



Through the Federal Power Act, National Park Service recommends provisions to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to mitigate and enhance conservation and recreation resources associated with licensing dams.

## Baker River, Washington

### 2004 Settlement Agreement Signed for 2 Dams

**The Baker River Relicensing Project** involves the Upper and Lower Baker dams in northwestern Washington. Lower Baker dam is located near the confluence of the Baker and Skagit Rivers. The lake formed by Upper Baker dam is surrounded by U.S. Forest Service land and North Cascades National Park is just upstream. The combined hydropower capacity of the two facilities is 175 megawatts. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing effort with Puget Sound Energy began in 2000, using a collaborative or alternative licensing process.

#### Land Protection and Recreation Enhancements

A comprehensive settlement agreement was signed for the Baker River project in November, 2004, outlining operation procedures and mitigation for a 50-year license. National Park Service was a signatory to this agreement along with Puget Sound Energy and a diverse group of local, state, and federal governments; tribes; and non-profit organizations. The agreement, currently under FERC review, includes provisions to restore the Baker and Skagit Rivers by improving upstream and downstream fish passage and increasing minimum flows.

In addition, the agreement includes a fund of approximately \$12 million to purchase and/or provide easements for approximately 3500 acres of wildlife habitat with compatible recreation allowed. The agreement also sets aside funds of approximately \$20 million for a series of recreation enhancements, including: 8 miles of trail construction; redevelopment of Baker Lake Resort with 30 to 50 new campsites; maintenance funding for numerous U.S. Forest Service campgrounds, trails and roads; management of dispersed camping; increased law enforcement; and a new day use park at Lake Shannon.



*Mt. Baker from Baker Lake,  
courtesy of Puget Sound Energy*



*Boat dock on Baker Lake,  
courtesy of Puget Sound Energy*

*The consultation provided by National Park Service was invaluable in all phases of the relicensing effort—they participated in recreation and conservation working groups and drew on staff from North Cascades National Park and the Rivers & Trails Program.*

*Jim Eychaner, Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation*

National Park Service provides technical assistance on recreation and conservation issues to all participants in Hydropower Licensing Proceedings of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. NPS makes recommendations on recreation access and facilities, instream flows for recreation, and protection for riparian corridors and conservation buffer zones. More information on Hydropower Assistance at <http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/hydro/>

For more information about National Park Service project involvement, contact Susan Rosebrough, [susan\\_rosebrough@nps.gov](mailto:susan_rosebrough@nps.gov). Further project information and copies of the settlement agreement are available from PSE at [www.pse.com/hydro](http://www.pse.com/hydro).