



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Annual Retreat
July 17, 2015
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge/Hickson
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

Council Members

JW Foster – *City of Yelm*
Darric Lowery – *Washington Dept. Fish & Wildlife*
Sandra Romero – *Thurston County*

Gary Stamper – *Lewis County*
David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
*** CAC Representatives (2)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Ed Kenney
Fred Michelson
Steve Pruitt*
Rosalea Pruitt

Karelina Resnick*
Marjorie Smith
Bob Smith
Lois Ward

Guests

Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Amber Martens – *JBLM*

Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Morgan Greene – *Nisqually River Council*
Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*

Tyler Willey – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*
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 9:11 am.

Approval of Meeting Minutes and Agenda – There was a motion to approve June’s meeting minutes as presented. They were approved, as was the agenda for the day.

2. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Several CAC members are interested in forming an un-associated organization that has the capabilities of pushing a political agenda. Sandra attended the last meeting to provide advice on what such an organization would look like. David will attend the next CAC meeting to learn more about the intended group.

CAC members are making an effort to increase representation on all NRC subcommittees. The CAC plans to complete quarterly fieldwork, too. In addition, the group is preparing to host the Nisqually Stream Stewards at their September meeting; members are preparing to develop a presentation for the day.

Elections were held at the last meeting. Steve Pruitt was selected Chair, and Phyllis Farrell selected as Vice-Chair. Karelina Resnick will be the third voting member.

Bob reported that bee populations are still in decline across the nation—there was a 32% loss of hives across the U.S. Fred recently visited Home Depot to buy plants, but couldn’t find any that were treated without neonicotinoids. David noted that this topic fits in very well under the NWSP Project List topic—perhaps we can brainstorm a project idea.

- *Chair Report* – David thanked Joe and the Nisqually Land Trust staff for the many hours of work they put in during the last legislative session. He noted that Nisqually pink returns are expected to be around one million fish this year. Although this brings nutrients back to the river, the strong pink returns may reflect a shift in ocean conditions. The Nisqually Tribe is working to develop a management plan in the face of low Chinook and high pink salmon returns and changing conditions.

David also noted that it is a difficult water year, although Tacoma Public Utilities projects that they will be able to meet minimum flow requirements through September and into October. As of now, on August 1, 550 cfs will remain in the mainstem, and will shift again on October 1. Currently, there are approximately 700 cfs in the mainstem, less than in ‘normal’ water years.

Denny Heck introduced the “Tell Your Story Billy Frank Jr. Bill” which aims to rename the Nisqually Refuge as the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. Denny Heck recently gave testimony before the house, which is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmYOa7FGn08>. David noted that although the bill likely will not move out of committee by the end of this summer, he doesn’t foresee any opposition to the its passage.

- *Staff Report* – Morgan recently hosted site visits for the Nisqually River Water Trail Advisory Committee, as well as Focus Group Workshop for current users of the river. This helped highlight values, barriers, issues and management concerns for increasing public use of the river.

Morgan is also continuing to work on the Delta Data project. She hopes to have a “public-friendly” publication by the end of the year, and will begin working on a larger document in 2016. In other news, Morgan has met with Pierce Conservation District and Ecology’s Shoreline Management Program to talk about the Nisqually Climate Adaptation Plan.

Nisqually Stream Stewards begins on August 4, and sign-ups must be in by July 27th. Morgan, Ashley and Sheila had a planning retreat earlier this year to finalize logistics for the course. Please share the flyer!

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Since the last NRC meeting, Joe worked to secure funding in both the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRF Board) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Recovery Program (PSAR), which both would provide funding for the Nisqually Community Forest. Joe noted that the Puget Sound Partnership—especially Jim Wilcox and Jeff Parsons—dedicated a lot of energy to the process, as did the Washington Environmental Council and State Land Trust Coalition. Overall, it was a great lesson for all involved. In the end, \$6.5 Million were secured for the Busywild Project and the potential prohibition against acquisition projects was lifted. In a similar vein, Hancock Timber is still willing to sell land for the Community Forest project.

