



Baker River Project License Implementation

Aquatics Resource Group Meeting Final Conference Call Notes

April 13, 2010 ~ 9:00 - 11:00 am

Team Leader: Arnie Aspelund, PSE (arnie.aspelund@pse.com)

PRESENT: Arnie Aspelund, Doug Bruland, Christina VerHuel, Cary Feldmann (PSE); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Lorna Ellestad (Skagit County); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Lyn Wiltse (PDSA Consulting, Inc.).

NEXT ARG MEETINGS: The next two ARG meetings are planned to be “in-person” meetings for those who are able to attend. Directions will be included on the agenda for that meeting.

- May 11 at PSE Snoqualmie Operations from 9 am - 3 pm.
- June 8 at Baker Lake Lodge, including a tour of the Baker FSC, the new hatchery, and adult trap.

DECISIONS: None today.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Brock Check with co-managers to see if trout should be released to Grandy or Vogler Lakes as was done last year. Let Doug know by April 16.
- Cary Send out results of electroshocking study done by R2.
- All Review the ARG representation list. Be sure it is current for your organization as it informs the distribution lists for related information.
- Doug Send out notice of no intended changes to the timing of the coho release to the co-managers.

PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEMS

- Mark Provide clarification on “working with the Corps on consistency” regarding Article 107(c).
- Jed Reconvene a teamlet in April / May 2010 to address sockeye fry release strategies.
- Co-Managers Define the brood stock allocation protocol and send it to Arnie by end of May.

REVIEW OF AGENDA, NOTES, HANDOUTS

The notes were reviewed from the March 9 conference call and accepted with minimal changes. The agenda was reviewed. The next two ARG meetings will be full day, in-person meetings and then we will continue the pattern of alternate conference calls and face-to-face meetings. The May 11 meeting will be at the PSE Snoqualmie Operations Center and the June 8 meeting will be up at the Baker Lake Lodge and include a tour of the FSC, adult trap, and hatchery.

BRICC / LICENSE UPDATES

Cary reported that the BRCC last met on March 24 via conference call. The meeting was intended to resolve a lack of consensus regarding a petition for funding by Whatcom County. The request from Whatcom County was for the RRG to distribute \$11K of RAM funds for their purchase of equipment listed in a proposal dated February 22, 2010. This decision was not discussed by the BRCC as the petition was withdrawn by Whatcom County. The team leads of the various resource groups provided updates of the license-related activities and answered questions from BRCC members. They also reviewed norms and suggested some edits.

The BRCC plans to meet again (face-to-face) on June 8 (combined with the ARG meeting) and October 27. BRCC members continue to reserve 9:00 – 11:00 on the mornings of the fourth Wednesday in case a conference call is required to resolve any issues elevated by one of the resource working groups.

FISH PASSAGE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Arnie reported that this team will meet again on May 7 and PSE will provide an update at the next ARG meeting on May 11 in Snoqualmie.

BAKER FISH HATCHERY CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Arnie showed some recent photos of hatchery construction and announced that Scott Williams is the new interim project manager for the Hatchery. Photos included a site overview, circular steel tanks with temporary covers. They are prepping for the aluminum framing for bird netting. Inside the hatchery building, Arnie showed the 1' x 24' early rearing troughs next to the 3' x 24' early rearing tanks, for staging fish for the 20K rearing program. He showed a photo of the screens being set on the AI adult holding pond crowders. He also showed more detail of the crowder assembly and the monorail structure to support the hopper unit used for fish transfer. Other photos included showing the spawning area between the adult holding ponds, crews installing the jump guard to the adult ponds and the outdoor rearing raceways with structures for supporting the bird netting. They should be installing the netting very soon.

ADULT TRAP CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Arnie showed some recent photos of the adult trap renovation. It is scheduled to be operational June 1 of this year. Photos included the sorting area of the adult trap. As soon as we get water flow through the system they will begin testing the system. They have set up the controls in the control booth. The photo showed where the fish will be jumping through the weir and sliding through a channel. Fish will be identified and the controls will tell the system where to send each fish. Photos showed the 2 holding ponds of the trap.

Doug described a photo of the sample station including the electro-anesthetic station. They hope to test this system with live fish (maybe provided from state hatcheries) by the end of the month. NMFS is reconsidering whether the electro narcosis process is acceptable. PSE hired R2 to perform a detailed study of the effects of electroshocking on fish and on their progeny. The results indicated no structural damage to the fish and no significant difference in progeny survival. Cary will send out this report to all to review.

Doug also described the photos of the sorting gates to the sorting ponds, the stress relief ponds, and associated fish return outlet pipes. These were operating last week without incident. After they finish grading and paving the east side of the ponds (in the next two weeks) we will be able to begin testing. The current plan is for Doug, the fish techs, PMs and engineers to be involved in the inspection. Cary

encouraged agencies to also participate in this review. Doug will pass that suggestion on to the PM. An April 23 tour has been set for NMFS. There will also be a fish facilities tour on June 8 associated with the ARG meeting that day.

