



BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Aquatic Resources Working Group

June 10, 2004

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

U.S. Forest Service

Conference Room A/B (425-775-9702)

21905 64th Avenue West, Mountlake Terrace, WA

AGENDA

1. Review Agenda, Notes, Actions	9:00 – 9:30
2. Fish Passage Technical Working Group Report	9:30 – 9:45
3. Policy Team Meeting(s) Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handshake Agreement• Clarification of 3.1.1 (Propagation)• Reconciling PME's with Settlement Agreement• Schedule for Settlement• Next Steps <p><i>Break at 10:30</i></p>	9:45 – 11:00
4. Instream Flow Technical Working Group Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Comparison Table SNF Scenarios <p><i>Lunch (meeting snacks or bring your own)</i></p>	11:00 – 12:00 12:00 – 12:20
5. Study Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A15: Upper Baker Delta Scour: <i>Draft Report</i>• A16: Lower Baker Alluvial Fan Assessment: <i>Powerpoint</i>• A37: Without Project Alternative: <i>Discuss Comments</i>	12:20 – 2:55
6. Set Agenda for August 12, 2004 (9:00-3 USFS-Mountlake Terrace)	2:55 - 3:00

June 10, 2004

Driving Directions to US Forest Service Office:

- 1) Driving North from Seattle (or South from Everett) on I-5, take the 220th St. SW exit (exit 179).
 - 2) Turn west (right if from southbound I-5, left if from northbound I-5) onto 220th St. SW.
 - 3) Drive west about a block and turn right onto 64th Ave W.
 - 4) The office building is about ¼ block down the street on the right side of the road.
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BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

AQUATIC RESOURCES WORKING GROUP MEETING

**June 10, 2004
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
U.S. Forest Service Building
Conference Room A/B, Mountlake Terrace, WA**

FINAL MEETING NOTES

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

ATTENDEES: Arnie Aspelund, Cary Feldmann, Nick Verretto, and Doug Bruland (PSE), Stan Walsh (Skagit River System Cooperative), Arn Thoreen, (SFEG), Dean Grover, and Margaret Beilharz (by phone), (USFS), Mike Stansbury and Jeff McGowan (Skagit County Public Works), Bob Wright and Alison Evans (DOE), Steve Fransen (NMFS), Ruth Mathews (TNC), Irena Netik by phone (Powel Group), Gary Sprague (WDFW), Phil Hilgert (R2), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator and Mary Jean Bullock, note taker (PDSA Consulting Inc.)

Future 2004 Baker Aquatic Meetings: August 12, September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9. These meetings will be at the Forest Service in Mountlake Terrace (except October & November meetings are at Bellevue).

Note: Our July meeting has been cancelled.

INTRODUCTIONS

Our Group welcomed Alison Evans who will be representing the WA Dept of Ecology. Bob Wright has been re-assigned and will be working on the third runway for SeaTac. We'll miss you Bob! Thanks for your contribution to the process.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ruth shared that she would no longer be with TNC (beginning the end of June). We hope she will be able to continue with us as a contractor. We appreciate the passion and value she has added to our process.

Agenda for June 10, 2004 (9:00-3:00 p.m. USFS Building in Mountlake Terrace)

1. Review agenda, notes, actions
2. Fish Passage Technical Working Group Report
3. Policy Team Meeting(s) Report
 - Handshake Agreement
 - Clarification of 3.1.1 (Propagation)
 - Reconciling PMEs with Settlement Agreement
 - Schedule for Settlement
 - Next Steps
4. Phil's Mexico Report/slide show
5. Instream Flows Technical Working Group Report
 - Review Comparison Table SNF Scenarios
6. Study Updates:
 - A15: Upper Baker Delta Scour: Draft Report
 - A16: Lower Baker Alluvial Fan Assessment: PowerPoint
 - A37: Without Project Alternative: Discuss comments received
7. Set Agenda and confirm location for August 12 meeting (9:00 – 3:00 USFS – Mountlake Terrace)
8. Evaluate meeting

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Steve: Send 3.1.1 write-up to Arnie to send out to all.
- Phil: Make sure Margaret gets the Alluvial Fan Power Point Presentation
- All: Call Mike Ramey (R2) if you have additional questions on the Alluvial Fan Study.
- Phil: Do alevin protection analysis (in August timeframe)
- Phil: Give description of Level 4 analysis (Note: In eRoom, under HYDROPS, Level 4, there are some descriptive data).
- All: Bring comments on A15 (Upper Baker Delta Scour) and A37 (Without Project) to August 12 meeting.
- Stan: Suggest wording changes and send to Arnie to distribute asap.
- Arnie: Follow up on who is issuing shoreline permits. Are they required for CZMA and 401? (Bob has shared with us his perspective that shoreline permits need to be handled by local jurisdictions before the State can issue CZMA.)

