



## *Baker River Project License Implementation*

### **Baker River Coordinating Committee**

**Cary's Contact Information:** 425.462.3088, Cary.Feldmann@PSE.com

**PRESENT:** Cary Feldmann, Paul Wetherbee, Arnie Aspelund, Jacob Venard, Elizabeth Dubreuil, Lynda Kupfer, Tony Fuchs, Pam Garland, Haley Edwards, Nick Verretto, and Nathanael Overman (PSE); Greta Movassaghi and Theresa Mathis (USFS); Bob Helton (Citizen); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Dan Berentson (Skagit County); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Lyn Wiltse and Jamie Riche, facilitation (PDSA)

**BY PHONE:** Steve Fransen (NMFS); Lou Ellyn Jones (USFWS); Shane Richards, Andy Hunting, Jim Hogan (PSE)

**WEBSITE:** You can find Baker River documents available to the resource groups such as resource group plans, reports, meeting notes, etc., via PSE.com:

<http://pse.com/aboutpse/HydroLicensing/Pages/Baker-River-Licensing.aspx>

**BRCC MEETINGS:** The BRCC meets semi-annually and reserves the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month for potential BRCC meetings or conference calls.

**DECISIONS:** none today

#### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- Cary: Post Baker Settlement PowerPoint as PDF on the Baker License Website for all to review
- Cary: See that PSE sends out a notice about when updated documents have been posted to the website.
- Lynda: Post 2011 letter asking for resource group representative updates to the PSE website. 2012 letter will be sent in September.
- All: Send feedback on the Baker License website to Andy Hunting or your resource group leader.

#### **PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEMS**

- All Send updates on the designated reps for your organization to Anna Wingfield (anna.wingfield@pse.com).
- All Continue to reserve 9-11 a.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wed. of each month for potential BRCC calls.
- Cary Continue to send out email updates on implementation activities to all during the months where the BRCC doesn't meet in person.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

- Paul announced that John Jensen, Plant Manager at the Baker Project has taken another position at PSE working with the Maintenance Management System in southeast Washington. The new plant manager should be on board in July.

### **BAKER LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION WEBSITE**

Andy explained PSE is working on making website more user friendly. It will include videos, etc. Brock is having trouble opening documents from the website. He thinks the problem may be internal to WDFW. Andy posts what has been placed in the inbox once a month. Plan documents will be posted to the site as well as minutes, agendas, etc. Andy invited all to give him feedback about how to make the site more useful / user friendly.

Note: PSE also has an FTP site for working documents, maps, etc. So far it has been mostly used by the TRIG and CRAG. It is password protected and is helpful for viewing larger documents that are works-in-process rather than clog recipients email inboxes.

### **RESOURCE GROUP UPDATES**

**CRAG:** Elizabeth Dubreuil, Team Lead for this group, reported that the Cultural Resource Advisory Group's (CRAG) last meeting on April 4 included a field trip at the Lower Baker dam site. They are discussing how to best address adverse effects caused by actions that will affect the historic character of the dam and fisheries. These actions include changes to the dam, removal of the Lower Baker gulper, and the soon to be decommissioned spawning beaches on Forest Service property. The Upper Baker Floating Surface Collector replaced the old gulper there which was also historic. Modifications to adult fish trap also constitute an adverse effect to the Historic District. PSE is in the process of creating a draft 2-Party MOA in accordance with the Historic Properties Management Plan. They plan to distribute it to the CRAG for review prior to their next meeting on June 20. They have already consulted on the stipulations of the agreement. It is just a matter of getting the CRAG to review and approve it. They will then move forward with the historic projects (removals, alterations, etc.).

They have been reviewing the design for new building at Upper Baker dam for 6 months. They are performing Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation for properties being removed. This documentation includes photographic and narrative descriptions with plant personnel to ensure authenticity.

On the recently-purchased Burpee Hill property, the Area of Potential Effect (APE) is being determined in advance of performing cultural surveys there. They are also working on Baker Clubhouse. Lead and asbestos assessments have been done for Baker Club House and BOLA is working with environmental group to create Lead Control Plan for Club House. They are safely removing paint from exterior prior to replacement product being applied.

Much preservation maintenance done on buildings is exempted from CRAG review. Elizabeth expects the frequency of their meetings to eventually become less. They are currently meeting every couple of months due to all the capital projects going on.

The CRAG had commented they would like to see a website where some of the historic documents and photos can be posted. PSE is investigating whether to use existing websites or to create something unique. They are also planning to create some short films:

- Native American perspective on fishery/early conservation
- Early construction of dam and fish passage
- Evolution of early Gulpers, fish traps, etc.

