



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
December 21, 2012
UW Pack Forest Conference Center
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Ron Averill – *Lewis County*
Jean Takekawa – *Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge*

David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
*** CAC Representatives (1)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Fred Michelson
Steve Pruitt
Karelina Resnick*

Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith

Guests

Greg Burtchard – *Mount Rainier National Park*
Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Kim Gridley – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Steve Ruff – *Miles Sand and Gravel*

Chris Schutz – *Pierce County*
Rene Skaggs – *Pierce Conservation District*
Stephanie Suter – *Puget Sound Partnership*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*
Don Perry – *Nisqually Stream Stewards*

Sheila Wilson -- *Nisqually River Education Project*
Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually River Council*

1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Call to Order – David called the meeting to order at 9:47am.

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

2. Introductions, Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Karelina shared that the CAC held a potluck celebration and recruiting party for their December meeting. They have also been working to update the NRC website, adding an events calendar and partner resource links. The development of the Citizens Conservation Certification assessment is proving to take more time than they had predicted, but has shown to be a larger project than originally thought.
- *Chair Report* – David reported that the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) request has been approved through the Governor's office. Nisqually did quite well in their submission of intended restoration projects. Chris will provide further details later his salmon recovery report.

The National Blueways System, a program created earlier this year by the U.S. Department of Interior, recognizes nationally and regionally significant rivers, their watersheds and the collaborative efforts of partners and stakeholders, while using a landscape-scale approach to river conservation and management. The first and only inductee to the program is the Connecticut River and Watershed of New England. The Nisqually has been nominated as a future candidate for the program. Representatives will visit the NRC and Nisqually Tribal Council to give a full presentation in January.

This program could be beneficial in bringing outside attention, awareness, and involvement to the Nisqually Watershed, as well as providing financial and technical assistance. The following supporting documents have been made available at:

<http://nisquallyriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/NationalBluewaysSystem-FAQs.pdf>

<http://nisquallyriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/NationalBluewaysSystem-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<http://nisquallyriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/NationalBluewaysSystem-MOUConnecticutRiverWatershed.pdf>

- *Staff Report* – Ashley reported that she has been working with Emmett O’Connell on the development of the NRC website. Those that have not had a chance to do so should visit www.nisquallyriver.org to check out the new design and layout. A new calendar has been added to organize watershed-wide dates and events, in hopes of avoiding overlapping activities and volunteer opportunities.

The Nisqually River Foundation had a staff retreat earlier this week. Heading to Ocean Shores for two days, the retreat allowed Justin, Sheila, and Ashley to develop a plan for the NRC and NRF for 2013. This plan includes increasing member participation for the Council, developing individual staff work plans, and expanding the Nisqually Sustainable program.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe Kane reported that the Land Trust has two transactions closing today. The first, the Burwash property, which has been a tough property to acquire. The second is a 57-acre piece that joins a parcel acquired from Hancock last October and will act as a buffer between the upper watershed wildlife corridor and the housing developments below. This parcel will also be entered in the future carbon credit market.

The Nisqually Land Trust was awarded \$20,000 from the Nisqually Indian Tribe, as part of the tribe’s 2012 Charitable Fund. Unfortunately, this is less than the Land Trust has received in the past and may mean the loss of their AmeriCorps position in the coming year. They will need \$5,000 to be able to carry the position through 2013, for which they have already been approved. David will look to acquire these necessary funds for the organization.

The NLT is requesting a rearrangement of SRF Board Funds for 2013. The Land Trust was awarded grant money for a conservation easement on the Litzenberger Property. However, an unforeseen problem has developed with Pierce County and the zoning of this property. Since the property is being recognized as agricultural and not residential, the value has decreased greatly. This makes an easement no longer beneficial to the property owner. The SRF Board has agreed to incorporate these funds into the Burwash and Martin Property projects, which are short on funding. There was a motion to approve the redistribution of SRF Board funding. The Council unanimously accepted the movement.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila reported that with the conclusion of tree planting, 670 students and 130 teachers and parent volunteers, planted native species on 7 sites throughout the Nisqually Watershed. Thanks to the Nisqually Tribe for the funding assistance they provided this year!

NREP has three Evergreen interns signed up for Winter 2013. Christian Sartin and Desiree Andersen will be returning, along with an additional part-time intern coming on.

Sheila is pursuing two new grant opportunities. The first, an environmental education grant with Abby Rusky and E3, and the second, a water quality and habitat restoration grant from the Department of Ecology with the Chehalis Basin Education Consortium and South Sound GREEN.