OLD ACTION ITEMS

- Arnie: Updated schedule.
- Arnie: Reserved phone line for May 24 Conference Call and June 24 Instream Flow Meeting.
- Cary: Re-visited the widest operating range possible (with new runners etc.) with Joel. Cary said that PSE will find ways to meet the ramping rates in the new license.
- Gary: Worked on “back of the envelope” costs of proposed 3.1 PME.
- Stan: Reviewed 3.4.1. and suggested wording changes and sent to Arnie to distribute by May 15.

FISH PASSAGE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP REPORT

Nick reported that the schedule shows installation of the Floating Surface Collector at Upper Baker complete in March, 2007. This will include modifications to the intake at the adult trap, sampling stations, stress relief ponds at Lower Baker, etc. If the 500 cfs proves insufficient, it will go to 1,000 cfs no earlier than 2012-2014 (five years after the determination to go to Phase 2 has been made).

The Floating Surface Collector at Lower Baker is set to be installed in 2014 and go to Phase 2 (if needed) by 2019. The Lower Baker adult trap is scheduled to be installed in 2008.

We are heavily into the design stage of the screen, looking at everything in the system, including flow patterns in the fore bay. Physical design is starting now and mathematical design will start in August. Plans include initiating construction of launch facilities by year end.

Ed and Steve are working on revising the preliminary draft of Section 18 prescription so it will be consistent with the Settlement Agreement (timing, etc.). The aim is to make the Federal Service prescriptions identical before the next submission to FERC.

Doug reported that *smolt collection* numbers have begun to drop off. *As of May 12*, we had 120,000 *which was on pace to be a record year*. It appears that since the numbers have dropped off we experienced an early out migration. We are now at about 160,000 and will probably end up at 170,000 (sockeye). *Even though the migration peaked a little early, it still looks like* this will be one of our top three years. Coho numbers also look good. (about 33,000 for unmarked/wild coho).

All in all, the recovery rates are very good, compared to previous years. We aren't sure the role the new Net Transition Structure played in this.

POLICY TEAM REPORT

Lyn reported that at the last Policy Team Meeting on May 17, an agreement in principle was reached. There was complete consensus with the exception of Skagit County who still had flood control concerns.

On June 7 the Legal Working Group met and worked on a draft of a letter to send to FERC requesting an extension so folks don't have to break away from our process to work on terms and conditions. The lawyers also felt that the time and energy that would be required in drafting and approving an actual AIP would be better spent on actual license articles and the Settlement Agreement. They suggested that we instead send FERC a letter requesting an extension. We have samples of letters that have been approved by FERC (from Chelan and Lewis River).

The Policy Team and the Legal Working Group will meet together June 14. At that meeting, they will work to clarify elements of the hand-shake agreement and, if it hasn't already been sent, sign and send out the letter requesting an extension with detail about substance of the agreement.

3.1.1 Fish Propagation

Gary explained that a Policy-Level Teamlet met June 9 to clarify this PME and confirm agreement. They came up with a conceptual "handshake" with some details still to be worked out. The limit of the facility would be 20,000 pounds of fish production. There would be water quality permitting implications if this

limitation were exceeded. They further agreed that the 20,000 number limit would be reached no more than three months out of the year. They further committed to keep the propagation program within the footprint of the existing facility at Sulphur Springs. The agreement also allows for flexibility in the future. The Fish Management Agencies will form the program and “make it fit” to the existing footprint. Some of the previous fish culture requests will be implemented on a reduced scale. There won’t be a Spawning Beach 5. More species will be included than sockeye.

PSE also agreed to contribute \$60,000/year for a reservoir fertilization program starting in year 2005 with a two-year study window. This would be neither conducted nor managed by PSE. Note: If this money is not used, it will remain tagged for fertilization until/unless the BRCC moves it to the HERC Fund. This program will include considerable study, consistency with 401 Water Quality Certifications, etc. The earliest this could happen would be year 7.

Concern was expressed about the wisdom of doing this hatchery program, (genetics and otherwise). Steve expressed cautious optimism that we (including NMFS) are learning from past failures. Stan explained that this program was considered to be the best alternative, with the project in place. Steve affirmed that the plan to produce fish via a hatchery may change in the future depending on the results. Adaptive management will be a major component of this plan. The current trend among most biologists working with sockeye culture favors hatchery over spawning beaches due to increased productivity and improved disease control.

STUDY UPDATES

A15: Upper Baker Delta Scour

Phil distributed reports (hard copy and CDs). We plan to finalize this in August.

A16: Lower Baker Alluvial Fan Assessment

Phil distributed a handout outlining the effects of changes in minimum flows in the Lower Baker River on the feasibility of mitigation and enhancement measures. For this evaluation, R2 assumed a minimum instream flow of 1,000 cfs. In summary, there was no change in the conclusions of this study with the increased MIF. He invited folks to call Mike Ramey at R2 if they have detailed questions about hydraulics, etc. of this study.

