

*Meeting Minutes*  
Nisqually River Council  
November 21, 2008  
Northwest Trek Wildlife Park – Hellyer Center

Attendees:

**Council Members**

**David Troutt** – Nisqually Indian Tribe  
**Ron Averill** – Lewis County  
**Bryan Bowden** – Mt. Rainier NP  
**Kathy Whalen** – Thurston Conservation Dist.  
**Cindy James** – Dept. of Ecology  
**Bob Burkle** – WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

**Mark Thibo** – Dept. of Natural Resources  
**Chris Schutz** – Pierce County  
**Debbie Young** – Tacoma Power  
**David Hymel** – Citizens Advisory Comm.  
**Robert Smith** – Citizens Advisory Comm.

**Guests**

**Don Perry** – Nisqually Indian Tribe  
**John Garner** – Northwest Trek  
**Paul Crosetto** – Ashford Resident  
**Deborah Crosetto** – Ashford Resident  
**Krystal Kyer** – Tahoma Audubon  
**Marjorie Smith** – Citizens Advisory Comm.  
**Steve Pruitt** – Citizens Advisory Comm.  
**Kirk Hanson** – NW Certified Forestry  
**Allison Abrahamse** – Northwest Trek

**Fred Michelson** – Citizens Advisory Comm.  
**Jeff Mocniak** – Olympia Resident /SPEECH  
**Ali Bibow** – Olympia Resident  
**Pam Hefley** – Tacoma Power  
**Natalie Duncan** – Partnership for Water  
Conservation  
**Michelle Tirhi** – WA Dept. of Fish &  
Wildlife

**Staff**

**Justin Hall** – Nisqually River Foundation  
**Kayla Saville** – Nisqually River Council  
**Sheila Wilson** – Nisqually River Education Project

1. **Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda** – **David Troutt** called the meeting to order at 9:24. **Cindy James** moved to approve the October minutes. **Bryan Bowden** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Visitor Introductions, CAC, Chair, and Staff Reports** – **David Hymel** presented the CAC report. At the November CAC meeting, **Don Perry** updated them on activities of the Stream Stewards including their work in the Tanwax Basin. There is a Community Salmon Fund application pending to continue work there next year. **Karen Luke Fildes** informed the CAC about her art project, doing paintings in the watershed. **Fred Michelson** provided an update on Sequatchew Creek and Glacier Northwest. The Nisqually Delta Association is taking some issue with the project, citing historical reasons. Pierce County's Nisqually Basin Plan is still not approved. Citizens from the upper Nisqually were invited to add some language, but they and **Dan Wrye** are currently at an impasse. **David Hymel, David Troutt** and **Jeanette Dornier** are working to bring together Pierce County Surface Water and the community to resolve the language and submit the final product to the county council, but it probably will not happen until next year. **David Hymel** passed around a rain garden poster and a project plan for continuing the Nisqually Basin Rain Garden Challenge. He has some new projects going on in Pierce County and with Thurston Conservation District. All teachers who participate in the rain garden classroom program get a copy of the poster. **Fred Michelson** registered a complaint

