



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
August 17, 2012
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Ron Averill – *Lewis County*

Christopher Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

JW Foster – *City of Yelm*

Cindy James – *WA Dept. of Ecology*

Sandra Romero – *Thurston County*

Jean Takekawa – *Nisqually NNWR*

David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

*** CAC Representatives (3)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Debbie Anderson

Mary Foster*

Fred Michelson

Steve Pruitt

Karelina Resnick*

Jean Shaffer*

Marjorie Smith

Robert Smith

Guests

Nick Bond – *Town of Eatonville*

Bob Burkle – *WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife*

Otis Bush – *Stream Steward*

Gabby Byrne – *Alliance for a Healthy South Sound*

Patrick Dunn – *Center for Natural Lands Mgmt.*

Mason McKinley – *Center for Natural Lands Mgmt.*

Renee Mitchell – *Pierce Conservation District*

Chris Schutz – *Pierce County*

Barb Wood – *Thurston County*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*

Sheila Jackson – *Nisqually Land Trust*

Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually River Council*

Sheila Wilson – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*

1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Call to Order – David called the meeting to order at 9:09am.

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

2. Introductions, Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Karelina reported that the Citizen Conservation Certification (CCC) Committee met to update the mission statement for the CAC, as well as develop a mission for the CCC program. The CAC presented these statements for approval from the Council. There was a motion to approve the updated mission for the CAC. The motion was unanimously accepted and approved.

The CAC was asked to provide background information for the new CCC program to better assess the mission statement before them. Karelina explained the nature of the program and

its intent to certify individual residences for steps taken towards sustainability. Suggestions were made to remove the phrase of “quality of life” because there isn’t a way to measure the quality of life of plants and animals. One alternative would be to interject “life of watershed residents and engaging them to start in their own backyards” in its place.

The Council requested that the CAC prepare a presentation of the CCC program, bringing with them a completed checklist, fee structure, and detailed program information for approval. The Nisqually River Foundation would handle incoming fees from the certification, but the CAC would have some control over how the money would be utilized.

The CAC has also been looking into the DNR Community Forest Trust (CFT) Program. They have formed a sub-committee, the Forest Buffer Committee, to seek out parcel nominations that may work for this program. Nomination information and documents have been mailed out to the NRC contact list and suggestions will be accepted until September 7th. Viable options will be presented to the NRC at the September meeting. The chosen parcel would aim to create a buffer zone in the watershed that would aid in conserving at-risk working forests from conversion to lands suited for development.

- *Chair Report* – David was unable to attend last month’s meeting due to his opening presentation at the First Stewards Climate Change Conference in Washington, D.C. David presented the work of the watershed and the Nisqually River Council to people and tribes from throughout the nation. Of the many watershed organizations that attended the conference, the Nisqually seemed to be the only ones offering solutions to the problematic issues caused by climate change.

Since the conference, David has been communicating with the Governor of American Samoa in hopes of developing a sister watershed program. This could lead to an exciting future partnership!

- *Staff Report* – Ashley reported that the Nisqually Watershed Festival, to be held September 29th at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, would be bringing on new food vendors this year. These new vendors include Marv’s Marvlus Pit BBQ and EZ Foods Olympia, to bring in fresh appetizers and salads made from all local produce. She also reported that many acts and exhibitors have confirmed their presence at the event and planning seems to be running on schedule.

The Water Quality Monitoring Program, to be done in conjunction with Pierce County’s Surface Water Management, is moving forward. Sheila has been in the field searching possible monitoring locations that will fit within the protocol requirements for collecting aquatic insects, while providing safety and enough space to fit a small group of teachers and students on site.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Sheila Jackson, new Director of Philanthropy for the NLT, reported that Hancock has accepted the offer for Section-22, a parcel located in the Upper Watershed. This is a very important piece that connects Mount Rainier National Park to its neighboring forestlands.

The Annual Nisqually Land Trust BBQ will be held Sunday, September 23rd. Please call the Land Trust office for more details!

