Priest Rapids Project

Mid-Columbia River, Washington state
Priest Rapids Project
Priest Rapids Project

- Two hydro facilities – Wanapum Dam / Priest Rapids Dam
- 2,000 MWH power generation (sufficient to power city of Seattle)
- 58 river miles
- 34,000 acres within Project Boundary
- Arid and dry (< 8” rain annually)
- Shrub-steppe habitat
- Volcanic geology
- Undeveloped and undisturbed shoreline
Recreation opportunities
Project Recreation Opportunities

What’s the appeal?

- Warm, dry summers (summer monthly avg. = 85°, .30” rain)
- Natural open spaces and vistas
- Shoreline residential communities
- Interstate 90 – easy access from Seattle area – 73% of all visitors from Central Puget Sound
- Gorge Amphitheatre outdoor concert venue
- >1 million visitors/year
Developing a Recreation Resources Management Plan...

- Guides Grant PUD management of existing and future recreation resources over time
- Meets Grant PUD’s responsibilities to provide reasonable public access to Project recreation facilities and waters
- Achieves specific goals by engaging key stakeholders and conducting relevant studies
2003 RRMP structure

- **Purpose and intent**
  - Comprehensive protection, mitigation and enhancement proposal for Project Recreation Resources

- **Vision**
  - Management of Project recreation resources over license term

- **Methodologies**
  - Results of previous recreation studies
  - Preferred set of proposed actions
  - Implementation plan

- **Adaptive management**
  - Monitoring and RRMP updates

- **Six distinct programs**

- **Issues and assumptions**
Getting started

- Land Use, Recreation & Aesthetics Solution Group (LSG) convened in 1999
- Met monthly through 2002 (35 meetings over 3 years)
- Gathered existing information
- Identified needed studies
- Proposed and analyzed feasibility of options
- Made recommendations
Analysis

Identified 35 primary recreation sites Project-wide, which included:

- 22 developed facilities
- 12 boat launches (17 ramp lanes)
- 5 swimming areas
- 3 visitor information facilities
- 5 camping areas (420 campsites)
- 7 picnic areas
- Several wildlife observation and hunting areas
Analysis

Identified 30 New Proposed Facilities and Existing Facility Improvements

- 230 new campsites
- 65 new picnic sites
- 6 new boat ramp lanes
- New swimming areas at day-use sites
- New I&E at recreation facilities
- 1 to 3 new accessible fishing piers
- New watchable wildlife sites
Recommendations

- **Phase I** - high need (2003-2015) – **19 sites**
  - Addresses existing ADA, ecological and safety concerns (2003-2005)
  - Locations of high demand (first 10 years of license)

- **Phase II** – moderate need (2016-2035) – **9 sites**
  - Meets proportion of future needs through expansion or infill of existing development facilities based on capacity threshold monitoring

- **Phase III** – Low need (2036-2055) – **2 sites**
  - Meets remaining long-term future needs through new site development based on capacity threshold monitoring.
**Recreation Opportunity Spectrum**

- **Activity + Setting = Experience**
  - Visitors engage in an activity
  - You provide the setting
  - The outcomes are the experiences and benefits – *By managing for certain setting characteristics, you will provide specific recreation experience opportunities and beneficial outcomes*
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

USFS Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Level of access, management, facilities, and social encounters

Level of remoteness

minimal  high

high  minimal
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

- **Setting attributes**
  - Physical – Access, Remoteness, Size
  - Social – Social Encounters
  - Managerial – Level of Management-Visitors, Facilities & Site, Naturalness

- **By changing one or more of these setting attributes you change the type of recreation experience.** ROS is more than identifying zones on a map it’s a different way of thinking about recreation – *it’s an outcomes-based approach*

- Understand what the **existing** settings are and what the **desired** settings are so that your actions either maintain what you have or bring you closer to what you desire
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

- **Why use ROS?**
  - **Meaningful Management**
    - How will our actions affect those opportunities?
    - Are we meeting public demand?
    - Are recreation objectives consistent with other management objectives?
    - What opportunities do we want to provide in the future?
  - **Development Creep**
    - Change happens - either through maintenance or reconstruction & can mean increased use; change the in the types of uses/activities; change the traditional user groups
    - Incremental hardening and development
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

- **The Value of ROS**
  - Provides baseline data on what you have now
  - Helps you display the effects of planning options on future recreation opportunities
  - Useful in writing desired conditions so that people can understand and visualize
  - Can be used to anticipate effects on more than just recreation
Recreation Resource Management Plan

- Within one year of license issuance and acceptance, the Licensee shall file, for Commission approval, a Recreation Resource Management Plan (RRMP) for the Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project.
- The Commission reserves the right to require changes to the RRMP.
- The RRMP shall identify both site-specific and programmatic recreation measures to be implemented over the term of the new license. Six programs shall be presented in the RRMP to implement the identified recreation resource measures as follows...
October 23, 2003

- Filed Final License Application for Priest Rapids Project P-2114
- Application included draft Recreation Resources Management Plan

April 17, 2008

- FERC issues a new License Order approving the draft RRMP and a directive to implement it within one year of license issuance
- Surprise!!
Get busy!

2009 public workshop on Grant PUD shoreline and recreation resources management plans
Challenges with Draft RRMP

Conceptual drawings had:
- Inaccurate contours
- No pool elevations or bathymetry data
- Inaccurate scaling (parking turnarounds, riparian areas)
- Didn't address access issues
### Development Characteristics

#### A: Semi-Developed Natural
- Area is a natural-appearing environment. Evidence of the sights and sounds of people are moderate. Such evidences usually harmonize with the natural environment.
- Interaction between users may be low to moderate, but evidence of other users is prevalent.
- Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Construction standards and facility design accommodate conventional motorized and mechanized uses.

#### B: Developed Natural
- Area is substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices enhance specific recreation activities and maintain vegetative cover and soil. Sights and sounds of people are readily evident.
- Interaction between users is often moderate to high.
- Many facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Density levels decline with increasing distance from developed sites. Facilities are often provided for special activities. Facilities for intensified motorized and mechanized uses and parking are available.

#### C: Urban
- The setting contrasts with the surrounding cityscape, but urban elements are common and readily apparent. Vegetation is often exotic and manicured. The design enables users to choose among solitude and social experiences in a naturalistic setting.
- Large numbers of users can be expected, both on-site and in nearby areas.

#### D: Highly Developed Urban
- Area is characterized by a substantially developed environment. The setting is highly structured to fit the activity being provided.
- Social encounters are expected and often programmed.
- Design is dictated by the requirements of the particular activities involved. Facilities are designed for large groups typical of sports and special events.

### Sense of isolation, self reliance, and closeness to nature
- Difficult to access, few amenities

### Social experiences in structured environment
- Comfort, security, and social opportunity

### Development Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campsites</th>
<th>Fire rings / pedestal grill</th>
<th>Launch ramps</th>
<th>Parking surface</th>
<th>Picnic shelters</th>
<th>Picnic tables</th>
<th>Restrooms</th>
<th>Roads</th>
<th>Trails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Random campsites</td>
<td>Conditional use - site specific</td>
<td>No boarding float, gravel parking</td>
<td>Gravel</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Concrete w/o pad</td>
<td>Vault toilet</td>
<td>Gravel, w/ soil binder if required</td>
<td>Native surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel parking pad, table with pad</td>
<td>Optional base on site setting, fire safety considerations</td>
<td>Boarding float, parking surface based on use</td>
<td>Based on use level and cost evaluation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Vinyl coated expanded steel on concrete pad</td>
<td>Vault toilet</td>
<td>Gravel unless maintenance cost favors pavement</td>
<td>Mostly compacted gravel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior campground roads and ADA site parking paved, table on pad</td>
<td>At campsites and dispersed in day use</td>
<td>Boarding float, paved parking</td>
<td>Paved</td>
<td>Small family units only</td>
<td>Vinyl coated expanded steel on concrete pad</td>
<td>Vault toilet</td>
<td>Paved</td>
<td>Mostly paved w/ some compacted gravel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle pad paved, site living area hard-surfaced, may include RV utilities</td>
<td>At campsites and dispersed in day use</td>
<td>Boarding float, paved parking, short term moorage available</td>
<td>Paved with exception of seasonal use areas</td>
<td>Family and group size shelters</td>
<td>Aluminum table on concrete pad</td>
<td>Rush toilets &amp; vaults, may include showers</td>
<td>Paved</td>
<td>Mostly paved w/ some compacted gravel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How did we do?

- Majority sites completed or nearly complete
- All scheduled for completion by Dec. 31, 2015*

*Crescent Bar on hold pending outcome of litigation
Next steps

- Long-term operations and maintenance
- 2015 FERC Form 80/studies
- RRMP update
Final thoughts...

- Develop a long-term vision for Project recreation
- RRMP should adhere to applicable regulatory/management obligations
- Work early and often with stakeholders and continue the dialogue
- Determine existing and desired setting characteristics for better outcomes
- Others?
Questions?
Challenges and opportunities

- Wanapum Reservoir drawdown
- Dredging in the dry