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## **BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE**

### **Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Meeting**

**February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002 (8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.)  
(Bring Sack Lunch)**

**U.S. Forest Service Office  
21905 64th Avenue West  
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043  
425-744-3236 (office # 425-775-9702)**

### **AGENDA**

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| Review notes/revise agenda/action items                                |
| Solution Team Update – Scoping process discussion                      |
| Review/add to Tony's list of database and Charles Howard model queries |
| Teamlet reports: T4, T5b, T6, T12, T15                                 |
| Come to consensus re: Continuing Impacts model/approach                |
| Review of vegetation maps  |
| Update on Ongoing Study Plans/requests                                 |
| New Study Requests (?), New Teamlet meetings?                          |
| Set agenda and confirm location for March 21 and April 18 meetings     |
| Evaluate meeting   |

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## BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

### Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group

February 21, 2002

8:30 am – 2:00 pm

US Forest Service Office  
Mountlake Terrace, WA

### FINAL MEETING MINUTES

**Mission:** “To develop alternative solutions and recommendations, addressing terrestrial and wildlife resource interests for the Baker River Project and its operations, leading to a settlement agreement that:

1. accurately defines and describes the existing environment in relationship to the previous environment;
2. identifies project effects (existing and proposed) leading to development of protection, mitigation, and enhancement options.”

**Team Leader:** Tony Fuchs, (Phone) 425-462-3553, tfuchs@puget.com

### ATTENDEES:

Patrick Goldsworthy (North Cascade Conversation Council), Martin Vaughn (Biota Pacific), Bob Kuntz (National Park Service), Don Gay, Carl Corey, and Ann Risvold (USFS), Stan Walsh (Skagit Systems Cooperative), Laurel Shiner (Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board), Tony Fuchs (Puget Sound Energy), Erin Colclazier (Hamer Environmental), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting, Inc.)

### SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

*Note: We have been meeting the third Thursday of each month. Starting in April, we will meet on the third Wednesday, from 8:30-2:00 p.m.*

Thursday, March 21, 2002 USFS Office, Mountlake Terrace

Wednesday, April 17, 2002 ???

Wednesday, May 15, June 19 (may want to do field trip week of June 12), July 17

### AGENDA

Mountlake Terrace, WA

February 21, 2002, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

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1. Review notes/agenda/action items
  2. Solution Team Update
  3. Review/add to Tony's list of database and Charles Howard model queries
  4. Teamlet reports: T-4, 5b, 6, 12, 15
  5. Come to consensus re: Continuing Impacts model/approach
  6. Review of vegetation map
  7. Update on Ongoing Study Plans/Requests
  8. Mountain goat enhancement
  9. New Study Requests (?)
  10. Set agenda and confirm location for March 21 (Thurs.) and April 17 (Wed.) meetings
  11. Evaluate meeting

### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- Tony/Marty: Check with Walker Associates re: aerial availability of pre-project photos and Government Land Office (GLO) records on Lower Shannon.
- Tony: Determine shrub reference
- Tony: Get update on R-2 progress on Basin Vegetation Mapping.
- Tony: Convene T-15 "Florette" meeting when data is available from R-2
- Don: Write up methodology used for Baker goats best burn options
- Tony: Consider setting up wetland fieldtrip for week of June 12
- Stan: Stay buttoned up with Chris re: Elk study information.
- Tony: Talk with Lauri re: wetland monitoring and WDFW hosting April 17 meeting in Mill Creek

### **REPORT ON PAST ACTION ITEMS.**

- Don – Reserved USFS Office at Mountlake Terrace for February 21<sup>st</sup> and March 21<sup>st</sup> meetings
- Don: Prepared list of potential mountain goat enhancements.
- Don: Emailed land bird analysis stuff to Tony to distribute
- Stan: Got an update from Chris what Elk Study is going on. The current study is for elk calving habitat for Nooksack elk range. This is in response to data suggesting that elk calf survival rates are low.
- Tony: Checked to see if photos were taken during vegetation mapping. He reported that photos were taken of plots for dispersed recreation sites and a few photos were taken of wetlands.
- Ann: Get with Tom Hamer to discuss sites to survey for rare plants.
- Ann and Don: Determined that Agee map was not useful for our purposes.

