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## BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

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### Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Meeting

December 19, 2002 (8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.)  
(Bring Sack Lunch)

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

### AGENDA

Review notes/revise agenda/action items
PME Matrix Development
Solution Team Update
Report on Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Status of existing studies: T2, T4, T5, T7 and T7b, T11, T13, T15, T16, T17</li></ul>
New Study Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>T6 Noxious Weeds, T12 Grizzly Bear, T19 HEP, T21 Elk, T22 Fluctuation Zone Enhancement</li></ul>
Report from preliminary assessment by PDEA contractor
How are we going to evaluate our data? Assess accuracy of data?
Recreation Impacts Discussion
New Study Requests (?), New Teamlet meetings (?)
Confirm January 16 <sup>th</sup> location (Lacy?) and agenda, meeting location/dates for February, March
Evaluate meeting



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### FINAL MEETING MINUTES

**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:

- accurately defines and describes the existing environment in relationship to the previous environment;
- identifies project effects (existing and proposed) leading to development of protection, mitigation, and enhancement options.”

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

### ATTENDEES

Bob Nelson, (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation), Gene Stagner (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), Tony Fuchs and Cary Feldmann (Puget Sound Energy), Lauri Vigue (Washington Dept. Fish & Wildlife), Ann Risvold, Laura Potash, Dan Gay, and Carl Corey (USFS), Patrick Goldsworthy (North Cascades Conservation Council), Kathy Smayda (Smayda Environmental for the Louis Berger Group), Ron Tressler (EDAW), Stan Walsh (Skagit System Cooperative), Dee Endelman (Agreement Dynamics) and Bruce Freet (Environmental Agreements), Lyn Wiltse (PDSA Consulting, facilitator).

### SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

Regular meetings: Jan 16 (USFWS in Lacey), Feb 20 (Mt. Vernon), March 20, April 17, May 15, June 19 (location?), July 17, Aug. 21 (location?), Sept. 18, Oct. 16, Nov. 20 (location?)  
HEP Teamlet: Jan. 15. Tony will provide details.

CONFERENCE CALL LINE: ALL WERE REMINDED, ESPECIALLY DURING THESE WINTER MONTHS, THAT THE CONFERENCE CALL LINE WILL BE OPEN DURING ALL THESE MEETINGS. PLEASE CALL 1-866-280-6429 AND ENTER PARTICIPANT CODE: 144995 #.

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## **AGENDA FOR DECEMBER 19 MEETING**

**Mountlake Terrace, Washington**

**8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!

1. Review notes/agenda/action items
2. Report on Studies
3. PME Matrix development
4. Solution Team Update
5. Study Plans – T12, T-21, T-19, T-5
6. New Requests?
7. Report from preliminary assessment by PDEA contractor
8. Assessing the accuracy/evaluation of our data
9. Recreation Impacts Discussion
10. Confirm January location/ (Lacey) and Set Agenda for January 16, 2003
11. Evaluate meeting

### **THANK YOU ANN!**

This is Ann's last meeting with us. She is being pulled off to work on other activities. Laura Potash will assume her tasks related to this relicensing process.

### **GENERAL CONCERN**

Concern was expressed re: time spent on form (process) over function (substance). We were reminded that this is a Technical Working Group. We will be sure to keep the PME to 90 minutes (or less) and facilitator will re-double her efforts to keep us focused on technical topics.

### **NEW ACTION ITEMS**

- ALL: Give Kathy input re: terrestrial interests related to the HYDROPS model.
- ALL: Come to January meeting ready to discuss the preliminary working draft that Marty put together for T7b.
- ALL: Let Ron know if you want him to send you a .pdf file of the updated telemetry map he showed at our November meeting.
- Don/Tony: Settle on location for our Feb. 20 meeting (PSE Office in Mt. Vernon or USFS Office in Sedro-Woolley).
- Marty, Tony, Dee, Bruce and Lyn: Draft a list of PMEs that potentially conflict with or synergize with PMEs from other resource areas.
- Marty: Draft outline for Recreation Impacts Discussion (Don and Lauri will review).
- Marty: By January 6, send out redlined and "cleaned up" versions of PME matrix.
- Tony: Sent out notification email when T15 coverages are ready for review (December 24).
- Tony: Check into the validity of data coverages for T-15.
- Lyn: Update Norms to remind members to silence cell phones and requirement that Tom Hamer share any comments that participants make with them before he distributes them.
- Tony: Get Ron out to "see the sights".
- Tony: Call Russ Paul (Crown Pacific) re: PME participation (January).

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- Tony: Pull together teamlet to discuss next steps in wetland study (early January).
  - Patrick: Bring photos from his trip to France (to have at our January meeting.)
  - Don: Locate and send USFS Administrative Elk Study telemetry data to Ron.
  - R2: Do initial assessment of potential recreation impacts to elk by overlaying a map of hiking trails in the basin on the T15 basin vegetation map. They will apply buffers of width accepted by the teamlet in all areas where the trails cross forage habitat. (Ron distributed a table of proposed buffer distances for trails and other recreation-related entities.)
  - Tony: Give recreational-related buffer table to Joetta to include as a layer on T-15 map.
  - Ron: Combine telemetry data from Lori Farrow and NWIFC into a format for plotting in the T15 map, and provide that information to R2 for plotting.
  - Tony: Look at state-wide mortality study to see if it includes numbers for the Nooksack herd.
  - Tony: Send Ron map that shows developed and dispersed camping, roads and trails, along with spreadsheet indicating recreational use at those sites.
  - Tony: Follow up with Frank re: local data for analysis species
  - Tony: Get Marty to prioritize list of analysis species.
  - Don: Send new canopy cover information to Tony to distribute by December 20, 2002.
  - Ron Tressler: Call Ron Davis re: re-assessing mapping scope and schedule by mid-January
  - Marty: Check with John Cook re: how additional resources might reduce the timeframe for data availability and compensation requirements.
  - Tony/Marty: Before our January meeting, get with Don to determine what consultant could help with Grizzly Study Plan (and eventually also do the study).
  - Marty: Ask Ron T. to do species analysis for elk.
  - Ron T: Do analysis species assessment for elk.
  - Tony: Get update species lists from agencies (in March '03?)
  - Tony: Set up T-5 teamlet to meet in January (conference call with Lauri)
  - Laura: Get Kathy known basin rare plant information by the end of January 2003.
  - Tony: Tell Tom re: UTM errors on rare plant maps need to be fixed.
  - Tony: Set up HEP teamlet meeting for January 15, 2003.
  - Tony: Update and distribute participant contact list.

#### **HEP INCOMPLETE ACTION ITEMS**

- Marty/Joetta: Finish the T7b study as quickly as possible (shooting for Dec. 13).
- Gene: Follow up on Gulf Maine HEP study to see what we can adopt to use in or process- Send all link to website.
- Lauri: Share models/species used from Skagit relicensing with teamlet members.
- Marty: Share same from Jackson Project on Sultan River.
- Lauri: Send Don data re: remaining bird species tied to deciduous forests, also send him the pond breeding amphibian model.
- Don: Ask Bob Kuntz to look at models and literature searches about using red-eyed vireo and yellow warbler.

#### **REPORT ON OLD ACTION ITEMS**

- ALL: Reviewed T12 (Grizzly Bear) Study/rationale and ready to discuss at our December meeting.
- ALL: Got comments on a T11, 13, 16, 17 by year end to Tony

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- Tony: Talked with Kristen re: some website hyper links not functioning; also re: setting up internal “protected” web site.
  - Tony: Sent Bob K pdf file of wetland map.
  - Tony: Set up HEP teamlet meeting in early December.
  - Marty: Emailed “final” draft final for T7, dated November 21, 2002, along with the maps for final review.
  - Bob Kuntz: Checked with DOI botanist about joining with teamlet for PME 106.
  - Marty: Worked with Patrick to draft a new PME: 114 Public Lands.
  - Marty: Sent out next draft of PMEs by Monday November 25.
  - Dee: Sent out Agenda for Dec. 5 workshop (and other information for meeting) by Monday Dec. 2.
  - Ann: Got Tom locations of six sites that need plant forms filled out.
  - Gene: Checked availability of meeting in Lacey for January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - Tony: Set up Elk teamlet meeting.
  - Marty: Framed issue around: What percentage of the overall recreation in the Basin is due to the Project?
  - Tony: Checked availability of PSE Office for February 20 meeting (Mount Vernon).

#### **PME UPDATE**

Dee reviewed with us the suggested format and draft and participant list for the upcoming cross resource PME workshop March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Cotton Tree Inn at Mt. Vernon. All were asked to give Bruce, Dee, or Lyn feedback on this. (Team Leader Note: as the list shows no USFS botanist on the list, Laura Potash wanted to make sure we had this part of the discussion in the notes: On USFS lands, restoration and erosion control projects will follow 1) USFS Region 6 native species policy and plant movement guidelines, 2) MBS guidelines for use on desirable non-natives (as per Potash and Aubry 1997), and 3) MBS Forest Plan Amendment #14 – Best Management Practices for prevention of noxious weeds.)

Marty will update the draft PMEs and send to all on January 6, 2003. Between now and our January meeting, a teamlet will draft a list of PMEs in potential conflicts across resource areas (e.g., vegetation restoration, slope management/erosion control, etc. A potential solution may be contained in creation of a native plant propagation program).

#### **SOLUTION TEAM UPDATE**

Lyn reported that at the December 17 Solution Team meeting, members reviewed the draft of the PME Workshop and the participants for the March Resource Workshop at the Cotton Tree Inn in Mount Vernon, March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. They also spent considerable time discussing the need for the Economics/Operations Working Group to come up with an assumption we can use re: flood control.

They commended the work the Terrestrial Working Group has done re: PMEs.

#### **ELK HABITAT MAPPING DISCUSSION**

Tony reported (for Chris Madsen) that an augmentation of the Nooksack herd is likely to be scheduled for fall of 2003. He suggested we work with elk managers (as a PME) to support their efforts.

Ron distributed a table of proposed buffer distances to use in evaluating trails, roads, and dispersed and developed recreation sites. When putting this table together, he erred on the side of broader buffers.

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There was general consensus for using these buffer distances as a starting point, and we may modify them later. The buffers will be used in the GIS overlay of elk forage habitat to identify areas where human activity may discount elk habitat capability.

At 10:00 we had a conference call with Lou Bender (505-646-3382, Ron Davis (765-828-8223), and John Cook (541-962-6536), who are currently working on several studies of the Nooksack elk herd and its habitat. We asked them if they were willing to help us with sharing applicable information and mapping products from their studies to help us the this T21 study. Topics discussed during the Conference Call were:

- Mapping and timeframe
- Data availability
  - Forage quantity, selection, quality
  - Body condition (by age class)
  - Help with putting parameters on a model for our use.
- Ongoing help (PMEs)

These elk experts were open to the possibility of working together to meet our needs for habitat mapping while helping them financially so that they can finish their studies.

Next steps: Ron T. and Marty will touch base with Ron D. and John Cook respectively about how additional resources would impact the schedule and how they can assist in assessing project effects and developing PMEs. They will report back at our next meeting.

Concern was expressed about the source and quality of the data we are using for our mapping (T-15), as we heard from conference call participants that the DNR data for stand age was an average and may not be accurate for any specific stand. Tony will investigate.

## **REPORT ON STUDIES**

See table below.

<b>Study #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Notes/Next Steps</b>
T2	Vegetation Mapping in Project Area	Tony received the executive summary December 19. He will send it out for review.
T4	Analysis Species Assessment	All have until January 16, 2003 to send in comments on the Analysis Species. Local information seems to be lacking
T5	Wetland Inventory Study	Complete. Part of T-2 mapping. Phase 2 will be determined in January. Lauri and Tony will discuss this via conference call prior to our January meeting.
T6	Noxious Weed Assessment and Control Plan	Need comments on final Study Plan by year-end. Summarize known occurrences in report.
T7	Historic Vegetation of the UB and LB Projects	Report is nearly complete.
T7b	Future vegetation mapping	Marty distributed and walked us through a preliminary working draft of Regeneration Prescriptions and Assumptions for the Future Without Project Scenario. We

		will discuss this at our January meeting.
T-9,10	Recreation use, effects on Mt. Goat Habitat use	Don has drafted a PME for our review with regard to mountain goats. We will address this issue there.
T11	Oregon Spotted Frog Inventory	The revised “final” Study Report is out and comments are required by the end of December.
R-T12	Grizzly Bear Spring Foraging Habitat Value	Don reported that what we are trying to find out is the relative habitat values present for grizzly forage. The Study Plan lists potential forage species for the coverage area. We need to know how many acres of herbaceous meadow are equal to the forested land in the basin. Marty will see if any of the data from the Elk Study would apply. We are trying to figure out how to evaluate project effects and what types of PME we will want to draft. We agreed to move this to the Study Plan phase. We will get our fleshed out plan blessed by the NCGC. We hope to be able to review the Study Plan at our January meeting. We hope to begin implementation in Spring, 2002.
T13	Survey and Manage Terrestrial Mollusk Survey	This is complete.
T15	Basin Vegetation Mapping	Nearly complete. This is a priority for the PDEA.
T16	Project Area Rare Plant Survey	Comments on final report due by year-end. Tom needs to button up with R-2 re: getting right UTMs on rare plants. Tony will follow up with him on this.
T17	Amphibian Studies in Reservoir Fluctuation Zone	Comments on the draft final report are due by the end of the year.
R-T18	Breeding Bird Surveys	Combine with T-19.
R-T19	Habitat Evaluation Studies	Still determining scope. The teamlet met Dec. 6 and will meet again in January to continue work on this.
RT20	Wildlife Use in the Reservoir Drawdown Zone	PSE will do it on its own and share the data.
RT21	Elk studies	See elk discussion above
RT22	Fluctuation Zone Enhancement	We will go forward with this as a PME.

### **PDEA UPDATE**

Kathy Smayda shared with us the following schedule for the Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment:

May 1<sup>st</sup> – Initial internal draft

PDEA to PSE and participants (need information by late March).

Report will include description of existing conditions, no action alternative, Project removal scenarios (no license, and dam removal scenarios).

October 1<sup>st</sup> – Draft PDEA to public (need information by mid-June)

April, 2004 - Final PDEA

### **ASSESSING THE ACCURACY/EVALUATION OF OUR DATA**

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This will be the sole topic of our February meeting, as we interpret the results of our completed study reports.

### **RECREATION IMPACTS DISCUSSION**

This discussion was deferred until our January meeting. Marty will draft something and have Don and Lauri review it prior to our January meeting.

### **HANDOUTS (Those that will be posted to the website are bolded.)**

- Final Minutes, Baker Project Terrestrial Resources Working Group, PME Meeting, December 5, 2002
- Draft Meeting Notes from the Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Elk Teamlet, December 6, 2002
- Draft Meeting Notes from the Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group HEP Teamlet, December 6, 2002.
- Copy of a letter from Marty Vaughn of Biota Pacific Environmental Sciences, Inc. to Dr. John Cook, NCASI, La Grande, OR and Dr. Lou Bender, USGS, Las Cruces, New Mexico, dated December 12, 2002. and an attached Baker River Location Map.
- Proposed buffer distances for assessing human disturbance impacts on elk in the Baker River Hydroelectric study area.
- Preliminary working draft of Regeneration Prescriptions and Assumptions for the Future Without Project Scenario.

### **PARKING LOT**

- Conceptual Mitigation Approach (PMEs)
- 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
- Interface with Access Management Plan
- Come up with optimal reservoir operation scenario(s) from Terrestrial perspective (HYDROPs)

### **MEETING EVALUATION**

#### **Well-Dones**

- Got a lot done!
- Wonderful spread of food!
- Ann’s participation to date. Thanks for your help and thanks also for the thorough hand-off to Laura!

#### **Opportunities to Improve**

- Got out late (10 min.)



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## **WHAT'S HOT?**

- Schedules
- Process vs. substance tension

## **STUDIES STATUS FOR SOLUTION TEAM**

- HEP – Still determining scope
- Drawdown Zone Planting was moved to PME status
- Grizzly study request is moved to an actual study plan
- Wetland monitoring teamlet in January will discuss this
- Elk Study plan is still being developed
- Final study reports from many studies will be complete in by end of January, 2003.
- Noxious weed study will be done in Summer of 2003

## **TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR OUR JANUARY 16, 2003 MEETING**

**FWS office in Lacey, Washington**

**8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!

1. Introductions
2. Review notes/agenda/action items
3. PME Matrix development
  - Recreation Impacts Discussion
4. Solution Team Update
5. Study Plans – T12, T-21, T-19, T-5
6. New Requests?
7. Assessing the accuracy/evaluation of our data: Plan for Discussion of this as sole topic at our Feb. mtg.
8. Confirm February location - Mt. Vernon
9. Set Agenda for February 20, 2003
  - Sole topic: Interpretations from data in Study Reports
10. Evaluate meeting