



BAKER RIVER PROJECT RELICENSE

Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group Meeting

**July 17, 2001 (8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.)
(Bring Sack Lunch)**

**PSE Mount Vernon Business Office conference room
1700 E. College Way
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
360-424-2925 (reservation desk)**

AGENDA

Review notes/revise agenda
Solution Team Report
Status report: Action items
Study Plan Approvals for final plans: T-2, T-5, T-11, T-15, T-17
Study Plan Review, potentially final: T-4, T-13
Review Study Request RT-16
Set agenda for next meeting (August 21st, in Mountlake Terrace (?), from 8:30am to 2:00pm)
Evaluate meeting



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Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources Working Group

July 17, 2001

8:30 am – 2:00 p.m.
PSE Office Mt. Vernon, WA

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), Patrick Goldsworthy (North Cascades Conservation Council), Lauri Vigue (WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife), Martin Vaughn (Biota Pacific), Don Gay (U.S. Forest Service), Bob Nelson (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation), Tom Hamer (Hamer Environmental), Robert Kuntz (National Park Service), Ann Risvold (U.S. Forest Service), Carl Corey (U.S.F.S), Lyn Wiltse, facilitator (PDSA Consulting)

AGENDA

July 17, 2001, **8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!

1. Review notes/agenda
2. Solution Team Report
3. Action Items
4. Process for comments/review of study plans

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5. Study Designs

Approve: T-2, T-5, T-11, T-15, T-17

Potentially final: T-4, T-13

6. Study Requests

Review T16

7. Future Studies

8. Set agenda and location for August 21 in Mountlake Terrace from 8:30 to 2:00 p.m.

9. Evaluate meeting

NEW ACTION ITEMS:

- ALL: Review initial spread sheet for T-4 and note which species exist in the Basin or in the area effected by the project. If you know it's there put "y" for yes or "n" for no with your initials by it. Leave blank if you don't know. Add any species present in the area but not on the list. Send back to Tom by July 27, 2001
- ALL: Consider filling out Study Requests to include budget for 2002 studies.
- Lauri: Draft study request for BBS.
- Ann: Draft study request for RT-16, send to Tony for distribution by 7/27 (if possible).
- Tom: Review T-17 protocol with Fred Seavey re: next steps.
- Tony: Contact Stan & Fred re: finalized study plans from today.
- Lauri: Get data from Lewis River process re: Wetland sampling protocol and monitoring and how they will use these data.
- Tom: Incorporate edits into T-2, T-4, T-11, T-13, T-15, and T-17, send to Tony for distribution to members as Working Group Approved Final Study Plans
- Tom: Incorporate edits into T-5, send to Tony for distribution as Final Study Plan, to be approved at next working group meeting.
- Ann: Get Tom list of Forest Service sensitive species, focus on vascular plants, ASAP.
- Tony, Tom, Don: Look at rewriting T12
- Tony: Work with Lauri to draft study request for Phase II of T-5 (let's call it R-T5b)

REPORT ON PAST ACTION ITEMS

- Don: Reserved Mountlake Terrace Forest Service Office for August 21 meeting
- Stan: Stan reported that the Cultural Historical Working Group will be dealing with culturally sensitive botanical resources separately.

SOLUTION TEAM REPORT

Lyn reported that the Solution Team is not meeting again until August 22. In the meantime, a technical working group of agency and PSE representatives is working off line to finalize the Communications Protocol and Process Documents. They will be inviting FERC representative Steve Hocking to the Solution Team Meeting on September 26.

PROCESS FOR COMMENTS/REVIEW OF STUDY PLANS

Tom suggested that we formalize this process by officially responding to the submitter of the study request re: incorporation of comments. They will reference page number and paragraph. Review by phone

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or face-to-face is preferable. The face-to-face interface is especially critical with the author of the study. Authors will work closely with consultants on the preliminary study plan before it is sent to team members for comments. No draft goes to the team for review without approval of the author. The author will remain in the primary loop throughout the process. Tony will continue to serve as a clearinghouse for distribution of information.

Any member emailing any comment on any study should send it to consultant and cc the team. Be clear on the subject line. Tony will also touch base with missing members re: approved study plans.

STATUS OF:

T-2: Vegetation Mapping In Project Area

This “final” study plan has gone through two revision cycles. Some background work has already been done. Tom will begin field work this week. This study will be combined with T-5.

Changes are as follows:

- Culturally-related resources were removed.
- Shrub areas will be treated as forested polygons.
- For forested polygons we will take all plants 10% or more, except those needed for climax community description can be less than 10%. Future studies may include follow-up work for some polygons. We will probably end up doing our own classification system for the non-forested polygons.
- We included a more specific snag definition provided by Lauri. Carl suggested that, where possible, we also identify snag species. We agreed to do this.
- No vouchers will be collected of unknown species.
- Wetland polygons will be identified for T-5

We will notify the Solution Team that this Working Group has approved this study for implementation.

T-5: Wetland Inventory Study

An unresolved issue is the phase part of this study. It's not clear what work will be done in different phases of this study. The inventory would be done first. The Working Group needs to flesh out the other phases. It's really hard to try to develop a sampling protocol without the inventory information. A second phase of this study will be to describe what sampling and monitoring are necessary to provide the desired baseline information. Phase 2 will be a second Study Request, drafted by Tony and reviewed by Lauri. The hydrology monitoring will be addressed in Phase 2. We will be looking at protocols used at Lewis River to assist us in further defining this study. We may want to begin in the fall when water levels are down. We'll discuss these protocols at our September meeting.

Delineation work can proceed immediately. Tony will be touching base with Historical Research Associates re: how to proceed with wetland study in an appropriate way.

We will notify the Solution Team that this Working Group has approved this study for implementation, however, the Terrestrial Working Group will review and finalize the Final Study Plan at the August meeting.

T-4: Analysis Species Assessment

We will turn this over to a qualified consultant. (Team Leader Note for clarification: Hamer Environmental will do, or will sub-contract). We will monitor this over time. Carl suggested we add the Regional Forester Sensitive Species List (to p. 6). Our knowledge of whether species occur in the basin will be critical to this process. Other database searches will be used for informative purposes. The final

product does not include a list of other studies to be done. We need to keep in mind that the species list will change over time.

We will notify the Solution Team that this Working Group has approved this study for implementation.

T-11: Oregon Spotted Frog Inventory

Page 8 and 9 change less than five acres to less than .5 acres. We will notify the Solution Team that this Working Group has approved this study for implementation.

R-T16: Project Area Rare Plant Survey

Ann Risvold is working on drafting this study request. She will try to get us an initial draft of this study request to review by 7/27/01. She will be using Forest Service lists, policies and procedures.

The minimum area would be the project boundary. Some of the species have pretty vague habitat descriptions at this time. This will translate into a fairly broad survey area. We will be doing this in 2002.

T-17: Amphibian Studies In Reservoir Fluctuation Zone Study Design

We are moving to implementation. Tom will give us an update on this and other field work at our future meetings. Tom will be touching base with Fred Seavey re: his concerns. We will notify the Solution Team that this Working Group has approved this study for implementation.

T-13: Survey and Manage Terrestrial Mollusk Survey

Moving to final plans. We will notify the Solution Team that this Working Group has approved this study for implementation. This is slated to begin in the fall of 2001.

T-15: Basin Vegetation Mapping

Transmission lines will be mapped according to vegetation cover type., where there is vegetation.

Otherwise, they will be classified as non-vegetation and included with substations. (Phase II) We may have the opportunity to do some kind of enhancement under the transmission lines even if FERC declares them to be outside the FERC boundary. We will notify the Solution Team that this Working Group has approved this study for implementation.

FUTURE STUDY REQUESTS

R-T5b: Phase 2 Wetland Inventory Study

Tony will draft this study request, with review by Lauri, to develop a "phase 2" study. The information from this study will satisfy the intent of the initial R-T5 wetland study request originally submitted by Lauri.

R-T9: Recreation Use Study and R-T10 Recreation Effects on Mountain Goat Habitat Use

After some discussion, we agreed to look at possible PM &E measures related to mountain goats in November. Don is doing research in this area. We will also review results of recreation use survey being done by the Recreation Working Group.

We aren't looking to the Solution Team to resolve mountain goat related issues at this time.

R-T12: Grizzly Bear Spring Foraging Habitat Value

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Don will work with Tony and Tom to remove the continuous impact connection in this study request, so that it may be possible to move forward with this request.

R-T6: Noxious Weed Assessment and Control

Deferred until after the two vegetation mapping projects are completed, field work should begin in mid-2002.

R-T7: Historic Vegetation of the Upper and Lower Baker Projects

Could potentially proceed if re-written.

R-T16: Project area Rare Plant Survey (combination of T3 and T-14)

Ann Risvold is preparing this Study Request for review at the next Working Group meeting.

OTHER POTENTIAL 2002 STUDIES:

- Elk foraging (Author - Chris Madsen?)
- BBS (breeding bird survey) (Author – Lauri Vigue?)
- HEP (Author – Lauri Vigue?)
- Riparian habitat (Author – Lauri Vigue?)
- Side channel/Off channel habitat in Lower Skagit River (Author – Don Gay/Fred Seavey?)

HANDOUTS

- T2 Final Study Plan - Vegetation Mapping for the Baker River Project Area
- Timeline for Alternative FERC Relicensing Process
- Timeline for Traditional FERC Relicensing Process

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
- 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?

Meeting Evaluation

Well Dones:

- Coffee
- Loved cinnamon rolls
- Happy to have Carl
- Got out early
- Got lots done

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- Made progress on implementing some studies
 - Finalized several studies

Need for Improvement:

- Missed Stan and Fred
- Facilitator rushed us a bit

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

August 21, 2001, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Mountlake Terrace USFS Office

Bring a sack lunch and we'll work through!

1. Review notes/agenda
2. Action Items
3. Study Plans:
 - Finalize T5
 - Review T12, RT16
 - Report on Field Progress (T2 and T5)
4. Progress on T4
5. Review 2002 Study Requests
6. Review Parking Lot
7. Set agenda and location for September 18 (new US Forest Service Office, Sedro-Woolley, start at 9am), and October 16, (WDFW Office, Mill Creek?)
8. Consider Carl's Northwest Forest Plan/Watershed Analysis presentation (October?)
9. Evaluate meeting

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

- Process/policy presentation of how to approach impacts due to inundation
- WUTC to give "process" presentation