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# Rocky Reach Meeting Minutes

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**To:** Distribution List  
**From:** Michelle Smith  
**Date:** March 20, 2001  
**Time:** 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
**Subject:** Rocky Reach Social Sciences  
**Attendees:** Refer to Sign-Up Sheet  
**Location:** Chelan PUD Second Floor Conference Room, Wenatchee, WA

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## **PURPOSE**

- 1) Review preliminary draft of the Recreation Inventory Analysis
- 2) Discuss Federal Power Act and Mandatory Conditioning Authority
- 3) Discuss process for determining Cumulative Impacts

## **Federal Power Act and Mandatory Conditioning Authorities (see PowerPoint presentation)**

Michelle Smith, Chelan PUD (PUD), briefly reviewed the Communications Protocol and Communication Guidelines to make certain that everyone was aware of them and comfortable with the types of communication mechanisms that were developed (Web site, e-mail, teleconferencing). She also mentioned that a revised Communications Protocol was distributed to stakeholders on March 16. The revisions were made due to a change in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) ex-parte rules. Gregg Carrington (PUD) explained to the working group that in the traditional process for relicensing, FERC had ex-parte rules. However, those rules did not apply in the alternative process. Gregg commented that FERC could speak more freely during the process by waiving those rules.

Michelle (PUD) explained that the purpose for the presentation was to give stakeholders a better understanding of the Federal Power Act (FPA) and the authority it gave to mandatory conditioning agencies. Michelle informed the group that the agencies that have mandatory conditioning authority for Rocky Reach; namely, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS), Department of Ecology (DOE), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Gregg (PUD) pointed out that although the USFS has mandatory conditioning, it was only in the areas of its reservation. For Rocky Reach, the area of potential effect was very little.

Jeff Davis, Entiat School District, asked if the PUD was comfortable with the level of participation the PUD received from the mandatory conditioning agencies. Gregg (PUD) responded that the participation could be better. So far, some agencies had attended between 20 and 40 percent of the meetings and had commented very little, if any, on study reports or plans. Gregg's concern was that if feedback was not received throughout the process, there was more of a chance for eleventh-hour surprises.

Michelle (PUD) distributed a handbook prepared by the National Hydropower Association (NHA). She explained the handbook was a basic guide to the relicensing approach. It also included a description of each of the laws that affect relicensing.

### **Cumulative Impact Analysis (see flow chart)**

Michelle explained that cumulative impacts were the effects of multiple activities that add up incrementally that affect resources of regional or national significance. Gregg (PUD) explained that a Cumulative Impact Assessment was one of the requirements for the NEPA analysis and a requirement for relicensing. Cumulative impact assessments consider and assess the effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities.

Gregg (PUD) mentioned that it was important to discuss cumulative impacts and what would be required in an assessment, because there were different perceptions of what should be considered. Unfortunately, cumulative impacts were not well defined and the best source available was a manual issued by the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ), which included guidelines for cumulative impact assessments. Gregg pointed out that the guidelines were set up for new projects and new impacts, and so the difficulty was that Rocky Reach was an existing Project with existing impacts. He further explained that if there was an ongoing Project-related impact, the first step was to determine what the impact was and then determine if and how the impact should be addressed. He added that cumulative impact assessments did not require going back in time to determine what were the changes. Karin Whitehall (USFS) responded that cumulative impacts should consider past impacts as well as future impacts. Gregg (PUD) clarified that the PUD was required to identify cumulative impacts and to consider what the impact was from other planning actions or activities. He added that it was explicitly stated in a recent court of appeals decision that cumulative impact assessments did not consider the Project as it existed prior to construction. Although other agencies may have different policies, FERC relicensing did not consider the past. Gregg (PUD) stated he would bring a copy of the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) decision to the next working group meeting.

Gregg (PUD) provided a flow chart that would help the working group determine whether a potential impact should be considered through cumulative impacts or if it could be addressed at the Project-specific level. The working group worked through the flow chart and began developing a list of potential impacts. Jim Eychaner, Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), recommended considering relicensing activities at Douglas PUD and Grant PUD.

### **Recreation Inventory Report, preliminary discussion draft**

Debby Howe, Howe Consulting, presented the preliminary discussion draft of the report. The intent of the discussion draft was to provide the working group an opportunity to review the report to confirm that all recreational facilities were included and to fill in any informational gaps prior to proceeding with the first draft. Debby stated that much of the data would be incorporated into the Recreation Needs Analysis.

Debby provided a brief overview of the report sections. In review of Section 5, Existing Project Area Recreation Sites and Recreation Use Areas, Debby explained that Chelan PUD acquired hunting easements on two privately-owned areas, Blue Grade and Boyd, which to her knowledge were undeveloped. She added that although Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) managed the land, they had very little information. Gregg (PUD) explained that the Wenatchee hunting easements were purchased as part of the Rocky Reach license. He informed Debby that the Natural Sciences Working Group conducted a literature investigation and a summary, which could provide additional information. Another point Gregg made was that there were additional sites on the Wenatchee River turned over to the state for access purposes.

The inventory included a description of existing facilities, campgrounds and trails. Debby asked the working group if there was any existing site she overlooked. The working group did not mention anything.

Debby pointed out that Section 8 concentrated on recreation sites that were within the Project boundary and their use and capacity. For each of the facilities, the report contained discussion on physical capacity. Debby asked Jim (IAC) if there were any standards that would provide recommendations related to capacity, number of park acres per number of visitors. Jim (IAC) responded that he was not aware of any recommendations. Karin (USFS) mentioned that the USFS did not usually have developed parks and, therefore, was not aware of any either.

Debby (Howe Consulting) discussed Section 10, Lands Suitable for Future Recreational Development and stated the purpose for the section was to receive input for potential areas that could be further developed in the recreation plan. It was pointed out that Section 11 discussed the impacts of milfoil on recreation sites; however, the mapping was not

completed in time for the preliminary draft and was expected to be available for the first draft. The first draft would be due to the PUD on March 30.

In conclusion, Gregg asked the status of the sternwheeler. John Huselton, Entiat Focus Group, informed the group that they were trying to resolve the need for docking space. The preference was to use the Entiat Park, however there were water depth issues as well as current uses and capacity considerations. The boat would be available for private use beginning Apple Blossom, but it would not be available commercially until the docking situation was resolved.

### **Next Meeting**

May 15, 2001

### **Action Items**

Gregg will provide copies of EWEB case at next working group meeting.

Reference materials are posted on the Web site, [www.chelanpud.org/rr\\_relicense](http://www.chelanpud.org/rr_relicense).

Please contact Rosana Sokolowski, (888) 663-8121, Ext. 6371, if hard copies are needed.

- Sign-up Sheet
- Distribution List
- Cumulative Impact Analysis Flow Chart
- Federal Power Act and Mandatory Conditioning Authority (PowerPoint Presentation)
- Relicensing Hydroelectric Projects Handbook
- Recreation Inventory Analysis, Preliminary Draft