



## *Baker River Project License Implementation*

### **Baker Aquatic Resources Group and Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group Joint Meeting Final Meeting Notes**

**Team Leader:** Jacob Venard, jacob.venard@pse.com

#### **PRESENT**

Jacob Venard, Tony Fuchs, Arnie Aspelund, Mel Walters, Haley Edwards, Ira McDaniel, Scott Heller, and Cary Feldmann (PSE); Ashley Rawhouser (NPS); Bob Kuntz (NPS); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Stan Walsh and Devin Smith (SRSC); Bob Nelson (RMEF); Patrick Goldsworthy and Jim Davis (NCCC); Sue Madsen (Skagit Fisheries); Ann Risvold by phone and Don Gay (USFS); Jeff McGowen (Skagit Co.); Lou Ellyn Jones (USFWS); Marty Vaughn (Biota-Pacific); Kathy Smayda (Smayda Environmental); and Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA).

#### **DECISIONS** – none today

**Next ARHWG Meeting:** Date / location TBD; Jacob will coordinate

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

- Arnie Add to the ARG agenda: request authorization for PSE real estate to work with Skagit Co. and the property owner to validate the Lipsey appraisal and charge the associated expenses to the 505 fund
- Jacob Stay in touch with Jeff and Ira re: the Lipsey Acquisition proposal; schedule the next ARHWG 505 meeting when the requested information (appraisal, etc.) are available
- Jacob Check with PSE legal re: whether it is allowable to spend 505 monies to provide matching funds for a SERF Board application for a feasibility study. Connect with Sue ASAP. If it is allowable, the proposal will need to be added to a future ARHWG agenda

#### **TODAY'S AGENDA**

- Review Skagit County's Proposal for funding
- SRSC proposal: feasibility of possible future proposal
- Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group rip-rap removal project update

#### **Skagit County Acquisition Proposal**

Jeff McGowan updated the group on Skagit County's proposal to acquire 62.5 or 142.5 acres of land on the Skagit River and Etach Slough, which would allow reconnection of the head end of the Etach Slough to the river when the Corps reconstructs the existing levee. After much discussion about the possible ways to move forward, the ARHWG agreed that it needs more information before it can make a decision. There are still several "moving parts" that may affect the potential efficacy of the proposal, including the owner's willingness to sell the land this group would be interested in, the owner's expected price, and the Corps / County's plans and construction timeline.

**Next Steps:** The group present, which includes the TRIG due to the meeting configuration today, agreed to authorize PSE real estate (Ira) to work with Jeff and the property owner to validate the property's appraisal. This is estimated to cost a few thousand dollars. While several members of the ARG were present at the meeting, this was not an ARG meeting day and so the ARG will need to confirm this authorization at its meeting next Tuesday. ARHWG also asked Jeff to work with the Corps to identify the Corps' level of commitment to the reconstruction project if the property is acquired. Jacob will stay in touch with Jeff and Ira and will call the ARHWG 505 team back together when this information is available.

**Possible future proposal to identify and prioritize potential acquisitions in the Skagit Basin**

Devon asked the ARHWG whether it would be worth his time to develop a scope of work for a 505 proposal to identify and prioritize properties for acquisition in the middle Skagit. ARHWG members pointed out that local conservation groups have created such a list; Devon agreed, but noted that the prioritization has been labeled confidential work product and has not been made public. The group agreed that it would find such a list useful and encouraged Devon to move forward with developing a proposal for the group to consider.

**Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group proposal to remove rip-rap along the Day Creek Slough** – Stan shared an update from Sue on this possible project. It looks more likely that land acquisition will be needed in order to move forward with this project. Sue wanted to know if she could list 505 funds as a matching source for a spring 2011 SERF board application. The matching commitment would be 10-15% of \$100k-\$200k, or somewhere between \$10k and \$30k. Cary responded that PSE's legal folks would need to look into whether 505 monies could be spent on matching funds for a feasibility study. Jacob will take the lead on this and will connect with Sue as soon as possible. If it is allowable, the ARHWG would need to decide whether or not to approve the expenditure.

**Next ARHWG meeting:** Jacob will set the next meeting date based on availability of the information requested about the Lipsey proposal, or as needed to address other proposals or requests related to 505 funding.