

BRCC Members

As there wasn't a request for an in-person meeting or conference call in July, below is an update of the past month's Baker River Project Resource Group activities.

Aquatic Resource Group (ARG)

The ARG did not meet in July. The next meeting is scheduled for September 10th at the PSE Skagit Service Center.

Plans

- No new updates in July on aquatic-related plans.
- Nearly all the aquatic-related plans have been through the ARG at this point and most have been approved by FERC.

Reports

PSE submitted the 2012 article report for SA 110 Shoreline Erosion with comments due July 31, and is preparing reports for SA 505 Aquatic Riparian Habitat (due July 31) and SA 602 Required Funding (due July 31) to the ARG. Later this summer PSE will be sending out reports for SA 103 Upstream Fish Passage and SA 104 Connectivity (both due August 31). This fall's reports will include SA 101 Fish Propagation (due Oct. 31), SA 105 Downstream Fish Passage and SA 106 Flow Implementation (both due November 30). Plans and reports are located at:

[http://pse.com/aboutpse/HydroLicensing/Documents/Plans_and_Studies/Plan and Study List.pdf](http://pse.com/aboutpse/HydroLicensing/Documents/Plans_and_Studies/Plan_and_Study_List.pdf)

Lower Baker Unit 4 Commissioning: The last of the three load rejection tests was completed on June 25th. The three tests were completed successfully and in accordance with the planned mitigation procedures.

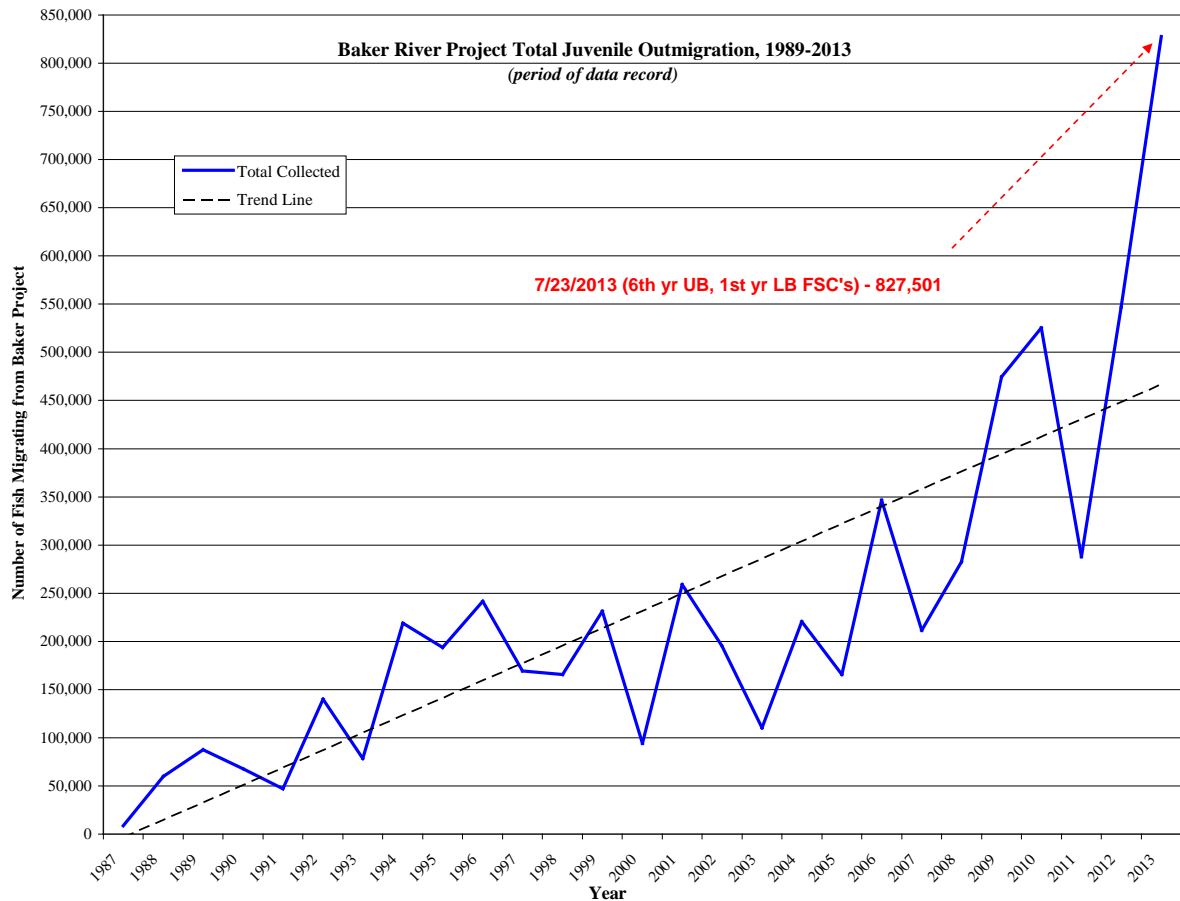
Baker Lake Daily Pool Level Change: PSE sent the ARG a summary of the June 18th Recreation Resource Group meeting discussion on modifying the Baker Lake maximum daily pool level constraint in Aquatics Tables 1 and 2 (PSE is seeking to modify this constraint from 0.5 feet/day measured on a rolling 24-hour basis to 1.5 feet/day measured on a daily basis). PSE sent an email on July 24th with the specific modification request to the ARG and RRG, requesting their review and comment by August 26th.

Fisheries

PSE accommodated requests from tribal fisheries managers for flow releases to support the fishery effort.

