



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
March 13, 2015
NW Trek
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Roger Andrascik – *Mount Rainier National Park*
Amy Cruver – *Pierce County*
JW Foster – *City of Yelm*
Ted Keeley – *WA Dept of Natural Resources*

Glynnis Nakai – *Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge*
Stephanie Suter – *Puget Sound Partnership*
*** CAC Representatives (3)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Phyllis Farrell
Ed Kenney
Fred Michelson*

Karelina Resnick*
Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith*

Guests

Doug Beagle – *Town of Eatonville*
Rene' Bracero – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Lisa Breckenridge – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Joan Miniken – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Chris Schutz – *Pierce County*
David Stepetin – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Charissa Waters – *Thurston County*
Lois Ward – *Citizen*

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 Troutt called the meeting to order at 9:34.

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

2. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – The CAC meeting was cancelled this month. Next month's meeting will be on April 14th, tentatively scheduled so that members can visit the Nisqually Indian Tribe's Fish Counter, and attend the NREP Eye on Nature Fundraiser.
- *Chair Report* – David testified to the Snohomish County Council on behalf of the Nisqually Indian Tribe and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board about a local estuary restoration project. Controversies have sprung up in the last few years surrounding salmon recover efforts on private lands; the County Council will make a final decision next Tuesday.

David also met with Martha Kongsgaard, chair of the PSP Leadership Council; Will Stell, NOAA Regional Director of National Marine Fisheries; and Phil Anderson, Director of WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to talk about marine survival. David hopes to bolster excitement in funding marine survival, and is optimistic that additional funding will become available. This might be an opportunity to speak about the Community Forest project as well.

Lastly, David reported that he has been working with the EPA over the last couple of months, to discuss their National Estuary Program (NEP) funds. The EPA will adopt a model that targets local implementing organizations completing specific projects.

- *Staff Report* – This month, Morgan met with USGS, the Nisqually Indian Tribe (NIT) and Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (NNWR) to talk about the delta restoration 5-year review project. She will be working to summarize monitoring data for the public as well as other scientific entities.

Morgan, Ashley and Sheila are ramping up Stream Stewards planning: they attended the Eatonville High School Career Fair and met with many interested students; participated in the Puget Sound Partnership's Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Training; and are planning a retreat in the spring to piece together curriculum. Past participants and partners will be receiving a survey soon to provide feedback on the course.

In the next couple of weeks, Morgan will help with NREP and Nisqually Land Trust projects. She is also working closely with David to schedule meetings with NRC member agency leads, to renew attendance by members.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – The NLT Auction will be next Saturday night and there are still seats available for those interested in attending! Joe is pleased to announce that NREP will receive an award for Partner of the Year, as will South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group.

It is also grant proposal season. NLT is applying for funds from Thurston and Pierce Conservation Futures, as well as other sources. He noted that the Powell Creek Complex will be a large project this year. The Busywild Community Forest will continue to be a strong issue too—the strategic plan will be finished next week.

The Land Trust is closing on several properties in the coming weeks. On April 27th they'll close on several acres adjacent to NW Trek. Additionally, NLT will close on the Ohop property and Ecosystem Services project in April too. Finally, NLT is bringing back the float trip this summer, likely held in late July.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Student GREEN Congress is next Friday, March 20th and will host 425 students! It will be held in the gymnasium this year, and features a new workshop led by David Stepetin. Wah He Lut School will be visiting GRuB in the morning, then join Congress in the afternoon. Additionally, Eatonville High School is sending 20 students to volunteer as IT helpers.

In other news, Sheila is working with Eatonville High School to revamp the raingarden at the Eatonville Visitor's Center. The Nisqually Tribe is providing funding. Morgan and Sheila are working on a NOAA Environmental Literacy grant. They are meeting directly after NRC to connect with grant partners. Sheila is also working with E3 and ESD 113 to change curriculum in Eatonville. Last month, Sheila and Tyler helped plant 250 trees at Weyerhaeuser Elementary.

This year's Nearshore Trips will engage 500 students. Sheila is interested in hosting a workshop for the NRC Education Committee to update members on new school standards. Finally, there is an Eye on Nature Fundraiser scheduled for April 14th, 5-10pm at Fish Tale Brewery. It will feature a live band!

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – The NRF did not receive Ecology's 319 Grant, but did receive feedback on the application. That feedback will be valuable for the NOAA grant.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – The Nisqually Tribe's Salmon Recovery and Stock Management Programs work hard to "re-naturalize" the Nisqually Chinook salmon. This means that while there is a hatchery stock, the Tribe would rather have a natural, thriving stock. To reach that goal, salmon habitat must be abundant and the hatcheries must cooperate. The weir is an important tool in catching hatchery fish before

they spawn with natural fish. However, there is no existing model to track the success of the weir. With partners from WDFW, NOAA and others, the Tribe is working to develop that model which will result in a stronger program in the future. Additionally, the monitoring component will become an annual part of the program and will track fish from the juvenile to adult stage. The Tribe met recently with WDFW to discuss combining monitoring and data collection efforts. In other news, the Tribe is working to conduct more tagging of juvenile Nisqually Steelhead as a part of the marine survival studies.

