BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Meeting

October 16th, 2001 (9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.)
(Bring Sack Lunch)

WDFW Mill Creek Office
16018 Mill Creek Blvd.
Mill Creek, WA 98012
(425-775-1311)

AGENDA

Review notes/revise agenda/action items
Solution Team Update
Update on ongoing studies
Carl's Presentation: Northwest Forest Plan and Watershed Analysis
Review updated study requests: R-T16 (rare plants) and R-T18 (breeding birds)
Review new study requests: R-T19 (habitat evaluation) and R-T20 (drawdown wildlife use)
Land Use Update (Recreation Working Group)
2002 Studies Update: review previously proposed study requests as to status
Set agenda and finalize the location for the November 15th (NWIFC office in Lacy) meeting, and finalize location and time for the December 18th (Mountlake Terrace) meetings
Evaluate meeting

NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN

AND

HYDROPOWER RELICENSING

NFP 101BakerT

Carl Corey – 10/16/01

United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

April 1994

Record of Decision

for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl

Standards and Guidelines

for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl

Introduction

- ROD signed in 1994
- Protect OG Forests and the species dependent on them, and provide stable timber supply
- Covers all FS and BLM lands within range of N. spotted owl (W. OR/WA and N. CA – 24MM acres)
- Primarily developed to guide future timber mgmt but does address other resource uses

Application to Existing Projects

- ROD pg 15: “S&G’s that require adjustments to current contracts, etc. will be applied in those areas where statutory or regulatory authority exists if the change is necessary to achieve the overall goals.”
- ROD pg. C-17: “Existing developments…are considered existing uses…and may remain, consistent with other S&G’s”

Interagency Coordination – REO and RIEC

- REO – Regional Ecosystem Office
- RIEC – Regional Interagency Executive Committee
- REO and RIEC have advisory roles – REO recommends to RIEC which decides and interprets S&G implementation
- Responsibility for project decision making still resides with FS/BLM

Interagency Coordination – REO and RIEC

- New developments in LSR's.
  - R6-FS LSR's policy for hydropower.
- Short-term ACS questions regarding hydropower projects.
- Long-term questions regarding ACS and hydropower.

ACS Consistency Finding

- Regional Forester Deciding Officer
- Must find the proposed action consistent with the ACS
  - "Meets ACS Objectives"
  - "Does not retard or prevent attainment of ACS Objectives"

Congressionally Reserved Areas

- Wildernesses
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- National Monuments, Parks
- Other federal lands not administered by the Forest Service or 0BLM
- Riparian Reserves S&G's apply

Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS)

- Goal – to restore and maintain the ecological health of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems on public lands.
- Protect habitat for fish and other riparian-dependent species
- Prevent further degradation
- Restore habitat over broad landscapes
- Long-term approach – decades/century

ACS – Four Components

- 1. Established Riparian Reserves – w/ Stds. and Guides
- 2. Identified Network of Key Watersheds
- 3. Prescribed use of Watershed Analysis
- 4. Emphasized Watershed Restoration

ACS Objectives (9 total) –

FS/BLM lands will be managed to Maintain and Restore:

- Distribution, diversity and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features…
- Spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds…
- Physical integrity of the aquatic system…
- Water quality…
- Sediment regime under which systems evolved…

ACS Objectives (9 total) –

FS/BLM lands will be managed to Maintain and Restore:

- Instream flows…
- Timing, variability and duration of floodplain inundation…
- Species composition and structural diversity of plant communities…
- Habitat for native verts, plants, inverts…

ACS Objective #2

- Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds. Lateral, longitudinal and drainage network connections include floodplains, wetlands, upslope areas, etc. Network connections must provide chemically and physically unobstructed routes to areas critical for fulfilling life history requirements…

ACS Objective #8

- Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands to provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris…

ACS Objective #9

- Maintain and restore habitat to support well-distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate riparian-dependent species.

Example S&G

- LH-4. …Adjust existing leases, permits, rights-of-way, and easements to eliminate adverse effects that retard or prevent the attainment of Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives… Priority for modifying existing leases, permits…will be based on the actual or potential impact and the ecological value of the riparian resources affected.

Maintenance vs. Restoration

- Maintenance is appropriate where:
  - Primary physical and biological processes are in place
  - Processes are generally operating within the natural range of variability

- Restoration is needed where the current situation has resulted in degraded conditions (i.e. where the above is not the case).

Maintenance/Restoration

- Baseline to assess maintaining or restoring conditions is developed through a watershed analysis.

- Improvement relates to restoring biological and physical processes within their ranges of natural variability.

Watershed Analysis

- Purpose: Developing and documenting a scientifically-based understanding of the ecological structure, functions, processes, and interactions occurring within a watershed.

