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## **BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE**

### **Recreational & Aesthetic Resources Working Group**

November 19, 2001

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PSE Business Office  
1700 College Way E.  
Mount Vernon, WA

### **AGENDA**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review action items
3. Studies updates: R9, R14, R12, R13
4. Study requests/pending study plans:
  - R11, Capacity and Suitability Analysis
  - R5, Aesthetics
  - R16, Needs Analysis
  - R15, Trail Routing and Feasibility
5. Analysis of data from 2001 studies
6. Review of related studies from other working groups
7. Set agenda for December 17 meeting (Mountlake Terrace, if we need to meet), confirm location for January 28
8. Evaluate meeting



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9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

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Mt. Vernon, WA

### FINAL MEETING NOTES

**Mission:** *“To develop alternative solutions and recommendations addressing recreation, education and aesthetic resources related to the Baker River Project and its operations leading to a settlement agreement.”*

**Team Leader:** Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates) (425) 828-4463,  
clawson@huckellweinman.com

**PSE Contact:** Tony Fuchs: (425) 462-3553, tfuchs@puget.com

#### PRESENT

Chris Lawson (Huckell/Weinman Associates), Susan Rosebrough (National Park Service), Ann Dunphy (U.S.F.S.), Lauri Vigue (WA Department Fish & Wildlife), Andy Hatfield (PSE), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator, PDSA Consulting Inc.

#### SCHEDULE CHANGES AND MEETING LOCATIONS:

December meeting, tentatively scheduled for December 17, **will not be held**

January 28 meeting will be at the USFS Office in Mountlake Terrace

February 25 meeting will be at the WA Department Fish & Wildlife Building in Mill Creek

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**NOTE: *These meetings will start at 9:30 a.m. (change from previous 9:00 a.m. start) and end no later than 2:00 p.m.***

**November 19, 2001 Agenda – PSE Office in Mt. Vernon**

**9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

**NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Update on Existing Studies (R9, 14, 12, 13)
4. Study Requests/Pending Study Plans
  - R11, Capacity and Suitability Analysis
  - R5: Aesthetics
  - R16: Needs Analysis
  - R15: Trail Routing
5. 2001 Data Analysis Update
6. Review of related studies from other Working Groups
7. Set agenda for December 17 meeting (if we need to meet), confirm location for 1/28/02
8. Evaluate meeting

**NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- ALL: Review Task Structure of R15 study plan; send comments to Chris by December 14.
- Chris: Discuss 1997 versus 2000 versions of Access database software with PSE/team leaders
- Chris: Talk with Arnie and Nick re: Aquatics GIS layers
- Chris: Discuss at Team Leader Meeting how to tweak study index to show status /start/end dates, etc.
- Chris: Bring initial list of participants and interests from first Public Meeting
- Chris: Ask R2 to show selected reservoir points on the visibility analysis map
- Chris: Secure contact from Whatcom and Skagit Counties
- Chris: Create initial draft of Needs Analysis (look at items from R-1 and R-2)
- Chris/Andy: Discuss options for ongoing monitoring (spring) of developed/dispersed sites
- Andy: Forward email on “Run” to Ann
- Andy: Investigate condition of traffic counter on Road 1107
- Ardis: Continue to discuss Water Quality Study with Greta
- Tony: Bring climate data prepared by Fluharty
- Tony: Research ownership of dispersed recreation sites around Lake Shannon
- Tony/Chris: List 2001 accomplishments
- PSE: Get professional help in managing data collected (accessible resource areas). It was the consensus of this group to use Access '97
- Ann: Chase down fish data from Brady (trout, etc.)
- Lauri: Check with Gary re: Aquatic Working Group data we need
- Lauri: Check availability of WDFW office at Mill Creek for February 25 meeting.

**REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS**

- Chris talked with Saul, who expressed interest in study plans

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- Chris: Contacted engineering firm in Bellingham re: installing permanent traffic counters.(see discussion below)

## **HANDOUTS**

- Trafficount, Inc. – Start Date 7/09/2001; Rd. 11/SO Rd 12; Loc. #1 HWA01159
- PSE – Baker Lake & Lake Shannon Visibility Analysis DRAFT map (color)
- Recreational Trail Analysis Study Plan (Study Request R-R15)
- PSE Baker River Project Re-license (FERC #2150) Cultural & Historical Resources Working Group – Progress Report, December 2001

## **EXISTING STUDIES UPDATE**

### **R9 RECREATION USE SURVEY – ELECTRONIC MONITORING**

Chris got summary data from the first three-week period of traffic counts (July 13-August 6). He gave John Lindsay from Trafficount feedback re: the formatting of the Excel spreadsheet so it would be user-friendly for us. Chris distributed summary data for one counter location to team members for their information. Summaries show hourly counts, daily totals and a.m. and p.m. peak hours for each day. Chris will talk with John about consolidating some of the vehicle classifications displayed on the printouts. Results for the example station on Road 11, south of the Road 12 junction, were as follows:

Daily average for inbound traffic:

Week 1	473	
Week 2	381	
Week 3	348	
Week 4	316	<u>Overall average (weekend and weekday) = 380 vehicles per day</u>

Average daily traffic by day of week:

Monday	214
Tuesday	220
Wednesday	247
Thursday	298
Friday	562
Saturday	548
Sunday	323

We are still awaiting the traffic count data from August 20 through Labor Day. Andy and Ann thought the numbers for that period might be slightly higher. Ann reported hearing that the counter tubes on Road 1107 were balled up beside the side of the road. Chris will keep us posted on new data as it comes in.

Chris talked with Sail Electric in Bellingham about plans for permanent counter stations. They declined to give him an estimate on two permanent stations because they couldn't guarantee the counters would remain functional over the long term. The main problem seems to be a reliable power source. It appears we would have to change batteries every week or two if we were not able to get a good enough backup power source, such as a solar system. There is concern that snow plows would disturb a solar back-up system. Right now, there doesn't seem to be a workable solution for long-term electronic monitoring of

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traffic. Chris will continue to research the viability of this option by checking with suppliers on the specifications of the counters and sensors we want. He will also check out an Alaska National Park Service connection to see what they use for a winter power source.

#### **R7 +R8 = R14: SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION**

Nothing to report (work will begin in winter.)

#### **R12 DEVELOPED AND DISPERSED SITE INVENTORY**

This past weekend marked the completion of the field studies. Last Tuesday, Chris, Andy and Tony met with those who conducted the site inventories. The field crew reviewed the initial inventory data and re-did the GPS coordinates to ensure their accuracy. All sites should be verified and the data should be ready to enter into a database in the next couple of weeks. Ann noted that Forest Service staff were anxious to get a map of the dispersed sites.

#### **R13 RECREATION VISITOR SURVEYS**

Recreational activity in the study area has declined to very low levels. Since our last meeting (through November 5) only 13 additional surveys were collected (11 drop box and 2 interviews).

Cumulative totals through November 5, 2001 = 718

Drop box - 422

Interview – 296

There may be a handful more surveys to tabulate. November 17 was the last day of surveying in the field.

#### **STUDY REQUESTS/PENDING STUDY PLANS**

##### **R11: RECREATION CAPACITY AND SUITABILITY ANALYSIS**

New: Changes to this study plan were noted in the meeting notes from last meeting. Chris incorporated this feedback and re-ordered the tasks (Task 4 becomes Task 1). He asked members to review the revised study plan from the standpoint of logical approach and timeline.

NOTE: Page 10, Table 2, Task 1: The date should read October 30, 2001. We will need to keep the request open to additional input over the next few months. We will look at it again as a group at our January meeting.

##### **R5: VISUALS AND AESTHETICS STUDY**

Ann is still looking at what the Forest Service has already on visual quality objectives and what we can use without conducting needless analysis. They are still working on developing frameworks for looking at “Special Places”.

Chris finally got the digital elevation model analysis from R2 that shows visible areas from selected reservoir points (based on terrain). He passed out the map he received from R2 showing these areas. We are assuming the viewpoints selected were in a line down the middle of the lake. The map looks like a reasonable first step. We will have the selected points displayed on the map. Chris expressed surprise that Anderson Butte didn’t show up as a visible area. Ann said we may also want to assess views from Road 11 and other major routes into the Basin, as well as major viewpoints into the Basin.

##### **R15: RECREATIONAL TRAIL ROUTING**

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Chris received comments by e-mail from four people since the last meeting. If we look at proposed actions involving trails, we will be specific re: guidelines (signage, etc.). He will integrate that feedback as we proceed. The Forest Service is interested in doing a rating system on trails to assist users. Ann suggested that this would be a desirable addition to the Study Plan. The Park Service said the GIS data should include year-round presence/usage of endangered species. Chris included the gist of that comment into the study Plan (page 6).

