



## *Baker River Project License Implementation*

### **Recreation Resource Group Meeting**

#### **Final Meeting Notes**

October 19, 2010 9:00 am – Noon

**Team Leader:** Pam Garland, PSE ([pamela.garland@pse.com](mailto:pamela.garland@pse.com))

**Facilitator:** Lyn Wiltse: 425-890-3613 (call if running late or if your plans to attend the meeting change)

### **PRESENT**

Pam Garland and Cary Feldmann (PSE); Ann Dunphy and Greta Movassaghi (USFS); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Sergio Capozzi by phone (AECOM), Jamie Van DeVanter (Van DeVanter Group), and Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

### **REMAINING 2010 RRG MEETING DATE**

Nov. 16 from 10:00 – 2:00 at Baker Lake Lodge with Field Trip to Swift Creek Campground site. We will provide Web-Ex capability for these meetings to facilitate remote attendance.

### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- All Let Pam know of any updates to the contact list for your organization.
- Pam Send Baker photos to Sergio to use as background for tear sheet map.
- Ann Get Pam info on no wake zones and campgrounds to add to tear sheet map.
- All Let Pam/ Sergio know of any additional feedback on current version (discussed at this meeting) of the Water Safety Tear Sheets ASAP.
- Pam Check on status of PSE website.
- Sergio Make changes according to our discussions and send out new version of water safety tear sheet map for all to review. Make in 8 ½ x 11 and also 11 x 17 for review at Baker Lake Lodge.
- Sergio Send out next version of Water Safety tear sheet to all prior to Nov. 16 RRG meeting.
- Pam Set up Bulletin Board teamlet and be prepared to report on progress at November 16 meeting.
- Brock Draft an email to co-managers and law enforcement to raise the awareness around creating some kind of communication protocol around the size of the fishery.

### **ONGOING ACTION ITEMS**

- Pam Continue to coordinate cross-resource group collaboration (e.g., I&E) – ongoing.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES**

We reviewed and approved the draft June 15 RRG meeting notes without edits. They will be marked as final and posted to the PSE website.

## **BRCC / LICENSING UPDATE**

The BRCC will meet in person at the CottonTree Inn in Mt. Vernon on October 27 from 9:30 – 2:00. Cary has sent out the draft agenda for all to review. Anyone who cannot attend in person is encouraged to call in on the conference line and to view documents on WebEx. Tentative agenda topics include:

- Designated rep discussion
- Baker Spawning Survey Discussion
- Baker 107(c) Flood Storage Update
- Working Group Updates
- Website Update
- Land Ownership Policy of PSE for Acquisitions
- SA 602 Project Evaluation System
- Opportunity for other Issues

Cary welcomes suggestions for additional items to include on the agenda.

## **UPDATE ON SWIFT CREEK CAMPGROUND CONSTRUCTION**

Ann explained that all the roads, trails, and utilities have been installed. The new generator building contains the well and pump house. They had an accessibility review and are performing some improvements to accessibility as a result. There will no longer be access to the beach (wheel chairs and sand don't mix!) This was a cost issue. They will be looking at making other campgrounds accessible where the costs would not be so prohibitive. There are no accessible ramps or docks on the lake and no access to state grant money to help with this. They have been doing well at keeping to cost. They are currently working with a contingency of 2%.

They have purchased some native plants from the conservation greenhouse this spring. They will be using them for re-vegetation. Work should continue until end of October. They will then pull out and come back in the spring as soon as weather permits. We will get a field trip at our meeting next month and the campground is planned to be open to visitors by next spring.

## **USFS RAM REQUEST for 2010 RAM Funds to be used for BL Resort Redevelopment**

Greta explained that there is now a draft evaluation process for projects going forward and this will be presented to the BRCC at their meeting next week.

The FS spent a lot of time negotiating with the contractor to get things buttoned up with the funds they had. The FS proposal for funding has a lot to do with ADA accessibility. This year the FS was also able to contribute \$121K of their money toward redevelopment costs. They are requesting the additional \$50K to complete items to meet safety and accessibility standards (parking, trails, "lipless" pads supporting faucets, same with CST toilets). They dropped things from the original proposal including picnic shelter and lighting system. They will update the request to fit new project evaluation guidelines and re-submit to the RRG for review.

