



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
May 15, 2015
Ohop Grange
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Roger Andrascik – Mount Rainier National Park
Amy Cruver – Pierce County
JW Foster – City of Yelm
Glynnis Nakai – Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

Rene' Skaggs – Pierce Conservation District
Gary Stamper – Lewis County
David Troutt – Nisqually Indian Tribe
*** CAC Representatives (2)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Phyllis Farrell
Ed Kenney

Fred Michelson*
Karelina Resnick*

Guests

Heather Saunders Benson – Thurston County
Bryan Bowden – NRC Alumni
Chris Ellings – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Amber Martens – JBLM
Chris Schutz – Pierce County
Cindy Wilson – Thurston County

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 Troutt called the meeting to order at 9:39.

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

2. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – The CAC met this past Tuesday evening, with Ed reporting on the impacts of nitrogen in Puget Sound. Additionally, Lois Ward's CAC membership application was approved by the CAC; the NRC now must approve it. There was a motion to approve Lois' application; it was approved.

In a follow-up to last month's NRC presentation on the Sustainability Ambassadors, Karelina attended a Youth Leadership Summit in Issaquah—this may be a model for the Nisqually River Youth Council. The Summit was a gathering of students, community leaders and business professionals to discuss topics like waste reduction and water conservation. In the months leading to the Summit, students collected data, produced pamphlets and prepared presentations, all of which were shared in the community. Students also developed solutions to become more sustainable, including black-out days, recycling boxes and waste free lunch days. Sheila will be working closely with Peter to submit a grant to kick-start the partnership.

- *Chair Report* – David reported that there was an Executive Committee meeting this week; the first topic discussed was the creation of an Emeritus Board. This is a process that will continue to be slowly implemented. Additionally, the Committee discussed increasing participation of NRC members; Morgan and David met recently with Maia Bellon and Heather Bartlett, of the Department of Ecology. They committed to a larger presence at a policy level, and will try to find money to support the NRC. In the next few months, David will meet with representatives from Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Department of Agriculture and WA Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Executive Committee also discussed increasing

CAC involvement in NRC sub-committees. Morgan is working to develop a list of all active sub-committees so that CAC members can join those of interest.

In other news, David is busy working on budget issues—the legislature is in an extended session currently, but David is hopeful that things will pick up soon. The legislature wants to limit the PSAR funding so that it does not support acquisition projects. David noted that Jim Wilcox has championed conversations on both sides of the aisle to reach a compromise.

- *Staff Report* – Morgan has been busy with the Nisqually River Trail Advisory planning process—there is a Focus Group Workshop in the coming months. Additionally, Sheila, Ashley and Morgan have been busy with the Nisqually Stream Stewards planning. Community members have already expressed interest in joining this year’s class. Finally, Morgan mentioned the annual NRC retreat is scheduled for July. The Council agreed that this year’s retreat should be both a social and working retreat. Morgan and Justin will explore the option of using the Hickson again. Details will be provided at a later date.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – JW noted that work party attendance has gradually increased, which is great news! Additionally, the Land Trust’s Board is fine-tuning the Strategic Plan. This includes expanding the scope into nearshore opportunities as they arise, and to increase property accessibility as appropriate. This aligns closely to the Nisqually River Trail planning effort too. The Land Trust float trip will be on July 26th with a cost of \$120 per person. There will be a nice lunch served halfway through, and it is family friendly, so long as all people can fit into a life jacket. It fills up quickly, so sign up soon.

JW also shared that the Yelm Spring Cleanup recently happened, offering free trash clean up at City Park. The day drew 144 vehicles, and the City plans to expand the event next year. This is tremendously effective at removing trash from the city.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – There are more Eye on Nature field trips scheduled for the year, and Sheila has been blown away by the volunteer response! The theme of Summer Teacher Institute this year is biomimicry and climate change, and will align directly to Next Generation learning standards. In other news, the Eatonville raingardens are looking very good. Sheila and Erica have weeded several gardens, but still have more work to do. Additionally, Cougar Mountain Middle School will bring its entire 7th grade class to Water Quality Monitoring next year. Sheila also met with the Thurston County Superintendents to discuss the Thurston ECO Network and the NREP program. She had positive feedback!

