



Baker River Project License Implementation

**Aquatics Resource Group Conference
Final Notes**

January 12, 2010 ~ 9 am – 11:00 am
Conference Call

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

PRESENT: Arnie Aspelund, Doug Bruland, Nathanael Overman, Cary Feldmann, Mark Killgore, Christina VerHeul, Frank Hella, Jacob Venard, and Nick Verretto (PSE); Phil Hilgert (R2); Ric Abbett (Trout Unlimited), Mark Hunter, Brock Applegate, and Kevin Kurras (WDFW), Arn Thoreen (SFEG), Stan Walsh (SRSC) Lorna Ellestad (Skagit County), Bob Helton (Citizen); Steve Fransen (NOAA); Lyn Wiltse (PDSA Consulting, Inc.).

2010 ARG MEETINGS: February 9 in person at PSE Skagit Office at 1600 Park Lane in Burlington. The ARG will continue to hold the 2nd Tuesday of each month in 2010, alternating between conference calls and in person meetings: March 9 (conf call), Apr. 13, May 11 (conf call), June 8, July 13 (conf call), Aug 10, Sept 14 (conf call), Oct 12, Nov 9 (conf call), Dec 14.

DECISIONS – None today

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Arnie Include Frank's PowerPoint of Hatchery construction with these notes.
- Arnie Confirm February meeting location and agenda and send out to all.
- All Send additional potential meeting locations to Arnie.

PREVIOUS, STILL RELEVANT, ACTION ITEMS

- Jed Reconvene a teamlet in April / May 2010 to address sockeye fry release strategies.

REVIEW OF AGENDA, NOTES, HANDOUTS

The notes were reviewed from the December conference call and accepted with no changes. We will be meeting "live" and in person on February 9 at the PSE Office in Burlington.

BRCC / LICENSE UPDATES

Cary emailed an update on the various resource group license implementation activities to BRCC members on December 23. Depending on the amount of material to share, the BRCC will meet in person, by conference call, or not meet and do an update through email instead. The fourth Wednesday of each month is being reserved for a BRCC conference call as needed (probably only needed quarterly), and face-to-face meetings will occur at least semi-annually. Cary estimates that the Baker Website will be updated by the end of January.

ADULT FISH TRAP

Nick explained that they will continue to run the trap through this Friday with closure from January 15 through May 15. Anyone going out to the trap this week will see that we are already demolishing some of the super structure while operating the trap. We collected fish on Monday and transported them. We will wait until Friday to remove fish and de-water the trap before the shutdown. Parts of the trap are being preserved for their historic re-use. E.g., the hopper will be set aside and other features will be used for public display. The mechanical crowders from holding pools #1 and #2 will be removed. The one from #1 will be stored for 2 years until we are sure we can operate without it. #2 will be refurbished and replaced. The intakes will be redone as well. We will remove the

coffer dam before May 15. Start-up is scheduled for June 1. Nick will keep us informed along the way. This Monday only one Coho was collected. There were a total of 5 steelhead in the month of December. The protocol for wild steelhead is to return them to the river so closing the trap should have no impact on that species.

HATCHERY UPDATE

Frank reported that changes in the last 3 weeks at the hatchery are quite remarkable. He walked us through some photos of the construction. We are getting close to completion of the incubation rooms. They are pouring the foundation for the 20K raceways next week. The treatment ponds are nearly complete. The concrete is also complete for the AI raceways. The new chemical building is also nearly complete. They are cleaning up the clarifier, preparing for caulking.

OTHER LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION / OPERATION UPDATES

Mark Killgore explained that they are reviewing historic flood frequency curves as they continue their evaluation of historic events. PSE has engaged Tetra Tech to assist with this and they are currently in scoping discussions with them. They will give a presentation at one of our upcoming in-person meetings (possibly April) on how imminent flood management affects flows in the Baker and Skagit Rivers. The teamlet will meet at the end of one of the upcoming in-person meetings to help inform the recommendations.

ARTICLE 104 (CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN RESERVOIRS)

Nathanael reported that WDFW recently completed their genetic analysis of Baker Char. Bull trout with genetic origins from 4 or 5 *genetically distinct* populations are present in the Baker *basin*. Juvenile bull trout were sampled in Sulphur Creek and the upper Baker River and its tributaries. In the upper Baker River, 98% of those sampled aligned with the Upper Basin *population(s)* and 2% aligned with Sulphur Creek. In Sulphur Creek, 90% aligned with Sulphur Creek, 7% with Upper Baker and 3% with Sauk River.

Approximately half of *bull trout* from the adult trap were of in-Basin *origins* and half were out-of-Basin origins. We will get a status report at our next meeting.

SOCKEYE SPAWNING BEACH

Kevin reported that they filled up most all of the incubators. A few trays are empty so we have room to go. So far, have had low amounts of snow so they are able plan to use Beach 3. He reported that we currently have 1.7 million in the incubation room. We are running at around 4% loss which is really good. The hatchery construction is going well and not interfering with operations. Email is the best way to get a hold of Kevin if there are any questions.

SOCKEY PRODUCTIVITY STUDY

Phil reported that he is in the process of summarizing water quality and zooplankton data. We went to 6 samples in Shannon and 8 in Baker Lake. We will see if these sample sizes are still appropriate. We will continue with these samples until spring of 2010. We will get an update on this at our next meeting. We will also get an update on the 10 meter vs. full-depth tows. If there is no difference between the two we will be able to extend the data set to use historic data. We may be able to correlate water temp to zooplankton growth. We will have a draft final report in September.

POWER EMERGENCY

Interim protocol is to limit generation flow to 3200 cfs when salmon are spawning. December 10, Arnie sent out a notification that it might be necessary to increase flows by 1500 cfs. This didn't turn out to be necessary. Stan asked for a discussion around this. How are potential "power emergencies" defined? If we are going to go beyond 3200 cfs during spawning season, we need to understand the protocols for doing this.

Cary explained that the 3200 cfs is a "best efforts" provision in the interim operating protocol. He explained that in cases of power emergency, if a major thermal plant had gone down, PSE was prepared to use whatever resources they had available to meet their system reliability responsibilities under NERC requirements. In the recent instance that Arnie referenced, it didn't become necessary to use Baker to help meet energy production needs. Stan was hoping that if the system was getting really taxed that a call would go out to PSE customers to conserve. These calls for conservation usually go out when PSE is able to predict that they will be short on supply.

http://newsroom.pse.com/article_display.cfm?article_id=389 is link to peak demand article stressing peak demand reduction on electricity.

In this case Baker operations would have been changed only as a last resort. It was agreed that it is helpful to continue an ongoing dialogue about what constitutes a power emergency and what constitutes best efforts. It is also helpful for PSE to share as much information as possible around decision making in such events. The Article 106 Plan will address this.

MEETING EVALUATION

Well Done:

- Able to follow along well on phone

Do Differently:

- Need to fine-tune process for displaying minutes real time
- Make better use of Web-Ex – more pictures / presentations
- Ran late

Next Meeting Location:

PSE Skagit office in Burlington

To drive to the Puget Sound Energy, Skagit Service Center, in Burlington, please proceed as follows:

- From I-5 North or South
- Take Exit 232 (Cook Rd Exit) onto the Cook Rd
- Proceed East to Stop light
- Turn right onto Old Hwy 99 and proceed approx 1.5 miles
- Turn left onto North Hill Blvd (Located in the Burlington Business Park between KIA and Pacific Coast Auto dealerships)
- Turn right Park Lane (second road on right)
- Go all the way to the end of Park Lane to PSE Skagit Service Center and parking is to the left of the gate

Address is 1660 Park Lane, Burlington, WA 98233.

Other Meeting Locations will likely be:

- Either Summit or Forum Conference Room in PSE building in Bellevue
- Snoqualmie Operations Office in Snoqualmie

These locations all have Wi-Fi capability. Unfortunately, the Mill Creek Office doesn't allow for Web-Ex access. The room also has poor acoustics.

HANDOUTS

- Agenda, Final Notes from December 8, 2009 meeting
- 2010 Meeting Schedule
- Baker Lake Sockeye Update, Jan. 2010
- Adult Recoveries Brood Year 2009 Baker Sockeye Facility
- Baker Incubation Worksheet, 2009