



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Meeting
August 18th, 2017
Mount Rainier National Park
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

Council Members

Amy Cruver – *Pierce County Council*

Abby Gribi – *Town of Eatonville*

Amber Moore – *Puget Sound Partnership*

Kevin Skerl – *Mount Rainier*

David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

* **CAC Representatives (2)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Phyllis Farrell

Bob Smith

Marjorie Smith

Ed Kenney

Karelina Resnick

Guests

Jeff Barney – *Pierce County*

Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Etsuko Reistroffer – *Nisqually Stream Stewards*

Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Randy Fossella – *Nisqually Americorp*

Celeste Fossella – *Nisqually Americorp*

Jackie Wall – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Brad Beach – *Nisqually Indian Tribe – TIPO*

Scott Beason – *Mount Rainier National Park*

Tara Chesnut – *Mount Rainier National Park*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*

Sheila Wilson – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*

1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda, Introductions

Call to Order – David called the meeting to order at 9:10.

Approval of Meeting Minutes and Agenda – The agenda for the day was approved

2. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – CAC talked about Nisqually River Water Trail and about the recycled asphalt proposal in the lower Nisqually, proposed gravel mine expansion near Eatonville.
- *Chair Report* – David and Joe met with Commissioner Edwards about conservation futures in Thurston County. There is concern on how the Thurston County Commission is considering using Conservation Futures around pocket gopher issues which could have a negative effect on salmon recovery. They will be continuing to work on the issue. Presented yesterday to the WDFW habitat division about salmon recovery and the refuge restoration.
- *Staff Report* – Community Forest work is ongoing. Getting ready to do the stream survey on the new property. Stream Stewards class has started.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – No report.
- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Hired a new Americorp, Brandon Bywater. He should start around September 1st. She presented at the ESD 112-113 next generation science symposium yesterday. Stream Stewards class has 21 participants, we are two weeks in and will be heading up to Mount Rainier tomorrow.
- *Nisqually River Foundation* – The Foundation has been conducting interviews for the Nisqually River Council Staff position. The Daniel J Evans Nisqually Stewardship Award event has been postponed.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – The Mashel log jam project at the mouth of the little Mashel river is a big project at a critical location. It's an amazing project on an amazing property. Most of the projects recently have been acquisitions, it's neat to have another earth moving project. Crew has been out and

very busy. Chris has been working on planning mostly (not exciting). Upcoming project is to move hatchery fish on to the spawning grounds to help jump start natural spawning. Chris explained this history of salmon recovery on the Nisqually and why the current project is necessary.

3. **Nisqually River Water Trail** – *Justin Hall*

The Nisqually River Council has been working on the Nisqually River Water Trail for the past 18 months.

Vision: The Nisqually River Water Trail provides high quality non-motorized public recreation opportunities that are aligned with efforts to protect areas of cultural importance and the natural environment, including threatened and endangered species habitat and protected lands.

Planning effort led by the Nisqually River Council with technical assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). The effort was guided by an Advisory Committee

The Goals of the Water Trail are to:

- Provide ample public access opportunities to the Nisqually River from La Grande Dam to the Nisqually Estuary.
- Create minimal impact on salmon habitat, private lands, or sensitive ecosystems
- Provide interpretation opportunities for users to learn about the cultural importance and natural history of the area
- Recognize the personal responsibility of users, including exercising skill-based judgement and Leave No Trace principles

The work on the River Trail consisted of seven meetings where we developed vision, goals, and recommendations. Four river floats & field visits to developed/potential access sites. We then held a Focus Group Workshop to identify areas of high value or importance

Special thanks to: Ed Kenney, for showing the core planning team several additional access points. Thomas O'Keefe for providing boats/gear for all river floats, for photographs of the river and for review of maps. Chuck Young for writing sections of the Concept Plan, writing segments for the website, and for reviewing maps. Rebecca Post, for providing boats/gear for all river floats, hosting a river clean up, and for review of maps

Public outreach consisted of: Media releases including a press release, newsletter article, blog post, and Facebook. Four Open Houses & 2 Informational Booths – Eatonville, Yelm, Nisqually Indian Tribe where we held both an open house & booth at a community dinner, and the Nisqually Watershed Festival where we had an informational booth. We also conducted an online survey where we got 146 responses. Once we finished the draft concept plan we had a public comment period on the draft.

The concept plan was completed and adopted by September 2017. It contains 1-year workplan for implementation along with Short-term, Mid-term and Long-term recommendations for improvement. The plan is available online: watertrail.nisquallyriver.org

We have developed several informational tools for the water trail including an informational website: **watertrail.nisquallyriver.org**. Safety information, Access sites/reach descriptions with a focus on McKenna Park to Luhr Beach, Downloadable maps, Reach by reach descriptions which have been reviewed by local recreationists and are printable in black & white and color, development of a water trail logo designed by a local artist.

The next step is an Implementation Forum. The Forum is to be convened by the Nisqually River Council. The plan is to meet on an annual basis. Guide implementation & pursue opportunities as they arise. The ideal make-up of the Implementation Forum includes: Land managers [including agencies, non-profits, etc], Recreationists, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, Emergency response personnel, and Natural resource managers along with other interested stakeholders

David brought up Tribal Council issues/support.

