
BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Public Information Meeting

April 26, 2000

9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Cottontree Inn
2401 Riverside Drive
Mount Vernon, WA

6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Concrete High School
7830 Superior Avenue
Concrete, WA

AGENDA

Registration	
Welcome & Review of March 30, 2000 Meeting	Connie Freeland - <i>Licensing Program Manager</i>
The Alternative Licensing Procedures - Additional Information	Connie Freeland
Establishing Working Groups by Resource Areas	Connie Freeland
Breakout Session - Interests Identification	Cary Feldmann - <i>Manager: Environmental Strategies</i>
Reconvene/Group Discussion	Cary Feldmann
Questions & Answers	

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Puget Sound Energy has established several methods for interested parties to contact the relicensing team or become involved with the Baker River Project Relicense. If you have a question, comment, request, or would like more information on the relicense, please use any of the following contact methods.

MAILING ADDRESS

Baker River Project Relicense
Puget Sound Energy, Inc.
PO Box 97034
OBC-14N
Bellevue, WA 98009-9734

MESSAGE LINE

1-888-CALL PSE, option 4, extension 81-3110

EMAIL ADDRESS

bakerlicense@puget.com

INTERNET WEBSITE ADDRESS

<http://www.bakerriverproject.com>
or
<http://www.pugetsoundenergy.com>

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WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

<u>WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>TEAM LEADER</u>	<u>DATE & TIME*</u>
Fisheries & Aquatic Resources	Arnie Aspelund	May 18: 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Wildlife & Terrestrial Resources	Tony Fuchs	May 23: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Cultural & Historical Resources	Connie Freeland	May 25: 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Recreational Resources	Chris Drechsel	May 23: 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Hydrological & Water Resources	Bob Barnes	May 18: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Economics/Operations	Charles Morton	May 16: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

* All of these first working group meetings will be held at Puget Sound Energy's Mount Vernon Business office (map and address attached).

OBJECTIVES OF FIRST WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

1. Set group mission statement in support of Baker Solution Team mission statement:

"To craft a license application for the Baker River Project that is cost-effective and consistent with public interests."

2. Set working group social and logistical norms.
3. Identify others who should participate in the group.
4. Set agenda for next meeting.

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List of Interests/Issues from April 26th Public Information Meeting

Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group
Improved public education, outreach, & interpretation
Improve & create back country trails - system of trails - loop systems
More trails in more developed areas
Use Concrete, WA as a focal point for trail access
Create water trail system
Develop scenic/aesthetic management objectives and management strategies to meet the objectives
Improve the identification of all recreational opportunities (basin wide)
Develop education & interpretive plan to include specific resource area information. Develop ways to implement & sustain the plan
Leverage existing resources for education
Develop public communication system
Identification of private lands around reservoir
Provide access to Lake Shannon
Low level hiking opportunity
Improve access to rock climbing areas in order to improve safety
Improve recreational fishing opportunities
Viewing of spawning fish
Possible relocation and/or expansion of existing interpretive facilities

Cultural & Historical Working Group
Showcase up-river history
Explore potential for cultural landscapes in area
Ensure compliance with federal laws on resource management
Explore full range of mitigation measures, such as enhancement of particular resources
Explore cooperative projects with other interest groups (tribes, museum groups,...)
Pursue ways to make Baker River a destination
Explore interpretive options (education, interpretation, outreach)
Coordinate information dispersal
Develop exhibits to show history of area - past, present, future
Research more about local heritage (including oral history interviews)
Encourage tribal participation (government to government)- network with tribes (one-on-one)
Survey archaeological sites in reservoir drawdown areas & shorelines
Develop mitigation & management plan for sites
Consider effect & management of resources in areal context
Consider local values in setting priorities
Research & priorities should address both “local” and tribal prehistory, history & current

