



## *Baker River Project License Implementation*

### **Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group FINAL Meeting Notes**

**Team Leader:** Tony Fuchs (PSE), 425-462-3553, [tony.fuchs@pse.com](mailto:tony.fuchs@pse.com)

#### **PRESENT**

Tony Fuchs, Cary Feldmann, Haley Edwards, Scott Heller, Christina VerHeul, Mel Walters, Kim Lane, and Ira McDaniels (PSE); Marty Vaughn (Biota-Pacific); Kathy Smayda (Smayda Environmental); Bob Nelson (RMEF); Patrick Goldsworthy (NCCC), Ann Risvold (USFS); Kara Symonds (Skagit County Public Works); Stan Walsh (SRSC); Chris Danilson (Sauk Suiattle Indian Tribe); Brock Applegate (WDFW); Lou Ellyn Jones by phone (USFWS); Jamie Riche, facilitator (PDSA).

**DECISIONS:** None today

**TRIG MEETINGS:** May 6 (TRIG & ARHWG at Burlington), 6/3, 7/1, 8/5, 9/2, 10/7, 11/4, 12/2

**NEXT BRCC MEETING:** May 11 (w/ ARG) at Baker Lake

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

- All Review draft annual reports, respond w/ edits by May 3
- Tony Report back to TRIG re: north-end location of key to Alder Creek property (Concrete office?)
- Tony Meet w/ Ira and Ray to merge your respective lists of possible alternative properties and draft a property search plan w/ estimated costs to present to TRIG at the next meeting
- Ira Mail a copy of the highlighted ownership map to Lou Ellyn
- All Provide feedback on the Alder Creek Program document to Marty by 4/16
- Marty/Kathy - Apply cover types to the current Alder Creek polygon map
- Tony Coordinate Joetta to digitize the updated map
- Tony Coordinate field trip to confirm map, focused on polygons that have elk mgmt implications

**PREVIOUS - STILL RELEVANT - ACTION ITEMS:** none!

#### **Report on previous action items:**

Tony reported that he distributed the Alder Creek Timber Management Plan via email. He noted that PSE found out late in the game that a Timber Management plan would be required for the Alder Creek property. They created a plan that was as generic as possible while still meeting the requirements to maintain the property's "open space" tax bracket, thus avoiding the need to pay the back taxes that would become due without this designation. The TRIG can amend or add detail to this document if it chooses.

#### **BRCC / LICENSING UPDATE ... aka "All that email!"**

Tony distributed draft annual reports for several articles this week via email. Please review and respond by May 3. FYI - the schedule of reporting can be reviewed in Article 501.

Cary reported that the BRCC met in person April 28. The original focus of the meeting was to address a RRG question about Article 602 funding. *The RRG could not come to consensus on whether to use*



*Recreational Adaptive Management (RAM) funds for a proposal by Whatcom County Sheriff's Dept to buy law enforcement equipment.* This question was answered just before the meeting as *Whatcom County withdrew their proposal*, so the meeting agenda shifted to resource group reports. The BRCC also agreed to new norms, which were distributed with the notes. PSE is continuing to provide monthly email updates on Working Group activities to members of the BRCC. The fourth Wednesdays are reserved for BRCC conference calls as needed. They are anticipating in-person meetings semi-annually. Unless there is a reason to meet sooner, the next in-person BRCC meeting will be May 11 with the ARG and held at Baker.

## **TRIG Budget Update**

Christina displayed an excel file with budget information about all the articles and noted that the information is in the draft annual reports Tony distributed. The reporting includes a breakdown of deposits, interest, the escalation factor, and expenditures from Oct. 2008 through Dec. 31, 2009, including pre-license land acquisition activities. Moving forward, the reports will be based on calendar year. Kim Lane pointed out that, this year only, interest was applied to the full deposit. In future, interest will be applied to account balances. Tony noted the complexity of the project and the TRIG thanked Christina for her work.

## **LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

### **Alder Creek Property Update**

Ira reported that the access easement for Alder Creek has been obtained from DNR. Final funds will be dispersed from escrow, completing the purchase process. We now have access to the road, and will need to install a PSE lock. Tony and Ira will have keys to this lock. The group also agreed that it would be good to have an additional key stored in the north-end, either at PSE's Burlington office or at the Lower Baker office. Tony will coordinate and let folks know where the key is located. Road maintenance costs will be shared proportionally with DNR, based on number and type of vehicle trips. This means that Tony will need to record each use of the road, so TRIG-related visits to the site will need to be coordinated through him.

### **Alternative Properties**

Ray and Ira met with the owners of "**Property T**" and Ira reported that the owners are not interested in selling parts of the property and their perspective on the value of the whole parcel is higher than Ira's. Ray and Ira think this is a good parcel to "keep on the radar" in case the owners' situation changes, but it does not warrant additional TRIG activity at this time. Ira has some ideas related to this property that might be worth consideration by the Article 505 ARHWG. The TRIG agreed to set this property aside for now.

Tony projected a map and the group discussed "**Property B**", as well as other properties in the area. Ira highlighted maps to indicated ownerships in the general area and distributed them to interested TRIG members for reference. Questions about any of the alternative properties? Ask Tony or Ira.

**Property Search Process:** Ira has been doing a lot of the legwork relative to the search for potential properties. Ray from RMEF has also been active in the search process to date. Cary pointed out three options for continuing the search for additional land acquisitions:

- hire a broker (approx. 5% commission),
- pay for Ira and Ray's time (Ira's costs relative to the Alder Creek property came to about 1%; the amount the TRIG has paid to RMEF for Ray's time/costs wasn't available at the meeting), or
- wait for properties to emerge (by being brought forward by TRIG members for consideration).



Tony will meet with Ira and Ray to merge their lists of potential properties and create a draft search plan with estimated costs for the TRIG to consider at its next meeting. TRIG will then set up a decision for a future meeting about whether or not to allocate funds for the search.

## **POST ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES, ALDER CREEK PROPERTY**

The Alder Creek Management Plan Teamlet has met twice; notes have been distributed via email. Marty walked TRIG through the draft Alder Creek Management Program, which was developed based on the teamlet's work. This was one of the documents Tony emailed this week. Proposed language is in regular font. Italics indicate placeholders for language that needs to be developed. Changes and additions based on teamlet feedback to date are highlighted. The outline of the document is:

- Chapter 2: current conditions. Marty noted that info-gathering is targeted to TRIG's specific needs
- Chapter 3: Goals & Objectives. Goals listed as primary specifically reference the goals of Articles 502, 503, and 504. The teamlet also identified secondary goals, which generally related to other license articles that apply to this land (ex: legacy wood, plants of special status, etc). Objectives which tie to the goals are the measurable statements of what the management plan hopes to achieve. Marty will add a section to document the administrative activities of land ownership (ex: documenting trips for road maintenance cost-sharing w/ DNR). He will also add a goal that memorializes the intent to comply with regulatory requirements.
- Chapter 4: Habitat Management Methods, specific to the parcel.
- Chapter 5: Management prescriptions, designated by polygon. Marty pointed out the labeling convention for the polygons and walked the group through a review of the teamlet's draft recommended management prescriptions for the existing polygons. It was clarified that wetlands are being identified here for the purpose of noting implications for elk management. The working assumption is that we will manage to comply with DNR standards (in order to maintain the "open space" designation and associated tax benefits)
- Chapter 6: Monitoring and Adaptive Management. This includes compliance and "efficacy" monitoring. Marty used the word efficacy here to differentiate this from the "effectiveness monitoring" specified in Article 514. What is proposed in Chapter 6 of this plan is about generally checking to see if we are getting what we want from the activities we do and does not have any tie to Article 514 funding.
- Chapter 7: Reporting
- Chapter 8: Funding
- Chapter 9: General references.

**Base Map:** Tony projected a base map for the Alder Creek property, with the ownership boundaries and the updated aerial photo. Marty and/or Kathy will apply cover-types to the new map; Tony will work with Joetta to digitize this and will coordinate a field trip to confirm the updated map, focused on polygons that have direct elk management implications.

## **OSPREY UPDATE**

Mel noted that the draft annual reports include two maps which indicate the active nest sites during the 2009 nesting season: three on Baker and five on Shannon. Artificial nest platforms are indicated by squares numbered one through ten. Mel walked the group through a photographic review of each platform. Platform nine was damaged last year but has been repaired. Three nests have Canada geese on them now. Osprey typically won't drive geese away, but the geese may be done by the time osprey are ready to nest. (This happened last year). Two of the sites need some maintenance. The license calls for this to be done by Oct. 1,



but Mel is trying to do this ASAP so it can be done for this year's nesting season; he's just waiting for water levels to go up for access (by barge).

Mel and Brock have identified some sites that will be good for creating nest trees along Lake Shannon. The age of the trees in the area is challenging; they aren't big enough to be good nest sites. Mel doesn't think we'll be able to create all 10 trees now. They will make as many as they can and develop a plan for creating the rest as habitat allows.

## **BALD EAGLE NIGHT ROOST SURVEY**

Haley walked the group through a presentation on the survey findings, starting by describing the team's process. They were looking for communal roosting sites near Lake Shannon, and while they did see some eagles, the most they saw in the same area at the same time was five on January 15. She noted that the January 15 date was the site visit with the most observed activity, which corresponds to peak numbers of eagles wintering in the Skagit River Basin. Throughout the surveys, no bald eagle communal night roost was identified.

## **LOONS**

Haley gave TRIG an update. The Baker platforms were maintained and updated with fresh vegetation and the Shannon platform needs to be replaced (the old one is currently in place). Haley showed photos of all the platforms and the work to date. Surveys start this month and continue bi-weekly through July.

## **BOTANICAL TEAMLET**

Scott reported on the botanical teamlet's field trip to *Baker Lake* wetlands 17, 29 and 30. *A portion of the Reed Canarygrass at wetland 17 may be able to be contained through natural competition. The thinking is to monitor the impacted areas over a 3-5 year period. Willow staking is also a possibility.* The group is also talking about testing some other activities on a small scale. Wetland 30 looked to be generally too wet for Reed Canarygrass, with exception of some small patches on stumps and sphagnum moss. They are planning to test *herbicide techniques on Reed Canarygrass* and replanting on and around stumps, and test in a small area to see what effects herbicide has on the *sphagnum* moss. Scott reported that he has also started to work with nurseries to grow appropriate plants for *revegetation after* these tests. These could be *planted next summer/fall*. He has also worked with Baker staff to develop a plan for the removal of a patch of ivy *at the old spawning beaches on Forest Service land*. There are some medium-priority patches that Scott will attend to next. Draft implementation plans for Plants of Special Status and *Carex flava* may be available for TRIG review by year-end.

## **ARHWG**

Marty reported that a draft 505 plan went out in January, ARG reviewed it in February, and the ARHWG met in March. Marty and Jacob are incorporating the input provided so far. The updated plan will be emailed in the next week or so. ARHWG will meet May 6 after the TRIG meeting. The plan is due out Oct. 1, 2010.

## **MEETING EVALUATION**

### **Worked Well:**

- Food, room, meeting logistics worked well for most (long drive for south-end folks)
- Glad Lou Ellyn Web-X-ed in
- Collective "Whoo-Hoo!" and celebration in honor of "our first baby" (the Alder Creek property)

# Final Meeting Notes

April 1, 2010 / 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. / Burlington plus Web-X, Call



**Draft May 6, 2010 TRIG Agenda** Note: If you are coming to Burlington for ARHWG, come at 9 for TRIG. Web-X and conference line will be open for both.

- Brief update on post-acquisition activities for Alder Creek Property
- Review draft property search plan
- Evaluate meeting, set location and agenda for next meeting