

# Acknowledgement

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## The Alouette Stakeholder Committee: Process, Analysis and Recommendations

### Executive Summary

In June, 1995, BC Hydro received government approval to construct and operate a replacement power plant at Stave Falls, subject to several conditions as outlined in the Energy Project Certificate Disposition Order. One of these conditions requires BC Hydro to develop and implement an Operating Plan for the Alouette system, incorporating stakeholder interests as well as the results of the Alouette River Instream Flow study. In response, BC Hydro initiated several activities to encourage broad public input, as well as a stakeholder committee process. The purpose of the Alouette Stakeholder Committee (ASC) was to explore alternative operating conditions, evaluate implications and trade-offs and, if possible, provide consensus suggestions to BC Hydro about operations of the Alouette facilities.

The stakeholder committee represented a broad cross-section of interests and organizations, including government and BC Hydro. Identified by the consultants, the following individuals were invited as members of the ASC. Mark Adams (owl resident), Rick Bailey (Katzie First-Nation), Lynn Baxter (Maple Ridge), Tom Cadieux (Alouette River Management Committee), Tom Charters (resident), Brian Clark (Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks), Geoff Clayton (Alouette River Management Society), Toni Dandurand (Kwantlen Indian Band), Drew Dunlop (BC Hydro), Jon Harris (Maple Ridge), Heidi Heder (Sto:lo Nation), Graham Lorimer (QVIELP), Steve McFarlane (Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans), Don MacLean (Pitt Meadows), Greg Mallette (Fraser Basin Management Program), Graeme Matthews (BC Hydro), Denise Mullen-Dalmer (Ministry of Employment and Investment), Mike Murray (Maple Ridge), Duanne Vandenberg (Alouette River Field Naturalists). Over the course of the meetings several members made changes to their status- Diane Bailey replaced Rick Bailey; Toni Dandurand and Heidi Heder maintained contact through receipt of ASC meeting minutes and project updates; Frank Ward replaced Duanne Vandenberg; Marvin Rosenau was an alternate for Brian Clark; Paul Adams was an alternate for Drew Dunlop at the second-to-last meeting; Daryl Fields was an alternate for Graeme Matthews at the last meeting.

This report reviews the results of discussions within the Alouette Stakeholder Committee (ASC) during the period February-July, 1996. Its recommendations will be submitted (in the form of this report) to Stakeholder Committee members and BC Hydro and available to the public. On the basis of this and other input, an Operating Plan then will be submitted by BC Hydro to the provincial Comptroller of Water Rights.

Based on interviews with key stakeholders and initial discussions among ASC members, the consultants prepared a preliminary set of objectives for an operating plan. These were presented at one of the early ASC meetings. After extensive discussions among ASC members, four main categories of objectives for the operating plan were identified:

- promote the health and biological productivity of the South Alouette River and Alouette Lake (including fisheries);
- avoid adverse effects from flooding;

# Acknowledgement

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- promote recreational activities; and
- avoid cost increases to provincial residents.

ASC members also were concerned about the level of uncertainty in our current knowledge of fisheries ecology and management on the Alouette River. It was acknowledged that additional studies, to be conducted over a period of several years, were needed to deepen understanding of the fundamental relationships between water flow and velocity, aquatic and riparian habitat, fisheries productivity and the quality of anglers' experiences. As a result, a fifth objective was added to the list:

- promote flexibility, learning and adaptive management for the Alouette system.

The following points summarize the areas of consensus agreement reached within the ASC discussions regarding key components of an operating plan for the Alouette River system:

- Biological health of the South Alouette River
  - Flushing flows to be implemented on an approximate four-year cycle, scheduled between September 15 and December 31, accepted by consensus;
  - No expansion of the low level outlet at this time, accepted by consensus;
  - Full-pipe flows on a year-round basis, from the low-level outlet except as may be required for maintenance or as agreed to by the Management Committee, accepted by consensus.
  - Ramping rates, the specifics of which are to be determined, accepted by consensus;
- An on-going program to monitor the relationship between water flows and fish and riparian wildlife habitats in the South Alouette River, with funding support of \$50 000/year from BC Hydro, with specific objectives to include:
  - determining the number and status of fish and riparian wildlife in and along the river;
  - determining the quantity and quality of aquatic and riparian habitat being used, with flows from 50 cfs upwards;
  - conducting other studies as agreed to by the Management Committee.
- Flood protection
  - Increase in expected flood protection from 1-in-12 year frequency to a 1-in-32 year frequency, accepted by consensus;
  - adit and spillgate operations to: achieve a 1-in-32 frequency to be specified in the operating plan accepted by consensus.

# Acknowledgement

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- Recreation
  - Family-oriented set of activities (e.g., swimming, boating, wading, angling, equestrian), consistent with summer flows in the range of 70 105 cfs, accepted by consensus.
  - Recognition of the benefit of full-pipe winter flows to angling, accepted by consensus.
- Cost increases
  - Financial cost of package (compared to base conditions of 20 cfs flow releases) estimated at approximately \$410,000 annually, in 1996 dollars (excluding costs for flexible flushing flows), depending on uncertainties and other variables discussed in the report.
- Flexibility, learning and adaptive management
  - One license to be held by BC Hydro, accepted by consensus;
  - A Management Committee to be established for the life of the license, composed of one representative from each of DFO, MELP, District of Maple Ridge, Katzie First Nation, and BC Hydro,, accepted by consensus;
- The role of the Management Committee will be to:
  - determine preferred monthly and annual flows in the South Alouette River, based on flows equivalent to full pipe releases from the LLO;
  - determine timing of flushing flows within the period September 15 - December 31;
  - oversee ongoing. studies and monitoring of fish and riparian wildlife;
  - evaluate and provide a@ recommendation regarding increasing flows beyond the capacity of the existing LLO.

These areas of consensus agreement represent all substantive content and process issues within the Committee's mandate. In addition, the discussions of the ASC have gone a long way toward creating a new atmosphere of trust and cooperation among a diverse group of community, First Nation, federal, provincial, and BC Hydro stakeholders. As a result, there exists a new framework for continuing discussions based on the values of participants.

Finally, BC Hydro has explicitly stated that it recognizes that the involvement of the Katzie First-Nation in the ASC is "without prejudice" regarding any future treaty-making and land claim agreements between the Katzie First Nation and senior governments.