After some discussion, we agreed to call this study *complete*. The PME for this says there will be a plan (within two years) to improve the geomorphic function of the Lower Baker River alluvial fan. Next steps will be to flesh out the objective and scope of this PME for the Settlement Agreement. Are there opportunities to pursue this in a side channel i.e., the Little Baker River versus the main stem? This may be included in PME 6.4.1.

After even more discussion, we agreed that the idea behind this PME is that gravel augmentation would be contained in this PME and not in the HERC Fund. No funding is attached to this PME for any projects beyond gravel augmentation. Other habitat improvement projects are to be addressed by PME 6.4.1 Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement.

A37: Without Project Alternative

No comments have been received. We plan to finalize in August.

INSTREAM FLOW TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP REPORT

Phil walked us through the revised comparison Table and the “*12-year hydrology summary sheet that Stuart Beck and he created to assist with the evaluation of the Level 4 Analysis (12 energy years). Due to a modeling problem that was discovered late Tuesday, they had to re-run SNF.09, SNF.10 and Sco.10.* There was not much of an economic impact, *but the middle Skagit River ramping results were affected.* The results *for SNF.09 and SNF.10* are in the Comparison Summary Table; *but they did not have time to re-run Sco.10 before the meeting.* They will re-run Sco.10 *after they confirm the flood control guidelines with Skagit County tomorrow (comments provided by Phil Hilgert, R2).*

In discussing next steps, Ruth advocated keeping natural ranges of variability in the *flow regime* to the extent possible. *There is a large and growing body of scientific literature supporting this approach. She explained that the scientific community was identifying specific components of flow that are representative of the flow regime and can be calculated for any river system. These include extreme low flows, low flows, high flow pulses, floods and extreme floods (comment provided by Ruth Mathews, TNC).* There is biological benefit to keeping *all of these flow components in the natural range of variability including extreme low flows.* She suggests the natural flow be instructive, not prescriptive. *The changes she suggested to SNF.04 were based on her analysis of the unregulated hydrograph for the Baker River and would bring the minimum and maximum flow releases more in line with what had occurred historically while maintaining the essence of the flow ratios that the Tribes and agencies have been requesting (comment provided by Ruth Mathews, TNC).*

Note: Cary is working on coming up with some Adaptive Management language to deal with emergency conditions, e.g., situations when we need to take corrective measures so as not to run out of water.

We discussed the suggested TNC modifications. After considerable discussion, we agreed to do the Level 4 (12 year) analysis for SNF.06, and SNF.06 with PSE’s flood control proposal. There could be an element of Adaptive Management here within the cost exposure of SNF.04.

MEETING EVALUATION

What Went Well

- Good technical discussions
- Great food
- Phil’s Mexico slides
- Happy to have Alison with us! Welcome!

What Needs to Change

- Ran over
- Missed some folks
- We’ll miss Bob Wright! We wish him luck and will see him at our celebration.
- We’ll miss Ruth! (Hope she can continue on contract basis).

HANDOUTS

- Draft Meeting Notes, Aquatic Resources Working Group, May 13, 2004

- Aquatic Resource Final Notes, June 10, 2004
- Aquatic Resources Working Group List
- Aquatic Working Group Long-term Schedule
- Instream Flow May 24, 2004 Conference Call Meeting Notes (Prepared by R2 Consultants)
- Attachment A: Final Measures Tentatively Agreed to for the Baker River Hydroelectric Project, May 17, 2004
- Appendix B: List of Aquatic PME's, April 2004
- Updated (HYDROPS) Comparison Summary Table: Comparison of Economic, Hydrologic and Environmental effects of Alternative Operational Scenarios for the Baker Project, Version, June 10, 2004 (Prepared by R2 Consultants)
- Hydrologic Characteristics of Unregulated Baker River and of Skagit River Above Baker River Confluence
- Draft Report/CD for A15: Upper Baker Delta Scour
- PowerPoint Presentation of Feasibility Assessment of Potential Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement Measures for Lower Baker Alluvial Fan Assessment Study A16, June 10, 2004
- June 9, 2004 Draft Description of Proposed Fish Propagation Program (prepared by Steve Fransen)

Tentative Agenda for August 12, 2004 (9:00-3:00 p.m. USFS Building in Mountlake Terrace)

1. Review agenda, notes, actions
2. Fish Passage Technical Working Group Report
3. Policy Team Meeting(s) Report
 - Memorializing the Handshake Agreement
 - Reconciling PME's with Settlement Agreement
 - Schedule for Settlement
 - Next Steps
4. Instream Flows Technical Working Group Report
5. Study Updates:
 - A15: Upper Baker Delta Scour: Draft Report: Discuss comments
 - A37: Without Project Alternative: Discuss comments
6. Set Agenda and confirm location for September 9 meeting (9:00–3:00 USFS Building, Mountlake Terrace)
7. Evaluate meeting