



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
February 15, 2013
Ohop Grange, Eatonville
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Bryan Bowden – *Mount Rainier National Park*
JW Foster – *City of Yelm*
Edna Fund – *Lewis County*
Cindy James – *Department of Ecology*

Jim McCune -- *Pierce County*
David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Cindy Wilson – *Thurston County*
*** CAC Representatives (1)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Debbie Anderson
Steve and Rosalea Pruitt
Karelina Resnick*

Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith

Guests

Lisa Breckenridge – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Alex Callendar – *Department of Ecology*
Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Kim Gridley – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Amy Kruver – *Pierce County*
Renee Mitchell – *Pierce Conservation District*

Mark Savoca – *USGS*
Stephanie Suter – *Puget Sound Partnership*
Terry Turner – *Trout Unlimited*
Barb Wood – *Thurston County*
Dan Wrye – *Pierce County Surface Water Management*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Desiree Andersen -- *Nisqually River Ed. Project*
Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*
Don Perry – *Nisqually Stream Stewards*

Christian Sartin -- *Nisqually River Education Project*
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 9:33am.

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

2. Introductions, Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Steve reported that the CAC has developed a new way to proceed with the Citizens Conservation Certification program. This will be discussed at the CAC's upcoming meeting scheduled for March 7th at 6pm.
- *Chair Report* – David reported that he has been working in Olympia to support Gregoire's PSAR budget. At this point, the Senate is unwilling to support the efforts outlined by the outgoing Governor. PSAR funds are critical to ensuring projects in the Nisqually move forward, with contributions estimated at \$4-5 million.

Justin and David have been working to secure the Tribal Capacity Grant, which would provide financial support for the Council for years to come.

David has been talking to Kim Lutz and Rebecca Wodder of the National Blueways Program, in hopes of establishing a date for them to visit the watershed and introduce the program to both the NRC and the Nisqually Tribal Council. However, due to a budget crisis of their own, travel has been suspended for employees until further notice. It is hoped that Sally Jewell, if appointed to the Secretary of Interior will accompany them on their visit. A potential visit would take place in either March or April, but may not line up with a regularly scheduled River Council meeting. The program is currently in its pilot phase, working with six watersheds throughout the country. Nisqually would be the seventh watershed to join the program. David has been forwarded the application materials to work on over the next month. Joining this program could prove helpful in drawing media attention to the Nisqually, as well as providing federal support to projects like the Community Forest and the I-5 Pier System Transition.

- *Staff Report* – Ashley reported that she has been working to complete the latest edition of the Nisqually River Notes. The newsletter should hit the printer sometime next week.

She has also been working to rid her and Justin's office of the 15,000 Nisqually Good Neighbor Handbooks that now line the wall. An envelope has been created and funding has been secured to distribute the books to residents of the Nisqually Watershed. A letter will be written by Justin and included in the mailing.

Ashley has been working with Justin and Christine, the Foundation's bookkeeper, to better track incoming and outgoing funds of the 2013 budget. This will include detailed account of grant funds spent, as well as how they were spent. This will allow the Foundation to plan accordingly, ensuring funds are being exhausted correctly and efficiently.

The NRC's Annual Retreat will take place next month at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park in Eatonville. The retreat will be held on March 15th and will run from 9:30am to 3:30pm. Lunch and snacks will be provided. Ashley mentioned that bringing on a professional facilitator to guide the retreat is still being considered. David added that facilitator would assist the NRC in creating evaluations for ongoing programs to determine effectiveness. This could allow the Council to refine the message being sent out, while readdressing goals and objectives. Members of the Council seemed very interested in working with Nancy Lee and approved bringing her on to assist with this year's retreat.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe reported that 2012 was the second best year for land acquisitions in the history of the Land Trust. They have made great strides in accumulating acreage and increasing ownership and will continue to look for parcels in need of conservation in the upper watershed. The Land Trust also intends to set their sights on the Nisqually Aquatic Reserve and are looking for grants to begin preliminary assessments in 2014.

On March 16th, the Land Trust will hold their 21st Annual Conservation Dinner and Auctions at St. Martin's University. The event runs from 4 to 9pm and will feature a number of items up for auction. This year, the Land Trust will be honoring the Nisqually Tribe and their Restoration Team for Partner of the Year.

Dan Wrye mentioned a piece of land that Pierce County and the Land Trust have been looking at for years. The 120-acre parcel is located on both sides of the Nisqually River in the upper reaches watershed, half of which is in Pierce County. Pierce County is still interested in acquiring this shoreline property and may be able to come up with half the funds. This land, owned by DNR, may need to be reassessed for an accurate purchase value.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila reported that the Salmon Carcass Toss fieldtrips have concluded. This season saw 2,400 hatchery Chinook added to the upper reaches of the Nisqually River by 277 students and 62 teachers and parent helpers.

Yesterday, February 14th, marked the first of two winter Water Quality Monitoring dates. Most teachers from the Town of Eatonville took their students out sites along the Nisqually River and its tributaries. The remaining water samples are to be collected next Thursday, February 21st. There are 41 teachers participating in Water Quality Monitoring this winter at 35 separate sites.

The 21st Annual Student GREEN Congress will take place March 21st at The Evergreen State College. Sheila is still looking for volunteers for a variety of tasks throughout the day. She would like to thank everyone in advance for their help in putting together this day of fun and education.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the NREP Program, Sheila sought out advice from colleagues, as well as inquired about evaluations at a NOAA conference she attended in Port Townsend. Sheila determined that the best way was to survey the student participants before, during, and after the school year. Approximately 150 students from 6 classrooms in the Nisqually Watershed completed the questionnaire. Scores showed a definite increase of knowledge gained in the areas of local environmental issues and natural processes. Sheila's presentation is available on request and welcomes feedback on this evaluation process.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin reported that he has been elected Chair for Alliance for a Healthy South Sound's Council. Justin will be bringing reports from the AHSS Council quarterly as to connect the NRC in projects happening throughout the region, as well as providing potential networking opportunities.

The Foundation was unable to pull together event surrounding the local airing of the River of Kings episodes, due to high costs and lack of sponsor interest. The show will air on KCTS-9 in the coming weeks. Ashley will send out the information once the date and times have been confirmed.

Justin and Ashley will be pulling together a survey next week for NRC members to fill out by March's Annual Retreat. The survey will be used to evaluate the work and programs of the Nisqually River Council and allow for future project planning and prioritization.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don Perry reported that the Stream Stewards had a phenomenal turnout at the tube removal event, held February 9th at the Braget Marsh. People came from as far as Seattle and Puyallup to lend a helping hand and removed an estimated 1,000 tubes from the plants at the restoration site. Attendees showed a lot interest in the history of the land and the Nisqually Tribe. Don would love to lead a short tour of the marsh after an upcoming Council meeting. He intends to hold another event to remove the remainder of the tubes at the site on March 23rd.

The Nisqually Tribe and the Nisqually River Council will be putting on a new festival this year, the Eatonville Salmon Fest, October 19th at Smallwood and Mill Pond Parks. Don has been communicating with Eatonville residents and stakeholders to gather information and resources. He was to meet with the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce this month, but the meeting was pushed back due to scheduling conflicts.

This year's Stream Stewards class is about half full. Don is introducing new field tours, as well as new presenters this year. He is currently working on outline and will have it ready for distribution by next month's Council meeting.

Don is also looking for interested juniors and seniors from Eatonville High School interested in developing and implementing raingardens as part of their senior projects. This program is part of an upcoming LID/Stormwater Project contracted through the Town of Eatonville, NREP and the Nisqually Tribe for 2013 and 2014. He, as well as Sheila, will be attending the Eatonville Career Fair on March 4th in hopes of finding interested students.

Don has been trying to assess the impacts of the Stream Stewards training on past participants. A way for him to evaluate results is to look at the class size and assume that each of student is communicating what they are learning to others. In the future, Don would like to take a closer look at this at the evaluation process.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris reported that the Salmon Recovery Annual Review took place February 6th and 7th at the Tribe’s Red Wind Casino. Messages delivered by co-managers of hatcheries and programs were not refined or polished, but showcased real data and information. Highlights include:
 - H-Integration Efforts had its greatest success in the harvest arena with newly introduced fishing techniques in the Tribal fishery proving to be effective.
 - The increase of the Nisqually sport fishery. Through surveys and submitted catch record cards, it was found that while the commercial harvest decreased, the sport harvest more than doubled. There are now more guides than ever on the river, showing people where to go and how to catch Nisqually salmon. With the boost in the sport fishery has also come an increased amount of motorized boats on the water. This hasn’t yet impeded spawning grounds, but is something to watch for.
 - Review of the weir system has allowed managers to re-tool the way the weir was run last year, as well as how staffing was organized.
 - The Steelhead Recovery Plan process is to begin very soon, with a plan being drafted by the end of 2013. This process will allow partners and agencies to provide comments and contribution to the efforts.

The Tribe’s Restoration Team is currently working on a Land Trust property in Hogum Bay, directly west of the Nisqually Delta in a pocket estuary.

The Tribe has ongoing monitoring of the estuary restoration area, including tracking fish with PIT tags. As fish move through different creeks and habitats, the tags are scanned at specific locations. This allows biologists and technicians to see where fish have been and when they were there. This pilot project has already began experiencing hiccups. Issues lie with the use of solar panels at this time of year, which are used to power the devices, along with in-stream debris blocking bar code scanners.

