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## **BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE**

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

**March 20, 2001 (8:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.)  
(Bring Sack Lunch)**

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

### **AGENDA**

Review notes/revise agenda/revisit mission statement
Status report: Action items
Report from Recreation Working Group on R-T9 and R-T10 (Lauri, Tony)
Review Decision Tree and draft species list (re: for selection of analysis species)
Report from TWG on R-T15
Discuss study requests R-T9-13
Approval by Working Group of priority 2001 Studies
Review/discuss Continuing Impacts Analysis (as time permits)
Set agenda for next meeting (April 17 <sup>th</sup> , USFS office in Mountlake Terrace (?))
Evaluate meeting

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## BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

### Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group

March 20, 2001

8:15 am – 2:00 pm

US Forest Service Office  
Mountlake Terrace

### MEETING NOTES

**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

Tony Fuchs (Puget Sound Energy), Patrick Goldsworthy (North Cascades Conservation Council), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife), Ann Risvold (U.S. Forest Service), Stan Walsh (Skagit System Cooperative), Fred Seavey (U.S. Fish & Wildlife), Lloyd Pernela (PSE), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

The meeting started at 8:40 a.m. and ended at 2:00 p.m.

**NOTE:** Lyn’s cell phone is 425-444-8156. She will have the phone with her and turned on until the meeting begins. Please call her if you need to prior to any meeting. She’ll turn the phone off when the meeting begins and she will check for messages at the break.

#### AGENDA

March 20, 2001, **8:15 a.m. –2:00 p.m.** at U.S. Forest Office, Mountlake Terrace, WA

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1. Review notes/agenda
  2. Status report: Action items
  3. Report from Recreation Working Group on R-T9 and R-T10
  4. Review Continuing Impacts Analysis
  5. Review Decision Tree (re: for Selection of Analysis Species)
  6. Discuss RT-11-13; 9,10
  7. Approval by Working Group of 2001 Studies
  8. Set next agenda (5/15) Location?
  9. Evaluate meeting

### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- Tony: Have Hamer prioritize the 6 studies for 2001 and send out draft study plans as they become available.
- All: Review draft study plans prior to next meeting.
- Ann: Check on making relevant information from Watershed Analysis available to this group. Will it be available electronically?
- Ann: Check parking situation for meeting at this office
- Lloyd: Bring legal citations re: Legal precedents for baseline.
- Tony: Email Bob's list of vertebrate species and vascular plant species to all members.
- Tony: Contact Shari Brewer re: Sauk-Suiattle presentation on cultural significance of mountain goats and other terrestrial resources.
- Lauri: Tell Tony dates of digital ortho photos (WDFW)
- Tony: Get statement of qualifications from proposed contractors and send to team members
- Tony: Begin putting together a list of contractors that this group could approve.
- Tony and Ann: Status of RT-16
- Tony: Bring operations definitions for project area, etc.
- Bob: Check with Partners In Flight (PIF) re: their species data base

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

- Marty: Revised and sent out new version of Terrestrial Group Continuing Impacts Analysis flow diagram.
- Don: Ann gave copies of the new Record of Decision to Tony (and Marty). Tony hasn't yet had time to review the changes. Some species may be outside the project boundary.
- Bob: Sent Vertebrate Species and Vascular Plant Species list to Tony
- Tony: Met with authors of priority studies and finalized them for the March meeting.
- Lauri: Touched base with Dave Johnson re: Washington/Oregon State Habitat Species Associates. Lauri and Tony are purchasing copies of the Johnson book.

### **TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP**

The team decided to form a technical working group to come up with a criteria/framework and a draft list of species and habitats to study. The group will consist of Stan, Don, Fred, Lauri, Tony and Marty. They are planning to meet on April 10, from 10:00 to 2:00 at PSE Office in Bellevue. (Team Leader Note: Don and probably Fred will participate by conference call).

