Lou Ellyn Jones by phone (USFWS); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Kara Symonds (Skagit Co.); Lyn Wiltse and Jamie Riche, facilitators (PDSA).

BRCC MEETINGS: The BRCC meets semi-annually and reserves the 4th Wednesday of each month for potential BRCC meetings or conference calls. Tom will continue to send out email updates on implementation activities to all during the months where the BRCC does not meet in person.

Next BRCC Meeting: October 22, 2014 in Snoqualmie

Other Upcoming Events / Meetings: Baker Project Tours: July 26, 2014

DECISIONS: None today.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Tom Send Bill instructions to find project documents online, including links to the archive and a direct link to the license itself
- Jacob Distribute the proposed updated annual reporting schedule to the resource groups by 4/25; confirm that the proposed schedule works for the co-managers

PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEMS

- All Send feedback on the Baker License website to Andy Hunting or your resource group lead
- All Send updates on your org's designated reps to Lynda Kupfer (lynda.kupfer@pse.com).

SAFETY MOMENT

- Tom shared a story about his brother, who received a concussion when he was “just boogie boarding.” The incident that caused the injury seemed minor, so he did not seek treatment until days later. Be proactive, especially with head injuries! Err on the side of caution.
- Spring rains make for dirty cars. Lyn suggested folks take a moment when you next fill up your gas tank to wash your headlights and taillights so that you are more visible.
- Elk and other wildlife are moving in the valley ... be thoughtful and attentive when driving and hiking / recreating.

BRCC HOUSEKEEPING AND PERSONAL UPDATES

Anna Wingfield is the PSE employee who maintains the lists of representatives for the BRCC and all of the resource groups. She is out on maternity leave this spring, so please forward any changes to Lynda instead (lynda.kupfer@pse.com). Lynda noted that each organization has a primary contact and many have secondary or back-up representative(s). If you are updating the contact information for your organization, please be sure to include whether the new person is a primary or back-up representative.

LICENSE REFRESHER

Tom walked the group through a brief refresher of the license. Many organizations were involved, including four federal agencies, four state agencies, three tribes, four local jurisdictions, a number of NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and a couple citizens. Twenty-four parties are signatory to the Settlement Agreement, which is the basis for the license. FERC issued the license in 2008, granted for 50 years.

The License divides the project work into four main areas:

- Aquatic Resources, which covers issues related to water quality, flows, fish passage, flood storage
- Cultural Resources, which include the protection of historic and cultural resources in the boundary
- Recreational Resources, which includes campgrounds, boat launches, trails, etc.
- Terrestrial Resources, which includes Elk, Eagles, Osprey, Loons, Botanical issues, etc.

Tom shared highlights of the major articles within the License:

- **Article 101 is about Fish Propagation.** Tom showed photos of the new hatchery, noted that they are processing almost 6 million fish through the facility this year. Stan noted that the capacity could go as high as 14.5 million fish in Phase Two.
- **Article 103 is about Upstream Passage.** This article is focused on the upstream fish trap (formerly called the adult fish trap). This facility captures fish on their way upstream; fish are then transported according to the Upstream Trap Protocol.
- **Article 105 is about Downstream Passage.** Tom showed photos of the state-of-the-art Floating Surface Collectors (FSCs). The Upper Baker Floating Surface Collector (FSC) is in its seventh year of operations; it attracts the smolts into a container to be transported around the dam. The Lower Baker FSC went into operation for the first time in 2013. This is a huge improvement over the old gulper systems they used to use. Last year was a record-breaker, with 826K fish. (For context, in 1987, the first year there was a gulper on the facility, 77 fish were transported).
- **Article 201 is about Cultural and Historic Resources.** Tom briefly noted the consultations, protection of historic sites, and mitigation work that Elizabeth and the CRAG (Cultural Resources Advisory Group) focus on.
- **Recreation and Aesthetics:** PSE provides funds to the USFS to assist in the development and maintenance of campgrounds, visitor facilities, trails, roads; they also collaborate with local groups and law enforcement. PSE has also nearly completed the decommissioning of the spawning beaches as called for in the license.
- **There are quite a few articles focused on Terrestrial Resources.** One of the areas with a lot of activity in recent years has had to do with property acquisition for elk forage and protection / mitigation / enhancement of wetland and riparian habitat. Tom showed photos of two parcels purchased to date, called Alder Creek and Burpee Hill. The Terrestrial Resources group also oversees the articles related to Noxious Weeds, Plants of Special Status, Osprey and Loon nesting

platforms, Eagles, and other terrestrial resources.