about being delayed on the entrance road by heavy equipment. **David Troutt** presented the Chair's report. He and **Jeanette** have been part of a task force to advocate for structures like the NRC elsewhere. They are hoping to receive state funds for the action agenda. It is mostly focused on aquatic environments right now, but they want to expand to forested areas and prairies. **David** said they are hoping that the state will create something like a South Sound taskforce, which would include representatives from the NRC and other groups, coming together to develop a vision for the future of South Puget Sound. There is concern across the region that there is a lot to be done but a lack of coordination. **David** gave an update on Earth Economics. They will be evaluating ecosystem services in the Nisqually watershed. DOE was asked for \$10,000 to fund the project, but they came back with an offer of \$20,000 due to the project's potential. **David Batker** of Earth Economics will be meeting with Puget Sound Partnership and **David Dicks** to inform them about the project. Regarding the presentations the CAC has had, and other discussions about Sequatchew Creek and Glacier NW, **David** anticipates there may be a role for the NRC to play in facilitating between environmental interests and Glacier NW. For the staff report, **David** mentioned **Kayla Saville**'s background with Congressman Dennis Kucinich. He lived in the Nisqually watershed at one point, and they may be able to reach out to him for support to form connections beyond the watershed and state, to help move our agenda forward and facilitate these processes elsewhere. **Kayla** reported that she is now staffing the Upper Nisqually Community Forum, taking minutes at their monthly meetings and sending updates via email. **Justin Hall** reported that he presented to the Lakewood Lions Club about the Council. He spent the last two days in Richmond, BC at a conference on watershed-based natural resource management, where he gave a presentation on the history of the NRC. He was surprised by some of the challenges they have in BC. Surface water is regulated like in WA, but groundwater is completely unregulated. Wells are creating a big problem for them. Strong private property rights are a challenge in managing forestry practices. First Nations in Canada are just now negotiating treaties. BC is looking at innovative ways to do natural resources management.

### 3. Allied Programs –

- **Nisqually Land Trust** – Not represented.
- **Nisqually River Interpretative Center Foundation** – Not represented. **David Troutt** reported that he, **Justin** and **Kayla** met with **Steve Craig** and representatives from UW, Evergreen and SPSCC to discuss potential collaborative research projects at the NRIC site.
- **Nisqually River Education Project** – **Sheila Wilson** reported that 32 out of 34 classes in the program participated in Water Quality Monitoring Day in October. NREP will be getting new funding from Thurston County for the program. They finished the Tanwax Creek planting and are almost done with the Braget planting. So far this season, NREP has involved hundreds of kids and planted thousands of trees. **Sheila** and **Daniel Hull** are now working on a research project with students at Braget Marsh which includes a field trip to Nisqually Reach Nature Center. Sheila will be applying for NOAA's B-Wet grant in January and is also working on a Public Participation grant from DOE. **David Troutt** shared that his son's class participated in the program this year, planting trees and doing water quality monitoring. He has seen firsthand the impact that it has on kids. His son talked about it for weeks.

- **Nisqually Stream Stewards – Don Perry** reported that Stream Stewards has finished planting Phase 1 of the Tanwax Creek restoration. They are hoping to continue next year with money from the Community Salmon Fund. He is working on outreach to other landowners now. So far, three additional landowners in McKenna Reserve are interested in planting on their land with the NREP and Stream Stewards. Don recently attended a McKenna Reserve landowner meeting to share information about the project and to encourage participation. The purpose of the planting is to increase shade along the creek and kill invasive reed canarygrass. Stream Stewards had a big turnout for the planting at Braget Marsh last Saturday. There are around 20,000 plants to be installed this winter and spring. Don said he hopes to have some people from Intel do a planting at Braget Marsh in December. He will be holding training for new Salmon Watchers for the Coho and Chum runs on December 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **Nisqually River Foundation – Justin Hall** reported that the NRF has received a grant to fund the salmon carcass tossing program for the next two years. Unfortunately, the hatchery freezer broke and 1,100 carcasses were lost. They are working on getting some from another source. The NRF applied on Monday for another grant to continue work at Tanwax Creek. They are hoping to get more community members involved. Justin is working on the 2009 budget. The NRF board will meet on December 5<sup>th</sup>. He will have more to report in December.

**Good of the Order – Steve Pruitt** announced that the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce is co-sponsoring an economic summit January 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:00-3:00. BALLE (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies) will be the other co-sponsor. BALLE is an environmentally friendly organization made up of people working to restore local economies. Interested businesses can contact Steve to join the new Nisqually chapter. **Justin** added that the BALLE group in Bellingham currently runs the Sustainable Bellingham program. **David Troutt** reported that he and **Jeanette** got a call from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) offering \$300-600,000 per year for the next ten years to support the NRC's programs. NFWF's board will meet in the next couple of weeks to make a decision and David should have more to report next month. **David Hymel** added that Stewardship Partners has applied for a grant to build six rain gardens in the Eatonville area.

4. **Northwest Trek Wildlife Park Conservation Projects – Oregon Spotted Frogs – Allison Abrahamse** is working on Oregon Spotted Frogs in a joint project with WDFW. She gave the NRC some background information on the species. Historically, Oregon Spotted Frogs had a large range. Now they are found in only about ten locations in WA, including five in Thurston Co. The others are on Convoy NWR in Eastern WA. 1/3 of all amphibians in the world are threatened. Introduced predators like bullfrogs are a big problem. A fungus called Chytrid also adversely affects them. Invasive plant species like reed canarygrass are a problem. A species survival plan was written in 2006, led by WDFW. They are responsible for egg collection, sites and tagging. Other organizations are also involved. Dailman Lake on Fort Lewis is the current release site, just northeast of Chambers Lake. NW Trek and Oregon Zoo are raising the frogs from egg stage. More than 700 eggs were collected on March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Eggs were kept in plastic shoeboxes, separated by site. 50% of the water was changed daily and any diseased or dead eggs were removed. Keepers learned from experience that they needed to keep the water warmer. Tadpoles began to emerge on April 1 and 7, from the two collection sites. Data was

kept on water temp, number emerged, number dead, type and amount of food, etc. Newly emerged tadpoles were fed boiled and pureed kale, lettuce and spirulina. After they reached ½ inch long from snout to vent, they moved to outdoor cattle tanks with islands of foam, moss and leaf litter (in bottom). Tarps were used to shade them, although they learned the tadpoles like a lot of heat, 70-75 degrees or warmer. This created extra algae. Tanks were also aerated. They used graph paper in the bottom of a tray with water to measure growth. Fed them crickets when they entered morph stage. Ended up with 150 or so frogs in each of four tanks. First observed adult forms around July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Release timing depended on weight. At release, frogs weighed about 5 grams. They were tagged in the rear-left foot with the tag visible under the skin. Frogs weighing 6 grams were fitted with transmitters attached around the waist. All were tested for Chytrid in September before being released. 536 frogs were released on Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>. Ten others have been PIT-tagged. The belly-band design didn't work well; they had abrasion issues. Michelle Tirhi of WDFW said this is the first time in WA that Oregon Spotted Frogs have been captively bred. They received guidance from Mountain View in BC, where Oregon Spotted Frogs have been bred for years. Now they are in the monitoring phase to see if the population establishes itself. Twelve non-profits and agencies are involved in this project. Eggs were collected at Black River on land owned by USFWS, WDFW and Port Blakely and raised at NW Trek. This will continue to happen for the next 4-5 yrs. They may then move to another release site.

***Ohop Creek Restoration Project – Jessica Moore*** – Jessica does citizen science and Nature Mapping at NW Trek. They are partnering with South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, which includes the Nisqually Tribe and other partners, to restore Ohop Creek. The plan is to take the existing creek, which has been moved to the side of the valley for agricultural reasons, and restore it to its meandering path, bring back native species and open it up for salmon again. Jessica organizes citizen science crews. She trains volunteers to collect baseline wildlife data to learn what wildlife is currently using the valley and to see how usage may change as the project progresses. Nature Mapping program was founded in 1993 by UW in response to Washington's GAP analysis, which found that only half of all wildlife records kept prior to that were usable data. Data is recorded by citizen scientists on a statewide database. It allows access to biologists, land managers, researchers, etc. This will create baseline data for a broad range of species. Data can be collected on paper or using a mioPDA (which includes GPS) with software from UW. The mioP550 costs about \$300 and works well. The CyberTracker software that compiles the data is \$50 and can be loaded onto as many units as you want. Jessica then submits the data to SPSSEG and the state database. Volunteers are trained onsite in the Ohop. They map signs of wildlife as well, including scat, tracks, owl pellets and bones. Volunteers found 67 species in July. Bird diversity was twice as high in July as in October. There were more invertebrate species in July but more mammal species found in October, probably due to changes in grass height and the visibility of tracks and scat. The next field trip will be Dec 7, 12-3 PM. Jessica would love to have more people to cover more ground. She plans to continue monitoring for the next 3-5 years. Next year, groundbreaking of the new channel may begin. All ages are welcome to participate in Nature Mapping, and students as well.