## **RECREATION PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES**

### **Baker Reservoir Recreation Water Safety Plan (SA 304)**

Sergio walked us through the most recent version of the water safety tear-sheet maps. These versions are currently undergoing Corporate Communications Review at PSE. He explained that, based on feedback from RRG members, the map has been enlarged – showing boat launch locations, no wake zones. He is

still waiting on more specific information from Ann re additional swim zones, no wake zones and rec sites to include on the map. Sergio was thinking swim areas could be rolled into no wake zones. Ann wants to wait until after Law Enforcement discussion to see if we can agree on a standard distance for no wake zones. She would see them forming a rim around the camp sites on the map, rather than spots. Whatcom County has 300 ft. zones in front of their swim areas, and boating areas and boat ramps for no wake zones.

Comments / Suggestions for first page:

- Say: “Be aware of log booms near dam.”
- Move FERC info to footer or header.
- Color seems really dark. Suggest dark print on light background. Red ink disappears right away. White lettering would become illegible pretty quickly.
- Question about the prominence of the buoy. Draws the eye to lower left which is not where we want people to look. Maybe move the graphic to the second page.
- In text box add to be aware of no wake zones.
- Like the new titles better.
- Need more consistency from first page to the second page.
- Photo could be more of the background to integrate it into the graphic of the page. Build info into the graphic.
- Add more no wake buoys – full circle surrounding the loon platform? This would make it easier to enforce. If we use metrics, need to use yards instead of meters.
- Add Baker Lake Trail, other key references (Ann will help).

Comments / Suggestions for second page:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet under Respect Wildlife and Lands – combine with 4<sup>th</sup>. Maybe refer to specific signage that addressed aquatic invasive species – place under “for more information...”
- Change “burning regulations” to “campfire.”
- Change “form” to “from” and remove extra space before “gear.”
- Get rid of bubble around “Boat Responsibly!”
- Instead of black and white high contrast to emphasize the text boxes, use shaded background – 20% gradient.

FERC approved this plan in January of this year. It is due the end of the year

**Draft Aesthetics Management Plan (SA 302)**

Jamie met with Scott Heller and updated the conceptual plan to integrate RRG feedback and create construction drawings. He walked us through the schematics and the proposed vegetation for the screening of the Upper Baker compound area and pump station area. Jamie explained the drawings he provided and the plans for vegetation for screening. Native plants will be used. The vegetation preference would be native plants that don’t require extra watering. Tall Oregon Grape will be used to screen the fence wherever possible. At the pump station the screening will be from West Pass Dike Road. We discussed clumping and retaining view breaks periodically to meet the screen objectives. There will still be a good view down by the boat launch.

Scott will lead the crew to do the actual installation and plantings in 2013 and 2014. Ask Scott to talk with

the Park Service in Marblemount They have managed container planting and have a lot of experience about what to do. They have quite a bit of expertise and it may be possible to use their facilities. There is concern about deer. We may be able to fence it temporarily until the plants get to an adequate height. The area along the fence line will be more of a buffer than a solid screen. It will be a densely planted deciduous buffer.

Ann expressed concern that some of the evergreen plantings may be a little tight. For Douglas firs, we will have 5 gallon containers 3-4 ft. in height with 6 ft spacing. Some of the larger trees will be at 3 ft. spacing. That is pretty close. L-4 is an alternative plan that has the trees spaced at 8-10 ft. Even at 8-10 ft. we would have to manage that. The FS sees the spacing in L-4 as pretty tight. They would suggest 12-15 ft. spacing instead while interspersing some more shrubs in between the trees. Otherwise, we would be committing to a pretty active management plan. This is something we will have to manage over time.