- **Article 505 is an article to provide funding for projects related to aquatic riparian habitats;** it is overseen by a joint working group of the ARG and TRIG. Six projects are underway from previous years; two more projects were approved this spring.
- **Article 601 established the BRCC and the four resource groups.** BRCC is the policy-level group tasked with overseeing implementation of the license. The resource groups meet quarterly, mostly in Burlington, and the BRCC meets twice per year. This article also spells out the decision process (consensus), dispute resolution process, and provides key definitions.
- **Article 602 spells out the funding schedule for adaptive management** activities that were unforeseen at the time of license issuance. There are four of these funds that align with the resource groups.
- All funds noted in the license are in listed in “2006 dollars” and there is a formula included in the license to adjust funds annually to account for inflation and interest.
- The License is where FERC orders PSE to operate the facility in accordance with the Settlement Agreement, other regulatory requirements, and terms and conditions. Tony pointed out that FERC actually included the Settlement Agreement within the License itself. This sometimes creates confusion since there are some repeated article numbers. PSE is intentional about listing articles as SA# or LA# to clarify the difference.

RESOURCE GROUP UPDATES

Aquatics Resources Group (ARG) Update – Arnie Aspelund

Arnie reported that the ARG continues to meet quarterly. The agenda usually involves operational details as well as implementation activities related to aquatics articles. He displayed a slide of ARG highlights since the last BRCC meeting:

- This is the 4th operating year of hatchery, 5.8 million sockeye fry through this year (highest to date)
- Work to identify additional fry release sites is underway (Technical Group formed)
- SA 104: Annual Fish Connectivity Implementation Plan (FCIP) Consultation is complete. 2013 results reviewed, 2014 plan confirmed (mostly focused on Char)
- SA 105: This is the 2nd year of operations at the LB FSC; it's the 7th year of operations at UB FSC
- Repairs are planned to address the screen issue at the LB FSC. Work is beginning this week. An interim plan for 2014-15 has been established, with a more involved solution to follow if needed.
- 3rd year / round of ARG-TRIG SA 505 ARHWG (Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group), Six restoration projects are underway from previous years; two more projects approved this spring
- Annual reports

What's next for ARG?

- 2014 ARG Mtgs: 6/10, 9/9
- SA 101 Headworks erosion plan
- Complete plantings and other final work for the Spawning Beach decommissioning
- This year's Sockeye forecast is 35,377 (if this is holds true, it will be our third highest on record)
- SA 104: Connectivity activities (capture, collection, and transport) for returning native char
- SA 105: Outmigration season peak is coming right up (May)
- SA 110: Swift Creek Campground, erosion project

Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group (TRIG) – Tony Fuchs

Much of this team's current work is around acquired properties. Highlights of TRIG work since the last BRCC meeting include:

- There isn't a lot of field work over the winter, but they did complete bare root plantings in knotweed treatment areas at Burpee Hill
- SA 508 Noxious Weed Habitat Mgmt Procedures document has been updated for the next 5-year treatment cycle
- Loon platform monitoring is ongoing; no nesting observed yet, the platform that mysteriously disappeared last year has been replaced and the rest have been maintained
- Goshawk surveys (none observed in last 2 years) and a timber harvest to open up elk forage are being planned for the Burpee Hill site
- 3rd year / round of ARG-TRIG SA 505 project selections. Six restoration projects are underway from previous years; two more projects approved this spring

What's next for TRIG?

- TRIG Meetings: 6/5, 9/4, 12/5
- Timber harvest at Burpee Hill and retirement of road #BI-1413 (pull culverts) on Alder Creek
- Related to SA 514 Effectiveness Monitoring: Haley will conduct two rounds of neo-tropical bird surveys in June, and plans are underway for pre-treatment elk forage surveys
- Weed treatments, including blackberries and wild chervil at Alder Creek
- Legacy Wood development at Burpee Hill (5 conifer snags have been identified; some work will be done on Alder stands, too, to open up more forage space)
- Forest enhancement plantings (cottonwood and willow) at Alder Creek

Cultural Resources Advisory Group (CRAG) – Elizabeth Dubreuil

Highlights of the CRAG's work since the last BRCC meeting include:

- It's still a bit wet for fieldwork, but they have started. Most work has been focused on the Lower Baker Campground Redevelopment to restore the Baker Clubhouse, demolish other structures, and create additional storage.
- Provided archaeological and geotechnical monitoring for the above.
- Weston Homestead Report – Weston had a multi-cultural homestead (really more of a logging camp), which includes pre-contact materials (tools that were used by native people who lived in the area originally). Items collected will be curated and stored at the Burke Museum.

What's next for CRAG?

- Elizabeth will complete the DAHP Level II Report for the LB Redevelopment work, which is a very detailed way to document historical structures in advance of demolition / alteration work.
- LB Redevelopment is going to affect our Washington Portland Cement Company Historic District, requiring the demolition of two buildings, decay-in-place plans for two others, and rehabilitation of the historic Baker Club House building into office and visitor center space.
- Collaboration w/ the ARG on the Swift Creek Erosion Control project.

Recreation Resources Group (RRG) – Tony Fuchs

Pam Garland got a new job as the O&M Supervisor at Baker. (Congratulations, Pam!) Tony will step into the team lead role for this group. Pam will remain the main PSE contact for the Law Enforcement team.

- Last meeting was a combined meeting, with RRG in the morning and the Law Enforcement group in the afternoon.
- Approved RAM funding (\$231,865) to USFS to harden the Panorama Point Boat Launch and expand parking in 2015.
- Reviewed the Recreation Implementation Schedule for 2014
- USFS provided an update on the Dispersed Recreation Plan (non-hardened campgrounds)

What's next for RRG?

- Recreation Hazard Monitoring / Large Woody Debris (LWD) collection starts next Monday
- Open Fish Season, 4/26/14
- Open Camping Season, 5/23/14
- Sockeye fishery opens shortly after the July 4 holiday weekend (July 9ish)
- 2013 annual reports will be available 7/31/14
- Next RRG meeting is 6/17
- There has been interest in increased monitoring of invasive plants and animals; expect additional boat checks this year.

MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATES

Lower Baker Unit Four Powerhouse: Tom reported that construction was largely completed last summer. There were some vibration problems uncovered with the new turbine during commissioning. This is limiting current operations to no more than 15-20 MW. The manufacturer brought in their lead research team to identify the source of the problems and suggest possible fixes (which will be their responsibility). They are building a physical model of the unit to simulate conditions, identify the problem, and test possible solutions. PSE expects to hear more from them this summer. The most likely option seems to be for the manufacturer to build new wicket gates (which direct water toward the turbines); if that is necessary, construction could move forward next spring. There is a slim possibility that the repair won't require wicket gate replacement, and if that is the case, the work could be completed by the end of 2014.

The SA and License call for this work to be completed by October 2014. The work was on target for early completion until this issue was discovered, but now the project cannot be completed by this October. PSE has communicated with the ARG several times, starting last autumn and including updates in December and at the quarterly ARG meetings. They also notified FERC of the issue and submitted a request last week for a one-year extension on the completion deadline.

Bob Helton suggested PSE run the machine again and complete a recording of the noise to help diagnose the issue. Tom replied that he and his team feel comfortable with the modeling planned for this project and may not take that additional step in order to avoid risking additional damage to the system.

Spawning Beach Decommissioning: Tom reported that in-water work was largely completed last year. Synthetic infrastructures were removed, five LWD flow-control structures were placed, and the rest of the site was altered to match surrounding topography. The site revegetation work could not be completed

before the weather turned cold. They will complete some modifications of the LWD placement this summer and finalize plantings in the fall.

Hatchery Headworks Water Supply: Tom shared that PSE is planning to complete some additional erosion control work. They have hired a consultant to conduct a slope stability analysis and suggest additional measures. Jacob is expecting a draft design in the next few weeks, and work could commence this summer and fall. Lou Ellyn asked to review the draft plan and Jacob assured her that PSE will share that.

Erin commented that USFS is also very interested in understanding and addressing long-term sedimentation into Sulphur Creek. She noted that some of this is due to natural causes, and some is caused by the additional stresses the project places on the hydrology in the area. Lou Ellyn added that this stream is important because it is perhaps the only stream in the area that provides spawning for bull trout.

ANNUAL REPORTS – PROPOSED SCHEDULE CHANGE

Tom reminded the group about PSE's request to adjust the reporting schedule to reduce redundancies, minimize the lag time, and streamline work for everyone. Since the last BRCC meeting, Jacob has vetted the proposal through all four resource groups. Based on feedback from those groups, the proposal has been adjusted to keep all the annual reports in a calendar-year cycle for simplicity and consistency. The single review period was expanded to 60 days to maintain the same total review time (used to be two 30-day reviews), and the review period was moved to the spring to avoid the work-heavy summer season. Jacob will also check with the co-managers to confirm that the schedule will meet their needs.

Jacob worked with FERC to identify the process for changing the schedule, and he was happy to report that this change will not require a license amendment. FERC directed PSE to document the consultation they have completed with the SA signatories via the resource groups and submit the revised schedule for FERC authorization. Jacob will distribute the updated proposal to the signatories by the end of the month for review and comment.

SKAGIT GENERAL INVESTIGATION (GI)

Kara reminded the group that the GI is a flood risk reduction study by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The Corps is evaluating the potential of additional storage at Lower Baker and changing the drawdown seasonality at Upper Baker from Nov. 15 to Oct. 15 in order to reduce economic damages and risks to life/safety in Skagit County.

There are currently four alternatives on the table, including one that represents no action. Each of the three action alternatives includes optimizing dam storage at the Baker project. The county is waiting for the Corps to announce the tentatively selected plan (also called the "preferred alternative"). Once they have made that announcement, there will be a public comment period before the Corps moves to the 30% design level. If the project moves forward, future work would include engineering and design, then construction, and finally operation and maintenance. Skagit Co. has cost-sharing obligations at each step along the way.

The Corps has called a meeting with resource agencies May 21 to talk about the effects analysis of dam storage. It is specifically an agency consultation meeting and is not a public meeting.

Stan reiterated that he is strongly concerned that the level of environmental analysis to come from the GI won't meet the level of analysis that was promised within the Settlement Agreement and License. Kara noted that she believes this is one of the topics slated for the Corps' May meeting.

Closing Remarks:

Paul shared a few thoughts, noting how different the view is through Vantage now that the Wanapum Dam has been drawn down to address dam safety issues. He noted that at one time PSE had five owner-operated hydropower generation projects in Western WA. Today, there are just two: Baker and Snoqualmie. He brought up the Wanapum project because this event shines a light on the topic of dam safety. Every five years, PSE must go through a process called a Part Twelve inspection. They convene a panel of experts to analyze potential dam safety risks, and then develop appropriate plans. It is an exhaustively detailed process ... and 'tis the season once again.

Tom reiterated Paul's appreciation for the way this group works together. He noted that PSE could not be where it is, with most of the major projects completed and operational, without the strong collaborative working relationships these groups enjoy. Lynda echoed those comments and added her appreciation from a compliance point of view.

NEXT BRCC MEETING:

October 22, 2014 at Snoqualmie

DRAFT AGENDA

- Confirm representatives to the BRCC and Resource Groups
- Working Group Updates
- Updates on Major Projects, including Unit 4 update
- Review the new Project Evaluation Protocol in light of RRG's experience
- Possible Amendment re: Daily Pool Change Proposal
- Update on General Investigation, Preferred Alternative

MEETING EVALUATION:

What worked well:

- Thank you, Tony and Kara, for stepping in to provide great updates on short notice!
- Thanks for flexibility with moving the meeting date
- Good level of detail / depth on the resource group reports
- Folks in the room did a 'splendid' job speaking up and waiting for the mic to get to them so phone attendees could hear and participate
- The Lync system worked well this time for Lou Ellyn
- Got done a little early!

Do differently:

- No state agencies in attendance lately; perhaps a little outreach would be helpful?
- Please ask the caterer to note which items are friendly for gluten-free / vegetarian folks