
BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Aquatic Resources Working Group

February 14, 2002

8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

US Forest Service Office
21905 64th Avenue West
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

AGENDA

1. Review Agenda and Minutes
2. Review Action Items
3. Reports from Fish Passage Technical Working Group
4. Review Communication Protocol and Process Documents
5. Study Plans/Requests
6. Review list of 2001 Accomplishments
7. Additional Issues?
8. Set agenda for March 14, 2002
9. Evaluate Meeting



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MEETING NOTES

***Aquatics Working Group Mission:** “To identify issues and develop solutions and recommendations addressing fish and aquatic resource interests related to the Baker River Project and its operations, leading to a settlement agreement.”*

Fish Team Leader: Arnie Aspelund, 425-462-3442, aaspel@puget.com

PRESENT: Arnie Aspelund, Nick Verretto, Doug Bruland and Cary Feldmann (PSE), Sue Madsen and Emily Greenberg (R2), Mark Downen (WDFW), Stan Walsh (SSC), Arn Thoreen (Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group), Gary Sprague (WDFW), Bill Reinard (Wildcat Steelhead Club), Chuck Ebel (U.S. Army Corps), Brady Green (USFS), Don Schluter (Trout Unlimited, by phone), Craig Addley, (Watershed Systems Group for USFS), Mark Killgore (Louis Berger Group), Lyn Wiltse (facilitator, PDSA Consulting, Inc.)

Note: If unable to attend meetings, please notify Team Leader.

FUTURE DATES AND LOCATIONS

March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13 from 8:30 to 2:30 at USFS Office in Mountlake Terrace unless otherwise specified. **NOTE: THE MARCH 14 MEETING WILL GO UNTIL 3:00.**

INTRODUCTIONS

We welcomed Mark Downen from WDFW and Mark Killgore from The Louis Berger Group, and Emily Greenberg from R2.

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8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
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Mountlake Terrace, WA**

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3. Reports from Fish Passage Technical Working Groups – Economic Working Group
4. Review Communication Protocol and Process Documents
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NEW ACTION ITEMS

- ALL: Get Arnie feedback on A14, A-26, A-36 by month end if possible.
- ALL: Give input (during meetings) to Mark Killgore re: questions, requirements. Invite anyone interested in evaluating the Charles Howard Model to attend our April 11 meeting at Mountlake Terrace or Economics April 10 at the PSE building at Mount Vernon.
- ALL: Give input re: Charles Howard Model questions, requirements (after the meeting) to Arnie.
- ALL: Let Sue know if you want additional copies of CD with Habitat tributaries pictures on them.
- Sue: Send out prioritization strawman and schedule by end of February for all to review.
- Nick: Follow-up with Don Schluter re: fish traps.
- Nick: Follow-up with Stan Zyskowski (Park Service) re: coordination on Little Park Creek sampling.
- Arnie: Get printout of adult returns (last season) to Arn Thoreen.
- Ruth: Draft Interest statements and accompanying issues for the Nature Conservancy
- Craig: Identify issues to be addressed in A9 Study Request and send to Sue/R2 by the end of February.
- Cary: Invite Steve and Fred's representative to present an overview of the IPP at our March meeting in relation to A9.
- Arnie: Button up with Recreation Working Group Team Leader re: A13
- Nick: Meet with Brady and Greta re: A13.
- Gary: Get Arnie recommendation on fry sample size and medium as soon as possible.
- Don: Provide references on information on cutthroat and char passage through Cascades to Arnie.

REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS

- Sue: Got habitat tributary pictures put on CD and sent to interested members
- Bob Barnes: Provided Phil an estimate of the forebay gage accuracy
- Arnie: Invited Fred and Steve to help discuss A-09 at our meeting

REPORTS ON ROAD CLOSURE AND LAND SLIDE

Doug reported that the road above Horseshoe Cove is still closed due to heavy snow. It looks like it will be spring before the road will be plow-able.

Cary reported that on February 5th a mud slide occurred on the right bank of the Baker River downstream of Lower Baker Dam.

REPORT FROM FISH PASSAGE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

The Upstream and Downstream Fish Passage Design Groups met February 4th and 5th. They continue conceptual design development and alternatives selection, and focused discussion on 2002 downstream behavioral studies at Upper Baker. Nick distributed handouts and schedules outlining these studies, which are separated into near-field (acoustic tag tracking of coho and sockeye for three-dimensional identification of fish movement) and far-field (radio tag tracking) releases. The studies will test movement during two treatments: low pool vs. high pool, and generation on vs. generation off. The timeline will be the seven weeks beginning April 29. Three additional studies include: radio-tagged kelts release at the upper end of the reservoir, PIT-tag & recovery of coho and sockeye in the near- and far-fields, as well as continuation of past releases of freeze-branded coho groups.