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila was unable to attend today’s meeting, but left a report that she was having a fabulous summer vacation.
- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin reported the Nisqually River Foundation Board of Directors met last night at the Center for Urban Waters in Tacoma. Matters concerning the future actions and direction of the NRF and NRC will be discussed later in the meeting.

Justin also reported that the event for Dan J. Evans Stewardship Award is to be held this fall. The award will be going to Norm Dicks, for all the work he has done for the Nisqually Watershed. The Foundation is very close to setting a date for the event, which is tentatively set for October 8th. The site will be the Nisqually Tribe’s Braget Farm Conference Center, located just across the interstate from NNWR. The event will be used as a means to raise funds for furthering the work of the Council and the Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don Perry was unable attend the meeting due to a scheduling conflict.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris reported at the July meeting that the Puget Sound Partnership was soliciting requests for prioritization listings of large capital project proposals from regional organizations working towards salmon recovery. Each organization was asked to make two lists, one to apply for base funding for individual watersheds, the other to go towards larger, regional projects. Chris and the members of the Salmon Habitat Workgroup met to discuss how to prioritize future Nisqually projects and which of these projects should be submitted for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Fund.

Base allocation funding that would be assigned across each watershed of the Puget Sound would provide Nisqually with an estimated \$1.4 million. Members of the workgroup agreed that momentum should not be lost on the Ohop Restoration Project and would like to see funds go towards implementing Phase 2, estimated at \$3 million. Combining PSAR funds with those granted each year from SRF Board would give the tribe the financial resources to move forward on this project. This would mean that all other projects applying for SRF Board allocated funds would be neglected next year. However, the Burwash Property is ready for the next step of this vital restoration in the Ohop Valley. There was a motion to approve this project to be submitted for PSAR funding. The motion was unanimously accepted and approved the Council.

Chris will be writing up this proposal and submitting it to the Puget Sound Partnership later today.

For the listing of regional project prioritization, the workgroup has selected three projects of which to nominate. First is the acquisition of 250+ acres in the McKenna Reach, which would provide significant benefits for salmon. This funding would purchase the land and allow for a restoration of designs on a heavily impaired section of the mainstem of the Nisqually; costs estimates are around \$1 million to purchase the land and \$1 million for the restoration. The second would allow for the purchase of conservation easements in the Wilcox Reach. Wilcox Farms is looking to abandon their lower pastures and acquiring these small parcels and removal of the armoring, would open up the area for mainstem restoration. Lastly, the NRF has received a grant to explore an ecosystem services pilot project, partnering with NLT, DNR and NNRG, as one of two organizations in the state to develop this trading system. To see if this project could really work in the Nisqually Watershed, the project would look to acquire 1000+ acres in the Upper Watershed through a conservation

easement of commercial forestland. There was a motion to approve this list to be submitted for PSAR funding. The motion was unanimously accepted and approved by the Council.

Chris will draw up these proposals in the coming month to be turned to the Puget Sound Partnership.

David added that he has been working closely with the Western Washington Treaty Tribe's Initiative. This initiative has brought together a number of tribes in the region to form a tribal forum. In the coming months, David will be tabling the idea of moving I-5 to a pier system as a major part of restoration of the Nisqually's mainstem.

Weir update: No fish yet. ☹

3. Update of the Bud Blancher Trail Construction

Nick Bond, Town Planner for Eatonville

The Town of Eatonville is currently working on a trail construction project to extend the Bud Blancher Trail. Funding for this project has been acquired through grants and donations, as well as a match from the town. The total project cost for the construction is \$1.4 million.

Phase 1 of the project is to be completed through a volunteer project set for September 8th, 2012. Workers will aim clear a path and build the northern section of the trail that will connect Weyerhaeuser Road to Eatonville Elementary School, allowing young students to travel from one side of town to the other without utilizing busy streets. Those who wish to volunteer their time and service should contact Cheryl Wright for more details.

Phase 2 of the trail construction project will begin at Center Street and continue down an old Weyerhaeuser logging road that runs north of Pack Forest. Construction of this 2-mile portion of the Bud Blancher Trail will begin at the end of 2013, following the stabilization the bank of the Little Mashel River and removal the current Mashel River Bridge, replacing it with a more stable structure. The town will aim to complete this portion in the existing salmon window, in the summer of 2013.