There will be a final re-evaluation of what is left after all the current work is complete. At that time it will be determined whether we still have as historic district. Public outreach will be ongoing. A draft MOA is expected to go out to CRAG for review in the next week or two.

**ARG:** Arnie Aspelund, Team Lead for this group, reported that the Aquatic Resource Group (ARG) met on May 8th. The Fish Passage Technical Working Group was dissolved as of April. Members will continue to participate in relevant discussions through the ARG meetings from this point forward.

Good progress on the Lower Baker FSC construction continues. They are finishing fabrication of the NTS, readying for pump and baffle installation, field painting on the FSC, concrete pouring on the Pier deck and fabricating the transport vessels.

ARG members are invited to attend the launch of the new FSC which is scheduled to occur the week of July 23, 2012. March 1, 2013 is the scheduled start-up date for the Lower Baker FSC.

We are past the peak of the juvenile out-migration season and another one for the record books. We will have set a new record for sockeye [now about 436,000], passing 2010 record mark of 436K. Coho counts are currently around the 6<sup>th</sup> highest [62,800] (2009 record is 131K). Through end of May about [499,200] juvenile fish have been collected and transported, currently the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest (2010 record is 525K). A single day record was set at 94K. There were two days when sub-sampling was in operation. The Upper Baker FSC and the Lower Baker gulper will both continue to operate through July.

PSE selected Anchor QEA for the initial work product of a conceptual design for decommissioning of Spawning Beaches 1-3. PSE and Anchor met at the site on April 9<sup>th</sup> for a site reconnaissance and assessment to begin analysis for design. This conceptual plan will be based on the Scope of Work prepared by the USFS last spring. We anticipate introducing draft concepts to the ARG in June, a Technical Working Group meeting has been set for June 26<sup>th</sup> to refine concepts and come to a preferred alternative, then the draft preferred alternative presented to the ARG at the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, with adoption of the preferred conceptual plan in August.

2011 adult broodstock tested positive for IHNV last fall. A case of IHN was reported in one of the 1<sup>st</sup> incubation batches at the hatchery. As result, 44,000 infected fry were euthanized. A second case of IHN infection appeared in some sockeye ponded from the 6<sup>th</sup> egg-take. Subsequently, 39,000 were euthanized and buried. And a third case of IHN infection appeared in May, subsequently 130K sockeye fry in the extended rearing program were euthanized. A group of sockeye fry were held in reserve to replace these lost. There was no disease outbreak in the Beach 4 fry.

Smaller container sizes make a big difference in limiting IHN losses to small batches of fish. The small IHN outbreaks this year put the containment features of the new hatchery and the operational procedures to the test and the good news is they worked.

The larger part of the AI production had no indication of virus, which yielded about 4.4 million fry from the approximately 5 million eyed-eggs. From the AI program, about 2.3 million fry were released into Baker Lake, 2 million fry released into Lake Shannon and 130K for extended rearing. At the spawning beach, fry emigration totaled about 1.13 million fry released to Baker Lake. Beach 4 is shutdown for annual maintenance as they ready this and the AI facilities for the June return of adult sockeye broodstock.

<b>BY 2011 Sockeye</b>	<b>Baker Lake</b>	<b>Lake Shannon</b>	<b>Rearing</b>
AI Sockeye	2,296,499	2,000,010	133,551
SB4 Sockeye	1,129,068	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,425,567</b>	<b>2,000,010</b>	<b>133,551</b>
<b>BY 2011 Coho</b>	<b>Baker Lake</b>	<b>Lake Shannon</b>	
AI Coho			182,411
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>182,411</b>

WDFW is reporting that the 2012 pre-season sockeye forecast is to be 35,366 fish (actual return in 2011 was estimated at 36,768; 27,195 to trap, 9,573 in fishery). The upstream fish trap was shutdown for annual maintenance during the slow time in May in preparation for the coming summer-fall fish returns.

USACE presented an update on the Skagit GI to the ARG on May 8<sup>th</sup>. They are a third of the way through feasibility scoping meetings. They have identified 6 conceptual alternatives that will be analyzed. The Corps is looking at scenarios for Baker storage and PSE, county and Corps are meeting to plan how storage analysis process will move forward. Concern was expressed, from a cultural/historical and aquatic standpoint, about an earlier drawdown.

PSE submitted the 2010 annual report to FERC April 25, 2012. A draft plan for SA106 Flow Implementation is anticipated to be out by June and is due to FERC in October of this year. Distribution of drafts of the Downstream Fish Passage Plans for Upper and Lower Baker FSCs is scheduled in October 2012. A formal draft implementation plan for SA108 Gravel was distributed to the ARG April 17<sup>th</sup> and comments were due by May 18, 2012. PSE is working on a draft Large Woody Debris Collection Methods and Procedures for SA 108. We are into the next cycle of article annual report drafts coming up to the ARG. The first of the 2011 annual reports (the 108 Gravel article and 109 LWD reports) was submitted to the ARG.