### **SOLUTION TEAM UPDATE –Scoping process discussion**

The Solution Team will be meeting next Wednesday, the 27<sup>th</sup>. The attorneys continue to report that they are nearly complete with the Communication Protocol and Process Document. They are finishing up language around confidentiality and handling settlement. They hope to have these complete prior to the next Solution Team Meeting. It looks like PSE is going to request permission from FERC to use the Alternative Licensing Process at the end of the month. They will include these documents as part of their submission.

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### **SCOPING DOCUMENT 1 AND INITIAL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

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We discussed Connie's 2/12/02 memo explaining PSE's decision (at FERC's suggestion) to draft Scoping document 1 and issue it as a companion document to the Initial Consultation Document. All were reminded that the completion of Scoping Document 1 does not mean the end of the issue identification phase, and that PSE is sharing this initial draft in the spirit of collaboration. There will be a public meeting mid-May to discuss both documents and formal comments for the Scoping Document 1 will be due mid-June and for the ICD will be mid-July.

#### **REVIEW/ADD to Tony's list of database and Charles HOWARD MODEL queries**

The Economics Working Group has been on hiatus for most of the last year, as they await the completion of the hydro operations model. At this point the model is still being tested. They have been going through an in-depth review of the Charles Howard Hydro Operations model. It is compatible with Excel and fairly user friendly. They are planning to do a 1-2 hour overview to demonstrate the model and begin to answer questions (including algorithms) at our April meeting. They will be doing this overview for reach of the Working Groups in the various resource areas. They will follow up with a comprehensive all-day workshop in May where any interested working group participant would be encouraged to attend along with any technical folks from their organizations to assist in reviewing the adequacy of the model.

#### **REVIEW OF TEAMLET MEETINGS**

##### **T-4/T-7 Analysis Species Assessment/Historic/Potential Vegetation of UB and LB projects**

The teamlet met and further defined the list of species to be studied. They are now looking at habitats being impacted. They decided to do an interpretation of old photographs to determine the historic vegetation coverages of the Upper Baker project. Marty reported that they would also be securing aerial photos flown in 1956 and 1957 (just before the project was built).

#### **UPDATE ON ONGOING STUDIES**

##### **STATUS OF:**

##### **T-2: Vegetation Mapping in Project Area**

Tony showed draft maps outlining T-2 vegetation and wetland polygons. Note: When doing the Basin-wide vegetation mapping, we want to be sure wetlands are included.

##### **RT-6: Noxious Weed Assessment and Control Program**

Ann and Laurel have agreed on the type of information to be included on the inventory form. The next step will be to discuss methodology and species. There was considerable discussion around the scope of inventorying reed canarygrass. We may want to employ a phased approach.

##### **RT-12: Grizzly Bear Spring Foraging Habitat Value**

Tony, Don and Marty met to discuss this issue. The area has sufficient habitat to meet minimum spring core habitat needs, but is short of the goal for optimum grizzly bear spring core habitat. There are two approaches to shoring up this shortage. We could try to enhance the habitat or we could limit road access during the spring around critical habitat areas. This could be a P/M/E that PSE could do. Next steps will depend on the data from T-7.

##### **T-15 Basin Vegetation Mapping**

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We still need to edit the seral stage data we have to reflect clear-cuts on private lands that occurred since the map. Joetta will compare what's there with existing. R-2 also needs to do incorporation edits of seral stage on Forest Service lands. The Parks data we have, although dated, may be sufficient for habitat. For seral stage we may want to do some photo interpretation on Park lands, but we will wait until we identify a specific need for seral stage information on National Park lands before we initiate any photo interpretation. In the meantime, we will push forward with completion of the rest of T-15 mapping, because other studies depend on this.