The Nisqually Tribe is in the middle of annual salmon harvesting negotiations. This year's Chinook runs are predicted to be poor this year, adding additional challenges to the negotiations. A final decision will be made May 16th in Sacramento, and results will be reported to the NRC soon. On a brighter note, the pink run is expected to be large this year.

Ashley reported the Habitat Work Group met last week to piece together the next round of PSAR and SRF Board project proposals. The Letters of Intent for these projects are accepted through March 27th, after which a list of all projects will be developed. That list will need approval from the NRC prior to May; site visits are scheduled for June 3rd.

In 2009, the Land Trust acquired the Manke Property between the mouths of Mashel and Ohop Creeks, with the intent of transferring the property to the Nisqually Tribe at a later date. Ashley seeks approval from the NRC to transfer that property now. There was a motion to transfer the property ownership. It was approved unanimously.

Lastly, this winter's weather could have a large impact on salmon. In general, there are two influences that restrict salmon runs: high winter flows, and low summer flows. The high flows cause smolt mortality, while low summer flows restrict habitat availability. Because the Mashel is important to both Steelhead and Coho, the expected low summer flows may restrict the number of juveniles that survive. Roger noted that Paradise has 18-24 inches of snow, though the SnoTel site reports 59 inches. It should be noted that rain levels have been normal this year, so the reservoirs are still full.

3. Open Government Act Training – Ashley Von Essen, Nisqually Indian Tribe

The Open Government Act was passed in July 2014 and helps ensure transparency in all public meetings. Because the NRC acts as the citizen's group to the Lead Entity, the Council is required to watch this training video. The Act requires that public meetings are open to the public, and that all minutes are available on the website. You may view all NRC meeting minutes here: <http://nisquallyriver.org/resources/>.

The 20 minutes long video has 15 different segments and covers topics such as scope; meetings; actions; final actions; and more. The video can be viewed in its entirety here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3B7_Xm3I8c.

4. Status and Trends of Timber Related Activities in the Nisqually Basin: Fish Protection, Barriers – Joan Miniken, Nisqually Indian Tribe

Joan has worked for the Nisqually Indian Tribe for 21 years in a number of different capacities. She currently serves as the Timber, Fish and Wildlife Biologist. In light of the new Community Forest, and because of concerns regarding local timber practices, Joan wishes to share the data she's been gathering for 10 years. In particular, she will be discussing harvesting buffers around water bodies.

The Nisqually Basin can be divided into three sections: the Lowlands, in the lower watershed; Mashel-Ohop, in the middle watershed; and Glacial, in the upper watershed. Joan's data depicts the spatial distribution of harvest units, roads constructed and water crossing in each of these regions. She noted that there has been a lot of timber activity in the Glacial region of the watershed; land was recently sold to Sierra Pacific. When referencing Joan's presentation, slides 8-32 show the activity in each region, and in the whole watershed, from 2007 to 2014.

When timber harvesting occurs within 200 feet of a protected water bodies, the harvest requires a buffer permit. There are three types of buffers: wetland, F Stream and Np Waters. When buffering around a wetland, the wetland area determines the size of the buffer. F Streams—or fish bearing streams—have buffers determined by the site class and stream width. Finally, Np Streams—or non-fish bearing streams—have a buffer size of 50 feet, for a distance of

x. Different buffer types are scattered throughout the Nisqually Watershed. For example, the Lowland region contains numerous fish bearing streams, while the Glacial region has fewer. Instead, DNR HCP Buffers dominate the upper watershed.

In general, Joan believes there is good compliance in buffers throughout the watershed and in terms of the general rules, she is happy with the results. Joan also works to ensure the rules are effective. She is a part of the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Committee (CMER), a committee that practices adaptive management in forest buffer rules. Specifically, she is involved with the Riparian Area Science Scientific Advisory Group.

Throughout the watershed, there are 20-acre exempt riparian management zones (RMZs), where riparian buffers increase or decline based on the number of leave trees in the area. Joan noted that these RMZs result in smaller riparian buffers, and are more complicated to review. Slides 40-43 show the RMZs in the watershed.

Other timber harvesting permits fall under “alternate plans” that allow for the treatment of riparian forests that are under or overstocked while still maintaining acceptable levels of function on a landscape scale. Alternate Plans may also provide conversion of riparian zones that are overly dominated by hardwood trees. In these cases, riparian harvesting prescriptions are based on the site productivity and tree community. These alternatives are largely targeted to small landowners, but also represent a decrease in buffer size. The alternatives are also complicated to review, due to site specificity, and occur within the watershed. Slides 45-48 show alternative plan locations.

