



Baker River Project License Implementation
Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group
FINAL Meeting Notes

Team Leader: Tony Fuchs (PSE), 425-462-3553, tony.fuchs@pse.com

PRESENT

Tony Fuchs, Scott Heller, Haley Edwards, Mel Walters, and Jacob Venard by phone, and Ira McDaniel (PSE); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Kathy Smayda (Smayda Environmental); Stan Walsh by phone (SRSC); Bob Nelson (RMEF); Lou Ellyn Jones by phone (USFWS); and Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA)

DECISION TODAY

“Does the TRIG agree to adopt the July 2012 version of the Management Program for the Burpee Hill Property document, with approved edits (if any), as our currently-approved working document?”

TRIG MEETINGS

First Thursdays, generally quarterly or as needed. Next meeting: December 6, 2012. We will skip having a meeting in October. Please hold the morning of Nov. 8 for a possible conference call, if needed for an acquisition decision. Watch for possible ARHWG (Article 505) meetings in the meantime, perhaps attached to an ARG mtg.

ACTION ITEMS

- Tony Send out updated TRIG representative list; attach the new USFS org chart
- All Please check that your organization’s contact info is correct on the TRIG rep list
- Haley Email the 502/514 Survey Report to the full TRIG
- Tony Send out the current TRIG budget spreadsheet with the Alder Creek clearing proposal to the full TRIG
- Tony Schedule Dec. 6 TRIG meeting, include Burpee Hill Program document review/comments

PREVIOUS - STILL RELEVANT - ACTION ITEMS:

- Lou Ellyn – Ask Deanna L. to weigh in on suitable habitat for the possible reintroduction of Oregon spotted frogs on acquired lands (on hold to address after USFWS listing decision in fall 2012)
- Tony Create a draft prioritization and schedule for the projects on the Alder Creek DNR LTA road plan for the TRIG’s review and consideration
- Tony, Haley, Scott – Compile list of suggested monitoring goals and activities related to Article 514, develop draft plan for the TRIG to review / edit (Tony: elk; Scott: wetlands; Haley: forest)
- Stan – Coordinate meeting between PSE and the Tribes re: access on acquired lands (still in the works)

BRCC / LICENSING UPDATE

PSE provides monthly email updates on Working Group activities to members of the BRCC. The fourth Wednesdays are reserved for BRCC conference calls as needed. In-person meetings occur semi-annually. The last BRCC in-person meeting was held May 30.

PSE Staffing Changes: Cary is now working as a consulting biologist to the group; Tom Flynn is now the manager of the licensing group and he is planning to attend the next TRIG meeting.

Tony noted that the funds which are due deposits in this license year will see those deposits in October. Tony will also work with Lisa to finalize the capital transfers related to property acquisitions at that time.

DECISION, BURPEE HILL PROGRAM DOCUMENT

Proposed decision text: “Does the TRIG agree to adopt the July 2012 version of the Management Program for the Burpee Hill Property document, with approved edits (if any), as our currently-approved working document?”

Tony projected the document on WebEx and pointed out that the document format is similar to the Alder Creek program document. He noted the improved sections on steep slopes, streams, wetlands, and road conditions, reflecting the information needed for the DNR Long-Term Application for Forest Practices. Tony projected a map of the management units and noted that they were delineated based on restrictions (such as steep slopes) and management (such as elk forage or wetlands). Stream buffers and wetland buffers have yet to be applied. The group briefly reviewed program objectives, management considerations, and prescriptions.

The management units beginning with 8 and 9 are most likely to be harvested for creation of elk forage. Unit 6 is also a possibility; it has a goshawk nest site that has been active in the past but was not active this year. Brock noted that he has emailed Steve about going out to review the habitat around the nest site. Brock also asked about Oregon Spotted Frog surveys. Wetlands 18 and 19 at the site had potential habitat, but no Oregon Spotted Frogs detected. Scott proposes surveying those wetlands again this spring.

Brock noted that he is comfortable approving the adoption of the BH Program document now since it is a living document; he also requested that there be time on the next TRIG agenda to entertain comments since some folks have not yet reviewed this as thoroughly as they would like. Tony will do that.

The group confirmed that quorum requirements were met, the decision was approved, and the Burpee Hill Program document was adopted by consensus. Tony reminded the group that this program document - like the Alder Creek Program document and the Plants of Special Status Plan - is one of the TRIG’s “living documents” and, as such, is subject to review and update as needed (for example, as new information becomes available or as conditions on the ground change).

505 UPDATE

Jacob reported on the Aquatic Riparian Habitat Working Group’s (ARHWG)’s recent work to improve the RFP process. Changes generally relate to streamlining the application and removing redundancies. There will be some improved clarity related to RFP announcements and other communications. Jacob also noted that the 505 team is considering delineating how much of the available fund could be used for PME (Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement) work vs. how much could be used for acquisition.

Jacob, Stan, Brock, and Sue are meeting next week with the Skagit Land Trust to explore the possibility of forming a partnership similar to the relationship PSE has with RMEF at the TRIG’s behest. It is almost time for the process to start up again. Requests for “pre proposals” will go out in the next week or so. Expect an update at the next TRIG meeting.

ACQUISITION UPDATE

The survey team shared findings from their site visit to the parcels discussed previously. Given the positive review of those parcels, TRIG wants to continue pre-acquisition activities and authorized Ira to move forward with an appraisal. He noted that appraisals typically take up to two months to complete. Once the appraisal is completed, Ira and Tony will prepare a suggested NTE (not to exceed) proposal for the TRIG’s consideration, including suggested contribution percentages from each fund. If this is ready in time, Tony will request a conference call for Nov. 8. Otherwise, the TRIG will consider this at its Dec. 6 meeting.

Ira updated the group on his and Ray's (RMEF) activities related to other possible future acquisitions. The group reviewed the parcels, asked questions, and shared their thinking about each. Since several of the parcels are in an area Chris D. is familiar with, Ira will talk with him about them and report back at the next meeting. Questions about any acquisition-related issues can be addressed to Ira or Tony.

LOON UPDATE

Haley reported on the completed 2012 loon survey season. Haley showed photos of each platform and described the maintenance and re-vegetation work done on each last March/April to make sure they were ready for loons this season. The Lake Shannon platform also required significant repairs due to debris damage in May. (Upon looking at the pictures, one TRIGger jokingly asked which hurricane did the damage.) The Anderson Creek and Noisy Creek platforms fared better. While loons were observed nearby during most of the surveys, these platforms also had no observed loon nesting activity.

For 2013, Haley suggested the TRIG rebuild the Lake Shannon platform using the Noisy Creek design. She also suggests moving it to another area, perhaps behind the log boom, in order to shelter the platform, reduce interaction with boats and campers, and maintain a fully functional platform for more of the season. Brock wondered whether it would matter if the platform were on the outside of the FSC's NTS (Floating Surface Collector, Net Transition Structure) in terms of fish availability and loon attraction. He also asked that one of the platforms continue to include netting in the design. Haley will bring a proposal to the TRIG and ARG before taking action.

Mel let the group know that they can expect an Osprey survey report at the Dec. TRIG meeting. Spoiler alert: all Osprey nests were in the trees the TRIG topped last year, meaning that Osprey moved out of the bowls and into more natural nesting structures! (WhoHoo!)

ALDER CREEK 502/514 SONG BIRD MONITORING

Haley and Scott reported on the Article 502/514 songbird monitoring work done at Alder Creek in June. Jamie tagged along as a volunteer to help set up the monitoring stations, which included seven plots spaced approximately 250 meters apart with documented canopy cover, tree/shrub species, percent cover, and GPS coordinates. The next morning, Haley and Scott followed a survey protocol that included listening for 10 minutes at each location and creating digital recordings for follow-up species confirmation.

Haley reviewed the findings for each survey location and will email the full report to the TRIG. She noted that Bob K. (NPS) suggests running surveys for two years in a row, then taking a several year break and conducting another round of two years' worth of surveys.

POST-ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES – ALDER CREEK

Tony provided an update on the roadwork at Alder Creek to brush out, seed and resurface our access road to improve access to the meadow ("Christmas tree farm" area) on the eastern parcel. Tony described the project and showed pictures of the work and finished product. WhoHoo! Work on the ground this year (legacy wood, road work, blackberry control and creation of a couple little forage areas along the road) is a good start ... And there was celebration across the land!

Up next: Tony and Haley will visit the site next week to review the grow-in of the seeded areas and to plan for future Legacy Wood work. With the access work complete, their initial thinking is to propose a timber harvest this October in order to open up a corridor of forage area within units 15, 13.2, 21.2, 21.1, 12, and maybe 13.1 (leaving green and reserve trees). Tony will submit a proposal for TRIG consideration and email approval. Brock requested that Tony attach the current TRIG budget spreadsheet; Tony agreed.

POST-ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES – BURPEE HILL

In addition to developing the BH Program document (approved earlier), Tony went onsite this summer to look for activity around the goshawk nest. The site we are aware of showed no signs of use. Tony walked around the area looking for other signs of nesting activity and found none. Scott also reported that amphibian

surveys were completed, with no observations of Oregon Spotted Frogs or Bullfrogs (but lots of red-legged frog egg masses).

BOTANICAL UPDATE

Scott and Kathy reported on Botanical Teamlet work since the last TRIG meeting. An informal (off-year) survey of *carex flava* was conducted with the USFS in August. Noxious weed treatments and monitoring are ongoing. Scott noted that this is the second year of treatment for Burpee Hill's knotweed; the patches are getting smaller and two patches showed no regrowth. Bull and Canada thistle treatments were conducted at the Campground.

The planned treatments at WB-9 (near the Upper Baker dam) to test the effectiveness of POAST has not happened yet because the ground has remained wet this year and POAST is not an aquatic-application herbicide. It was noted that the Lake Shannon boat launch area might also have the right mix of species and habitat conditions for this test.

Scott also shared that he found a small patch of meadow hawk weed, which is a class B designate, within a section of cat's ear along the road to the Upper Baker boat launch. He sprayed it during the August survey and will monitor the site.

Scott and Kathy have created an excel sheet to track the treatment areas and monitoring activities.

MEETING EVALUATION

- Reduced meeting frequency seems to be working well for this group (quarterly seems workable)
- Better representation today; thank you all! Special thanks to Brock and Bob for coming in person
- Thanks, Kathy, for help with the notes!

Draft December 6, 2012 Agenda

- Safety Moment, Review Agenda, Notes, AI
- BRCC/License Updates, TRIG Budget Update
- Land Acquisition Update
- Post-Acquisition Updates
 - Burpee Hill, including review of Program Doc
 - Alder Creek
- 514 Monitoring Plans Update
- Report on Song Bird Surveys
- Osprey Update
- Botanical Teamlet Update