



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
November 18, 2011
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Auditorium
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

Council Members

Ron Averill – *Lewis County*

Christopher Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Rich Doenges – *Thurston County*

Cindy James – *WA Dept. of Ecology*

Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*

Fred Michelson – *NRC Forestry Committee*

Jean Takekawa – *NNWR*

David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

* **CAC Representatives (1)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Debbie Anderson

Mary Forth

Jean Shaffer

Marjorie Smith

Robert Smith*

Steve Thompson

Guests

Otis Bush – *Nisqually Stream Stewards*

Renee Mitchell – *Pierce Co. Conservation*

Steve Ruff – *Miles Sand and Gravel*

Lydia Wagner – *Department of Ecology*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*

Don Perry – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually River Council*

1. Call to Order, Officer Elections, Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Call to Order – David called the meeting to order at 9:15am.

Approval of Minutes, Agenda – There was a motion to approve the September meeting as presented. It was approved, as was the agenda as presented.

2. Introductions, Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – There was no Citizens Advisory Committee report at this time.
- *Forestry Committee* – Fred Michaelson reported that the Forestry Committee met on September 29th at the Nisqually Tribe Natural Resources Building. Three main topics were discussed as part of a forestry plan that would develop over the next two years.

The first topic was a discussion involving the establishment for a Low Interest Revolving Loan Fund that could assist in purchasing small parcels of forestlands with favorable terms and rates. This would involve approaching a variety of banks in order to network and find an institute to meet the our needs and objectives of future projects. Tim Schomberg and Richard Siddoway of the Kannon Forest Trust, for example, have been attempting to raise \$25,000 over three years times by selling timber from logging on their 300 acres. This money raised could then be lent out at low rates in order to acquire more land or purchase tools necessary for future logging.

The second included a discussion on Branded Products and the establishment of a mill where Nisqually planned products could be produced locally and stored in a warehouse in which customers could come and view the products for sale. The Nisqually Sustainable program could be used to market these products to the community. There is an abandoned quarry property in Eatonville that is currently owned by Weyerhaeuser that could potentially be grounds for a mill for forest waste.

Jean Shaffer introduced a discussion on current taxes in Thurston County for those forest owners who don't harvest timber from their forests due to the eco-services they provide. For these owners who don't have to cut trees, for the alignment with open tax relief program requirements, because the value their forests provide are either equal, if not more valuable, than the capital being produced from logging.

The next meeting will be held between December 17th and 20th.

- *Chair Report* – David reported on two presentations that he had recently given in the area.

The first was to a legal office with a number of attorneys working towards CLE credits. The topic of the presentation was the accomplishments of the people of Nisqually, as well as the possibilities and hopes of other watersheds following suit.

The second presentation took place in Portland at the National Congress of American Indians. The topic focused directly on the effects of climate change on the Nisqually watershed and what is being done to offset those effects. Distinctions were also made between the differences between plans and projects of the Nisqually and Skagit tribes. The success of the Nisqually watershed is directly dependent on surrounding areas and watersheds and their strides towards environmental issues and sustainability.

David also reported that he is in the running for chair of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council. He has been in attendance of these meetings as a representative for south Puget Sound tribes and would like to change roles within the organization taking on that of a leadership role.

- *Staff Report* – **Staff Report**

Sara Scott, Nisqually River Council staff, has decided to pursue other opportunities of employment. Her replacement, Ashley Von Essen, has been an educational intern with the Nisqually River Foundation, through the Evergreen State College, for the 2010-2011 calendar school year.

Plans are being made for the Nisqually Watershed Festival follow-up to discuss the successes of this year's event. This information will be included in the upcoming Nisqually newsletter.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe Kane reported on the Middle Mashel Project, which entails the attempted purchase of a large piece of property by a grant given by the SRF Board in 2010. The effort to buy this property, the Middle Mashel Riparian Corridor, would have secured an 84-acre property with an additional neighboring property of 229 acres. Funds were raised to acquire both parcels, when at the last minute the asking price was raised to twice the appraisal amount. The Land Trust was forced to walk away from this deal. They then began to look at another piece of land owned by Hancock Forest Management. A deal was made and this new transaction is expected to close on December 1st. The Middle Mashel has been rated a vital location for increasing the populations of steelhead. If this property isn't acquired quickly, it has a great chance to be sold and potentially harvested of its natural resources. The purchase of this parcel, along with any tracts of land in this corridor, will promote efforts to restore resources and save these forests from continued harvest.