Ann reported that the Forest Service is currently doing an environmental assessment on the Boulder Ridge trail re-construction and will need to maintain habitat for grizzly bears. This may affect the status of Swift Creek Trail as well as road access so there would be no net loss of core grizzly bear habitat.

Other comments: Study objectives were revised to better apply to recreational trail analysis. On page 4, Task Structure – Are there Forest Service restrictions against doing anything in the LSR? There will be LSR and grizzly impacts to this study. The Forest Service is in the midst of figuring out what all this means operationally. Ann will keep us posted.

Item 2: Most of the overlay resource maps from the Terrestrial Working Group will be in GIS format. We agreed to consolidate Task2 with Task4, and leave it before Task3. Re: The table-top study we should look at route locations and objectives (e.g., are we trying to link developed sites together, etc.) This should be the first step.

We also need to see how all this fits into market analysis, etc. (not just for trails but for all recreational opportunities). We didn't address this well with the Visitor Survey. We may need a new Study Request to address this. We need to prioritize recreational opportunities in terms of what we absolutely need vs. what we could live without, keeping in mind current/future trends. Chris will work with Ann to integrate this big picture overview into R16 Needs Analysis .

2.3 – Task 1: Add language that Terrestrial Working Group would define high quality habitat. Also, this group or sub group will participate with Huckell/Weinman Associates providing the next level of detail. This will be an iterative process.

Page 5, Section 2.6 – We added *riparian habitats*;

We edited Section 2.7 to be more relevant.

Page 6 – Study Schedule: We need to work with other Working Groups, especially GIS information and the scheduling on this is uncertain.

We may need to work from preliminary drafts depending on the availability of some of the GIS layers, even in preliminary form. We need to work to include Aquatics data since we don't have a direct link with that group.

## **R16: NEEDS ANALYSIS**

OBJECTIVE: To identify potential measures to take to include in the settlement Agreement

1. What is needed?
2. Of what is needed, what is reasonable, do-able?

Chris is working on a draft on this study plan. He will include the visioning stuff we discussed (market analysis, prioritization of needs, etc.). We discussed how we might do the visioning exercise. We agreed we need to get input from as large a variety of recreation users possible. We would try to include both active and inactive members of this Working Group. We could also contact interested folks who attended the initial Public Meeting PSE held. If so, we would need to work to ensure their expectations remain realistic.

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Chris will bring the list of interests expressed by recreation folks at the initial Public Meeting for us to review at our next meeting. We will discuss next steps at that time.

### **UPDATE ON ANALYSIS OF 2001 DATA**

It looks like the Working Groups will be using Access database software to hold our data. PSE's IT department is working on a draft framework for recreation data for us to review. It should be complete in the near future. Nancy Smaridge (who worked on the field crew throughout the 2001 field season) will stay on to enter the data. This makes sense since she is intimately familiar with the data.

### **PARKING LOT**

- Operationally define "project induced"
- List authorities that this team must be aware of
- Tie education piece to ALL Working Groups
- Hold periodic "outreach" meetings for feedback from other groups (hiking, horseback riding, etc.)
- Land Management
- Forest Service presentation of SMS
- Trailhead surveys
- Have demonstration of Charles Howard Operational Model (this winter?)
- SOP (sense of place) presentation (Jim)

### **EVALUATION OF MEETING**

#### **Things Done Well**

- Got out early
- Lots of food
- Field data collection over for the season
- Good work Nancy, Steve, Andy!

#### **Need for Improvement**

- Small attendance
- Missed Jim, Ardis, Tony, Curt, Saul, Ken
- No computer

**Note:** There will be NO DECEMBER MEETING

FEBRUARY MEETING will be at the Washington Dept. Fish & Wildlife Bldg, Mill Creek, WA

### **TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR JANUARY MEETING**

**January 28, 2002 Agenda – Forest Service Bldg, Mountlake Terrace, WA**

**9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

**NOTE: BRING LUNCH; BE PREPARED TO WORK THROUGH**

1. Review/revise minutes/agenda
2. Review Action Items
3. Update on Existing Studies (R9, R14)

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4. Study Requests/Pending Study Plans
    - R11, Capacity and Suitability Analysis
    - R5: Aesthetics
    - R16: Needs Analysis
    - R15: Trail Routing
  5. Review list of 2001 accomplishments
  6. Set agenda for next meeting (WDFW Office in Mill Creek)
  7. Set date for May meeting (to avoid Memorial Day)
  8. Evaluate meeting