Finally, Sheila has an upcoming meeting with Peter Donaldson to discuss an application to Ecology’s GROSS grant for the Nisqually River Youth Council. Given the scale of the project, Sheila will be figuring out how to build it into what we do. She will gradually move in that direction.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin is busy on managing, writing, reporting and amending grants and contracts. He also reported that Sheila had the opportunity to float a section of the Nisqually River—her first time ever! Additionally, the Tribe’s Native Plant Crew rescued an injured eagle several weeks ago; it was released into the wild on Monday. Finally, the NRF crew had a team-bonding hike last Friday—they hiked Eagle Peak.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris updated the Council on the Three Year Work Plan Project List. The list does not need approval today, but it is important the NRC understands new projects on the list. Puget Sound Partnership recently replaced the Three Year Work Plan with a Four Year Work Plan and Biennial Report—this means a plan will be submitted every other year; in odd years, Lead Entities will simply need approval for new projects added to the list.

The potential funding available for this year stems from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB, \$415,000), the Puget Sound Acquisition and Recovery Fund (PSAR, <1,400,000) and leftover Ohop Project Funds (<\$750,000) for a total of <\$2,565,000. Of those funds, the Ohop Project Funds are the only ones currently secure—the rest will be determined based on the approved State budget.

The list contains several new projects:

- Whitewater Reach Protection Project, sponsored by the Nisqually Land Trust. This is the acquisition of up to 4 parcels on the Thurston side of the Nisqually mainstem through the whitewater reach of the river. It would protect 42 acres, including 6 acres of forested wetland and 3,800 feet of shoreline.
- Mashel Shoreline Protection Phase IV, sponsored by Nisqually Land Trust. This project would expand the existing corridor of protect lands by Boxcar Canyon. It includes 2.4 miles of Mashel River shoreline. One of the parcels would secure land under immediate threat of forest harvesting.
- Middle Ohop Protection Phase II, sponsored by Nisqually Land Trust. The project would protect 38 acres of the middle Ohop, and would include 2,200 feet of riparian habitat as well as 3 acres of riparian planting. Note—this section of Ohop Creek is not included in the remeandering of the creek.
- Mashel Eatonville Restoration Phase III Conservation Easement, sponsored by Nisqually Land Trust. This accompanies the next and final phase of the Engineered Log Jams, at the confluence of the Mashel and Little Mashel Rivers. The costs associated with this project are simply for the conservation easement, not for the restoration work to follow.
- McKenna Area Small Lot Acquisitions, sponsored by Nisqually Land Trust. There are several small sections of undeveloped land near McKenna; with these funds, the Land Trust could purchase up to 15 of those parcels as the opportunity arises. They would receive up to \$710,000 total.
- Nisqually Chinook Recovery Monitoring, sponsored by Nisqually River Foundation. It was decided that watersheds could use up to 10% of PSAR funding to support monitoring projects to complement recovery strategies and fill data gaps in management plans. NRF will provide field assistance to collect data on juvenile and adult Chinook at the river, estuary and nearshore. The total cost is \$47,725 with \$41,500 in grant money and \$6,225 in match.

In addition to the updated project list, Chris shared several maps of each new project location. The presentation and maps are available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/2015-nisqually>. The technical review panel will review the project lists in early June.

In other news, Chris noted that over 400 Steelhead have passed through the Centralia fish counter to date, despite a late start to the season. He also noted that Steelhead redds have been observed high in the Busywild. The Tribe is in the process of tagging another round of juvenile Steelhead to continue their marine survival studies—King 5 news will feature a story on this topic next week. Finally, Chris thanked the Council for the Letter of Support for the BIA Climate Adaptation grant. This grant, if funded, will allow Chris to model salmon survival according to different land-use scenarios in the face of climate change.