Watershed Analysis

- Terrestrial Findings (paraphrased)
  - LSR's – Habitat connectivity disrupted by Project, potential mitigation will likely need to be adjacent to inundated areas.
  - Habitat diversity reduced due to inundation of productive riparian and upland veg. types.
  - Riparian structure and function also impacted by inundation, disruption in connectivity.

Watershed Analysis

- Terrestrial Findings (cont')
  - Grizzly bear – points to limiting recreation use within BMU – middle Swift Creek core area. Spring foraging habitat limiting.
  - Noxious weeds – Occurrence enhanced due to inundation zone and relationship to project-related recreation use.
  - Sensitive/S&M plant species – lack of information but high potential for occurrence due to high diversity and productivity of areas adjacent to reservoirs.

Watershed Analysis

- Terrestrial Findings (cont')
  - Big game – low elevation, productive, and riparian sites inundated. Best habitat lower in watershed, but private/agricultural concerns. Opportunity to manage inundation zone for enhanced forage (early-successional habitat).
  - Project-related recreation – potential botanical species impacts, mountain goats?

Late-Successional Reserves (LSRs)

- Goal – to protect and enhance conditions of late-successional and old-growth ecosystems, which serve as habitat for late-successional and old-growth related species, including the northern spotted owl.
- Functioning and interacting late-successional and old-growth ecosystem
- Management Assessments for LSRs
- Existing developments are considered existing uses and may remain, consistent with other S&Gs

LSR Example

- Reservoir Fluctuation Zone
  - Maintained in early successional stage, precluding ability to manage for late-successional forest
  - What components of late-successional forest habitat can be managed for adjacent to the reservoir to improve habitat for late-successional species?
  - Objective is to reduce impacts to late-successional species

Survey and Manage Species

- Goal – Protection for rare species of plants and animals (amphibians, bryophytes, lichens, mollusks, vascular plants, fungi & arthropods)

- Required actions
  - Surveys
  - Implement Management recommendations

Continuing Impacts

- Mitigation for impacts to NFSL resources that will occur over the new license period
- Pre-project, reference, or historical conditions
- Mitigation constrained by site potential & evaluation of what could be expected to be restored if the project facility were removed ("without-project" conditions)
- Not FS intent to receive reparations for past impacts

BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group

October 16, 2001

9:00 am – 2:00 p.m.
WDFW Office
16081 Mill Creek Blvd., Mill Creek, WA 98284

FINAL 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), Cary Feldmann (PSE), Don Gay (USFS), Carl Corey (USFS), Patrick Goldsworthy (North Cascade Conversation Council), Stan Walsh (Skagit Systems Cooperative), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife), Fred Seavey (USFish & Wildlife), Martin Vaughn (Biota Pacific), Tom Hamer (Hamer Environmental), Lia Kruger (Hamer Environmental), Robert Kuntz (National Park), Bob Nelson (Rocky Mt. Elk Foundation), Ann Risvold (USFS), Rhonda Hilyer (Agreement Dynamics, Inc.), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

INTRODUCTIONS:

The group welcomed Lia Kruger of Hamer Environmental, and Rhonda Hilyer (Agreement Dynamics).

SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

November 15	**NW Indian Fisheries Commission office in Lacey- Start at 8:30 a.m.**
December 18	Mountlake Terrace

January 17, 2002 ***Switch to 3rd Thursday of each month for 2002***

Starting in January 2002, this group will shift to each 3rd Thursday, which would make it possible for Laurel Baldwin (Whatcom County Noxious Weeds Control Board) to attend the meetings.

AGENDA

October 16, 2001, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!

1. Review notes/agenda
2. Action Items
3. Solution Team Update
4. Carl's Presentation: Northwest Forest Plan and Watershed Analysis
5. Update on ongoing studies
6. Review Updated Study Requests: RT-16 (Rare Plant Survey) and RT-18 (Breeding Birds)
7. Review New Study Requests: RT-19 (Habitat Evaluation) and RT-20 (Drawdown Wildlife Use)
8. Land Use Update (Recreation Working Group)
9. 2002 Studies Update: Review status of previously proposed study requests
10. Set agenda and confirm location for November 15 meeting (Lacey) and December 18 meeting (Mountlake Terrace)
11. Evaluate meeting