Fisheries & Aquatic Resources Working Group
Appropriate representation by fish management authority/Federal, State, Tribes, (PFMC), Local Govts, NGO's
Meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy of National Forest Plan. Biodiversity - emphasis on native species.
Direct/indirect effects on Skagit Wild Scenic River – fish, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, etc
Improve downstream, upstream and reservoir fish passage at project
Sustainable levels of anadromous fish stocks to historical levels. Increasing sockeye production potential (fertilization)
Increase/maintain recreational access on reservoirs
Improve fish passage & production facilities/operations to meet current/future fish management objectives
Quantifying project impacts related to flow/habitat/fish downstream of Project including Baker River and area of project influence on Skagit River. (Flow coordination - IFIM –from dam to confluence & beyond
Quantifying project impacts to state owned Aquatic Land (past/present/future)
Education/Interpretation/outreach
Restoration Resident Fish species
Having clean water (Baker River discharge) - Municipal cooperation on City of Concrete sewage treatment plant -Flow coordination -Flow control
Sustained economic benefits for city of Concrete-as they relate to fisheries
In concert with sockeye, bring back other anadromous fish species using projects such as Little Baker River Channel Project

Operations & Economics Working Group
Warning system (community)
An assessment of structural integrity of various facilities Upper Baker/Lower Baker/fitted/West Pass Dike
Project viability
Economics of Project
4 (e) conditions & ability to fund
Economics of operations of the project & how we compare those to the non-commodity tradeoffs (e.g., aesthetics, preservation of historic buildings)
Army Corp. involvement
Commercial timberland management & how it fits with PSE operations & other uses of resources
Develop a process for evaluation of economic impact of various options
Over 50 year license, things will change. How will we be able to assess and address future issues
Ownership identification of properties in Baker Basin
Taxes for Upper Baker go to Whatcom County; however, all support svcs for this portion of project come from Skagit County & Concrete
Explore ways to “lure” drive-through traffic from Highway 20, thus providing enhanced economic vitality of the immediate area
Exploration of ecotourism and/or other potential economic uses of project area

Wildlife & Terrestrial Resources Working Group
Noxious Weeds - characterize problem
Loss of rare plant habitat
Wetland, riparian rare habitats
Inundation habitat loss - wetlands, riparian, deer & elk winter range
Fluctuating water levels - s&m species & precluding loon and other waterfowl nesting
LSR impacts - # of species that can be supported, connectivity edge effect on HS for species (Habitat Suitability)
Recreation impacts - Grizzly bear, mountain goat, other
Productivity - reduced species compliment & biomass of migratory fish
Potential recreational impacts to rare plants, habitats & species
Potential impacts to DNR managed trust lands - HCP
Public Environmental Education & Outreach - Terr issues
Designate areas for specific uses - eg: keep beaver areas for beavers and low impact human use
bats & other spp of concern which may be enhanced by project activities
ecotourism as means of enhancing wildlife - management of rec/users for enhancement of wildlife (ie. Visitor trail, walkways, interp signs)
Promotion of biodiversity - including those other than fish & mammals, ie plants, invertebrates, microb)

Hydrological & Water Resources Working Group
Flow coordination with upstream mainstem projects on the Skagit River (Ross, Gorge, Diablo). Stated concern is the protection of fisheries and/or other water related values.
Flow coordination with downstream water management on the main stem of the Skagit River such as IRPP on mainstem of the Skagit River
Degree of Project Impact to mainstem of Skagit River downstream of the Baker River confluence to Sedro Woolley (WDOE) or to delta
401 Water Quality Certification. Scoping, studies, requirements.
Slope stability and erosion control at Lake Shannon especially along steeper hill slopes.
Erosion control along shoreline at Upper Baker and depositional impacts in lower stream reaches due to loss of hydraulic gradient from reservoir backwater.
Flood control impacts and opportunities
Dams interrupt downstream transport of large organic debris
Flow maintenance for benefiting other downstream water uses and users
Potential meeting conflicts with other existing processes (USFS watershed analysis, WRIA 2514 & 2496 for example)
Water quality and flow issues regarding the city's sewage treatment plant discharge into the Baker River.
Management of hydro for protection and/or use of cultural and natural resources.
Snow chemistry and air pollution impacts to water quality. Do these processes lead to effects that should be considered in reservoir management and operation?
Upland [watershed] management influences water quality [quantity?]. Explore potential use of upland [watershed] management for desynchronizing storm flow to assist in flood control.
Glacial studies e.g. mass balances and chemistry affect both water quality and quantity. How are these effects accounted for in project operations from both water quality & quantity perspectives?