SA505: The TRIG and ARG have selected to fund three SA 505 aquatic riparian habitat projects (1) Swift Creek – FSR 1152 Storage/Decommission, (2) Lower Day Creek Slough – Faber Property Restoration, (3) Kaaland Property Floodplain and Riparian Restoration, for implementation in 2012 and 2013. At an upcoming June 7<sup>th</sup> TRIG-ARG meeting they will be discussing ways to improve the project selection process.

Folks representing the Yuba River Project Relicensing and accompanied by Gary Sprague, toured the Baker Fish Facilities (UB FSC, Hatchery, Upstream Trap, LB FSC) on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Upcoming meetings: The next ARG meeting is scheduled for June 12th and will be an in-person meeting at the Skagit Service Center. We expect a discussion on the Flow Implementation Plan monitoring and reporting requirements for the new powerhouse, draft concepts of Spawning Beach Decommissioning, updates from the LB FSC construction, juvenile migration and hatchery operations and planning, and brief updates on other license implementation activities.

## **SETTLEMENT REFRESHER**

Cary Feldmann walked us through a creative and comprehensive PowerPoint presentation that captured the content and spirit of the Baker Relicensing process. He reviewed the Project Data for Upper Baker. As part of the relicense goal was to respect the need for ongoing relationships – PSE customers, general public, FERC, state and federal resource agencies, (regulators), counties, and municipalities, tribes, environmental groups. Another goal of the relicense process was to balance resource needs and allow for the widest representation possible.

We started with a global stakeholder group out of which were created the various resource groups. Technical Working Groups were created from the various working groups as needed to focus on specific technical issues. Working groups came up with potential solutions in the form of PME's (Protection, Mitigation and Enhancements). The Baker Solution Team created final solutions which ultimately resulted in a comprehensive settlement agreement. This represented an accumulation of diverse perspectives of the 24 Settlement Parties.

Over 160 groups notified – nearly 500 on initial stakeholder list. PSE hosted many public tours, held public meetings, and other forms of outreach to the community.

The Aquatics Working Group held 138 meetings with 47 major studies. The Terrestrial Working Group held 70 meetings with 14 major studies. The Recreation and Aesthetics Working Group held 99 meetings with 9 major studies. The Historic and Cultural Working Group held 34 meetings with 5 major studies, and the Economics & Operations Working Group held 24 meetings with 1 major study (HYDROPS analysis).

The Alternative License Process was founded on inclusiveness. FERC responded by issuing on October 17, 2008 a license of 50 years. Flexibility is built into the agreement through adaptive management opportunities. Other benefits include increased future collaboration – access to diverse parties – reduced potential legal challenges to the license, stable market competitive power cost, and WUTC regulatory support for the term of the license.

Lessons Learned include:

- Facilitation makes the collaboration journey efficient and enjoyable
- Licenses and for decades, long-term relationships a key to success
- Broad-based involvement (including NGOS) is the key to future successes

Some of the Implementation Highlights:

Article 101 Fish Propagation: New spawning beaches, and state-of-the art hatchery, well designed and collaboratively developed – can produce 15 million fry each year.

Article 103 Upstream Passage: Counting house and sampling room.

Article 105 Downstream Fish Passage: The award winning Upper Baker FSC is setting records for fish outmigration. We are experiencing record sockeye returns.

Historical and Cultural Resources: Historic Properties Management Plan is in place, as is the Programmatic Agreement, Historic Districts designated. Protection of archaeological sites, and training of plant personnel is in place.

Article 502: Terrestrial land purchases: Alder Creek and Burpee Hill Management plans are in place.

Article 505 Riparian: 3 projects approved so far.

Article 506: Osprey nest structures are in place.

Article 506 Loon Nesting Platforms (popular with geese).

Article 510: *Carex flava* no longer on FS sensitive species, but still important species to enhance and control reed canary grass that is crowding it.

Article 512: Bald eagle management plans are in place.

Article 601: Created the BRCC based on licensing Working Group / Solution Team model of collaboration among settling parties. Any signatory can be a part of the resource groups or the BRCC. All create group solutions that go into the implementation. The TRIG, RRG, ARG, and CRAG are responsible for making decisions. In the event they are unable to do so, the issue would be elevated with the BRCC for resolution. This has yet to occur which shows the system is working.