ECONOMICS/OPERATIONS WORKING GROUP

The Economics/Operations Working Group has been on hiatus for most of the last year, as they await the completion of the hydro operations model. Mark Killgore reported that 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 used) at our April meeting. They will be doing this overview for each of the Working Groups in the various resource areas. They will follow up with a comprehensive all-day workshop in May or June 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.

SCOPING DOCUMENT 1 AND INITIAL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

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.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL AND PROCESS DOCUMENT UPDATE

Nothing new to report. The teamlet of agency and PSE attorneys continued their review and 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.

STUDY REQUEST SUBMITTALS/STUDY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Study #	Title	Notes/Next Steps
A01.A	Reservoir Tributary Habitat Surveys	Emily gave a PowerPoint presentation summary of the preliminary survey results. This presentation will be available on the website. The full report will be complete prior to our March 14 meeting. Results will be used to assess fish production potentials in the three basins and also to identify areas for P/M/E measures.
A01.B	Reservoir Tributary Biological Surveys	Not discussed at this meeting. We will have a draft report this spring.
A01.C	Reservoir Tributary Delta Surveys	Not discussed at this meeting. The delta portions of tributaries in the drawdown zone will be surveyed in the next few months. This will be a supplemental report.
A02	LB River Habitat Mapping	No changes since last meeting.
A03	Reservoir Fish Population Characteristics	No changes since last meeting.
A04	LB/Skagit River Flow, Gaging	No changes since last meeting.
A05	Water Quality Sampling	No changes since last meeting.
A06	UB Passage Design Baffle Modification	Complete.
A07	Lower Baker Forebay Bathymetric Survey	Complete.
A08	UB Passage System Evaluation	The study report from R-2 is complete. Arnie distributed a copy of the report generated through the Fish Passage Technical Working Group.
A09A	Skagit River Flow and Habitat Assessment (HIGH PRIORITY)	The Interim Protection Plan is due February 15. The IPP concerns ESA issues for the remainder of the current license period. It may be useful as a reference going forward. After the IPP is complete we will reconsider our study plan and see if there are issues that have been resolved through the IPP and agree on next steps. The IPP addresses issues of flood control and supplementing low flows. A summary of this plan should be available for discussion at our March meeting. The IPP will be followed up shortly after with the Biological

	Assessment.
A09B Salmonid Redd Selection and Maintenance in the Middle Skagit in Response to River Fluctuation from Hydropower Peaking	We agreed to move this to Study Plan (first priority is A9A). We'll address it by this summer. We'll submit the Study Plan for member review in June for discussion at July meeting.
A09C Distribution, Timing and Depth of Salmonid Redds	We are in the process of developing a Study Plan for this. Some preliminary work was already done last fall. These data will be incorporated into the plan. Submit Study Plan in June for discussion at July meeting.
A09D Distribution, Timing of Salmonid Fry	Stan suggested a snorkeling contingency if can't get a permit.. Need Study Plan by March.
A10 Baker River Delta Habitat Assessment-Char	Complete. Note: USFW is concerned with impacts to char and indirectly to bald eagles through chum and also to cutthroat.
A11 Nutrient Addition	Not Discussed. Parking Lot.
A12 Instream Flows for Bio-diversity	Not Discussed. Split between R-A21 & R-A09.
A13A Water Quality Impacts of Human Uses of the Reservoir and Adjacent Shorelines.	We discussed reservoir/road/toilet –induced recreation. Arnie will follow up with Recreation Working Group re: existing data and possible PMEs. Nick and Brady will discuss this offline with Greta.
A13B Water Quality Impacts on Aquatic Habitat	Nick and Arnie will discuss this offline.
A14 Reservoir Shoreline Erosion	R2 has created an internal Study Plan Draft. They will send it out for team member review very soon and get in the field as soon as possible. Should have Study Plan in March.
A15 UB Delta Scour	Not discussed at this meeting. Status as of October meeting: Data collection underway.
A16 Lower Baker River Alluvial Fan Assessment	Not discussed at this meeting. This is not time sensitive. We agreed to wait until the completion of A24 in March before developing a Study Plan. The US Corps of Engineers funded Little Baker Project to be a tie to this Study.
A17 Tributaries Surveys Upstream of Barriers	Not discussed. Request pending; not for 2001.
A18 Baker River Survey Upstream of 1 km.	Not discussed at this meeting. Status as of October meeting: Merged into A-01.A habitat surveys conducted Aug & Sept 2001.
A19 Review Limnological Information	Not discussed at this meeting. Status as of

	October meeting: PSE is talking to a University of Washington researcher to review existing data.
A20 Large Woody Debris Management	<p>Sue received comments on the Study Request from the Forest Service Consulting Team. She will respond and copy her responses to the group. The goal of this plan is to create a Large Woody Debris management plan. There are questions re: ownership of wood. It may or may not be a salvage issue.</p> <p>R2 has drafted an outline for how we might address the wood issue and move forward with a Study Plan. In the next week, the woody debris (most is less than one foot in diameter) will be removed from the Lower Baker forebay. It will be dragged over to the boat launch where it will de-water. Some members believe that the amounts of gravel and large woody debris are important natural processes and need to be quantified. We need to determine the influence of the project on large woody debris and what to do about it.</p> <p>Sue will flesh out a budget and proposed scope for quantifying large woody debris and button up with Cary.</p>
A21 Skagit Wild & Scenic River Values	Not discussed at this meeting. Status as of October meeting: Study Request is under review.
A22 Baker Lake Trout Impacts Evaluation	No longer necessary due to change in management direction re: stocking of Baker Lake.
A23 Baker River Wild & Scenic River Values	Not discussed at this meeting. Status as of October meeting: Study Request needs clarification.
A24 Hydrologic and Geomorphic Analysis	In process of conducting the study, R2 has received hydrologic data from Bob Barnes. Are responding to comments from the Forest Service. We'll be basing analysis of the Skagit River on existing information.
A25 Unnatural Predation	Still awaiting a collection permit. This is TIME SENSITIVE for this spring! We agreed to discuss Study Plan offline.
A26 Reservoir Limnology-Production Potential	Stan is rewriting this to include other species. We don't want to miss this year's plankton bloom. Stan will send this out for review by

	month end. Pending review, we will move this forward to study design, combining it with similar studies.
A27 Middle Skagit Incubation Flows	Not discussed at this meeting. Status as of October meeting: Covered in A9.
A28 Fish Passage-Reservoir Management	This is being further developed in the Fish Passage Technical Working Group.
A29 Estimate Sockeye Production from Different Incubation Sources	Methods are still being evaluated. This is time critical. We will collect the fry from identified sites. We agreed to discuss Study Plan offline.
R-A30 Fish Passage-Near Field Smolt Behavior	Coordinated through Fish Passage Tech. Group.
R-A31 Fish Passage-Far Field Smolt Migration	Coordinated through Fish Passage Tech. Group
R-A32 Fish Passage-Kelt Radio telemetry	Coordinated through Fish Passage Tech. Group
R-A33 Fish Passage-PIT Tag Migration	Coordinated through Fish Passage Tech. Group
R-A34 Fish Passage-Downstream Run-Timing Correlation	Coordinated through Fish Passage Tech. Group
R-A35 Fish Passage-Upstream Run-Timing	Coordinated through Fish Passage Tech. Group
R-A36 Native & Wild Inland Fish Population Assessments	Mark (WDFW) walked us through this new Study Request. All were asked to get comments to Arnie by end of February so he can forward them to Mark. He will incorporate comments and we can discuss at our March meeting.

LIST OF MEETING HANDOUTS

- Agenda, January meeting notes, updated mail list, updated index of study requests, A13.A-Water Quality (02/02 amendment)-Water Quality impacts of human uses of the reservoir and adjacent shorelines,A36- Native and Wild Inland Trout Population Assessments.
- A06-Final Report-Assessing Effectiveness of Turbine Intake Baffle Modifications for Improving Downstream Passage of Juvenile Salmon: 2001 Study Results.
- Biological Assessment Supplement – Upper Baker Reservoir Flood Control Agreement with Puget Sound Energy (July 30, 2001)
- Memo February 12, 2002, To: Members of Baker Working Groups and Solution Team From: Connie Freeland, Licensing Program Manager, Subject: Decision to draft Scoping Document 1.
- Downstream Studies and Draft Schedule and Release Groups for 2002 Down Stream Fish Passage Studies
- Summary of Release Groups for 2002 Downstream Fish Passage Studies through Baker Lake, Washington.

PARKING LOT

- State agency presentations re: mandates (agency direction)
- Create a master list of possible studies across all working groups and share with all

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- Access to the Baker River Project hourly operational model (Charles Howard)
 - Participate in Lower Skagit Work Group for native char
 - Create Overall “Study Plan” for Studies that will drive the Relicensing Process
 - Address Traps & Haul – other species

EVALUATION OF MEETING

Well-Dones

- Great food!
- Good participation
- Emily’s presentation
- Welcome to Mark K. and Mark D. and Emily!
- Talking about hard stuff (prioritizing)
- Facilitation

Opportunities to Improve

- Ran over time
- Missed NMFS and USFW
- Sending material out late
- Discussion off topic
- Missed Don and Cary in the p.m.
- Room got warm
- Late Study Request
- Workload piling up –limited resources.

Tentative Agenda for Next Meeting

March 14, 2002

8:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

U. S. Forest Service Office

Mountlake Terrace, WA

1. Review Agenda and Minutes
2. Review Study Plans and Requests
A9a, A9d; A14, A26; A29
3. Review Strawman prioritization matrix and schedule prepared by Sue (R2)
4. Action Items
5. Update from Solution Team Meeting
6. Reports from Fish Passage Technical Working Group
7. IPP Review
8. Additional Issues?
9. Set agenda for April 11, 2002
10. Evaluate Meeting