



## *Baker River Project License Implementation* **Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group** **FINAL Meeting Notes**

**Team Leader:** Tony Fuchs (PSE), 425-462-3553, tony.fuchs@pse.com

### **PRESENT AT THE MEETING**

Tony Fuchs, Haley Edwards, Ira McDaniel, Scott Heller, Mel Walters, and Cary Feldmann (PSE); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Marty Vaughn (Biota-Pacific); Kathy Smayda (Smayda Environmental); Bill Richardson by phone and Bob Nelson (RMEF); Patrick Goldsworthy (NCCC); Lou Ellyn Jones (USFWS); and Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA)

**TRIG MEETINGS:** The next TRIG meeting will be in-person October 6th, probably in Bothell. The September 1 TRIG date will be held for the Burpee Hill teamlet and Tony will send out an email update.

**DECISION:** Does the TRIG adopt the June 7th, 2011 version of the Plants of Special Status Management Plan as our current implementation document?

**CELEBRATIONS:** The TRIG learned that Scott got married since last we saw him and congratulated him heartily! The team also celebrated the successful Burpee Hill acquisition. WhoHoo!

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- Ira Send Brock information (parcel #s, etc) about the property brought forward today
- Brock Coordinate WDFW review of the property brought forward today, report at next TRIG mtg.
- Scott Send out Giant Knotweed treatment dates (volunteers welcome!)
- Brock Send Tony contact info for the person PSE needs to talk with about moving the access gate onto the Burpee Hill property
- Tony Add comments about the preliminary nature of the estimates (draft scopes, very rough cost assumptions) in the Burpee Hill “year one” spreadsheet; send to TRIG with these notes
- Haley Connect with Don re: updated Legacy Wood proposal; assuming his concerns have been addressed, move forward with the proposed activities

### **PREVIOUS - STILL RELEVANT - ACTION ITEMS:**

- Kim/Greta Update TRIG re: accounting process for Late Seral Forest money and TERF fund
- Tony, Haley, Scott - Compile list of suggested monitoring goals and activities related to Article 514, develop a draft plan for TRIG to review / edit (Tony: elk; Scott: wetlands; Haley: forest)
- Tony Email TRIG an updated proposal re: Alder Crk brush mgmt for TRIG to review & provide feedback; move forward with activities unless a TRIGger asks for add'l review / discussion
- Tony, Marty, Kathy -Provide a summary of activities to be conducted in the first year post-acquisition, priorities and sequencing of tasks and related costs (*from 7/25 Burpee Hill teamlet*)
- Marty Modify pre-acquisition data collection forms to include percent cover estimates for dominant overstory trees on potential elk forage forested stands, as well as notation of other overstory and understory species (for use in legacy wood). Modify understory data collection to include estimates of percent cover of salal, sword fern, Oregon grape w/in elk forage stands. (*from 7/25 Burpee Hill teamlet*)

- Ira, Tony Prepare “straw dog” proposal for access on acquired lands, perhaps in preparation for an off-line meeting with the tribes?

#### **Update on previous action / decision items**

1. **Late Seral Forest thinning, monitoring, and funds distribution:** At the end of their fiscal year, USFS will do a complete accounting of their Article 515 Late Seral Forest thinning work and the follow-up monitoring (approved by the TRIG at its May 5, 2011 meeting). Remaining funds will go into the TERF fund; Greta sent PSE a USFS funds transfer form for the funds transferred from the Late Seral forest thinning budget to their proposed monitoring budget (related to the May 5th decision). Look for an update in October or November.
2. **Alder Creek Brush Management:** Tony reported that a hoped-for volunteer outing with RMEF was cancelled due to low volunteer availability. Tony hasn’t rescheduled, yet. He will keep TRIG posted.
3. **Sauk-Suiattle representative:** Stan reported that he will fill Chris Danilson’s place on the TRIG for now. *(update on action item from the 7/25 Burpee Hill Teamlet meeting)*

#### **BRCC / LICENSING UPDATE**

PSE provides monthly email updates on Resource / Working Group activities to members of the BRCC. The fourth Wednesdays are reserved for BRCC conference calls as needed. In-person meetings are scheduled semi-annually.