#### **RRG:**

Pam Garland, Team Lead for this group, reported on recent activities of the Baker Recreation Resources Group (RRG). They are meeting 3 times a year. They are providing ongoing funding to the USFS for ongoing projects, including law enforcement. Funds were recently used as requested by WDFW for the purchase of a bear trap. This is being stored at Marblemount and has been used already several times. Swift Creek Campground is up and running (following the decommissioning of the Baker Lake Resort). Article 318 Law Enforcement Plan is also in place. Law enforcement officers meet at before each recreational season to plan for the season. They also meet at the end of each season to discuss lessons learned and plan for the following year.

The recreation series 2011 Annual reports will be out for agency review at end of July. The next RRG meeting will be June 19 at the Baker Lake Lodge. This will be a field trip, including boat trip with USDA-Forest Service and WA Dept Fish & Wildlife to the boat access dispersed sites along Baker Lake. There will be a focus on peak recreation season and Sockeye Fishery season. They are working closely with law enforcement to provide safe environment for the recreational season. PSE is getting contracts in place with WDFW, Whatcom County, and USFS.

Creel surveys were better for Lake Shannon than Baker Lake. The Visitor Center now staffed with host in weekends, Kulshan campground host in place. It is the same as person who was there the last two seasons.

Having some struggles with waste management and wildlife resistant containment. Not getting appropriate dumpsters. Greta suggested contacting Carol on this. It is a condition of the WDFW bi-op.

#### **MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE: LOWER BAKER POWER HOUSE**

Shane Richards, Project Engineer for this project, reported that the new Lower Baker power house has been under construction since the end of 2010. They expect it to be online by August of next year if not sooner. They are on budget and on schedule. The new unit will be 30 megawatt / 1500 cfs. It is a vertical Francis Turbine. The ARG will review progress at their next meeting in June.

## **WORKING GROUP UPDATES (CONTINUED)**

**TRIG:** Tony gave the report on the recent activities of the Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group (TRIG). They have adopted the SA 511 Decaying and Legacy Wood Implementation Plan.

The draft Management Plan for the Alder Creek property is being updated. Work on the SA 514 Effectiveness Monitoring plan is ongoing, with a draft due this fall. They plan to begin baseline surveys for forest birds at Alder Creek (related to SA 502 Forest enhancement planning) in early June. The property contains some areas where we need to add culverts before we can drive on it. This will be discussed with TRIG members (when and how to do the access road work).

Field work and GIS mapping for the Burpee Hill management program document have been completed, and an initial draft of the Burpee Hill Management Plan is complete. They have identified program goals and objectives for the property. They include elk forage, wetland protection, and hardwood forest for migratory birds. The management unit prescriptions have been sent to the TRIG for review and input at their next meeting. They hope to receive comments before the next TRIG meeting. They anticipate getting the roads and steep slope assessment complete and turned around for review by July. They will then start working on the DNR application.

They are doing wetland and amphibian surveys on Burpee Hill Property (400 acres). There are flooded forest areas with pretty good habitat. They have yet to see any Oregon spotted frogs or bull frogs. They are working with the PSE Real Estate Group on tribal access agreement. The Burpee Hill Draft Management Plan, with comment revisions included, will be available by the June TRIG meeting.

Haley reported that 4 loon and 2 osprey surveys were begun in April. There are two sites with legacy wood management. They are developing prescriptions for Burpee Hill, including a monitoring program for neo-tropical birds. They will be doing aerial survey for eagles and osprey for early July. Some loons have been sighted near Baker Lake. There are no geese nesting on the nesting platforms this year. Osprey: treated trees have some osprey on them.

Tony reported they recently planted 1000 plugs of wetland plants into Wetland 17 in those spots that were treated for reed canary grass. They have visited all of the rare plant sites.

Will be doing some clearing, and timber harvesting in the next few years on the purchased properties. There is still nearly \$2 million available for purchasing additional elk lands.

The next TRIG meeting is June 7 in the Baker Room of this building.

## **MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE: LOWER BAKER FSC**

Jim Hogan (PM for this project) explained the FSC will be launched into Lake Shannon the week of July 23. They will decommission the gulper in August after fish run is complete. They anticipate commissioning of all the new systems for 3-4 months. Pier concrete has been poured. Will be installing fencing, light fixtures, water pumps, floating dock on the end of the pier, 2 transportation vessels. One is complete – other is 30% complete.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Paul thanked everyone for their participation and for the spirit of collaboration in the midst of so much political divisiveness occurring throughout the country. The Baker License implementation activities will

be shifting in the next year or so from construction to operation. This will change the nature of these meetings somewhat.

## **MEETING EVALUATION**

### **Well Done**

- Food
- Pictures
- Cary's SA presentation
- Nice to have folks call in for updates
- Web ex
- Stan arrived a half hour early

### **Do Differently**

- Level of participation
- Stan arrived a half hour early
- Have Safety Moment at start instead of end of the meeting, instead of at the end