Nick's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare website. To view, please visit: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/bud-blancher-trail-construction-eatonville-2012>

4. Update of the South Sound Prairie Program

Patrick Dunn, Program Director, Center for Natural Lands Management

Originally a division of The Nature Conservancy, the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) has been working towards the conservation and preservation of prairie and oak woodlands for the last 20 years. The CNLM is a grant-funded organization that currently manages 75 preserves, in cooperation with multiple project partners, and works to enhance conservation in an ecologically beneficial manner throughout the eco-region, conducting regular maintenance, removing invasives and administering prescribed fires. They also aim to protect threatened and endangered species, having four candidate species slated for listing under the Endangered Species Act for 2012.

The organization focuses on four major projects: prairie restoration, cooperative conservation, freshwater, and science. This includes assisting other organizations with management of their lands, small and large-scale restorations, and seed and plant production. Another segment under the CNLM is the Sustainability in Prisons Project, first introduced by Nalini Nadkarni of The Evergreen State College.

This includes the propagation of rare and endangered species, such as the Oregon spotted frog and the checkerspot butterfly, by inmates at local prisons. Other projects are the Cascadia Prairie-Oak Partnership, knotweed control, salmonid conservation, and research studies of pollinators, soil biotic communities, and climate change.

Volunteers have proven to be critical in the preservation and restoration of managed prairie and oak woodlands, contributing almost 5,000 hours each year. Volunteers help with natural seed collection, weed control, monitoring, and putting together the organization's annual Prairie Appreciation Day. CNLM is currently looking to increase their community education and outreach, however more funding is needed.

Patrick's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare website. To view, visit: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/south-sound-prairies-update-august-2012>

5. Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan Discussion

David Troutt, NRC Chair

The Nisqually River Foundation Board meeting yesterday and it was decided that NRF staff should look to develop a 3-year budget, along with a 3-year action plan for implementing the NWSP. The structure of the plan will resemble that of the 3-year Salmon Recovery Plan, highlighting key action items, estimated project costs, and potential funding sources. Over the next few months, Foundation staff will be referring to the notes from March's annual retreat, as well as the NWSP, to take inventory of objectives being currently undertaken by project partners. Staff will be then able to acknowledge objectives in need of attention and make decisions as to how to delegate these tasks and how to acquire necessary funding.

The Board is also looking to redistribute the responsibilities of the NRF's Executive Director to include the implementation of the NWSP. To allow for this transition, the Foundation would aim to hire a grants manager to undertake financial and administration tasks. Finances would need to be acquired to allow for this shift to compensate for the salary of the Executive Director.

6. For the Good of the Order

Chris Schutz reported that the Pierce County would begin working on a 1200-foot extension of the levee near Mount Rainier National Park in the Upper Watershed. Construction is set to begin in September of this year. At the completion of this project, the County will be then be installing a number of erosion control structures, such as engineered log jams, to slow the river, help guard against flooding and increase protection of the levee. These projects are being moved on ahead of schedule due to unexpected funding and are in accordance with the Pierce County Flood Plan.

Chris also shared that the Pierce County Flood Plan and Environmental Impact Statement have been completed and will be brought before Pierce County's Economic Infrastructure and Development Committee next week. They will have the opportunity to make changes and thereafter will move forward for a final vote. After the Flood Plan has been approved, Pierce County will then be activating the Nisqually Plan, followed by Channel Migration Zone (CMZ) operations. There are no specific dates for these actions. There will opportunity for public comment on both the Nisqually Plan and CMZ operations before the commencement of these projects.

Jessica Moore, from NW Trek, will be holding a Habitat Restoration Workshop Saturday, August 18th. Ashley will email event information to the NRC Contact list.

David took a moment to share the successes of Canoe Journey and his hope that everyone was able to take part in this amazing celebration of tribal culture.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 11:53am.

***Next Meeting: Friday, September 21, 2012, 9:30am – 12:30pm
Mount Rainier National Park, Longmire Building***