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Meeting Summary

Puget Sound Energy held another two public meetings to initiate the federal relicensing of the Baker River Hydroelectric Project. The purposes of the meetings were to: review key points on the relicensing process and public involvement presented at the earlier meetings, provide additional information on the alternative licensing procedures, discuss setting up working groups by resource areas, and gather in working groups to brainstorm interests of participants. The presentation on the alternative procedures focused on the collaborative nature of the procedures and the requirements for requesting FERC permission to use the procedures, including gaining consensus of stakeholders and preparing a communications protocol for how the licensee, stakeholders and FERC will communicate until the license application is filed in 2004. Information was also provided on the communication tools for the relicense: the internet website, phone message line and email address.

Information was presented on the organization and initial meetings of the six working groups: fisheries and aquatic resources, wildlife and terrestrial resources, cultural and historical resources, recreational resources, hydrological and water resources, and economics/operations. At the breakout session, meeting participants moved around the room to the working group stations and listed their interests and issues regarding the various resources. The group then reconvened to summarize the points listed.

The next steps for the relicensing process include holding initial meetings of each of the working groups, to set up the procedures they will work by and identify additional participants for the groups. A process working group will also convene to draft the communications protocol. Results of these working groups will be presented at the next public meeting to be held in July.



May 3, 2000

Dear Interested Party:

RE: Baker River Project Relicense

On April 26, 2000, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) held its second set of public meetings to initiate the federal relicensing of the Baker River Hydroelectric Project. These meetings reviewed key points about the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process and how the public can become involved. Additional information was provided on the alternative licensing procedures and the setting up of working groups by resource areas. Forty people representing the public, local jurisdictions, and resource agencies attended these meetings held in Mount Vernon and Concrete.

This letter is a follow-up to the April 26 meetings and provides details on how you can contact PSE and information on the first working group meetings.

Contact Information:

Attached is information on four methods of contacting PSE or receiving information about the Baker River Project Relicense. These include our mailing address, telephone message line, email address and website address. If you do not want to continue receiving mailings about the Baker Relicense, please let us know, and we will remove your name from the mailing list.

Resource Working Groups:

Working groups will be where the substantive work for the resource areas will occur. Because these groups will be meeting for two to three years, it is important that they be carefully set up. We have scheduled the first working group meetings for the month of May. These initial 2-hour meetings will focus on process: how the group will work together and who should be part of the group. We anticipate several more process meetings for each working group before substantive work begins.

The schedule for these meetings and the location map are attached. We realize that the dates for the first meetings may not work for everyone interested in attending the working groups. Each group will work on a process to find the most convenient time for subsequent meetings. Please let us know if you plan to attend one of these working group meetings by using our message line or email address. If you cannot attend this first meeting, please contact us and the team leader for the working group you are interested in will contact you about your concerns and availability to attend future meetings.

Process Working Group:

PSE must request FERC's permission to use the alternative licensing procedures for the Baker Relicense. Part of that request is providing a communications protocol for how the licensee, stakeholders and FERC will interact until the license application is filed in 2004. PSE plans to convene a Process Working Group (to meet for 3 months, May through July) to draft this protocol. If you are interested in joining this working group, please use our message line or email address, and I will contact you with details.

Results of these working groups will be presented at the next public meeting to be held in July. Details of the meeting will be available on our website in June. If you have any questions or require additional information, please use our message line or email address, and a member of the relicensing team will respond to your call or message.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Connie Freeland". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Connie Freeland, Program Manager
Baker River Project Relicense

Attachments

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