Student GREEN Congress is right around the corner and will be taking place at the Evergreen State College on March 21st, 2013.

Up and coming for NREP is Salmon Carcass Tossing and the Eatonville Stormwater Initiative, which will work to install 6 to 8 rain gardens in the Town of Eatonville over the next two years.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin reported that the Nisqually Tribe gave away \$1.4 million as part of their 2012 Charitable Fund, in which the Foundation also received \$20,000 at the event, along with their \$20,000 donation at the Daniel J. Evans Stewardship Award event.

Justin has been working to develop the Foundation budget for 2013. The budget was to be presented to NRF Board this week. Unfortunately, the meeting was canceled and rescheduled for early January. The Board has given approval via email for the Foundation to operate in the new year, until a formal approval can take place.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don Perry has been working to complete the tribe's salmon recovery newsletter, "Yil Me Hu." The latest addition hit the stands last week and includes information about current restoration and conservation projects in the Nisqually Watershed. Hard copies are available at today's meeting and an electronic version will be added to the NRC website.

The Nisqually Salmon Watcher Program, a citizen-science program that trains volunteers to identify and count salmon species, is in full swing. Volunteers are counting and recording information twice a week in order to provide vital information on spawning salmonid species.

This year's Salmon Carcass Toss was held Dec 15th and saw 600 carcasses added to watershed tributaries.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris also reported on the Governor's fully approved PSAR request of \$80 million. For Nisqually, it means project funding for Ohop Phase 2 is secured, along with additional supplemental and match funds. This money will need to be spent in the next two years, meaning site preparation and construction will begin the summer of 2013 and will conclude in the summer of 2014. Permits are anticipated to be the most difficult portion of the project. After the completion and success of Phase 1, more freedom is being allowed for the restoration design of Phase 2, which will aim to maximize benefits for salmon and flood plain protection. PSAR funds will also be incorporated into the McKenna Ranch Property, including land acquisition and demolition of all structures for a new restoration project, the largest on the mainstem to date. The property owner is ready to begin negotiations, under the condition that their personal residence is left intact. Excluding the residence from the sale will mean a lower price, making the project more obtainable.

Numbers for this year's Nisqually chum run are down 75%, with only 6,000 fish being seen this far into the season. The tribe is hoping to meet numbers necessary for escapement and will more than likely close the fishery early. Decreased populations could have something to do with past weather events. Historically, an inverse relationship has been noticed between coho and chum runs, this year being an amazing season for coho.

3. Archaeological Research at Mount Rainier National Park

Greg Burtchard, Archaeologist and Tribal Relations, MRNP

Greg Burtchard came to work at Mount Rainier National Park in 2000 and has worked to further the development and surveying of over 100 documented pre-historic and pre-contact sites that lie within the park boundaries. His research is a continuance of past archaeologists to understand the history of how humans have used the planet over time by examining relics left behind.

Archeological research at the national park has provided evidence that historically, tribes once settled mountainous regions, which were once considered to be inhospitable. In fact, site research has shown that not only did humans inhabit land that surrounds Mount Rainier, but that they are thought to have burned forests to the ground to create areas of open meadow. Not only did the open landscape provide space for the tribe, but also paved the way for elk,

birds, and other wildlife to move in, providing food and other resources. Studies in the past 2 to 3 years have shown that human presence dates back as far as 10-12,000 years BP, in the early to mid-Holocene.

The most recent project at Mount Rainier National Park is the Buck Lake Project, which has arguably returned the most useful and informative data. The testing uses sediment coring in Buck Lake, a natural trap with no outlet for pollen or sediment. Implications of the research show a shift from an open pine environment to that of a closed fir dominated habitat, an increase in fire frequency through the years, and two volcanic effects, each large enough to suppress vegetation (Mt. Mazama and Mt. St. Helen.) The first of the artifacts found dated back to 7,500 BP, with the earliest presence being estimated between 9,000 to 9,500 years ago, before the Mt. Mazama event and consistent with the early-Holocene land-use onset.

A portion of Greg's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare website. To access, please visit: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/environment-a>

4. Recognition of NRC members Jean Takekawa and Ron Averill.
5. Viewing of Saving the Oceans with Carl Safina, "River of Kings", Part 1 and 2. Both episodes are available on the NRC website: www.nisquallyriver.org.
6. **For the Good of the Order**
Nothing at this time.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 1:03pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, January 18, 2013, 9:00am – 12:00pm
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge*