
BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group

March 26, 2001

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

USFS Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Headquarters Office,
Mountlake Terrace, 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.”*

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PRESENT

Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates, Inc.), Ann Dunphy (U.S. Forest Service), Jim Eychaner (IAC), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. Fish & Wildlife), Andy Hatfield (PSE), Tony Fuchs (PSE), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

NOTE: The next few 2001 meeting dates are as follows: 4/23 and 5/21 (to avoid Memorial Day). ***Times will be 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.*** The location will remain, for the most part, at the Forest Service Building in Mountlake Terrace, WA.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- **ALL:** Discuss review comments on visitor survey study plan on a conference call on April 6th (tentatively) at 10:00 a.m.
- **ALL:** Get Visitor Survey Study Plan comments to Chris as soon as possible

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- Chris: Talk to Ken re: his participation on this team.
 - Tony: Check with Joetta (R-2) re: dispersed recreation mapping the Forest Service has done.
 - Jim: Share boat ramp condition matrix with Ann & Chris.
 - Andy: Share PSE facilities operational inspections matrix with Ann & Chris.
 - Jim: Provide PSE with statewide recreation data to be used in SCORP.
 - Chris: Contact County traffic engineers re: traffic counts

REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS

- Chris: Chris has added two Park Service folks (Cindy Bjorklund and Paula Ogden) to the mailing list. They may begin attending these meetings.
- Ann and Chris: Got together and shared data and worked on revised study requests/study plans.
- Ardis and Jim: Reviewed the updated/revised study planning products.
- Chris: Distributed PSE creel survey questions to team members.
- Chris: Distributed visitor survey study plan to members on March 21st.

March 26, 2000 Agenda

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Forest Service Building at Mountlake Terrace, WA

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Studies: Finalize 2001 studies
 - Review/discuss revised study request forms
 - Discuss study plans for near-term work
 - Provide direction for mobilizing studies in April
 - Discuss input to PSE opening day creel survey
4. Continue to consider definition of “project-induced recreation”
 - What facts will we use?
 - What is our premise?
 - How and when will we apply concept?
5. Set agenda and location for Apr. 23 meeting (Consider meeting back at Mt. Vernon)
6. Evaluate meeting

STUDY PLANS

When Ann and Chris met prior to this meeting, they agreed to concentrate on Study Plans rather than spend a lot of time on revising study request forms.

R1 & R6 = R12. Developed and Dispersed Site Inventory

Developed and dispersed sites are now together in the same study. We don't have a draft study plan yet. This is high priority as we want to get started this spring. Ron McDonald (Forest Service) is available to conduct a two-day orientation of dispersed sites. The geographical area will include areas at both project reservoirs and in adjacent upland areas. The scope may be expanded if a significant relationship may be reasonably presumed to tie other recreation sites and facilities to the Project.

The Forest Service GIS map of dispersed recreation will be used to delineate the geographical scope. The

Forest Service map only includes the watershed. Everett Lake will be included in the site inventory.

The group agreed to move R12 to the Study Plan phase.

NOTES:

It is difficult to determine what to measure re: dispersed sites. Some sites are better defined than others. What constitutes a dispersed site exactly? What do you measure as impacts? Water quality is also difficult to measure, as is the level of compaction that affects vegetation, etc. Should we also consider significant erosion that goes into the lake? We may want to include indicators, e.g., if 200 feet from lake. Consider various factors. There is a starting point for a data form to use for dispersed sites (revised form from Hell's Canyon). A draft form will be included with the Study Plan. We will use the existence of any denuded area that is used for parking or for a tent as definition for a possible site. We will best guess how the sites are used during the site inventory (includes parking). We will also include user made trails for whatever purpose (e.g., favorite fishing/swimming spots). The Forest Service has a couple levels of trails: inventoried and maintained. We can use these as a starting point. We may want to walk user trails with a GPS, where there are user impacts.

