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## BAKER RIVER PROJECT LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION

### Aquatic Resources Group

December 11, 2007

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

16018 Mill Creek Boulevard

Mill Creek, WA

(425) 775-1311

### Conference Call Procedures-Dial In Info:

1-888-228-0484 (call automatically charged to PSE)-Dial in at the designated date and time –

Conference ID: 6058

Conference Password: 12345

### DRAFT AGENDA

1. Review Agenda, Notes, Actions	9:00 – 9:15
2. Brief Updates Fish Facilities Operations Topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sockeye Spawning Beach Operations (WDFW)</li><li>• Artificial Incubation Operations (WDFW)</li><li>• Fish Rearing Inventories &amp; Releases (Bruland)</li><li>• Adult Trap Protocol Update or Changes</li></ul>	9:15 – 9:30
3. Hatchery 30% Design Review (PSE-Jenness) <i>Break at 10:30</i>	9:30 - 12:00
<i>Lunch (provided)</i>	12:00 – 12:30
4. Hatchery 30% Design Review (cont.)	12:30 - 2:00
5. BRICC, License/ Other Implementation Updates	2:00 - 2:30
6. Confirm Date & Agenda for Next Meeting (tent. Jan 8), Mtg Evaluation	2:30 - 3:00

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## **Baker River Project License Implementation**

### **Aquatics Resource Group Meeting FINAL MEETING NOTES**

December 11, 2007 ~ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
**WDFW Office, Mill Creek, WA**

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

#### **PRESENT**

Arnie Aspelund, Jacob Venard, Cary Feldmann, Doug Bruland, Ginette Lacasse, Doug Koens, Dave Jenness (PSE); Dan Carrier and Mort McMillen (McMillen Engineering); Ted Thygesen, Jed Varney, Rich Johnson, Brett Barkdull, Kevin Kurras, and Kevin Clark (WDFW); Bob Helton (Citizen); Scott Lentz (USFS); Steve Fransen (NOAA); Lou Ellyn Jones (USFWS, by phone); Jon-Paul Shannahan (Upper Skagit Tribe); Arn Thoreen (Skagit Fisheries); Phil Hilgert (R2); Jeff McGowan (Skagit Co.); Craig Olson (NW Indian Fisheries); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Stan Zyskowski (NPS); **Lyn Wiltse, and** Jamie Riche (PDSA Consulting, Inc)

**NEXT ARG MEETING:** The ARG agreed to take a pass on a meeting in January 2008, therefore the next planned meeting is on February 12, 2008 (to review the 60% hatchery design), and on subsequent second Tuesdays of each month, with exceptions noted (*March & Nov.*): *Mar. 13 (Th)*, Apr. 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, Aug. 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14, *Nov. 13 (Th)*, Dec. 9

#### **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**

- All If you want a copy of *The Baker Story*, ask Cary.
- All Send any additional comments on hatchery design to Dave by Dec. 17 (note: be sure to review process flow diagrams).
- Arn Give the Skagit County Herald a copy of the Baker Story.
- Co-Mgrs Discuss/determine: Little Park Trap value/plan, fry planting allocation (by January), disposition for hatchery surplus fish.
- Dave Follow up with Jon V (USFS) re: special use permit.
- Doug B Train biologists re: amphibian classification (are there bullfrogs at Little Park Creek?).
- Doug B Let Arn know how many Chinook were caught in the trap.
- Jon-Paul Follow-up re: disposition of excess hatchery fish.
- Scott Bring teamlet together to develop a proposal re: Beach 3 decommissioning (see notes for interested parties) to submit to Jon V. (USFS).

#### **OLD (STILL PERTINENT) ACTION ITEMS**

- All Review the Work Group Representative list, let Arnie know of any updates.
- Cary Follow up with Bob H. / NASA re: counter problems.
- Rich Talk with Bret B. re: scientific studies in the basin – what makes sense going forward?

- Doug B Follow up on access road to Beach 3 / Channel Creek.
- Doug B Work w/ Cary & Arnie: why were our LB recovery total numbers and percentages so good?
- Dave Contact Ernie Brannon re: outside review of hatchery design.
- Cary Share Hydro article when published.
- Jacob Send out an “all call” for interested parties re: gravel plan.

## **FISH FACILITIES OPERATIONAL TOPICS**

### **Sockeye Spawning & Artificial Incubation**

Kevin reported 896K sockeye eggs in incubation trays. Fish are smaller, fecundity a little lower, but no fungus problems. There was less than 2% loss in the first take; the second take was a little higher. We got 129K eggs from spawning ripe adults. Kevin will present final numbers at the next meeting. Everything was IHN sampled and there are no detections to date. Two new counter heads have arrived to replace the two that failed. Co-managers need to determine planting allocation for the fry by the end of January 2008.