The Nisqually Land Trust is looking to begin the process of accreditation. These steps are vital in ensuring the success of the Nisqually Land Trust in the future by providing financial backing to the purchases made on watershed properties.

The Nisqually Community Forest held its third advisory meeting Tuesday, November 15th. The committee continued to discuss the establishment of a somewhat sizeable forest in the upper Nisqually Watershed. Brainstorming was done in order to decide the vision of this project, as well as what type of land is desired and what products could be produced.

Joe was asked to be the keynote speaker at a Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation event. The organization seemed to show great interest in the Nisqually Community Forest.

The Nisqually Land Trust is also looking to add a full-time, permanent position to their team. The position of Development Director would begin sometime in January and would allow the Land Trust to spread its program through the region.

The Land Trust is looking at a new property on the Mashel River shoreline, between Alder Cut Off Road and the additions done to Smallwood Park. This 5-acre parcel, with the possibility of 2 additional acres, is in need of a conservation landowner to make the purchase.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila was unable to attend the meeting, but Ashley informed the council that she is in the height of tree planting season and was unable to make the meeting because of a planting at the Braget Farm property with middle school students. Justin added that October 20th was water quality monitoring day for NREP and December marks the beginning of this year's salmon carcass tossing dates.
- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin reported that possible funders from the Boeing Company and the Russell Family Foundation were taken on a airplane flight throughout the Nisqually watershed, with a focus on the town of Eatonville. Boeing was very interested and asked NRF to submit a grant proposal to inquire for a substantial amount of funding. After hearing nothing for nothing for a month or so, a check for \$25,000 arrived at the office on November 17th to put towards the Nisqually Sustainable program in Eatonville. The Russell Family Foundation was also interested in the possible projects in the town of Eatonville and asked for a full grant proposal for a possible \$50,000 in funding.

The award to be given to Norm Dicks has been postponed until next year. This will allow for the foundation to approach more funders to contribute to the dedication, but will also occur in time for the Nisqually River Council's 25th anniversary.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don Perry reported on planting events that were held on Land Trust Property at Ohop Creek. The event saw 110 plants put in the ground, and it was witnessed that pink salmon were actually spawning on site! In early November, Boxcar Canyon, another Land Trust property, had been eradicated of a number of blackberry vines and replanted with native plant species.

Salmon identification and salmon watcher workshops are coming up soon.

The newsletter is in its final phase and should also be out very soon.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris Ellings, just promoted as the Program Director for the Salmon Recovery Program, reported that the Washington's DNR has just

provided them with funds to expand the research being done on the Nisqually Delta Restoration Project. This will allow for further, more detailed studies to be done on the fish in the delta, as well as develop larger near shore options and access more shoreline areas. The focus is to use this funding to focus more on island habitats and their significance on our local salmon species, such as chinook, for restoration and protection.

The restoration project at Ohop Creek will continue to use resources to monitor the progress of the program. They will begin tagging juvenile salmon in spring and summer with PIT tags, which use bar codes to track movement of these fish. This will allow researchers to monitor the immigration and emigration of species throughout restoration area. This will provide clues as to how long fish are remaining in freshwater and the effects this has on their ability to survive. This information could prove to be of great use for guaranteeing future funding and financial support.

Joe Kane asked whether the Nisqually Land Trust should be beginning to inquire about island properties to assist with future research. Chris assured him that there is a lot of potential for protection restoration in island areas and purchasing this land may be vital for this research and future assessments of the area.

3. Update of the Nisqually Knotweed Control Project

*Renee Mitchell, Knotweed Control Program Manager
Pierce County Conservation District*

The Knotweed Control Project started in 2007 when it was noticed that a huge influx of knotweed along the Nisqually River and tributaries as a result of the 2006 flood. Renee gave a brief introduction of the four species of knotweed and informed us that the species that plagues our watershed is the bohemian knotweed. This invasive spreads quickly and with ease, and can wreak havoc on native species, and causes erosion and degradation of fish and wildlife habitat. The Pierce County Conservation District, along with many project partners, has been working to eradicate this invasive from the shorelines of the Nisqually River.