Notes regarding Developed Sites:

We want to capture the description, condition, capacity of the sites (new/disintegrating, etc.). The Forest Service is interested in the level of day use, e.g., the number of parking spots, length/condition of boat ramps, etc.) We want to include informal boat ramps. Forest Service has partial baseline data about campground facilities. We want to be consistent with those data. We need to determine how to evaluate facility conditions, may want to use FS "Meaningful Measures" as a template.

R7 +R8 = R14: Secondary Data Collection

The study plan for the data collection won't be much more detailed than what is already included in the study requests. We will prepare an agenda with a set of questions for each agency we contact. These will be manager/provider driven. Should we include well-established user groups? No. They will be covered in the User Survey.

R9: Electronic Monitoring

The most helpful information to get is a total traffic count into the Basin. This means we would set up a traffic counter past the Road 12 intersection. Do we also put one in at Horseshoe Cove? On Road 11? The Forest Service has a counter on Road 13. How do we get meaningful numbers? Numbers alone don't tell the whole story. We don't want to count administrative vehicles as recreational. The aim/value of this survey was questioned. These data would supplement other surveys. It was suggested that we not go forward with this study this year and that we use it later if we determine a need. If we do the study, we need robust methodology including calibration. The team agreed to move R9 to the Study Plan Phase. Ann talked to the zone engineer. If we put a counter on Baker Lake Highway it should be north of the Road 12 junction, and Puget Sound Energy should work directly with Whatcom County on installation.

R13: Recreation Visitor Survey

To section 3.2 add: "This scope may be expanded if a significant relationship may be reasonably resumed to tie to other recreation sites and facilities to the Project."

Do we spend extra effort to try to capture the Rockport State Park population? We will keep this door open if

we feel we're not getting the type of information we need.

A question was raised re: the lack of a consensus definition of "Project induced" recreation and how that might influence the geographic scope of the studies. We have a common goal of designing studies that won't need to be re-done down the line. We also have a common goal of coming up with PM&E's that meet everyone's interests. There was agreement that the people being surveyed form the population to be sampled. Calculations from this population will include project-induced recreationists. This is the beginning of the basis for agreement of a definition of "Project induced".

It was also agreed that this population may not include folks who are motivated by visual quality and aesthetics. It is Jim's opinion that endangered species, especially fish, may render aesthetics discussions moot.

Study-specific notes: We want to go ahead with this type of study.

Assumptions: We could survey Lake Shannon in ½ day. Baker Lake will be more of a challenge. We might be able to do one half of Baker Lake in a day.

The degree of sampling coverage was identified as an unresolved question. Chris reported that the frequency of sampling proposed in this study plan is approximately 50% more than the sampling program used recently at Lake Chelan and Rocky Reach. A Forest Service article [Gregoire and Buhyoff, 1999] on estimating recreation use included an example in which the objective was to sample use on 3% of week days and 6% of weekend days. We also need to consider random vs. non-random sampling to choose specific sampling dates and blocks of time. Dispersed and developed site surveys would be done within specific geographic areas. The current study plan identifies three different survey instruments that could be used. The feeling of the group was to rely heavily on in-person interviews and supplement with drop-box surveys, and not to use mail surveys. During the surveys, we need to emphasize what will be done with the information they provide and how it might benefit those being interviewed. Chris, Andy, and Tony will address staffing issues, calendar and other logistics.

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
- Be sure someone from Recreational Resources area sits on the Solution Team.
- 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
- Get a National Park Service rep
- Forest Service presentation of SMS
- Need good maps of the project area

- Consult with Jim Johnston (with WDFW)

EVALUATION OF MEETING

Things Done Well

- Long meeting---got a lot done.
- Began to build consensus re: “project induced” recreation
- Uncovered synergies with Terrestrial Working Group

Need for Improvement

- Missing some key players who may request additional studies later.

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR APRIL MEETING

April 23, 2000 Agenda

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at USFS office, in Mountlake Terrace, WA

NOTE: NEW EXTENDED HOURS. BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Update on Visitor Survey
4. Review Study Plans for R12, R14, R9
5. Set agenda, location May 21 (Mountlake Terrace), June and July
6. Evaluate meeting