### **Fish Rearing Inventories and Releases**

Doug B. distributed an inventory of fish on-site at the hatchery and walked the group through the current plan for all the stock. Sockeye are in raceway one. They will be doing the FSC biological evaluation study again this year, so about 10k sockeye will be held back from the release at blue tarp (5k freeze-branded). There will be a small acoustic tagged group in the spring. Fish are healthy and growing well. We're now using a dry feed type. Coho are in raceway 2; we need to work out details about distribution of pit-tagged group.

Once the current fish are out of the trout pond, it will be disinfected to hold the 20K rainbow trout PSE gets from the Arlington hatchery. Circulars 0, 1, and 2 will be disinfected for pit-tagged group. In circular four, 200 Coho brood stock are allocated for spawning, 194 have been received so far (60k eggs taken so far, we will continue until January).

### **Fish-Related PSE Updates**

PSE will bring in an ROV (remote operated vehicle) to inspect the new guide net. With the new FSC floating, they are setting up a training schedule to support sampling activities that will begin in spring 2008.

A new pipeline was installed between the LB gulper and the juvenile trap at the LB fore bay; it is ready for the smolt season. The Little Park Creek trap needs some minor repairs. At the last meeting, the group discussed the value of this and whether it should be continued ...if so, who should participate in supporting this trap? Doug noted his need for guidance from the co-managers.

Troutfest has been cancelled this year due to the planned site construction activities of the new fish hatchery. The rainbow trout program has not been cancelled; there will still be fish for various releases at Depression Lake and Tribal programs, just not the Troutfest. We are planning for existing rearing programs to be maintained during the hatchery construction.

### **Adult Trap Protocol**

Doug noted that there were some minor changes relative to Steelhead and Chinook protocols.

### **Hatchery Steelhead Surplus**

Brett suggested sacrificing hatchery Steelhead surpluses and making them available to the tribes. Another suggestion was putting them into Baker Lake. Several ideas were discussed, another was putting surpluses into Depression Lake; the co-managers will discuss and provide PSE with guidance.

### **Fry Planting and Beach 3 Decommissioning**

Jed explained that the number of fry release locations has diminished over the years from six to one. Beach three has worked well as a release site in the past ... Scott will bring together a teamlet (including Doug Bruland, Jed Varney, Doug Koens, Stan Walsh, Jon-Paul Shannahan, Arnie Aspelund and Dave Jenness) to develop a proposal around the decommissioning and enhancement of Beach three; the proposal will be given to Jon Vanderheyden as USFS has slated beach 3 for decommissioning. Cary reminded folks of the historical and cultural interests relative to the site. Scott anticipates some fieldwork this summer to develop the proposal with the possibility of conducting decommissioning in summer 2009. A separate teamlet may come together around fry planting strategies.

### **HATCHERY 30% DESIGN REVIEW**

Dave J. (PSE) and Mort (McMillan Engineering) lead a discussion around the hatchery design project. Dave noted that PSE is looking for your feedback today and encouraged ARG members to review the design offline and provide additional comments to PSE by Dec. 17 so they can incorporate the ideas into a design meeting agenda on Tuesday, Dec. 18. He will share responses to that input by Jan. 8.

He also noted that Value Engineering is starting now, at the 30% design level (which focuses on undergrounding); the 60% design (will focus on internals) will be available in February and 90% design is anticipated at the April 2008 ARG meeting.

PSE is currently gearing up for HPA and other permitting activities; construction is slated to begin in March, based on license issuance and a USFS special use permit. In late May to early June, to take advantage of the annual spawning beach outage, they plan to tie in the new water system.

Mort walked us through the draft 30% design drawings, distributed copies of the drawings and the Design Documentation Report, based on these three major components: 1. hatchery, 2. trout ponds, and 3. spawning beaches. The following feedback / comments were shared:

- Retaining wall: make sure we get the full 32 foot buffer to accommodate vehicles
- Lower part of head box will become part of the retaining wall
- Will unescorted public access be promoted? (Likely no, due to FERC and security related issues)
- How will side-discharge trucks navigate around the buildings?
- What happens if we need a de-gassing tower at some time in the future?
- Will the food contain antibiotics? How would this impact disposal protocols?
- Potential fail point of routing flow through sand separators (night time event, lots of sediment coming through when no one's around) ... should it go through separation when no one is on site? There will be high- and low- water level alarms on the tanks.
- How to handle default operations?
- How do we encourage public awareness / education (kiosks, video at visitors' center, etc)?