The BRCC has not met since the TRIG’s May 5, 2011 meeting. Cary provided a high-level review of the most recent BRCC monthly email update:

- As you all know (☺), there are a lot of annual reports out for review.
- 107c report is out for review; comments due 8/12
- Ground prep is underway for the Lower Baker Floating Surface Collector; construction starts Sept.
- CRAG / ARG are continuing to work on the spawning beach decommissioning
- This year’s Sockeye return is the highest return on record.
- At their meeting next week, the ARG will debrief an accident that caused the death of about 800 fish.
- Tony will attend the Law Enforcement meeting in October to ensure that newly acquired properties are included in their plans.
- PSE took about 250 Skagit citizens on tours of the Baker facilities.
- The 505 ARHWG will convene again this fall to solicit and consider proposals.

#### **TRIG BUDGET:**

After acquisitions and related costs, the Elk Capital fund currently has about \$492k.

The Forest Article owes the Elk Capital Fund \$60k for the Alder Creek property and approximately \$219,520 for Burpee Hill (per the Property X addendum to the Nov. 4, 2010 TRIG notes, the Forest Fund owes the Elk Fund 20% of the final actual acquisition cost for the Burpee Hill property). Wetland owes Elk \$280,00 for Alder Creek and approximately \$18k for Burpee Hill (the actual amount will be 2% of the final actual acquisition cost). Final acquisition costs have not yet been calculated, but by the end of the year we should know the total amounts for Burpee Hill.

PSE’s next infusion (\$1.25 million) into the Elk Capital fund is due in 2013.

The Forest Article will get its first infusion of money (\$458,380) this October. The Wetland Article gets its first infusion of acquisition money (approximately \$380,545) in October 2012.

The Elk O&M fund started the year with \$18,694 in carry-over; \$53,300 (\$50k + escalation) was added and \$45,597 was spent (mainly on planning & permitting work). There is currently \$26,397 in the O&M fund. Tony pointed out that once the DNR permits are in place for the properties, O&M money will be focused on management activities.

## **DECISION, PLANTS OF SPECIAL STATUS**

Proposed decision text: “Does the TRIG adopt the June 7th, 2011 version of the Plants of Special Status Management Plan as our current implementation document?” A quorum was present and no proxies were noted. Kathy and Scott reported that Ann (USFS) had reviewed the plan and expressed her support via email. By consensus of all present, the decision was approved and the Plants of Special Status Plan was adopted. Tony noted that this is one of the TRIG’s “living documents” and, as such, is subject to review and update as needed, perhaps annually (for example, as listed plants change or as conditions on the ground change). The plan as approved will guide the TRIG’s work until such update.

## **LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

Tony pointed out that TRIG is not actively pursuing any parcels at this time (“There’s nothing on the front burner”). He then projected a spreadsheet showing all the properties TRIG has considered, what actions TRIG has taken relative to each, and each property’s current status. Ira answered questions about the spreadsheet and brought forward a property the TRIG may want to consider. Ira pointed out the parcel’s proximity to residential development, but added that the owners came forward expressing interest in collaborating on a conservation easement. In addition to nearby development, the owners’ interests make this a potentially complicated deal. Ira will send Brock information about the parcel so WDFW can review it (it is outside the core area). Assuming WDFW is OK with the parcel, TRIG agreed this would be worth a conversation between Ira, Bill and the owners to clarify interests.

The group talked about the TRIG’s next steps in terms of acquisitions. Stan pointed out that TRIG has two recently acquired parcels and has plenty to do to get management activities underway on those. The rest of the group agreed that the TRIG’s current focus is on Alder Creek and Burpee Hill. TRIG asked Ira and Bill / RMEF to use this “down time” (from an acquisition perspective) to maintain contact with landowners they have talked with before in anticipation of the next round of acquisition activity.

## **POST-ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES, ALDER CREEK**

**DNR Permit:** Tony reported that he will be submitting Part I of the DNR long-term application next Tuesday (next Monday was the soonest he was able to get on Joetta’s calendar to do the final GIS / mapping work). Marty, Kathy, Haley, and Tony met last week to identify what needs to be done for Part II of the permit and will keep this work moving forward.

**Roads:** Tony also showed photos of the road DNR is building on their land adjacent to the Alder Creek property. Extending this road into the Alder Creek property will provide access to Mgmt Unit 5, which is the bench above the slope on the western part of the western parcel that is designated to be managed for elk forage. DNR’s contractors are extending the road to our property line, which is a little further than they would go if they were constructing it only for DNR’s logging needs; they are also constructing it to a better quality than they would if it were only for logging purposes.

PSE already holds a permanent road access easement for the property at this location, and it is in the Alder Creek management plan to construct this road sometime in the next year. While a price quote is not yet available, the TRIG’s cost for the extra roadway on DNR land will likely run about \$2.5k. The cost of extending the road onto the Alder Creek property so it connects with the existing road in Mgmt Unit 5 is likely to cost about \$5k more. Building the road now, using the DNR’s contractors, will save the TRIG money by avoiding contractor mobilization costs. TRIG agreed that this is a prudent choice.

## **POST-ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES, BURPEE HILL**

Tony reviewed the notes from the 7/25/11 Burpee Hill Teamlet meeting (emailed out to the TRIG 8/2/11). He also reported that he has a meeting scheduled with Scott Williams (PSE Project Manager) to plan the work to build an access road onto the Burpee Hill site that goes around WDFW’s property.

At the teamlet meeting, attendees generated a list of possible activities to be done in the first year of owning the Burpee Hill property. They tried to identify projects that are time- or season-sensitive or must be done in

a particular order. Based on the team's work in the meeting, Kathy created a spreadsheet showing the list of potential activities. In order to add estimated costs for each activity, she had to create an estimated scope for each one. She stressed that all of the costs are very rough estimates based on those scopes that she assigned. TRIG or a teamlet of the TRIG will need to review and either update or confirm the draft scope and cost assumptions for each activity in order to have a budget-worthy estimate of costs.

Tony projected this spreadsheet and the TRIG reviewed the list of potential activities.

Stan asked for clarification about work that is appropriate to charge to Capital (acquisition) vs. O&M. Tony listed the roadwork and about half of the Cultural review as acquisition costs; the rest of the activities are O&M.

**Giant Knotweed:** The activity on the shortest timeline is treatment of the Giant Knotweed on the site. Due to the plant's presence on the Skagit Valley regional plan, treatment is mandatory; and, per the 508 plan, the cost will be charged to the Forest Habitat Article. Funding in the Forest Article becomes available this fall, and PSE financial folks agreed that the work could be done in August and charged to the Forest Article when the article is funded. Scott and Kathy suggest treating the weeds this August in order to thwart an additional growing season. TRIG agreed that the weeds should be treated this year ("there's no value in waiting ... weeds only get worse and worse = more expensive").

**Wetland Mapping:** Bruce Stoker is the contractor who completed the steep slopes, creek channel migration zone, and road mapping for the Alder Creek property; he has the certifications DNR requires for their permits. Tony has extended PSE's existing contract with him so he can do the work on the Burpee Hill property. Kathy explained that the wetland mapping must be done in the dry season if the TRIG wants to be able to differentiate perennial streams from seasonal-only streams (during the wet season, all the streams are watered up, making it impossible to tell which are perennial and which are seasonal). This differentiation may not be necessary if the TRIG is willing to honor the perennial stream buffers for all of them.

Bob asked whether it would be possible to go back and update the designation if the TRIG later finds that the perennial designation excessively limits the TRIG's ability to manage certain units within the property for elk. Marty, Kathy, and Tony confirmed that the DNR's process does allow for updating. Kathy explained that the designation in the application will clearly state the survey methodology used and will make clear that the surveyor was designating the class N streams as perennial in lieu of waiting for the dry season.

The TRIG agreed that it would be OK to defer the Burpee Hill stream identification work until the 2012 budget year. Based on the work's timing and the ability to update the designations in future if needed, the TRIG also agreed that it would be acceptable to designate all of Burpee Hill's class N (non-fish bearing) streams as perennial for purposes of the DNR permit.

**Prioritization of Projects:** There was a lengthy discussion about the potential projects and how to best prioritize the work in light of available funding. The very rough cost estimate for all of the items on the spreadsheet came to about \$150k. The Elk O&M budget has about \$29k, about \$15k of which is already designated for roadwork and other Alder Creek activities. This means there is about \$14k available in 2011 for Burpee Hill work. Tony pointed out that the 2012 payment of \$50k plus escalation will be deposited into the Elk O&M fund in January and the TRIG will need to decide how best to prioritize those funds across both properties.

The TRIG asked Tony's team to generate a prioritized list of projects that could be done within the remaining 2011 O&M budget, email that to the TRIG, and then proceed with any work that is time-sensitive unless a TRIG member asks for additional deliberation. This task will be taken on by the Burpee Hill teamlet, which will meet on September 1st in lieu of the regular TRIG meeting.

## **ACCESS ON ACQUIRED LANDS**

At the May 5 TRIG meeting, Brock reported that WA RCW 4.24.210 releases landowners from liability as long as known dangers on site have been appropriately marked and the owner does not charge for access. Ira and Tony are still planning to draft an outline of a comprehensive approach to public access for the TRIG's consideration. Since they have not had time to do so, the TRIG agreed that both properties will be closed to vehicle access, and Ira can process limited use access permits this year using PSE's existing process.

### **LEGACY WOOD PROPOSAL UPDATE**

Haley reviewed the document describing the legacy wood proposal that she emailed to the TRIG in early June. Earlier, Don expressed concern with the proposal because he felt it did not contain sufficient supporting documentation. Additional documentation has been added and Haley feels confident that she has addressed Don's concerns. TRIG authorized Haley to move forward with the work as soon as she has confirmation from Don that his concerns have been addressed.

Haley noted that much of the Legacy Wood work done for Alder Creek will apply to Burpee Hill as well and can be incorporated into the Burpee Hill program document, which will be more efficient than dealing with the topic separately.

### **BOTANICAL TEAMLET UPDATE**

Scott shared highlights of the Botanical Teamlet's work since May 5.

- He noted that the *2010 SA 508 Annual Report* is out for review.
- Plants of Special Status sites are all being monitored this year. Two site visits have been completed so far and *there is one more field visit required for the two remaining sites* yet to do.
- The Carex Working Group is out now surveying the *Carex flava* sites. So far they have found 40 additional plants in transect two (WhoHoo!)
- All scotch broom on USFS lands were treated 6/14. *The Baker project staff has been treating the scotch broom on PSE lands as part of their regular maintenance schedule.*
- Reed Canary Grass was retreated at WB 17 and stem counts *in the monitoring plots* have been completed to assess whether Reed Canary Grass is advancing *into the wetlands interior.*
- The seedlings being grown for us are growing well (about 3k plants available this year ... maybe a fall planting party is in order?!)
- Canada and Bull Thistle will be treated 8/16.
- On the back burner is an assessment of Wild Chervil on acquired lands. It flowers in spring and has not been assessed yet at the Alder Creek property.

### **LOON UPDATE**

Haley put together a map of sightings and projected that for TRIG's review. Seven were sighted at Lake Shannon, none near nesting platforms (no geese either, though, since netting was installed). Eight loons were observed at Baker Lake concentrated near the boat launch and NW end of the lake. There was no nesting or *young* observed this season. Many buoys have been moved or lost; the rope at Lake Shannon was partially submerged by debris (the platform needs repair but remains functional).

### **OSPREY UPDATE**

Mel reported that there will be one more osprey survey due in August. There were four or five active nests on Lake Shannon this year and a couple more on Baker. He noted that Tree #2 of the 13 that were topped had a successful Osprey nest. The geese were prolific this year (five of the 10 artificial nest platforms had geese). The group talked about the reduction in Osprey sightings on Baker without coming to any conclusions. Mel will have a "pretty report ... with pictures" available at the next TRIG meeting.

### **Meeting Evaluation**

- Congratulations, Scott!
- Special thanks to Ira and Bill for their acquisition work ... WhoHoo re: Burpee Hill!
- Thanks also to the Burpee Hill teamlet for their great start on "year one" activities

- The Mexican “take-out” was great; nice to have the hot lunch
- Bothell location good for this sized group; central location is appreciated
- North-enders asked for another Burlington meeting
- There was a long, circular discussion about Burpee Hill’s potential “year one” activities. The dialogue was good for getting the full TRIG thinking about the property’s needs. It also underscored that a large group is better suited for considering / editing a proposal than developing a proposal. The dialogue could have been streamlined if the teamlet had taken the work one-step further and included a proposal for the remaining 2011 O&M funds.

**Draft October 6 Agenda – Bothell, with Web-X, Call**

- Agenda, Notes, A.I.
- BRCC / License Updates
- Land Acquisition Updates (WDFW review of today’s property)
- TRIG 502 & 504 Budgets: O&M, Capital expectations
- Post-Acquisition Updates
  - Alder Creek: DNR Application, Road Update
  - Burpee Hill: “year one” activities
  - Updated flow chart for post-acquisition activities
- Access Management
- Document Update Schedule (Program Docs, plans, etc)
- Botanical Update
- Osprey Report (pretty, with pictures)