



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Meeting
March 18, 2016
Northwest Trek
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

Council Members

Amy Cruver – *Pierce County*

JW Foster – *City of Yelm*

Darric Lowery – *WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife*

Amber Martens – *JBLM*

Rene' Skaggs – *Pierce Conservation District*

Stephanie Suter – *Puget Sound Partnership*

David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

*** CAC Representatives (2)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Phyllis Farrell*

Ed Kenney

Karelina Resnick*

Marjorie Smith

Bob Smith

Lois Ward

Guests

Grace Ann Byrd – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Janell Blacketer – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Morgan Greene – *Nisqually River Council*

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 9:55 am.

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

2. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Phyllis reported that the CAC met last week, with agenda items such as the outreach presentation, marine protected areas, Ed's trip to Patagonia, and the HIMARS rocket testing on JBLM. The CAC was also updated on the pause in the proposed methanol plant in Tacoma.
- *Chair Report* – Justin, Joe, Chris and David met with Hancock Timber a few weeks ago to talk about timber management and the Nisqually Community Forest. They shared the science behind steelhead recovery efforts and how responsible forest practices can aid in those efforts. The group will continue to meet with Hancock's technical team to discuss potential changes to their management.

In other news, David highlighted a recent op-ed that he ran in the Seattle Times recently, in response to an opinion article written by the Wild Fish Conservancy. The Conservancy blamed low Steelhead numbers on harvest and hatchery practices, but David pointed out other issues that play a larger role. The piece is available here: <http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/restoring-puget-sound-key-to-saving-steelhead-runs/>. The Nisqually Tribe established Billy Frank Jr.'s birthday, March 9th, as a tribal holiday and hosted a dinner in his honor.

- *Staff Report*– Morgan reported that the last Nisqually Stream Stewards salmon tossing event for the season occurred on February 20th, with 25 people attending, including JW and Sandra. The water trail committee also floated the upper portion of the Nisqually River earlier in March, which provided an opportunity to experience first hand the portage around the Centralia Diversion Dam. A draft plan for the water trail will be completed at the end of the month; Morgan will bring the plan for comment at that time.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – JW reported that the NLT Board met last night and discussed upcoming acquisitions in the Yelm area. The Land Trust is also working to develop policy on increased access to properties, while still protecting the natural resources of each area. Lastly, the annual dinner and auction is on April 2nd, and is now sold out.

In Yelm news, this week's edition of Nisqually Valley News ran an article of Billy Frank Jr. and the newly established holiday in his honor. The newspaper also covered the demolition of the house that was destroyed by Nisqually floodwaters late last year. Finally, 2 weeks ago, the newspaper ran a feature story on the Land Trust and its volunteers. These stories are available online for those who have a digital subscription. Finally, the Supreme Court ruled against the water rights granted to Yelm by the Department of Ecology.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila reported that the 24th Annual Student GREEN Congress was on Tuesday March 15. 399 students attended! Highlights included a keynote presentation by Hanford McCloud and the Nisqually Canoe Family, the multiple Stream Stewards who volunteered, and Ed Kenney's new workshop "An Extreme Sports View on Climate Change." Eye on Nature field trips are starting soon; a volunteer training was held yesterday at the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. There will be one more training held next week at the Refuge. Nisqually Valley News covered the event, and will produce a story soon. Additionally, several grant applications are pending review. One grant, if successful, would launch a pilot program to bring students to prairies. The NOAA grant kick-off event on April 21st has been cancelled to provide better momentum for this year's Summer Teachers Institute. The Nisqually Stream Stewards will host an Earth Day event on April 22nd at the Tribe's Garden.
- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Most of Justin's time has gone towards grant reporting and other administrative tasks. Along with that, he has been representing the NRC at Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) meetings, as well as at Pierce Conservation District planning efforts. AHSS is working to develop South Sound wide strategies, and Justin will continue to report on their progress. The NRF was honored to receive \$6,000 from the Puyallup Tribe to fund NREP. Lastly, the Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex met last night for a board meeting.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – David reported that salmon forecasts for the coming year have been developed, and are predicting record lows. The coho forecast is the lowest its ever been, with 1,200 natural fish expected to return. The expectations for returning hatchery fish are equally low. Current discussions revolve around the possibility to shut down coho fishing seasons altogether. On the same vein, the coho that returned last year were much younger than normal, suggesting that poor ocean conditions forced the fish to return to freshwater more quickly. David noted this makes freshwater habitat restoration even more important. In other news, the Tribe is reexamining weir management; together with the State, the Tribe is developing a new plan to use the weir in a different and more efficient way.

3. Nisqually Community Forest Management Plan – Justin Hall, Nisqually River Foundation

A large proportion of Justin's time over the last year has been dedicated to the development of an initial management plan for the proposed Nisqually Community Forest. Although the plan isn't completely finished yet, there is funding in place to buy the first 3 parcels (or 1,396 acres) from Hancock Timber. This management plan will help ensure actions are ready to go once the properties are purchased. The Nisqually Community Forest (NCF) will be owned by a separate non-profit organization, that is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Nisqually Land Trust.

The parcels are located near Ashford, adjacent to the Nisqually Gateway Property (owned by Nisqually Land Trust) and the Elbe Hills State Forest (WA DNR). These properties jointly comprise the Mashel sub-basin, but the first three parcels of the NCF will protect Busywild Creek, a tributary that is important for Steelhead spawning. Data has shown that trees help mitigate the impacts of climate change, especially when they are around 80 years old. As trees in NCF grow older, they will improve summer flows in the Mashel River.

Currently, most western Washington forests are managed as part of an investment program, with a continuous cycling of underlying owners. As such, land is typically managed with a short-term lens. The Hancock Timber tree

farm outside of Ashford has 6 underlying owners currently. The concept behind NCF is that the forest will still be managed for some timber harvesting, public access, and for salmon recovery. However, it will be managed by a local organization that receives public input and uses a long-term lens. The community forest non-profit will also have different overall management goals. Right now, the NCF is driven by a 7-member board. Eventually, there will also be a community advisory committee that will guide NCF direction, and work to keep money locally.

The first 3 parcels are located in an east-west valley that protects the uppermost drainage of Busywild Creek. It begins at an elevation of 4,000 feet and contains rocky, dry soils. There are numerous ephemeral streams and roads throughout the parcels. According to stand inventory completed by Hancock, the average age of trees in the parcels is 30-50 years old, although there are some patches of older trees.

The timber management will be based on continuous, variable density harvesting. Additionally, many of the highly stocked stands will undergo treatment to reduce the trees per acre. In short, a particular unit would receive a pre-commercial thinning to allow remaining trees to grow with less competition. About 15 years later, that same unit would be entered to remove some of the trees representing small, medium, and large sized trees. After several more years, a similar treatment would occur. The plan also calls for the protection of old growth, and the preservation of legacy trees, snags, and downed logs.

In the future, a public access plan will be formally developed, but the initial thought is to have the NCF open to the public as much as possible. This potentially opens the possibility to hire a WCC crew to build trails. Rene' noted that Pierce Conservation District is interested in sharing a crew, if possible. Additionally, the NCF has considered the possibility of allowing the harvest of native plants and traditional foods. The presentation is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-community-forest-forest-management-plan>.

4. Nisqually 4-Year Work Plan & New Project List – Ashley Von Essen, Nisqually Indian Tribe

As a part of Ashley's Lead Entity duties, the Nisqually 4-Year Work Plan and New Project List outlines the Tribe's proposed projects to be submitted to state funding through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRF Board) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR). There are several changes to the 2016 grant round: PSAR and SRF Board monies will be awarded at different times of the year; PSAR project lists—both regular round and large capital—will be prepared a year in advance of funding availability; and the Nisqually Lead Entity will submit a 4-year work plan instead of a 3-year work plan to the Puget Sound Partnership.

There is approximately \$300,000 in available SRF Board funding, and \$1.4 million through PSAR, bringing the Nisqually total allocation to approximately \$1.7 million. Pre-applications are due on May 11th and final applications are due on August 12th. SRF Board allocations will be announced in early December; PSAR awards will be announced in July 2017.

The new projects are:

- Nisqually Chinook Recovery Monitoring (Nisqually River Foundation): There is the potential to allocate 10% of SRF Board money towards monitoring. The monitoring will track juvenile Chinook in the lower Nisqually River, estuary, and nearshore. This will be a continuation of monitoring that's been on-going for about 10 years.
- Salmon Recovery Early Action Weed Control (Pierce Conservation District): This is a new project that would emphasize early detection and rapid response of invasive species that aren't yet widespread, including butterfly bush, yellow flag iris, and purple loosestrife.
- South Creek Riparian Planting (Nisqually Indian Tribe): This project entails the revegetation of 6.3 acres along South Creek (South Fork of Muck Creek) near Eatonville. Reed canary grass will also be removed from the property.
- WRIA 11 Habitat Project Assessment (South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group): The Salmon Enhancement Group would examine the Nisqually Steelhead Recovery Plan and launch on-the-ground assessments to identify projects to further the goals outlined in the plan.
- Nisqually River – Wilcox Reach North Shoreline Protection (Nisqually Land Trust): Involves the acquisition of 160 acres of Pierce County shoreline adjacent to the Wilcox Flats property.
- Nisqually River – Wilcox Reach Small Lots Acquisition (Nisqually Land Trust): Involves the acquisition of 2 properties where landowners are forced to move due to rapidly changing shoreline conditions. It would include structure demolition.

- Lower Ohop Acquisition for Restoration Planning (Nisqually Land Trust): Involves landowner outreach to begin discussions about purchasing properties for Ohop Restoration Phase IV. Planning areas is approximately 360 acres and includes 1.8 miles of creek.
 - Middle Ohop Protection Phase III (Nisqually Land Trust): The acquisition of 32 acres along Ohop Creek, which is just upstream of the Phase IV planning area.
- The proposed PSAR large capitol projects are:
- Middle Mashel Protection Phase II (Nisqually Land Trust): This would be the final acquisition needed to protect the middle Mashel corridor, from Boxcar Canyon to Busywild creek.
 - Busy Wild Creek Protection Phase II (Nisqually Land Trust): The acquisition of 1,385 acres of commercial forestland along Busywild creek.

Ashley requested approval of the 4-year work plan to submit to the Puget Sound Partnership. The full project worksheet is available upon request (vonessen.ashley@nisqually-nsn.gov). There was a motion to approve the workplan; it was approved unanimously. The presentation is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-4year-work-plan-and-new-project-list>.

5. **Nisqually Community Garden – Grace Ann Byrd and Janell Blacketer, Nisqually Indian Tribe**

The Nisqually Community Garden provides food to the Nisqually Community, including tribal members, employees, and the Red Wind Casino. The garden is located on the old Bragget Farm and is about 5 acres in size. Among other things, the garden has an apple orchard that is over 100 years old. Although the Tribe has maintained a garden since 1981, the garden has been in this location for only 6 years. The new location allows for increased job opportunities and new programs. In the past, the Nisqually Tribe lived in a food desert; the Community Garden allows for food security.

The community garden grows everything, including fruits, vegetations, and traditional native plants. The garden crew is typically 8-12 people in size, which includes four permanent positions. In 2015, the garden grew 16,000 pounds of food to share with the community! All food is available by a suggested \$3 donation. The garden contains hoop houses and a small greenhouse used to start seeds. A larger greenhouse is in the works.

Grace Ann and Janell work frequently with tribal programs, including Elders, Diabetes, Summer Youth Workers, Nisqually Daycare, Headstart, Youth Center, and Substance Recovery. The Elders Program, for instance, receives fresh food deliveries 2 times per week. Raised garden beds have been built behind the Elders and Daycare centers, to help increase community exposure to healthy and local foods. The garden staff also teaches community members about medicinal plants, traditional foods, salve making, and more.

Currently, the Farm is in charge of preparing 250 kits of healing salves and lip balms for Canoe Journey gifts. The vegetables may also be used during Canoe Journey, although only after the needs of the Elders are met.

To volunteer, contact Grace Ann (byrd.graceann@nisqually-nsn.gov) or Janell (blacketer.janell@nisqually-nsn.gov). The presentation is here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-community-garden>.

6. **For the Good of the Order**

Karelina noted that the Greater Eatonville Heritage Forum will meet on May 17th. The focus will be on trail building for a variety of uses, including hiking, horses, kayakers, and more. The hope is to have trails that connect Eatonville to Pack Forest, NW Trek, Ashford, State Park, and more. A more formal plan will be developed in the near future.

Amber noted that JBLM is beginning a new project to collect acorns and is in need of planting pots.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:31pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, April 15, 2016
Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, 9:00-12:00
NWSP Topic: Ecosystem Functions*