

Meeting of the Packwood Lake Hydroelectric Project Recreation Committee

Date: April 5, 2005

Location: Packwood, Washington

Present:

Energy Northwest - Laura Schinnell, Bernice Kasko, Bill Kiel, Randy Crawford, Jerry Baker
Howe Consulting – Debby Howe

United States Forest Service (USFS) – Kristie Miller, Diane Bedell, Danna Hadley

Introductions were made and copies of the discussion draft study plan and a 1965 agreement between Energy Northwest and the Forest Service were provided to the group.

Debby gave a brief summary of her background and the projects she has worked on.

Debby asked if the Forest Service had maps of the campsites along the Lake. Diane responded that the Forest Service had a map of the campsites in the wilderness area and their condition but did not have any maps of campsites outside the wilderness area. As part of the study, Debby will be preparing a map of the campsites around the Lake.

The group discussed the use of Lake Creek for fishing. Access to Lake Creek is difficult and therefore observations will be done by the bridge on old Highway 12. Observations would be limited in scope due to the perceived limited use of Lake Creek for fishing. Diane suggested that Debby make contact with the Sports Hut to see if anyone talks about fishing Lake Creek.

The Forest Service has guidance for the Wilderness Area that outlines the number of people for a campsite and the number of sites that should be occupied on a given day. The Forest Service believes that the wilderness permit system is effective with 80% compliance. There is a registration box on Trail 81 at the wilderness boundary and a second box on trail 78. Diane has the Wilderness System information in an Excel file and will provide the information to Debby.

Debby asked if the Forest Service had any information regarding fishing on Lake Creek or Packwood Lake. The Forest Service has no information available regarding fishing. Laura suggested that Debby could talk to John Squire, a local resident and member of CPR Fish.

Survey and Schedule

- On site surveys will be conducted at the trail head (parking lot) as they enter and exit the area. The group discussed using a drop off box but decided that it would not add any additional value. Peak season was defined as between Memorial Day and Labor Day. It was also decided that opening fishing season and elk hunting season would be surveyed. Debby will put together a calendar showing the days that the surveys will be conducted for review and approval by the group. Once the calendar has been agreed upon Debby will develop the survey form for review and approval by the group. It was decided that one survey form could be used for all seasons.

Traffic Counters

- Two traffic counters will be installed on Trail #74 between the junction of Latch Road trail (FS Rd 1262) and the pipeline trail (Trail #74) and below the drop structure. An additional counter will be installed on Forest Service road 1260 to collect information on total vehicle use of that road. A count of vehicles will be done at the parking lot at 12:00 pm on survey days.

Debby outlined her plan to collect baseline data, prepare a recreation use report based on the data, review applicable agency plans and then create a demand and needs analysis. The Forest Service commented that regional recreation demands and needs may not be in alignment with the Forest Service Plan management goals. Debby said that Forest Service Plan management prescriptions and goals for the area would be included in the analysis.

A second draft of the study plan will be prepared based on today's discussion. Debby will get a draft to Energy Northwest by April 11 to get to the group. The group will provide comments to Energy Northwest by April 15. Jim Eychaner with the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation will be included in the distribution.

The group discussed the FERC schedule and the possibility that the first study report will not be complete until December due to the hunting season surveys. The group agreed that the extended date would be acceptable.

The group discussed the old maintenance agreements and the need to update them. The Forest Service will talk in-house about the best way to proceed and propose a course of action.

The dates reserved for review of Recreation issues is June 16, June 30, July 14 and August 4 in Lacey, Washington. We can use these dates, or modify them as the group desires.

Following adjournment of the meeting, the group drove to the public parking lot on Forest Service Road 1260. The group then hiked to the Lake via Latch Road 1262 and Trail No. 74. At the Lake, the group observed the project intake structure, the ATV parking lot, the US Forest Service guard station, and several of the campsites and toilets at the north end of the Lake.