FISH FACILITY OPERATION UPDATES

As Kevin was busy ponding fry at the hatchery, and made available some handouts, Doug provided the following operations updates:

Hatchery Fish Inventory:

- Raceway 1 – Now empty as the right freeze branded sockeye were released late last week. This raceway is currently being prepared to receive the 176K sockeye fry from incubation.
- Raceway 2 – Will be releasing excess of 65K coho to Lake Shannon in June and keeping the same amount for biological studies.
- Raceways 3 and 4 - Sockeye are out of incubation. The fish are being fed and then released into Baker Lake. They are doing this with groups every week and will continue collecting until incubation is complete.
- Trout Pond - 8K trout (as opposed to the 20K we had last year) will be released prior to the opening day of fishing. Brock will check with other co-managers and let Doug know if he should release some fish to Vogler and Grandy Lakes, as was done last year. Doug will check with tribes re derby fish numbers.
- Circulars 0 and 1 – These freeze branded coho will be released into Baker Lake tomorrow.
- Circular 2 – Coho were released into Lake Shannon yesterday. Doug reported they looked great.
- Circulars 3 and 4 – It looks like they will make the normal out-migration window after all. They will be released to the Skagit River by end of April.
- Sockeye incubation – They are transferring these fry weekly to Raceways 3 and 4. 176K are scheduled to transfer to Raceway 1 today.
- Coho incubation – This is about halfway complete. They are transferring fry weekly from incubation to Raceway 2. They have coho troughs for incubated fry. These are protected from birds and predation.
- Sockeye Incubation – Same applies. There has been no indication of IHN in incubated fry.
- Fry outmigration from Beach 4 – Nearly 2 million fry have come out so far. In Spawning Beach 4, we only have one counter. It has been working well and Doug reported they all feel comfortable with the numbers they are getting from that main counter into the hopper.

Incubation Worksheet

Doug reported that they are about halfway done. They have 1.7 million total eyed eggs. They are cycling through ponded fish each week. Total loss has been an acceptable 3.7 – 7% range. These fish are doing well. There have not been any problems with this operation. Doug is pleased that, considering all the construction of the new hatchery, they have been able to maintain normal operations.

2010 Upper Baker Juvenile Fish Trap Data

There have been a total of approximately 2K fish collected and transported so far at Upper Baker- mostly coho no marks (1500) and sockeye no marks (517). Doug reported that they have hired and begun to train their temporary staff for the season. There are not a lot of fish yet. Sockeye fry are not included in the total collected (2,068). These are small fry that are not planning on migrating so we have been returning them to Baker Lake.

2010 Lower Baker Juvenile Fish Trap Data

LB gulper is operating and very few fish at this point. As part of the bio study, they will be doing char sampling (angling and pit tagging).

OTHER LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Article 107(c) - Flood Management

Arnie reported that PSE has issued the contract with TetraTech. They will provide an update on the modeling program at the May 11 meeting. Arnie showed a schedule that Mark Killgore provided that shows the planned interface of that group with the ARG. There will be reports for the next 5 ARG meetings. Arnie will check in with Mark about plans to include the teamlet from the ARG in this work. We will also discuss the March 16 FERC conference call.

AQUATIC RIPARIAN HABITAT WORKING GROUP (ARHWG) Meeting

Article 505 Plan

The ARHWG last met on March 4. They plan to meet again after the TRIG meeting on May 6 at the PSE office in Burlington. Jacob will send out the draft plan in the near future. After that, a subsequent iteration will be distributed in August for the official 30 day review. The draft management plan will be submitted to FERC in October. After that time, work will continue on the local implementation plan.

HANDOUTS

- Agenda, Notes
- Revised 2010 Meeting Schedule
- Representation schedule and contact information
- April 9, 2010 Baker Hatchery Fish Inventory
- Incubation Worksheet by 2009
- Fry Production Beach #4
- 2010 Lower Baker Juvenile Fish Trap Data

MEETING EVALUATION

Worked Well:

- WebEx was great for conference calling
- Great photos
- Nice, clear phone line (no cell phone participants)

Do Differently:

- Participation was light

TOPICS FOR NEXT ARG MEETING – May 11, 2010 at PSE Snoqualmie Operations Center

1. Review meeting Notes / Agenda / Action Items from April 13, 2010 Meeting
2. BRCC and License Process Update
3. Fish Passage Technical Working Group Update
4. Baker Fish Hatchery Construction Update
5. Fish Facility Operations Updates
6. License Implementation Updates
 - Article 107(c) – Imminent Flood Management
 - Article 505 – Aquatic Riparian Habitat Plan

7. Evaluate Meeting, Set Agenda for Next Meeting (June 8, 2010 at the Baker Lodge with field trip)

Directions to Snoqualmie Operations Center

35413 SE Douglas Street
Snoqualmie, Washington

Traveling from West to East on I-90

- Take the Snoqualmie Parkway Exit from I-90.
- Take a left turn at the intersection at the east end of the I-90 off ramp. You are traveling north. Pass under I-90 and continue to the intersection at the western terminus of the west bound I-90 off ramp and continue through the intersection onto Snoqualmie Parkway.
- Continue north for about 1 1/2 miles until you reach the signal at Douglas Ave. The City of Snoqualmie Police Department will be on the right.
- Turn right onto Douglas Ave. and continue to the end of the street. You'll be at the Snoqualmie Operations Center.

Traveling from the City of Snoqualmie or Snoqualmie Falls

- Take Railroad Ave to the Snoqualmie Parkway.
- Turn onto the Snoqualmie Parkway and continue for about 1 mile until you reach Douglas Ave.
- Turn left at Douglas Ave., passing the Snoqualmie Police Station on your right on the corner.
- Continue on Douglas Ave. to the end of the street. You'll be at the Snoqualmie Operations Center.