**Roy/McKenna Biodiversity Project** – **Michelle Tirhi** of WDFW gave some background on the project. Pierce County has developed a biodiversity network made up of biodiversity management areas (BMAs). The study has included entire watersheds, even crossing borders into other counties. They have been refining data on species distribution and now have 16 BMAs connected by biodiversity corridors. Information on the project is available on Pierce County's website. They have verified the quality of habitat in the BMAs and are now looking at each individually and working to preserve biodiversity. **John Garner** said they are looking at subset 10-E, east of 507 and north of 702 in the Roy/McKenna area. First they will be doing a bio-blitz, a quick assessment of species presence or absence. They are working with landowners to survey species on their properties and are looking at incentives for landowners to voluntarily make changes for conservation on their land. They want to develop a stewardship plan with the community to help guide action on the ground. For funding and support, they are looking to Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance and Point Defiance Zoo. **Krystal Kyer** has a grant pending from Pierce Conservation District to help with the bio-blitz, and they are applying for a grant from USFWS for upland restoration. **John** asked for help reaching landowners in this BMA. The bio-blitz will occur in May, with community meetings to follow in the fall. There is nothing regulatory in this process; participation is voluntary and there will be rewards for landowners who participate. **John** asked if NRC can help with staff assistance given \$5,000 of funding. He asked the NRC to confirm partnership in this effort as they move ahead. **Kirk Hanson** offered the services of Northwest Natural Resource Group in reaching out to landowners and developing stewardship plans for small woodland owners within the BMA. **David Troutt** suggested that the Council be considered a partner, and they will talk more about how involved the Council will be. **Michelle** mentioned that this project is also focused on preserving remnant prairie locations and includes the Lackamas area. **Bryan Bowden** commented that this does seem like a natural fit for the Council.

5. **Partnership for Water Conservation** – **Natalie Duncan** described the Partnership for Water Conservation as a non-profit organization made of members like utilities, businesses and environmental groups working to generate water savings, support communities, ensure long-term benefits and sustain necessary flows in streams. Natalie is working under contract with NRC to develop a conservation plan for the entire watershed. She is doing outreach to Group A water purveyors to improve water efficiency and has been developing a conservation plan with the city of Eatonville. She is holding informational meetings, making conservation templates for small water providers, and producing a quarterly newsletter. There are around 130 Group A systems in the watershed. They can be as small as a campground or gas station or as large as a whole city like Eatonville. Natalie has been studying conservation materials and plans, has taken workshops, and staffed a booth at the Watershed Festival with Wayne the Raindrop. She attended a Water-Smart Innovation conference and has been doing outreach to teachers in Eatonville with **Sheila Wilson**. She may start writing a water tip of the week for the Eatonville paper. A water use efficiency bill was passed by the state legislature in 2003, requiring municipal water suppliers to use water more efficiently. Privately owned systems were just ruled to be exempt from these requirements. The ruling has affected Natalie's program because now it is not mandatory for these providers to take action. Natalie has been contacting a lot of Group A suppliers, and they are interested in conservation. She will be working on how to entice them to participate. There is a lawsuit going on between some environmental groups and

Tribes (not the Nisqually Tribe) and the Dept. of Health regarding water rights. The Dept. of Health is working on revising the requirements for private water providers, so Natalie's program is on hold as far as meeting with Group A providers. Natalie developed water lists to give to different types of water users. Giveaways including toilet rebates and showerheads can be considered. The goal is to help suppliers see the benefits of these measures. Natalie will be teaching a 9<sup>th</sup> grade earth science class about water conservation. She is looking at having tools available for checkout to teachers. Wayne the Raindrop is available for events. After finishing up Eatonville's plan, Natalie will be choosing two smaller suppliers to work with to develop conservation templates. She is also looking at the education department at Northwest Trek and maybe doing something with Mt Rainier NP. She is searching for grants to help small providers pay for equipment for water audits. **Fred Michelson** noted that Natalie is playing an important role by filling a big gap in communication with small suppliers regarding water planning. He suggested that water planning be on the agenda for next month's meeting.