### **RT-10 Mountain Goat Habitat Use**

Don shared maps of potential burn areas to address to enhance mountain goat habitat. We will defer discussion of this until this fall. Don will write up the methodology he used to create these maps in the meantime.

### **CONTINUING IMPACTS MODEL/APPROACH UPDATE**

An agency caucus (Bob K., Fred, Laurie, Stan, and Don) met to discuss their reaction to the paper on Continuing Impacts that Marty drafted and presented at the last meeting. We drafted the following collaborative approach to meeting people's interests:

*We reached consensus that for areas of interest we can look at the hypothetical "without-project" scenario as a future reference condition for identifying potential PM&E measures, but we are not specifically required to do so in order to determine project effects.*

Other discussion topics included:

- Does project effect include loss of future habitat potential?
- The North Cascade Conservation Council's aim is for PSE to mitigate what was lost when the project was originally constructed, however the NCCC is willing to collaborate.
- Can we look at loss of future habitat for resources we value? Are we required to do so for everything?
- Is the reservoir in place a re-commitment of public resource?
- Is the applicant required to mitigate/evaluate for recommitment of public resource?

All those present agreed that:

- Resolution on one issue doesn't set precedent for the way in which future issues will be resolved. Agreement among the collaborating parties on how to approach a specific issue does not obligate anyone in the group to approach other issues in the same manner. Each issue and each interest will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- None of the agreements reached on individual issues by the Working Group is binding on any member of the Working Group until the full Settlement Agreement is signed. (It ain't over 'til it's over.)

It was acknowledged that a number of key individuals in the Working Group were not present for this discussion, and that the rest of the group will need to give them opportunity to review and comment.

While the group is leaving the continuing impacts approach behind at this point, Carl Corey proposed to make edits to Marty's proposal in an effort to find a continuing impacts approach that could work for the group.

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**T-5: Wetland Inventory Study (Phase I)**

Erin and Joetta are refining the draft vegetation/wetland map. Lacustrine wetland modifier zones will be determined this spring during drawdown zone vegetation mapping. We will be making a list of polygons that may need to be revisited.

**T-13 & T-17: Survey of Mollusks & Amphibians:**

Spring surveys begin March 4.

**T-5: Phase 2 of Wetland Study**

On hold until after field trip to visit wetland areas, which may occur in June.

**RT-16: Project Area Rare Plant Survey**

Ann is reviewing the draft Study Plan and will button up with the Hamer Group

**RT-11 –Oregon Spotted Frog**

The survey is continuing. No sightings so far. Spring surveys for amphibians in drawdown zone will also include spotted frog. We expect the report in mid-summer.

**HANDOUTS:**

- DECISION TO DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT 1. (Memo from Connie Freeland, Licensing Program Manager – February 12, 2002.)
- Shrub definitions. These are the definitions for shrublands that we will be using for the vegetation cover type.

**PARKING LOT**

- Conceptual Mitigation Approach (P/M/Es)
- Review time frame/goals of working groups/milestones
- Definitions of “project boundary”, “project effects”, “previous environment”, “project area”, NEPA definitions
- Watershed Analysis Presentation
- Land Management – Do study?
- Make list of all available relevant data. Create a subset of those data for Tony to always bring to meetings for group to continually reference.
- Are transmission lines in or out of FERC boundary?
- Changing Climate Patterns
- Determine land management allocations within Project boundary
- Tony to set up Wetland Field Trip

**MEETING EVALUATION****Well Dones:**

- All parties present came to consensus re: how to proceed with continuing impacts
- Got out early
- Erin!
- Weed passion
- Good maps

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**Need for Improvement:**

- Got excited and interrupted (broke norms)
- Carl's offer to edit Continuous Impacts Document

**TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR OUR NEXT MEETING**

**Mountlake Terrace, Washington**

**March 21, 2002, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!

1. Review notes/agenda/action items
2. Solution Team Update
3. Studies
  - Teamlet Reports
  - R15 Basin Vegetation Mapping Update
  - T7 Update
  - T13, T17, 5b.
  - Others?
4. Set next agenda/location for April 17 meeting
5. Evaluate meeting