



Baker River Project License Implementation **Aquatic Resources Group**

Team Leader: Arnie Aspelund (PSE), arnie.aspelund@pse.com

PRESENT

Doug Bruland, Lynda Kupfer, and Haley Edwards (by phone), Arnie Aspelund, Tony Fuchs, Cary Feldmann, Nathanael Overman, and Jacob Venard (PSE); Bob Helton (Citizen); Robert Franklin (Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Jeff McGowan (Skagit County); Steve Fransen (by phone) (NMFS); Lyn Wiltse and Candace Wilson (PDSA Consulting).

DECISIONS – none today

ARG MEETING DATES: Assume Tuesdays, alternating in-person and phone/web meetings:
April 10, Apr. 11 (FPTWG meeting at PSE LB Office in Concrete with field trip), May 8, June 12, July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11.

Website: You can find Baker River documents available to the resource groups such as resource group plans, reports, meeting notes, etc., via PSE.com:
<http://pse.com/aboutpse/HydroLicensing/Pages/Baker-River-Licensing.aspx>

ACTION ITEMS

- Nathanael Send Bob Helton hard copy of 104 presentation.

PREVIOUS - STILL RELEVANT - ACTION ITEMS

- All Let Nick know if you plan to attend Apr. 11 field trip of the gulper and LB FSC construction. Arrive by 1 pm and wear sturdy shoes with good ankle support. PSE will provide hard hats, vests, and safety glasses.
- Cary Create and disseminate single schedule that spans all Baker License Implementation Resource Groups.
- Cary Send out finalized report on repairs made and lessons learned for Upstream Fish Trap.
- Co-Mgrs Send a draft Fish Production Plan to Arnie ASAP, as per FPPF. (Co-managers reported still making progress, they have been meeting.)
- All Review / update the ARG representation list for your organization (ongoing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS / SAFETY MINUTE

- Arnie reviewed the Long Term Planning Schedule. TRIG ARG 505 meets April 5; ARG scheduled to meet April 10, but status will be re-visited, given BRCC reschedule.
- Lyn mentioned the safety hazard of a puddle of water that can form from wet boots.
- Arnie announced the location of the defibrillator and building evacuation routes.

NOTES

Meeting notes of the February 14 meeting were approved as submitted.

BRCC UPDATE

Cary announced that the next BRCC meeting will be held in May, not in combination with the ARG meeting April 10 as had been discussed. The date is in the process of being scheduled. It will likely be the end of May.

Updates from other Resource Groups:

- TRIG – They are working on management plans and implementation for Alder Creek and Burpee Hill properties. The Legacy Wood Plan is moving along. The March meeting will be a joint meeting with ARG.
- RRG – They issued some RAM funding for the USFS to do additional improvements at Swift Creek campground. Their next meeting is in June.
- CRAG – They met in February and reviewed designs for the Lower Baker Dam Crest Improvement project, which is being done in response to FERC requirements for overtopping. The Lower Baker Dam is part of the historic district. Impacts to the dam from this project are thought to be relatively minor. Decommissioning of the Spawning beaches is ongoing. CRAG also monitors other projects, such as Baker Club House, Floating Surface Collector, and the elk habitat lands.

SA 104-FISH CONNECTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ANNUAL CONSULTATION UPDATE

Nathanael reported that the Fish Connectivity Implementation Plan was completed last summer to provide continuity in management for bull trout. He reviewed char management activities for 2011, plans for 2012 activities, and a slide show of the fish tagging process. He also reported results of surveys, captures, and genetic studies.

The Fish Connectivity Implementation Plan

Article 104 stipulates that a fishway for native char connectivity be provided. The goal is to preserve reproductive connectivity throughout the area, and genetic analysis is being used to provide information as to fish origins. The Plan has been written to allow for an adaptive management approach to provide flexibility to respond to changes in the data. The Plan is reviewed on an annual basis with stakeholders.

Nathanael concluded with an overview of the 2012 FCIP O&M, Schedule, and QA/QC, which highlight the plans and procedures for active collection of native char this year.

OPERATIONS UPDATES

Baker Fish Hatchery Operations – Fish Inventory

Doug reported that PIT tagging is complete; 2,450 sockeye were released last Friday into Baker Lake. From Raceway 3, 44,000 coho will be released in late April into the Stress Relief Pond. There are around 5,000 in each of the circulars: The sockeye group and one of the three coho groups will be released mid-April into Baker Lake at Blue Tarp. The other two coho groups will be released at the same time into Baker Lake at West Pass Dike and Lake Shannon respectively. The rainbow trout in circulars #5 – 8 will go to tribes / charity events and also be planted in Depression Lake later in the season. Outdoor intermediates (around 1,600 each): PIT tagged last month, two sockeye groups and two Coho groups. These will be released in various locations April 14, May 15, and May 22. They are part of the 2012 Lake Shannon biological study. There are just over 6,015 lbs. of fish on site.

AI Ponds: In Take #2, there were 700,000 fry that were ponded. Of that group, about 41,000 of the sockeye fry developed a fungus. They were isolated and observed, but developed IHN and had to be destroyed. Everything else looks good, but they have chlorine ready for treatment in the event of another IHN outbreak.

Sockeye Incubation

Doug reported they ponded fry from egg take #3 this morning: 571,396 eyed eggs. We released the first group into Lake Shannon yesterday. The fry were so small they stuck to the sides, but a new spray bar

worked well. These fish are being ponded from week-to-week. They are held for a week and fed, then moved to the transfer station to collect and release.

Coho groups – about 40,000 fry have been ponded, and are coming out each week. They will be moved out within the next month.

Spawning Beach – At Beach #4 they are hauling Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and will soon be hauling every day. The fish are looking good. They will put some into Beach 3 to spread them out.

Incubation Worksheet for Brood Year 2011:

Sockeye green eggs = 5.3 million; Sockeye eyed eggs = 5.1 million; Sockeye fry ponded thus far: 1.5 million
Coho estimated total green eggs = 190K; Coho estimated total eyed eggs = 184K; Coho fry ponded thus far 40,000.

OTHER LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Progress on Plans and Reports

Arnie reminded all that SA108 (Gravel) and SA109 (LWD) annual reports will be coming up for review this month.

Progress on Lower Baker FSC Construction

Arnie walked us through some photos of the pier construction and other activities in preparation for the Lower Baker FSC. Doug explained where the net will be located this year. They are making good progress and still anticipate a launch in mid-June of this year.

MEETING EVALUATION

Worked Well:

- Fabulous PowerPoint from Nathanael

Do Differently:

- Started late and ran late
- Attendance is a little low

NEXT MEETING

Previously scheduled for April 10, status pending.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m. and reconvened as the ARG-TRIG SA 505.