6. **Northwest Certified Forestry – Kirk Hanson** said he has been working with Northwest Trek for the last 1 ½ years. He gave them a temporary certification and they worked to develop a forestry plan for the property. People coming to the meeting this morning could see them thinning along the entrance road. They sold logs to an FSC certified mill in Snohomish. A new hardwood mill was just certified in Onalaska. Northwest Trek will be sending alder logs there. This will help keep a historic mill up and running. Trek is doing some amazing work, using innovative variable density thinning in 80-year Douglas fir stands. There will be a seminar on ecological forestry on January 10<sup>th</sup>, looking at creating more habitat complexity and retaining some old growth with variable density thinning. He is continuing landowner outreach and now there are 20 FSC members in the Nisqually watershed. Kirk asked for leads on people who might be interested in the program. They can also get into carbon markets if not interested in harvesting. Northwest Certified Forestry is working with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP), which helps with conservation planning and restoration work. Sheila asked if volunteers are needed for restoration projects. Kirk said it's a case by case basis with EQUIP. **Fred** asked if Kirk has any interest in land that is not being worked, like the Land Trust properties. Kirk said that harvesting doesn't have to be involved; it can be habitat restoration or carbon sequestration instead. He is already planning to systematically certify NLT properties in order to have a working forestry plan. Kirk asked if there are other community groups that would be interested in learning about this. They want to bring some milling back to the watershed and work with existing secondary manufacturers. So far he has identified about two dozen in the watershed and is looking for anyone he may have missed. He will hold a seminar to look at using Nisqually wood within the watershed and is also looking for architects doing green building who would use Nisqually grown wood in their projects. A Nisqually Forestry Committee is being developed with DNR, Pack Forest, the Nisqually Tribe and others to coordinate a management plan for forests in the watershed. They will be looking at supply, education and outreach, and job creation. The first meeting is likely to be in January. They hope to implement the forestry part of the Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan. **Paul Crosetto** noted that the FSC certified NLT property being worked on in the Upper Nisqually involves multifaceted benefits with restoration and monitoring. **David Troutt** said that now is

the time for wood produced in the Nisqually watershed to start using the Sustainable Nisqually logo.

7. **Letter of Support Request for Rural Community Connections in Upper Nisqually – Bryan Bowden** – At the last meeting, **Bryan** talked about the opportunity to develop rural transit in the Upper Nisqually. He has dropped the idea of a memorandum of understanding because it was too complicated and resource intensive. Now, he is just recommending that various organizations write letters of support for Lewis Mountain Transit in their grant application process. Current service is Mon-Fri focused on transit dependent populations. They would like to expand operations from mid-June to September to connect with the Mount Rainier National Park shuttle and Pierce Transit. They are not asking for additional funding, just modifying the service. They would be extending to 7 days a week and connecting to Ashford during the tourist season. **Fred Michelson** moved to approve the letter of support request. **Chris Schutz** seconded the motion. Discussion: **Ron Averill** said that Lewis County has discussed this with the manager of Lewis Mountain Transit, which is totally grant-funded. It is the only transit system that covers the east part of Lewis County and connects to areas along the I-5 corridor. He was concerned about possibly losing service to some areas, but it appears that this plan is not contradictory to what they expect out of Lewis Mountain Transit; it is just providing something where nothing existed before. The motion passed unanimously.
8. **Final Notes and Comments:**
  - **Jeff Mocniak** said that the copies of South Sound Green Pages he brought are available for anyone to take.
  - **Krystal Kyer** said that Tahoma Audubon may also send a letter of support for rural transit in the Upper Nisqually.

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 PM.