L-2 also shows firs and cedars in front of the fence, screening the fuel valves, etc. Ann suggested using more shrubs and fewer conifers. Pam explained that the screening must ensure that plant operators have sufficient visibility from an operations and safety standpoint. Ann likes the groupings and suggests if we adjust the tree spacing and swap some trees for shrubs, the plan is good to go. We want to balance coverage vs. maintenance.

Jamie will make revisions, as discussed, and send to Pam for review. Pam will send out to folks once adjustments have been made. All are welcome to provide additional feedback.

### **2009 Draft Annual Reports**

Pam said the 60 day review of the Annual Recreation Report will begin the end of 2010. All have received the draft report. Comments have been received and responses are complete and to the PSE tech writer for final edits. Article 301 will likely be a separate report as a summery document that appends all final reports for the articles with comments enclosed. All resource groups will have their own packets of documents. Everything will get submitted to FERC April 30, 2011.

### **Cross Resource Issues**

Management of lake levels – Greta brought this up at the June BRCC meeting and there is an action item for Kim on this. She suggested we work together to develop and active communication protocol for this. The requirements to manage the lake at certain levels don't kick in for a couple of years yet. PSE needs to manage the lake to the best of their ability to allow, to the extent possible, for access to boat ramps and swimming areas while meeting other resource needs. The FS needs to know if access to these areas will be negatively impacted by lake levels and would like sufficient notice so they can inform the public. Pam will start sitting in on operator meetings weekly, during recreation season, to get advanced notice of what is being intended for lake levels.

The IPP states that the reservoirs' elevation needs to be drawn down to create 115 K acre-feet of flood storage by Oct. 1. Since then NMFS has changed the spawning period from Oct 1 to Sept 15. The new power house will be online in 2013. Pam has a sheet of minimum elevation levels for Baker Lake that allow for bare minimum use of the boat launch. Those minimums don't allow sufficient water for visitors to use the swim beach or for optimal use of the boat launch.

Pam and Ann will get together and review the minimums and maybe add a preferred minimum level.

There may be flexibility in how PSE operates. We need the communication protocol also to cover for when the unexpected happens so we all respond in the most effective way.

Sockeye Fishing: Greta learned from talking with Bob Everitt that as long as there is the opportunity there will be a fishery. This is creating all kinds of challenges from a recreation standpoint (parking, place for boats to launch, etc.). The FS has had to put on additional staff to handle the additional capacity. There were 6-8 boats launching at the same time at Shannon. Historically we get 4-8% back from a run. Ocean conditions play a big role. This year we had about 9% return. We need enough fish to continue propagation. We want to keep the two fisheries separate – in river and in the reservoirs – net fishing doesn't mesh well with hook and line. By keeping the fisheries separate, it promotes fishing for everyone. Cary's sense is that this is likely to continue to be an issue because sockeye production will probably only increase. We haven't been increasing production with the hatchery as of yet. Success with this year's Sockeye run shows a solid recovery in the fishery, if ocean conditions hold up.

The FS would like advanced communication if another large run is expected. WDFW needs to let the FS know as this is a staffing issue for them (traffic control, etc.) It could become a facility issue ultimately. The FS may need to look at adaptive management funds to determine how to deal with this. Brock will draft an email to co-managers and law enforcement to raise the awareness around creating some kind of communication protocol to relate the expected size (and impact) of the fishery.

#### **NOVEMBER 16 RRG MEETING (AT BAKER LAKE LODGE) TOPICS**

- BRCC Update
- Field Trip to Swift Creek Campground
- Decision for Ram funding to USDA-FS (tentative)
- Status of Annual Reports
- Bulletin Board Teamlet Report
- Set 2011 RRG Meeting Schedule
- Evaluate Meeting

#### **HANDOUTS**

August 17, 2010 notes from RRG Meetings (no edits)  
October 19, 2010 RRG Meeting Agenda  
Draft Water Safety Team Sheets  
Aesthetics plan handouts (schematics and photos)

#### **MEETING EVALUATION**

Worked Well:

- WebEx and conference call

Do Differently:

- Start on time at 9am (vs. 9:30)
- Web-Ex difficulties at start