In other news, Thurston County Conservation Futures ranked the Land Trust’s Whitewater Reach Project as the number one project; this would adjoin existing protected areas so that the whole riparian area is protected. It will likely link into future trail projects in Yelm.

The float trip will be held July 25 and 26; the Saturday trip is smaller than the Sunday trip and is sold out. There are two seats remaining for the Sunday float—be sure to sign up! JW also noted the Land Trust attended Thurston County’s Pollinators Garden dedication. As a reminder, the Land Trust signed on to the Thurston County MOU banning neonicotinoids on Land Trust property. Other signers included LOTT and the city of Olympia.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Summer Teacher’s Institute had 30-40 people for each of the 3 days; the program included several hands-on activities related to biomimicry and climate change. Sheila co-hosted a Next Generation Science Standards training course at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge this week.

Unfortunately, NREP did not receive the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s 5 Star Grant. However, Sheila’s ALEA grant application was successful! In addition, the NRF is in a contract negotiation phase of

a 3-Year NOAA Environmental Literacy Grant. This will incorporate a lively webportal, a teacher fellowship, and regional partners. Sheila continues to work with Peter Donaldson on the GROSS Grant, to fund the Nisqually Youth Council. It is due at the end of the month. NRF is not eligible for the Boeing Grant.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin spent most of June/July in Canada for the Women’s World Cup. Beside that, he has been busy with grant reporting, especially those that expired June 30. As a heads up, the NRF Strategic Planning process will involve NRC members; he will continue to update the Council on the process.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris reported the Nisqually Tribe was awarded the BIA’s Climate Adaptation Planning Grant, which will fund planning within the Mashel Watershed. Chris will use the Ecosystem Diagnostic and Treatment Model (EDT) to prioritize salmon recovery actions based on stressors, specifically under different climate change and land use scenarios. One scenario will examine land use under a Community Forest, compared to status quo timber harvesting. Bob McKane (EPA) will present on similar work at the August NRC meeting, with a focus on ecosystem services.

The next phase of construction begins in Ohop Valley next week; a fish-out event will be announced soon. Chris also reported that the Nisqually River is 61.5°F above the Centralia Diversion, but is 65 degrees below the diversion point. That section of the river is too warm for salmon, which may cause the fish to be blocked from travelling further upstream. On another note, the weir is being installed at this moment.

Ashley shared the ranked Nisqually 2015 SRF Board Project List. Ideally, SRF Board will provide \$415,000 in projects. In addition, 2015-2017 PSAR could provide \$1,400,000 and the remaining 2013-2015 PSAR money will provide <\$750,000. Note: The 2015-2017 PSAR is separate from Large Cap Projects; the 2013 PSAR money must be spent by June 30, 2017. The ranked projects are:

1. Mashel Shoreline Protection Phase IV; Sponsor: Nisqually Land Trust; Cost: \$724,165. The acquisition is adjacent to other Land Trust properties including Boxcar Canyon, and would close the gap between the properties. The land is currently owned by Conservation Forestry and under the threat of harvest. Joe noted that this provides match for the WWRP grant, and may be amended to include 2 miles of stream-front property upstream.
2. Mashel Eatonville Restoration Phase III; Sponsor: South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group; Cost: \$1,190,000. The project would include Engineered Log Jam installation and riparian plantings. It will build upon earlier upstream projects. Note: the map provided shows planting locations—these are subject to change.
3. Whitewater Reach Protection Project; Sponsor: Nisqually Land Trust; Cost: \$300,000. This includes the protection of 3,800 feet of shoreline and associated wetlands. Ninety percent of the project area is intact and undeveloped. Thurston Conservation Futures would provide match for one of the parcels.
4. Mashel Eatonville Restoration Phase III Conservation Easement; Sponsor: Nisqually Land Trust; Cost: \$150,000. This project would be a conservation easement on 5.1 acres to assist with Ranked Project #2. As of now, the group believes access to Site #2 is accessible without needing this conservation easement. However, if that access is not available, this project increases in priority. If that is the case, Ashley will return to the NRC to seek approval for an amended ranked list.
5. Nisqually Chinook Recovery Monitoring; Sponsor: Nisqually River Foundation; Cost: \$41,500. A portion of SRF Board funds can be used to support ongoing monitoring programs. This would provide field support for salmon recovery data collection, including beach seining in the lower river, estuary and nearshore.
6. West Oakland Bay Restoration and Conservation; Sponsor: Squaxin Island Indian Tribe; Cost: \$200,000. This project has regional importance, so although it is outside of the watershed, it will have impacts on salmon populations in South Puget Sound. It would include the acquisition of 14 acres on Eagle Point, Engineered Log Jam construction, and dike removal, creating intertidal shelves.