Surveys are conducted each spring in order to maximize the limited window treatment can be applied, beginning in July throughout early October until first frost. Problems were encountered this last application season due to the increased levels of rain received throughout the month of July and because of early leaf drop from bohemian knotweed. Since plants can't be sprayed in the rain and because leaves are needed to absorb chemicals, the program was somewhat limited the amount of progress it could make. However, they were able to survey 38.4 miles along the mainstem of the Nisqually River. Also they program was able to connect with the community through a variety of workshops, knotweed bending parties, and by participating in the Nisqually Watershed Festival.

Renee's PowerPoint presentation has been made available on the slideshare website.

4. Upper Nisqually Ecosystem Service-Based Demonstration Project

Joe Kane, Nisqually Land Trust

Joe reported that a grant proposal was submitted in attempt to acquire funding through the Department of Ecology and the Department of Commerce for a new ownership structure for local timberlands to promote ecosystem services in the Nisqually Watershed. This program would be centered on water rights owned by foresters and DNR. For example, the city of Yelm would like to build more houses, but don't have enough water inside the city limits to back these properties. If the Land Trust can acquire land from small forest owners or DNR or change the management practices to supply more water to the city of Yelm, these houses could get built. Landowners could reap benefits, such as possible tax credits, through the ecosystem services water deals could provide. By doing this, we could make more of the natural resources in our watershed, and through monitoring of the area; we can see if these practices have a positive influence on the area. The Land Trust will find out on December 19th if they received the grant that would secure \$400,000 of funding towards this project. A work group of project partners will be formed in 2012 in order to meet and establish a vision and goals for this endeavor.

David suggested we draft a letter of intent to submit to the Department of Ecology by January's NRC meeting.

Photos and maps of the coverage area are available on slideshare at:
<http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/middle-mashel-scope-expansion>

5. **Amendment to the Agenda** -- David motioned to make a small amendment to the agenda to take care of some housekeeping. With Jeanette Dorner's recent promotion, Nisqually has lost its representative at the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council. Possible nominations for representatives from the council are Ron Averill of Lewis County and Chris Ellings of the Nisqually Tribe. Ron declined the nomination due to scheduling conflicts. Chris Ellings is nominated for the position, followed by motions to secure the nomination. Congratulations, Chris!

6. Tribal Treaty Rights

David Troutt, Nisqually Tribe and NRC Chair

Treaties are a conveyance of rights from the tribe to federal government for peaceful settlement in the area as natives. An argument is forming that while the Nisqually Tribe is holding up their end of the bargain, the federal government seems to slacking a bit on their part. For example, steelhead and coho salmon populations are still very much on the decline, as is the

fall Chinook run. A study funded by NOAA and prepared by Millie Judge focuses on the progress of Puget Sound Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan. This research provides evidence that critical habitat features, such as estuaries, wetlands, plains, forested areas, etc., are still in a state of decline. The federal government has made promises to look into these issues, but changes have yet to be made.

A recovery council meeting was held in order to question a variety of state agencies and establish how they were to improve conditions. When only DNR made promises to make difficult changes, the council drafted a white paper document that represented the treaty rights that were at risk. This document was then submitted to the White House. The Obama Administration has asked agencies to respond proactively and develop a proposal of what they will do to make a positive change. Ron Allen, Tribal Chair and Chief Executive Office of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, has organized a group of tribal chairs to aggressively approach these environmental habitat concerns quickly. The first meeting was held in September of last year and established a work group of tribal governments and state agencies to work on stable response to the Millie Judge report.

The briefing paper and full document, *Treaty Rights at Risk*, from the Treaty Indian Tribes of western Washington, are available on the NWIFC website:

<http://nwifc.org/w/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/08/whitepaper628finalpdf.pdf>

NOAA's report, prepared by Millie Judge, can be accessed by visiting the website listed below.

<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Recovery-Planning/Recovery-Domains/Puget-Sound/upload/implement-rpt.pdf>

7. For the Good of the Order

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:14.

***Next Meeting: Friday December 16, 2011, 9am – 12pm
UW Pack Forest Conference Center***