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- ALL: Review R-T19 study request (Habitat evaluation) and send comments to Lauri prior to next meeting.
- ALL: Send any interests you feel may be excluded by the Forest Service definition of *continuing impacts* to Tony prior to the next meeting.
- ALL: Send list of habitat/species that we feel need to be assessed. Send list to Lia at liakruger@hotmail.com, 19997 Hwy 9, Mt. Vernon, WA, 98274.
- Tony, Tom, Don: Look at re-writing RT-12 – Look at vegetation studies results for reference.
- Tony: Work with Lauri to draft study request for Phase II of T-5.
- Tony: Form teamlet of Laurel, Bill, Ann, etc. re: RT6.
- Tony: Share climate information with other team leaders.
- Tony: Get draft T15 data from Joetta.
- Carl: Send PowerPoint presentation to Tony to post on PSE Baker Relicense Website.
- Tom: Send list of Fred's federally listed species of concern to Tony to distribute.
- Lia: Make a list of habitat types (based on Johnson and O'Neill) that exist in the Basin or have the potential to exist over the license period.
- Marty: Put together a technical work group to review/approve of the guilding process used by Lia (Lia, Lauri, Fred, Bob, Don, Stan)
- Tony: Call Joetta re: mollusk maps.
- Ann: Check with Ann Dunphy re: map of dispersed Recreation Sites.
- Don: Get copy of LSR Assessment to Tony to distribute.
- Don: Prepare list of potential mountain goat enhancements.

- Tony, Tom, Marty: Prepare proposal for data management

REPORT ON PAST ACTION ITEMS.

- Patrick distributed climate change information related to the 30-50 year license period prepared by Conway Leovy, Professor Emeritus, Atmospheric Sciences and Geophysics. Tony will share this information with the other Working Group Team Leaders, as it relates to several resource areas. We appreciate Patrick's efforts in calling this important topic to our attention.

SOLUTION TEAM UPDATE

The Technical Working Group has finished making edits to the Communication Protocol and Process Documents. Both documents have been distributed to Solution Team members for review prior to the next meeting which will be October 24, at the Forest Office Mountlake Terrace. In the meantime, PSE's attorney is getting the attorneys of the major agencies together to hammer out the legal lingo re: confidentiality, definition of consensus, and evidence.

NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN AND WATERSHED ANALYSIS PRESENTATION

Carl Corey gave a very informative presentation on the **NW Forest Plan** as it relates to relicensing the Baker River Project Relicensing Process. His presentation (Power Point) will be available on the Website. The Forest Plan is primarily concerned with old growth ecosystems. It focuses on species viability. The first question is whether it is possible to maintain species viability with existing structures/processes in place. If that is not possible, then efforts would be made to restore function and processes needed to ensure species viability.

The **Watershed Analysis** focuses on understanding the ecological structure, functions, processes and interactions occurring within a watershed. It is concerned with understanding reference conditions. Terrestrial findings (as paraphrased by Carl) include:

- LSR's (Late-Successional Reserves) Habitat connectivity disrupted by the project
- Habitat diversity reduced due to inundation of productive riparian and upland vegetation types
- Riparian structure and function also impaired by inundation, disruption in connectivity
- Grizzly bear – points to limiting recreational use within BMU – middle Swift Creek core area. Spring foraging habitat limiting
- Noxious weeds – occurrence enhanced due to inundation zone and relationship to project-related recreation use
- Sensitive Survey & Manage plant species – lack if information re: high potential for occurrence due to high diversity of productivity of areas adjacent to reservoirs
- Big Game – low elevation, productive and riparian sites inundated. Best habitat lower in watershed, but private/agricultural concerns. Opportunity to manage inundation zone for enhanced forage.
- Project-related recreation – potential botanical species impacts, possibly mountain goats (?)

UPDATE ON ONGOING STUDIES

STATUS OF:

T-4: Analysis Species Assessment

Tom distributed an update on this assessment. We reviewed the Analysis Species Matrix. Species that made the list were either listed or that met two or more of the criteria we identified. Lia: Make a list of

habitat types that exist in the Basin or have the potential to exist over the license period , based on Johnson and O'Neill
Marty: Put together a technical work group to review and approve/approve of the guilding process used by Lia (Lia, Lauri, Fred, Bob Don, Stan). All members were asked to send list of habitat/species that we feel we need to be assessed. Send list to Lia at liakruger@hotmail.com, 19997 Hwy 9, Mt. Vernon, WA, 98274.

T2: Vegetation Mapping in Project Area
The vegetation above the drawdown zone for Baker Lake was mapped by October 2, for Shannon Lake by November 2. We are starting to put these data into GIS format. We hope to have this complete by year-end.

T5: Wetland Inventory Study
Forest Wetlands will be split into deciduous and conifers for the sake of consistency. When the lake is drawn all the way down, we will identify three zones (upper perennial, intermittent, and lower perennial). These modifiers are listed in the study plan. The zones will help identify wet areas in the drawdown zone that we may want to conduct studies in, and will aid in continuing impacts discussions.

T17: Amphibian Studies inn Reservoir Fluctuation Zone
The second visits will be completed by November 8. These are being done in mostly riparian and stream areas above the drawdown zones. The drawdown zone amphibian studies will be conducted in the late winter/spring of 2002.

T11: Oregon Spotted Frog Inventory
There will be a summary report this spring.

T13: **Survey and Manage Terrestrial Mollusk Survey**
This study will start shortly. The survey crew is awaiting maps from Joetta. Tony will contact Joetta to remind her of the high priority around this study.

REVIEW UPDATED STUDY REQUESTS
R-T16 Rare Plants
Ann discussed the revisions she made to the scope of this study. She now suggests the areas be:

- Current and proposed dispersed recreation sites adjacent to the reservoir
- Proposed developed recreation sites within the project boundary
- All wetland areas hydrologically linked to the reservoir.

Most of the existing developed sites have already been surveyed. The intention of this study is to survey every dispersed site that is project related. Surveyors would make their own determination according to protocol as to the area people are using associated with each study site. The surveyor could extend out the survey as suitable habitat was identified. The group approved this Study Request. It will move to the design phase after Ann distributes the final version to Tony. Hamer Environmental will draft the Study Plan with Ann before it is distributed to the Working Group for review.

R-T18 Breeding Birds
After some discussion, we agreed to continue to discuss this study at our November meeting.

STUDY REQUESTS FOR 2002

- T5(b): Wetland Monitoring (No study request, but need one, second phase of T5)
- R-T6: Noxious Weed Assessment and Control Plan
- R-T7: "Potential" (future) Vegetation of the UB and LB Projects
- R-T9/10: Recreation Use/Mountain Goat Enhancement (develop concept)
- R-T12: Grizzly Bear Spring Foraging Habitat Value
- R-T16: Project Area Rare Plant Survey
- R-T18: Breeding Bird Survey (could be a modeling effort, potential for measuring Project impacts to habitats and development of a PM&E, could include species beyond the "analysis species" list, and could be used to monitor compliance with land management issues)
- R-T19: Habitat Evaluation Studies
- R-T20: Drawdown zone wildlife use (PSE)

POTENTIAL 2002 STUDIES (no Study Requests at this time)

- Elk foraging - Chris
- Land Management – Could be 2003 – (Recreation Working Group Land Use Study)
- Riparian Habitat – Lauri (actually, Lauri is proposing this to be part of the HEP study, and not a separate study).
- Spotted Owl, etc. (Section 7) – info needed for consultation (timing?) - Fred
- Lower Skagit Wetlands - Fred
- Settlement Agreement – Tony (could include PM&E proposals, land acquisition - opportunities in Skagit Basin, etc.)

HANDOUTS

- Comment on FERC Relicense Application for Baker Reservoir Dam: Impact of Global Warming – by Conway Leovy, Professor Emeritus, Atmospheric Sciences and Geophysics
- Progress Reports on:
    - T2 Vegetation Mapping in Project Area
    - T4: Analysis Species Assessment
    - Amphibian Surveys – 2nd Visit Summary

PARKING LOT

- Conceptual Mitigation Approach (P/M/Es)
- Review time frame/goals of working groups/milestones
- Definitions of "project boundary", "project effects", "previous environment", "project area", NEPA definitions
- Watershed Analysis Presentation
- Land Management – Do study?
- 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?
- Changing Climate Patterns

- Determine land management allocations within Project boundary

MEETING EVALUATION
Well Dones:
- Good participation
- Carl's Presence/Presentation
- Lia!
- Making progress on substantive issues

Need for Improvement:
- Ran over
- Raspberry Milanos were bad!
- Missed Chris
- Missed cinnamon rolls
- Need bagels!

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR OUR NEXT MEETING
NWIFC Office, Lacey, Washington
November 15, 2001, 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!
****NOTE**: NON-PSE MEMBERS WILL CAUCUS RE: REFERENCE CONDITIONS FROM 8:30 TO 9:15

1. Review notes/agenda/action items
2. Solution Team Update
3. Update on Ongoing Studies
4. New Study Requests: R-T19 (HEP), R-T20 (drawdown zone wildlife use)
5. Update on existing Study Requests
   R-T18 (Breeding Birds)
   R-T16 (Rare Plants)
   Others (R-T6, 7, 9, 10, 12)
6. Data Management
7. Terrestrial reference conditions
8. Terrestrial study needs on Skagit River below the project
9. Land Use Update (Recreation Working Group)
10. 2002 Studies
11. Set agenda and confirm location for December 18 meeting and January 17 meeting
12. Evaluate meeting