These projects will only be completed if one of the top ranked projects falls through:

7. Alternative 1--Middle Ohop Protection Phase II; Sponsor: Nisqually Land Trust; Cost: \$230,000. The property is adjacent to other Land Trust properties, but Joe is still negotiating with other landowners.

8. Alternative 2--McKenna Small Lot Acquisitions; Sponsor: Nisqually Land Trust; Cost: \$600,000. There are 15 separate, undeveloped lots in the McKenna area, totaling around 15 acres. The idea of this project is to have money available to purchase individual parcels as they become available.

Ashley sought approval of the ranked list. As clarification, full funding would provide money for Ranked Projects 1-6, with Projects 6 and 7 as alternatives. There was a motion to approve the list, which passed unanimously. The presentation is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-2015-ranked-project-list>.

3. NRC Elections – NRC Nominations Subcommittee

The NRC Nominating Subcommittee meets annually to gather all nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair. This year, the Subcommittee also discussed ways to improve NRC membership, including brainstorming a list of people not at the table. This included current members who rarely attend meetings, or those who aren't members, but should be.

The Subcommittee noticed that 3-4 agencies rarely attend NRC meetings, but are active through the Greater Eatonville Heritage Forum. Steve will reach out to DOT and State Parks; Morgan will coordinate with Steve. This could be an avenue to bring some folks back to the table. In addition, the Subcommittee suggested expanding NRC membership in order to better reflect the expanded view of sustainability, as reflected in the NWSP. Steve noted that there are 4 Business Associations in the watershed—Ashford, Eatonville, Graham, and Yelm/Roy. Perhaps the Associations could share one seat on NRC membership.

Sandra noted that Pierce County Council members don't attend the meetings, although Amy Cruver attends on behalf of Jim McCune. David agreed that getting Jim's participation should be a high priority for the next year; he will set up a meeting with him. Sandra and Gary will be invited to that meeting, too. Ed mentioned that Weyerhaeuser used to attend NRC meetings; the timber companies should be brought back to the table. Joe observed that many of the active timber companies are run by businesses on the East Coast, so it may be hard to find local representation. Increased membership will be a topic of discussion at the next Executive Committee meeting; Morgan will share all NRC Nominating Subcommittee suggestions. David noted that he and Morgan have met with several NRC members recently; they will continue their efforts to meet with agency leaders.

David was nominated to continue as the Chair, and Sandra was nominated to continue as the Vice-Chair. There was a motion to approve the nominations, which was accepted unanimously.

4. NWSP Project Lists – Morgan Greene

To be completed at a later date.

5. For the Good of the Order

The Land Trust recently transferred 55 acres in Boxcar Canyon to the Town of Eatonville, to provide match for the Bud Blancher Trail. The conservation easement will remain on the property, but will allow the Town to expand their trail system. Salmon Habitat remains the top priority.

Karelina recently watched a video on research in Canada on viruses found in salmon. This would be a good future NRC topic.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

***NRC Retreat: Friday, August 21, 2015
Wilcox Family Farms, 9:00-12:00
NWSP Topic: Recreation***