Chris discussed log jams issues. There should be a group that goes and evaluates each logjam and decides what to do before they are cleared. They do have great habitat potential. Also brought up the eventual FERC relicensing and what will greater use of the river mean for how the dams are operated in the future.

Will be back for final review a little later in the year.

4. Changes to glacial extent and volume since the late 19th century at Mount Rainier National Park – Scott Beason (Park Geologist, Mount Rainier NP) and Joseph George (Geoscientist-in-the-Park, Mount Rainier NP)

This work got started because the glacier layer was out of date. They have access to almost daily satellite images. He used a September 2015 image that showed least extent.

They have data from 1896, 1920s 1970s 1994 2009. He updated it to 2015. Incredible high resolution 46cm 17 gigapixel images. They also used NAIP flight data. Finding the edge between ice covered by debris and just rocks proved to be a difficult. He also mapped the extent of debris covered ice. Produced a 2015 glacier extent map.

Currently there is approximately 70.76 square kilometers (30.41 square miles) of glaciers (29 glaciers) and 80.82 km (31.21 Sq mi) including perennial snowfields.

Extent since 1896 has changed from 128 sq km to 78 sq km.

Glacier volume change. Has important implications for the hydrologic systems. Glacier extents were used in conjunction with equations...

In 1981 Driedger and Kennard measured the large glaciers and estimated the volumes of the smaller glaciers. Park wide glacier volumes calculated at 4.34 cubic kilometers. 62% of this was from measured volumes which makes this number robust. There have been a variety of studies that have provided numerous estimates.

Get conclusions from presentation.

5. Restoring a Species Lost: An update on the Cascade Fisher Restoration Project – Tara Chestnut, PhD (Ecologist, Mount Rainier NP)

Fisher were extirpated from Washington shortly after the great depression. They were lost due to overharvest. They were very sought after for furs (could go for up to \$1,500 in great depression dollars). This project was to reintroduce them back into Washington. They are an arboreal species and have a greater extent across Canada. There are 3 recovery areas in Washington – Olympic, Cascade, and Selkirk.

Fisher have delayed implantation. They will breed up to a year before the egg implants. This means that captive breeding will not work. So they identified areas where they could capture animals without harming the local population. They worked with trappers to capture animals in Canada and paid 4-5 times the value they would get for the animal pelt.

They are captured and then undergo veterinarian review to make sure they are healthy. Then they are given an internal transmitter that runs between 1.5 and 2 years.

They are then transported and released in Washington under an intense coordinated effort.

First year they released ?? animals – all at cispus. This year they had 7 releases of 17 animals. Once the animals are released they fly patterns to detect where the animals are. They have spread throughout the southern cascade range. They seem to be setting up home ranges more quickly than was expected.

One of the Fishers has successfully reproduced!

There has been mortality. 69 Fisher have been released. Overall survival rate is 82% (may go down a little bit). They had been expecting up to 50% mortality. They do forensic investigation. They have recovered 4 animals, one

was likely killed by another male fisher. Another may have been an interaction with a bobcat and another may have been an interaction with a raptor. Lastly, one was hit by a car.

Goal is to release 80 in the southern cascades and 80 in the northern cascades. They are at 69 in the south right now. Will start in the north next year.

6. Evaluating the Impacts of Barred Owls on Northern Spotted Owls in Mount Rainier National Park – Tara Chestnut, PhD (Ecologist, Mount Rainier NP)

Barred owls are native to Eastern North America. They have been expanding their range from East to West post European colonization of the area. They are similar in size and habitat use to the Northern Spotted Owl though they have smaller ranges (4 to 1). The greatest threat to Northern Spotted Owl recovery is the Barred Owl. 80,000 acres of the MORA is Northern Spotted Owl nesting/roosting habitat. The basis for this work are from the Northwest Forest Plan. Mount Rainier is an independent demographic study area.

11 of the 14 study areas included Northwest Forest Plan areas. 7 areas showed declines – 6 in the northern half of the range.

Is Mount Rainier a source population for the Cascades?

Northern Spotted Owl habitat is associated with old growth, they have higher breeding following warm/dry winters. Seem also to be an every other year breeding cycle. Locally they eat Pica, flying squirrels, and deer mice. First Barred Owl in Washington was 1965. Barred Owls compete for resources.

Methods include Northern Spotted Owl vocalization surveys, the four mouse protocol, and presence surveys for Barred Owl. Up to 75% die during the first year (common among raptors). The four mice protocol involves presenting mice and looking for the den.

Presence in territories switch to a higher proportion of Barred Owls in 2007. This year was the second most productive Northern Spotted Owl year on record... but they need to make it beyond fledging and through the winter.

36 Northern Spotted Owl territories. There were 16 initially in 1997 but looked more and found more. Initially there were Barred Owls in 20% of them. Up to 50% then 70% recently. Fewer than 20 adult pairs in the Park at this time.

Get research questions from the presentation.

7. For the Good of the Order

- Kevin offered to bring snacks next year.
- Gathers Rain event on Thursday the 24th at the Billy Frank Jr Nisqually Community Center.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:12pm.

***Next Meeting: Friday September 19th, 2017 from 9:00-12:00
BFJNNWR***