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## **OPTIONS FOR SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

Patrick Goldsworthy stated that the North Cascades Conservation Council is interested in seeing Puget Sound Energy mitigate for pre-project conditions. The Forest Service strategy is to have PSE mitigate for continuing impacts. Even though the “baseline” has been very clearly defined legally, that doesn’t necessarily limit what we can create together in PM&Es. The tribes need to see a careful evaluation of the “without project alternative” and weigh that against any proposed PM&E package before supporting a licensing alternative.

Even though PSE believes they are not legally required to mitigate for pre-current project conditions, they are open to what makes sense in terms of the collaborative process.

## **UPDATE ON WATERSHED ANALYSIS:**

A question was raised re: the Forest Service’s Watershed Analysis. How can we make use of relevant data from that report? We look to see the final version of the analysis distributed to Working Group members. (Team Leader Note: Ann Risvold just told me that we probably won’t get the final version until some time after July 1<sup>st</sup>. We may want to try to get some of the pertinent information from the document in draft form in the next month or so.)

## **REPORT FROM RECREATION WORKING GROUP**

Tony suggested to the Recreation Working Group that they take on the following studies:

R-T9: Recreation Use Study in Mountain Goat Habitat; and

R-T10: Effects of Recreation on Mountain goats.

The Recreation Working Group declined to take ownership of either of these two studies. There will be continued discussions between the Recreation Working Group and the Terrestrial Working Group. The results of R-T 9 will determine if R-T 10 is needed. Potential Project impacts to mountain goats is an important cultural issue to the tribes.

## **REVIEW CONTINUING IMPACTS ANALYSIS**

Discussion was deferred until after the Technical Working Group had met and proposed a framework for us to use.

## **REVIEW DECISION TREE FOR SELECTION OF SPECIES ANALYSIS**

Discussion was deferred until after the Technical Working Group had met and proposed a framework for us to use.

## **DISCUSSION OF STUDY REQUESTS R-T11-13, 9, 10**

### **R-T11: Oregon Spotted Frog Inventory**

Don found that the OR Spotted Frog occurred in the Watershed as late as the 1930’s. (Defer for discussion.)

### **R-T12: Grizzly Bear Spring Foraging Habitat Value**

Defer until Don is here to discuss.

### **R-T13: Survey and Manage Terrestrial Mollusk Survey**

Need for this study comes out of the Northwest Forest Plan. If we have suitable habitats the project operations could impact we need to survey for these. It would be nice to know potential habitat for these species in the reservoir fluctuation zone. Defer approval of study request until a later meeting. Earliest potential study season

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would be fall of 2001, but the study could be accomplished in 2002. The vegetation studies we do this spring could help focus this survey effort and make it more efficient.

### **VEGETATION/WETLANDS TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP REPORT**

Don G, Bob K, Tom Hamer (Hamer Group), and Joetta Zablotney (R2) met March 19<sup>th</sup> to review study requests. They combining T1 and T8 into T15, changed the scope of T2, and added to T5. Tony announced that all these studies are interrelated. All will ultimately be GIS coverages that support each other.

#### **R-T15: BASIN VEGETATION MAPPING**

This study was created by combining T1 and T8. The aim of this study is to produce GIS coverages of existing vegetation types and forest seral stages in the Baker River Watershed. R-T15 was approved for draft study design.

#### **R-T2: VEGETATION MAPPING IN PROJECT AREA**

This study was slightly modified by the Technical Working Group. Where as R-T15 was basin vegetation mapping, R-T2 will focus on Project Area vegetation mapping (cover types, species composition and distribution). The mapping should be at a smaller scale. The mapping will incorporate data from vegetation studies in the drawdown zone, and will include GIS coverages for other land use cover types within the FERC boundary. R-T2 was approved for draft study design.