Besides looking at F Buffers, Np Buffers and Alternative Buffers, Joan is focusing on other buffer types, especially in the Busywild region including: channel migration zones (CMZs); perennial intitation points; off-channel habitat; unstable slopes; headwall seeps; heatwater springs; alluvial fans, and more. A lot of these features are easy to miss, so Joan will be keeping a close eye for all these features. Additionally, a new buffer plan for the Busywild—also called Farther Out—has been released for 65 acres of class 4 land. While Joan would like to see 178 foot buffers, the site class requires only 110 feet.

Joan concluded by noting timber harvesting is generally increasing. However, compliance is quite good, though improvements can be made. Moving forward, Joan plans to focus her efforts in heavily vegetated areas; on adaptive management for site specific areas; on CMER participation; and on Np stream buffers and the 20-acre exempt CMZs. She believes non-compliance happens to do time or safety constraints; by recognizing that, she hopes to work more closely with timber companies to ensure compliance. Also, on-site adaptive management doesn't necessarily change compliance in the long-term, but can make large impacts locally. Her presentation can be viewed here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/miniken-nisqually-timber>.

Questions/Comments:

- The Busywild project should have an interdisciplinary team. Additionally, the NRC could send a letter to small forest landowners to raise public awareness—perhaps this should be a subcommittee of the NRC.
- An example of successful on-site adaptive management is the willingness of contractors to leave certain shade-providing trees. On a larger scale, Joan thinks this could be translated into increasing buffers to minimize consequences of particularly hot summers. This is where NRC support could be very important.
- TMOs are on a 10-year permitting period; that may be an opportune time to negotiate buffering.
- The NRC should announce its goals for forest ecosystems, as its done in riparian zones.
- The Tribe is considering submitting an application to the BIA for climate change planning. This would provide a new model in climate influences, and show the impact on salmon populations. It would help define the vision for the Mashel, inform the Eatonville Comprehensive Plan, and inform the Busywild Plan. This data will be valuable for that Plan.

5. **Mountain Community Co-op Update** – *Brenda Smith, Mountain Community Co-op Board Member*

Brenda Smith is the Mountain Community Co-op Board Vice-President. In an effort to increase the Co-ops community involvement, they have started several initiatives aimed at improving access to locally grown and healthy foods. Brenda views the Co-op as more than a natural food business—it is an opportunity to teach kids and community members about healthy foods. It is a place to change personal, community and world culture.

The Co-op Board has only 4 members, so it was important to increase awareness of the business. As a result, the Board launched a community outreach program, which features continuing education classes, a backpack program, a community garden, organic produce shares, and Working Member Owners & Buyers Club. The Program began in October 2014, with the initial meeting attracting 60 people! Class topics include reducing toxic waste, emergency preparedness planning, allergies, organic gardening and a Barter Fair. The Barter Fair will raise supplies for the Food Bank and the education program. Due to the success of the first meeting, the Board is considering re-launching the Eatonville Farmers Market; the NRC could provide support in that effort.

The Backpack Program is a partnership between the Co-op Board and the Family Agency. Community members and the Co-op donate healthy food to the Food Bank, ensuring all children have access to healthy foods. Additionally, the Co-op received a grant to build a compost unit in the Community Garden.

Brenda noted that the co-op volunteers are fantastic. They run the store, and help ensure all community members can have access to Organic Produce Shares. One volunteer even drives shares to Ashford to assist people unable to get to Eatonville. In the future, the Co-op would like to have a paid store manager, and to have more families volunteer. In fact, co-op volunteer hours could as hour fulfillment for high school students.

The Co-op is committed to providing quality continuing education to the local community. Brenda believes that knowledge brings a challenge; experience brings a choice; values establish personal responsibility. To keep up-to-date on Co-op happenings, please visit the Facebook page! Brenda's presentation is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/smith-mnt-coop>.

6. NWSP Discussion: Community Wellness – Morgan Greene

The Community Wellness indicators are: locally grown and produced foods are available and affordable; community health indicators show marked improvement; and disaster response plans and community emergency response teams are developed. This topic is a central theme for many local projects, including Thurston Thrives, the many local co-ops, organizations like GRuB and the newly established agritourism byways in the area. Additionally, regional food councils are creating plans for future food systems. On another note, non-profit hospitals must now collect data tracking changes in community health indicators. Morgan is unaware of any published or available date, but she will continue to track it. Finally, most emergency plans are in place. The recent NRC presentation on oil spill response will add to the preparedness of the watershed.

7. For the Good of the Order

Doug Beagle wished to update the NRC on the Rim Rock Mine proposal. In December, a draft EIS went to local landowners and stakeholders. Eatonville submitted a letter to Adonais Clark identifying many issues the town had with the EIS, including an incomplete analysis of scope, noise report, and traffic increase. In response to Eatonville's letter, the Town met with Pierce County and the project engineer to further discuss the comments and share the Town's concerns with the project. The engineer committed a response to the County by the end of March or beginning of April. Doug would like another set of eyes on the engineer's response. Fred offered to take a look, as did David.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:31pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, April 17th, 2015, 9:00am – 12:00pm
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge*