

## **BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE**

### **Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group**

July 23, 2001

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PSE Baker Lake Lodge  
Upper Baker Compound  
Concrete, WA

### **AGENDA**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review action items
3. Studies updates: R12, R13
4. Pending study plans: R9, R14
5. New/deferred study requests: R2, R3, R5, R11, R15, others (if any)
6. Set agenda for next meeting (August 20, in Mountlake Terrace)
7. Evaluate meeting
- 8.



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## BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

### Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group

July 23, 2001

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PSE Business Office, Mount Vernon, WA

### 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:** Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates) (425) 828-4463,  
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**PSE Contact:** Tony Fuchs: (425) 462-3553, tfuchs@puget.com

#### PRESENT

Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates, Inc.), Dan Haas (National Park Service), Susan Rosebrough (National Park Service), Ann Dunphy (U.S Forest Service), Ardis Bynum (U.S. Forest Service), Jim Eychaner (Interagency Committee for Recreation), Andy Hatfield (PSE), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

#### NOTE: SCHEDULE CHANGES

All meetings are from 9:00 to 2:00.

August meeting is **August 20, USFS Mountlake Terrace, WA**

September meeting is **September 24, tentatively at USFS office in Mountlake Terrace**

October meeting is **October 22, tentatively at USFS office in Sedro-Woolley**

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November meeting is **November 19** and December meeting is **December 17** (both dates moved up one week to third Monday of month to lessen holiday conflicts).

### **July 23, 2001 Agenda**

**9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at PSE Business Office, Mt. Vernon**

**NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Studies updates: R-12, R-13
4. Pending study plans: R-9, R-14
5. New/deferred study requests: R5, R3, R2, R15, R11 - Road access analysis (travel), Visitor Survey (Year 2), Creel Studies, Others?
6. Set agenda/review schedule/location for August 20 meeting at Mountlake Terrace and for September 24
7. Evaluate meeting

### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- ALL: Consider how specific/robust our data need to be re: ramps and their usability at varying lake levels
- ALL: Get additional Study Requests for 2002 season drafted as soon as possible.
- Chris: Secure contact from Whatcom and Skagit Counties
- Ann: Get Rockport State Park use data to Chris
- Andy: Check with Doug re: Fish Survey
- Ann: Check with Leif re: snowmobile counters
- Tony: Check on availability data of the PSE Operational Model.
- Tony: Check availability of Mt. Vernon PSE Office for November 19 meeting.
- Ann and Ardis: Create study request for Road Access Analysis (travel)
- Ann: Check out Wild & Scenic River study needs (ORVs, etc.) for Skagit
- Ann: Check availability of new Forest Service Office at Sedro Woolley for 10/22
- Ann: Check availability of Mountlake Terrace Forest Service Office for 9/24 and 12/17

### **HANDOUTS**

- Baker River Recreation Studies Status Report to Recreation Working Group – R12: Recreation Developed and Dispersed Site Inventory, R13: Recreation Visitor Survey, R9: Electronic Traffic Monitoring, R14: Secondary Data Collection (contents incorporated into the meeting notes)

### **STUDIES/STUDY PLANS:**

Chris distributed an update on studies 9, 14, 12, 13.

### **R12, RECREATION SITE INVENTORY**

- Study initiated and basic inventory completed in May
- No specific activity since last meeting; incremental changes noted in observation field work
- Inventory will be updated and refined in fall

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## **R13, RECREATION VISITOR SURVEY**

### General Observations

- Summer schedule, with two crews, under way since week of June 18
- At least one crew sampling somewhere in project area almost every day, two crews some days, occasional days with no sampling
- Level of use very light until weekend of June 30-July 1, closer to typical summer levels since then

### Visitor Observation Work

- Crews covering assigned strata pretty much as scheduled, are having sufficient time to cover circuits and occasionally add extra observations
- Surprising number of “0-activity” reports for many or most monitored sites, especially through end of June
- Very low level of dispersed use at Lake Shannon; dispersed campers rarely reported, never more than 1 site occupied

### Drop-box Surveys

- 145 total surveys collected through about July 15; 65 on old survey form, 80 on form revised at 6/20 work group meeting
- Return rate has about tripled since new form distributed beginning 6/23; new form, higher use level and 6/28 meeting with RRM hosts should help response
- PSE Kulshan and USFS Panorama Pt. over-represented so far; Resort under-represented, and only 1 survey from Park Creek, 0 Boulder Creek
- Based on recent weeks, should have at least 400 drop-box surveys by mid-September, possibly 500 to 600
- No processing or analysis of responses yet

### In-person Interviews

- 97 total interviews recorded through July 10; 23 on old form, 74 on form revised at 6/20 work group meeting
- 74 surveys on new form represent 25 to 30 interviews per week over less than 3-week period; at that rate, would have 350 to 400 total completed interviews by end of summer
- Use levels are higher now and importance of interviews has been stressed to survey crews, so completion rate should increase, or at least remain solid
- Roadside surveys began June 23, appear to be working reasonably well; completed 10 interviews on Saturday 6/23, 18 on Sunday 7/8 (in 4-hour sampling blocks)
- 86 of 97 interviews from Baker Lake, 11 from Lake Shannon; good coverage for Baker day users and overnight users, except for dispersed campers (13 of 97 so far)

## **R9, ELECTRONIC TRAFFIC MONITORING**

### Short-term Monitoring Activities

- Trafficount placed tube counters at all 5 identified locations Friday, June 22, have been recording continuously since then
- Counters have been monitored regularly by PSE survey crews and Trafficount; no problems with equipment malfunction, vandalism/theft or memory capacity
- 11 calibration counts so far by PSE survey crews
- Data have been downloaded at least twice since 6/22, will be again this week; no analysis yet, but will get some data within 2 weeks

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- 5 counters will be left in place through about 9/10, or will be pulled this week and reinstalled by 8/20
- Long-term Monitoring Activities

- Progress on equipment purchase and installation of permanent sensors at two locations still stalled
- Technical questions about reliability or applicability of all three potential sensor options for vehicle classification unresolved, so have not placed order yet
- Have not been able to get a response from contractors on installation of permanent sensors
- Long-term plan to be worked out with Trafficount in near future

Study Plan

- Study plan not yet updated, pending resolution of issues for long-term program

**R7 +R8 = R14: SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION**

No action on this study; plan pending group approval or revision.

We agreed to proceed with the study as described in the existing plan.

Anyone who is aware of any relevant information should let Chris know. We will look at trailhead registers.

**STUDY REQUESTS:**

**Note:** Ardis stated that the group should talk again about Don Gay's mountain goat study requests (T9, T10): depending on information collected this year, we may do trailhead monitoring as a follow-up next year (if this year's survey results indicate a sizable number of people from Baker Lake going into the high country).

**R11: RECREATION CAPACITY/SUITABILITY ANALYSIS**

Parts of this study request are being covered by other studies. Chris and Lauri will be re-working this study request accordingly. Capacity/suitability analyses are typically done after data collection and other analyses have been complete. The group suggested we defer this study until August 2002.

**R2: VISITOR USE SURVEY AND MARKET ANALYSIS**

Depending on the information collected from our visitor use survey and secondary data, we'll look at this study request again later to see if additional data need to be collected. (Pieces of this study request will become part of the secondary data collection.)

**R3: LAKE LEVEL STUDY**

Part of this study request is currently being covered in the visitor survey study. We will also want to run PSE's Operational Model as it relates to different recreational issues/lake levels.

There is also considerable overlap here with other Working Groups. We will discuss this further at our meeting in August.

**R5: VISUALS AND AESTHETICS STUDY:**

Ann reviewed the contents of the original study request. She thought we should do some preliminary review of applicable data collected in visitor survey this fall. She indicated we also need to define the viewshed area to be used in the study and apply the Scenery Management System (at least on National Forest lands; the SMS includes visual aesthetics and sense of place). Concern was expressed re: the undefined scope of this study for potentially very little return in terms of PM&E measures. It was

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suggested that we treat Lake Shannon differently than Baker Lake, going by just the FERC requirements for Lake Shannon and seeing what would be required to apply SMS to Baker Lake. An alternative suggestion was not to use a separate approach for Lake Shannon, but to define the Lake Shannon viewshed and separately cost out use of SMS here as well.

The group agreed to undertake the following steps:

**Step 1.** Check with R2 re: the geographical extent of their digital terrain data. If they have the entire surrounding area, find out what it would take for them to determine the viewshed and view points within it. If they don't have data for the entire area, also find out what would it take to get it and define the viewshed?

**Step 2.** Look at existing points in the viewshed and try to identify what would need to be done and at what cost to apply Scenery Management System (SMS) to that view shed.

### **R15: RECREATIONAL TRAIL ROUTING**

This study request asks to what extent new non-motorized trails (primarily for walking) would be appropriate to add within the project area. This study is in keeping with SCORP guidelines. We agreed to take this request to the study plan stage. Jim and Chris will work together to flesh this out.

### **OTHER POTENTIAL STUDIES FOR 2002**

- Road Access Analysis (travel)
- Visitor Use Survey, Year 2 (tweak form to fill gaps)
- Creel studies
- Land use and management information
- Wild & Scenic Rivers (Skagit recreation)

### **PARKING LOT**

- Visioning exercise
- Organizational/agency goals
- Bounce around with meeting locations
- Operationally define "vicinity", "watershed", "project induced", "dispersed", or "displaced"
- List authorities that this team must be aware of
- Look at dispersed recreation with the Project as a whole.
- Look into getting guest speaker from Seattle City Light
- Tie education piece to ALL Working Groups
- Hold periodic "outreach" meetings for feedback from other groups (hiking, horseback riding, etc.)
- Land Management
- SCORP data from Jim
- Forest Service presentation of SMS
- Need good maps of the project area
- Consult with Jim Johnston (with WDFW)
- Trailhead surveys
- Have demonstration of Charles Howard Model

### **EVALUATION OF MEETING**

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### **Things Done Well**

- Chris keep bringing copies
- Got out early
- Calendared through end of year.

### **Need for Improvement**

- Low energy
- Missed Lauri and Tony
- Lyn kept talking after meeting ended.

### **TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR AUGUST MEETING**

**August 20, 2001 Agenda – USFS Office/Mountlake Terrace**

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

**NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Studies update: R-9, R-14, R-12, R-13
4. Study plans: R15
5. Study Requests: R11, R5
  - Road Access Analysis
  - Wild & Scenic Rivers (Section 7)
  - Creel survey?
6. Set agenda for September 24 meeting, confirm location for 10/22 meeting
7. Evaluate meeting