3. Greater Eatonville Heritage Forum – Bryan Bowden, NRC Alumni extraordinaire

Bryan, Steve Pruitt and the Town of Eatonville are leading an effort to highlight the regional heritage of the Eatonville area. The group has created a Forum that will work on developing the Greater Regional Heritage Area—so far, the group has developed a draft strategic plan and convened a stakeholder summit. Although the full scope of the heritage area has not been defined, it generally includes the area from NW Trek, to Eatonville, through Pack Forest and up to Mount Rainier.

For a brief history of the project, Jessica Moore (NW Trek) and Steve Pruitt (Pioneer Farm) first approached the NPS's Recreation, Trail and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program with the idea of developing a bicycle trail between the two facilities. NPS ultimately decided that the project needed a larger stakeholder group. Bryan initially became involved at that point, and helped reach out the community members and interested parties. The feedback that they receive largely revolved around the fact that there are several other existing trail plans in the region. Rather than develop an entirely new plan, stakeholders thought it would be best to work to encourage the implementation of those existing plans. The Town agreed to be the convener of this effort, and the Greater Eatonville Heritage Forum was born! The first meeting was in September 2014, and the most recent summit was held two weeks ago.

The Strategic Plan outlines the project's values, vision, mission, process, components, goals and actions. It highlights the need for collaborative partnerships and respecting private property rights. Bryan noted that most of the project will occur on public lands, though private landowners who wish to participate will be welcome to. According to the Strategic Plan, the Forum's focus is on conservation, visitor information and support, local recreation

facilities, and a regional tourism-based economy. Furthermore, the values are respect, collaboration, inclusive perspectives, stewardship and sustainability, livability and hospitality, education and interpretation, private property rights, sustainable local economy, and accessible and diverse transportation options. These values play into the vision statement—see slide 6 of Bryan’s presentation.

The Forum’s mission is to oversee the development and management of the Heritage Area. Please note: the Forum won’t build or manage components of the project, but can help leverage partners in implementing components of existing plans. To achieve this mission, the Forum will follow a 3-step process: outreach, information gathering and sharing; assessment analysis and recommendations; and facilitation of development and implementation.

The Strategic Plan outlines several components of the Heritage Area project:

- The development of a regional non-motorized trail system
- The development of a regional transit system that serves residents and tourists and connects them to recreation opportunities
- The development of visitor support facilities, including gas, food and lodging
- Use of interpretation, education and marketing of the heritage area to develop a sustainable tourism economy
- The existence of a regional recreation component, which entails the development of a wide array of recreation locations and types.

The Forum will continue to convene on a quarterly basis, with the Town of Eatonville acting as the face of the project. Each meeting will revolve around a specific component of the Strategic Plan—the next meeting will dive deeply into existing regional trail plans. Bryan’s presentation is available here:

<http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/greater-eatonville-heritage-area-forum>.

Questions/Comments:

- Phyllis noted that the Thurston Bountiful Byways, and similar agritourism efforts, should be included in the Forum.
- Chris mentioned the Skagit Watershed Group has a similar project that highlights salmon restoration projects—that could fit in well too. Additionally, Chris is interested in presenting to the Forum to discuss ways to manage public access in a way that is complementary to salmon recovery efforts. He will also discuss the cultural importance of the region from the perspective of the Nisqually Tribe.
- Perhaps the Nisqually Land Trust’s scenic byways could be included in this project.

4. **Alliance For a Healthy South Sound** – *Elizabeth McManus, Alliance for a Healthy Sound Sound; Ross Strategic*
Over the last year, Justin, David and Chris have mentioned Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) without explaining in depth the purpose of the group. Elizabeth noted that AHSS is a group that works in a similar fashion to the NRC. The Alliance is one of nine Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs) which are recognized by the Puget Sound Partnership’s Leadership Council as the organizations responsible for Action Agenda implementation. AHSS’s mission is to support coordinated and collaborative decision-making aimed at restoring and protecting the ecological and socio-economic health of South Puget Sound. AHSS works in the South Sound and Nisqually Watersheds, and encompasses Pierce, Mason, and Thurston Counties, as well as the Squaxin Island and Nisqually Tribes. The scope also includes cities of Olympia and Lakewood, and JBLM. AHSS has an executive committee, and Justin chairs the Council!

AHSS meets bi-monthly with the Executive Committee and Council, and has regular technical sub-committee meetings. The meetings help determine ways to implement components of the Action Agenda. The Alliance prepares near term actions that are submitted to the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), which translates into the priority actions AHSS acts on. These actions are divided into shellfish, stormwater and habitat priorities—Elizabeth can share more specific details for those who are curious about learning more.

Near term actions are prepared are submitted to the PSP, which translates into priority actions that the AHSS agreed on. They are divided into shellfish, stormwater and habitat priorities. Elizabeth has more details about each of the priority actions, for those who are interested in learning more. In Elizabeth’s PowerPoint, bright green items represent actions that have been implemented; purple represents actions yet to be started.

In the coming months, AHSS will contribute to the State of the Sound Report Card, along with several other reports. The group is also generating a list of local ecosystem pressures, LIO-scale recovery card, and prioritizing AHSS Near Term Actions for the 2016 Action Agenda. The Alliance will continue to represent South Sound interests during Puget Sound wide planning efforts. She noted that there will be new funding for the recovery planning effort, though the details are not well defined yet. In any case, however, AHSS planning efforts will fit into the greater Puget Sound recovery efforts. The formalized plans will encourage collaboration and will make AHSS eligible for EPA grant funding. Note: AHSS is not a fiscal organization—Thurston County handles the money—so grant money would be distributed to project leads.

Elizabeth believes there are several ways that AHSS and the NRC can collaborate. First is through advocating for and supporting the implementation of projects. Second is reflecting the NRC's insights and ideas in the AHSS updates to priority action in 2016. Third is to reflect NRC insights and ideas in the LIO-scale planning. Finally, AHSS and NRC could create a forum for peer-to-peer communication and potential partnership opportunities to advance the South Sound recovery activities.

Questions/Comments:

- Ed wondered if AHSS has considered marine protection areas. AHSS generally works to bring current projects together, rather than spearhead new projects. However, since the Alliance is designed to bring interest groups together, Justin will invite Ed to the next meeting.
- It would be appropriate for the NRC to be updated on the Pressures Assessment planning. Morgan and Elizabeth will connect to determine when she should come back to talk about this.

Elizabeth's presentation is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nrc-5-1515-presentation-draft-2>.

5. NWSP Discussion: Culture and Arts – Morgan Greene

A year ago, Morgan gave a more in-depth overview of the farmers markets, heritage facilities, artisan communities, watershed events, and existence of a sense of local identity. NRC members did not provide suggestions for further research, so Morgan has little to report at this time. Karelina noted that this weekend is the Rainier Film Festival. Chris Schutz was curious about artist workshops provided throughout the watershed—Morgan will research.

6. For the Good of the Order

The next Nisqually Beer College will convene on Friday June 5th from 5-7pm at Top Rung Brewery. Also, Happy Endangered Species Day!

Denny Heck has proposed a bill to change the name of the Refuge to the Bill Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge; this would also establish a new historical site within the Refuge boundaries. Details are still TBD.

The Nisqually Glacier monitoring results show that conditions are similar to those typical in July. Also, new facilities have been completed at the Longmire Campground—a dedication will take place on May 26th and facilities will open in June.

Both Pierce and Thurston Counties have a new in-lieu fee—Chris and Cindy have contact for potential future presentations. Cindy also suggested a presentation on the Thurston County Volunteer Stewards.

The Nisqually Land Trust needs a useable crew pickup truck with 4WD; please consider donating if you have one. The Land Trust is also hosting summer walks—details are on their website.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:25pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, June 19th, 2015, 9:30am – 12:30pm
Ashford Fire Hall*