The juvenile fish outmigration in 2013 broke records at Upper Baker FSC (625,611), at Lower Baker FSC (201,890) and total (827,501), all species combined. Preliminary

counts by species indicate about 763,000 are sockeye and 61,000 are coho and the remainder a mix of other species including trout and char. Based on historical run timing, as of July 23rd the migration is more than 99% complete. Following normal operational plans, PSE has provided notification of shutdown for both FSCs for end of day July 31 to the USFWS.



The LB FSC performance evaluation, including flow preference, tissue collection for coho smolt ATPase analysis, and fry and smolt FTOT has concluded. PIT-tag releases of coho are part of the first-year operations to provide an indication of collection effectiveness. Over 90 percent have been recaptured. An update on results is expected at the September ARG meeting.

For the 2013 migration season, PSE implemented a sampling approach coordinated through the fish co-managers identifying the number, type and frequency of smolt data collection. This entailed recording length, weight and collecting scales and a few specimens for percent dry weight comparison from sockeye sampled weekly at both Upper and Lower Baker. This morphological data, plus numerical data discussed in the proposal, identifies empirically-derived data for SA 101c2 to track changes in juvenile smolt size and condition as indicators for density-dependence and help guide fry production goals. PSE will be compiling the season's results for annual reporting.

Spawning Beach Decommissioning: Decommissioning site work has begun. The in-water work is scheduled for July 16 – Aug. 16, and the project is on track for completion by November 2013. The ARG will get another update, with photos of the progress, at the September ARG meeting.

Hatchery and Spawning Beach Operations: At the end of June, PSE crews completed the extensive and remarkable repairs restoring water and adding a protective graded filter at the intake area to the hatchery water supply. PSE will prepare a final project report with a copy to the Forest Service.

The hatchery and spawning beach are fully operating, and the facility is receiving sockeye adult broodstock. Sockeye adult broodstock collection is on target according to the fish co-managers loading schedule. Through July 28th, 1,847 have been distributed to the spawning beach and 3,332 to the artificial incubation hatchery for a cumulative of 5,179 of the 6,000 season goal. For juvenile fish inventory, approximately 117,000 sockeye and 93,000 coho fingerlings are in raceways for the extended rearing program.

Upstream Fish Trap Operations: Through July 28th, 10,932 sockeye have been counted at the Upstream Fish Trap. The fish co-managers have reduced the forecasted sockeye and suspended further tribal fishery events on the Skagit and Baker rivers.

Other license plan implementation activities:

- SA 101: The fish co-managers will support the development of an MOU mechanism for implementing the SA 101 nutrient enhancement funding.
- SA 108 Gravel: PSE reported that this will be the second year of gravel monitoring and invited any ARG member interested to join them in the gravel bar surveys this summer.
- SA 109 Large Woody Debris: PSE distributed a draft allocation guidance protocol for managing requests for Large Woody Debris (LWD) and asked for feedback. Initial feedback had three suggestions: 1) review requests for LWD during the annual ARG-TRIG (SA 505) process; 2) ask PSE to maintain a basic inventory of available material by size categories and presence / absence of root ball; and 3) specify that Article 505 projects get priority over other requests. PSE has noted these suggestions. The first collection of wood will happen this summer.
- Article 110 Shoreline Erosion: PSE has been working with USFS on a project to stabilize the bank near Swift Creek campground. They are looking to modify the project design, with construction tentatively slated for next fall.
- Article 505 Aquatic Riparian Habitat: PSE announced that contracts are up and running for all six projects that have been approved (three projects in each of the last two years). The RFP process begins again this fall.

Terrestrial Resources Implementation Group (TRIG)

The TRIG did not meet in July. The next meeting is scheduled for September 5th at the PSE office in Burlington.

Terrestrial activities during July included:

- PSE conducted the helicopter survey flight for nesting osprey and bald eagles on July 2nd. There were two active osprey nests on Baker Lake. On Lake Shannon, there were four active osprey nests and one active bald eagle nest (at Thunder Creek). PSE will provide an update at the next TRIG meeting.
- PSE mowed the large pasture area at Alder Creek for a second time on July 25th to help control weeds (Canada thistle, bracken fern) and allow the grasses to become better established. The mowing looks to have greatly reduced the amount of thistle flowering in the pasture. Currently the forage areas are being heavily used by elk.
- The SA 514 teamlet met on July 23rd to continue the development of the Effectiveness Monitoring Implementation Procedures document.
- Noxious weed treatments are ongoing throughout July.
- A second Goshawk Survey was conducted at Burpee Hill on July 15th. No Goshawk activity was observed.
- PSE conducted two loon surveys on the reservoirs during July.
- The *Carex flava* site will be inventoried this year, and a field trip to get the contractor set up and working will take place on July 31.

Cultural Resources Advisory Group (CRAG)

The CRAG did not meet in July. The next CRAG meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on August 21st at the Skagit Service Center in Burlington. There were no other activities to report this month.

Recreation Resource Group (RRG)

The RRG did not meet in July. The next RRG meeting will be held on October 15th along with the next LEP meeting.

- The Baker special events in July were very well attended. KOMO 4 News covered the July 12th ribbon cutting ceremony, which was attended by a number of elected officials and community leaders, a variety of the Settlement Agreement stakeholders, and our CEO Kimberly Harris. The Community Celebration on July 20th, held in concert with Cement City Days, had over 700 people in attendance. There were bus tours of the Upper Baker Floating Surface Collector and the hatchery, free spray-on tattoos and kettle corn, information about energy efficiency programs, and information booths for cultural resources, avian protection, and dam safety.

- The Sockeye Fishery continues to be in full swing on Baker Lake. Although the fish run is smaller than in 2012, good weather and desire to fish has made for a busy season.
- Law enforcement has been doing a good job of responding to incidents and being a presence in the basin.