## **BRICC / LICENSING / EARLY-IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES**

The last Baker River Interim Coordinating Committee (BRICC) was held Nov. 20. The primary focus of this meeting was a settlement agreement PSE entered into with the City of Mount Vernon, the City of Burlington, and Dike Districts No.1 and No.12. This settlement ended several years of litigation and challenges to the Baker Comprehensive Settlement Agreement. Importantly, this settlement commits the Cities and the Dike Districts to refrain from any further "action to directly or indirectly challenge, protest, appeal, delay, obstruct, impair or in any way interfere with the Comprehensive Settlement or the issuance and full implementation of the New License." In exchange for these commitments, the Cities and the Dike Districts received a total of three million dollars, to be allocated among the parties and earmarked "for additional flood control measures, to be implemented in such area or areas within the Skagit basin as Petitioners may determine." The settlement does not in any way affect the terms and conditions of the Baker Comprehensive Settlement Agreement.

The Cities and Dike Districts did ask, however, to be given the opportunity to present a proposal to modify Article 107 to the BRICC. Lorna Ellestad (Skagit Co.) lead the presentation at the Nov. 20 meeting, and the BRICC discussed the history of the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement, background about the flood control language in Article 107, the Corps' role and responsibilities, the G.I. process, and attendees' views on the proposal. Arn and others complimented Stan for his diplomacy. Several ARG members who were present at the BRICC meeting commented on the value of the opportunity to meet with the Cities and Dike Districts, and expressed hope for a more open and collaborative relationship going forward.

The BRICC members also talked about the proposed PSE merger and its impacts on our process. The merger is under review, in the due diligence process, and PSE doesn't have any reason to believe there will be direct impacts in its day-to-day operations (including license implementation).

### **NMFS Bi-Op Update**

Steve shared that the project which was delaying his ability to work on the Baker Bi-Op was completed recently, so he can now give us his full attention. Steve reported, with great certainty (and a few caveats), that the NMFS Bi-Op will be on its way to FERC early in the new year. This remains the final outstanding piece of information FERC needs in order to issue the license.

### **Fish Passage Technical Working Group Update**

The FPTWG met on November 26 & 27<sup>th</sup>. At the first meeting, they agreed to the first year (2008) Floating Surface Collector performance study. As in the 2006-2007 studies, integrating juvenile salmonid migrant characteristics into the FSC performance evaluation will be included. The performance test will include a seven week release and re-capture of coho and sockeye at 500 cfs flow and then followed by two weeks at 1000 cfs flow. They will also be doing some diagnostics at the entrance of the FSC, which will include acoustic tagging and tracking in the entrance area of the FSC to monitor behavior of fish entering the facility.

On the second day, the group reviewed the 90% design drawings on the adult trap. PSE is reviewing bids on the design/build contract for this project. Dave shared that contractors' questions seem to be centered around specialized / non-standard crowders in the trap.

The FSC start-up is scheduled for March 1. All components (docking stations, walkway, FSC, Net Transition Structure, and new guidenets) are now installed in the forebay. Detail work remains to be done. Arnie shared some FSC photos of recent progress and position in the forebay.

### **Middle Skagit River Chinook Spawning Survey**

Phil walked us through a PowerPoint presentation of the 2007 survey that PSE did as part of the Interim Protection Plan. He explained the methodology and results of the survey. Phil is in the process of compiling the annual report, which will be sent in with all the permits in January. Phil reported, with great certainty, that the A09 final report will be out before the license is issued.

### **HANDOUTS**

- Agenda, Notes, 2008 Meeting Schedule and ARG Norms
- ARG Representative List
- Sockeye Incubation Worksheet
- Baker Project Fish Inventory (Nov. 2007)
- Baker Adult Trap Protocol (Nov. 2007)
- Middle Skagit Chinook Spawning Survey PowerPoint
- Baker Fish Hatchery 30% Design Review & Design Documentation Report
- "Ask NASA" email

### **MEETING EVALUATION**

#### **What Went Well**

- Great turn-out!
- Thanks WDFW – we appreciate the space!
- Mort's and Phil's presentations, and FSC photos
- Bob's birthday & cake
- Good job speaking up for the conference call

#### **What to Do Differently**

- More table space
- Introductions took too long

### **AGENDA FOR NEXT ARG MEETING**

#### **February 12, 2008; 9 am – 3 pm at WDFW Mill Creek Office**

1. Welcome, review notes, action items, agenda
2. Fish Facilities Operational Topics
3. Update on BRICC / License
4. Early-Implementation Activities
5. Fish Hatchery 60% Design Review
6. Evaluate meeting, set next meeting agenda & location