#### **R-T5: WETLAND INVENTORY STUDY**

This study was edited so as to complement R-T2 and R-T15. Existing wetland information would be incorporated into the R-T15 map. The team recommended going forward to the draft study design level with the first phase of this study:

- a. Delineation, description, and hydrologic influences of wetlands in Project Area and contiguous waters, in support of study R-T2.
- b. Existing information on wetlands in basin (NWI maps, USFA info, other) in support of R-T15.

### **OTHER STUDIES APPROVED FOR 2001 FIELD SEASON**

#### **R-T4 ANALYSIS SPECIES ASSESSMENT**

This will be addressed by the Technical Working Group. This will help uncover gaps in values that we want to measure. The group agreed that we work with Tom Hamer to come up with a methodology for doing this study.

#### **R-T7 HISTORIC VEGETATION OF UPPER BAKER/LOWER BAKER PROJECTS**

This concerns what vegetation was there before the Project and what was removed to make the Project happen. Lloyd stated for the record that this historic study goes beyond existing current project baseline. The study would be used as a reference condition for the continuing impacts analysis. The group recommended that we move to draft study design.

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## **R-T17 AMPHIBIAN STUDIES IN RESERVOIR FLUCTUATION ZONE**

Conduct presence/absence studies for amphibians in several potential habitat types within the fluctuation zones and lower stream reaches of Baker Lake and Lake Shannon. Includes contiguous waters. The group recommended that this study move on to draft study design.

## **NOTE: R-T3 and R-T14 = R-T16: PROJECT AREA RARE PLANT SURVEY**

Tony and Ann will flesh out over the next couple of months for 2002 (R-T6 is separate, and will also be deferred until 2002).

## **USE OF CONSULTANTS**

PSE is planning to use Tom Hamer to develop the study plans. No opposition was expressed, except that USFS wants to see Hamer's SOQ's. PSE seeks that team members are comfortable with the consultants who conduct the studies. A study cover sheet will be developed for each study plan and will include a list of people PSE proposes to have conduct the study, along with their Statement of Qualifications (SOQ's).

## **DEFINITIONS**

Project area = everything within FERC boundary

Project vicinity = project area plus areas "close to" project area.

Area of project influence (goes both ways)

Project effects

We will spend time clarifying these at our next meeting. We want to be consistent with NEPA definitions.

## **FERC BOUNDARY UPDATE**

Joetta of R2 is working on mapping the FERC boundary. We will look at a printout of this at our next meeting.

## **PARKING LOT**

- Will PSE compensate key players to attend these meetings?
- Length of period of license (30 years? 50 years?)
- Review time frame/goals of working groups/milestones
- Definitions of "project boundary", "project effects", "previous environment", "project area", NEPA definitions
- How do we handle "latecomers" to this process?
- Land Management
- Conceptual Mitigation Approach
- Consider multiple meeting locations
- 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?

## **MEETING PROCESS REVIEW**

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**Well Dones:**

- Doughnuts
- Got out early
- Stayed focused (worked hard!)
- Approved six studies

**Need for Improvement:**

- Confusion over time
- Need Mint Milanos!
- Clarify “PME thing”

**TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

April 17, 2001, **8:30 a.m. –2:00 p.m.** (U.S. Forest Office, Mountlake Terrace, WA)

Bring a sack lunch and we’ll work through!

1. Review notes/agenda
2. Status report: Action items
  - Review mission statement
3. Reports from Recreation/Cultural Working Groups
4. Operational definitions (Tony)
5. Report from Technical Working Group
  - Criteria/framework and a draft list of species and habitats to study
6. Review Study Designs
  - R-T2, 4, 5, 7, 15, 17
7. Set next agenda (5/15) at U.S. Forest Office, Mountlake Terrace, WA. 8:30 to 2:00 p.m.
8. Evaluate meeting

**NOTE: Our June 19 meeting will be at the USFW Office in Lacey!**

**OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE MEETING TOPICS**

- Process/policy presentation of how to approach impacts due to inundation
- WUTC to give “process” presentation