Kim added that the Burwash Property has closed in the Ohop Valley and the Tribe will be moving forward with Phase 2 of the Restoration. Phase 2, which will be similar to Phase 1, intends to raise waters levels and continue the sinuosity of an additional 1.2 miles of the creek, while restoring vegetation on the valley floor. At this point, 60% of the design and permits are in place, with construction and implementation beginning in 2014-2015. The Tribe is working with the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group to secure more funding for the project.

Kim attended an all day workshop yesterday, February 14th, with faculty from The Evergreen State College. The conference brought people from around the world and provided them with a guided tour of the Nisqually Basin, starting with the logjams of the Mashel River and ending with a presentation from David Troutt at the Nisqually estuary.

Kim has also been working with the Town of Eatonville on their Stormwater Comprehensive Plan. The committee met two weeks ago to take a look at upcoming projects and prioritize them as a part of the town’s Stormwater Management Plan.

Chris added that North of Falcon planning process for the 2013-2014 fishing season would begin in March. Steelhead Recovery will be included in this process.

3. Characterization of the Groundwater Flow System in the Nisqually

Mark Savoca, Hydrologist, USGS

Mark has come today to share the mission of the USGS and a potential project in the Nisqually Watershed. To fully understand the function of a river system, one must take in consideration not only the target river, but also

neighboring rivers, tributaries, and groundwater systems. USGS would like to monitor the groundwater flow of the watershed and construct a “Numerical Flow Model” to better understand water resources in the Nisqually. Data would be collected and integrated into the model to provide a tool for evaluating potential effects of future natural and anthropogenic activities on groundwater, surface-water resources, and aquatic habitat. This mathematical representation of the Nisqually Watershed system would offer information such as stream flow and discharge, while answering questions about the effects of climate change, fluctuation of precipitation levels, and increased human populations.

From the viewpoint of the USGS, the Nisqually is a very advantageous watershed. However, since the USGS is only partially funded, they must raise supplemental financial resources by seeking out partner organizations to assist with project support. Due to financial constraints, the USGS can contribute a 40% match to all projects. The estimated length to complete this study of the Nisqually Watershed would take about 4.5 years and about \$900,000. Mark is in search of multiple partners to split the costs for this research.

Questions and/or interest in this project can be directed at Mark via email at: mesavoca@usgs.gov.

Mark’s presentation has been made available on the NRC’s SlideShare website. Please visit: www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-watershed-characterization.

4. Pierce County Stormwater Management Plan for 2013

Dan Wrye, Pierce County Surface Water Management

Since 2008, Pierce County has been using a composite system to “grade” stream health, including both chemical water quality testing and macroinvertebrate sampling. The system rates degrees of non-compliance and compliance on a scale from 1 to 5, respectively. Since using this model in 2008, compliance has gone up 105%, while non-compliance has gone down 50%. Pierce County employees are sent to 65 sites per month to collect the necessary data for this composite. The “Raise the Grade” program, which will focus on Horn Creek, Spanaway Creek, Swan Creek, and Minter Creek for 2013, recently won the National Environmental Achievement Award for Innovation in Operations from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. Congratulations to Pierce County for their hard work and dedication!

Dan is here to share with the Council the goals for 2013 Stormwater Management Plan. They include:

1. Continued compliance with the current permit. This includes following 150 pages of regulations and completing 100+ requirements of the NPDES Phase I Municipal Storm Permit. This year alone, \$17 million has been spent to complete the compliance for the permit.
2. Prepare for next permit, which will go into effect August 2013. This will add an additional \$3-4 million in costs per year costs.
3. Work for federal and state funding to be prioritized in order to help pay for programs looking to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater on the State’s water resources.
4. Continue successful programs and enhance other programs identified in 2012 EPA Audit of Pierce County’s Stormwater Program.
5. Continue to use parts of the NPDES Phase I Stormwater Permit to further Pierce County’s watershed health improvement goals, specifically the “Raise the Grade” program.

The Draft 2013 Stormwater Management Plan is open for public comment. Comments can be made and documents are available online by visiting: www.piercecountywa.org/npdes.

5. Nisqually Community Forest

Joe Kane, Nisqually Land Trust

The Nisqually Community Forest Planning Committee has reached the end of Phase 1, the conceptual planning phase for this project. This time has allowed the committee to establish goals, decide what they want to accomplish with this project, and how they will complete tasks associated with creating a community forest. The Community

Forest began as a way to take back ownership in the Nisqually Watershed. It was a little known fact that most of the upper watershed is owned by a timber management company in South Carolina, with most of the wood being exported to China. Residents and local stakeholders care a great deal about the quality of the water running through the Nisqually River system, as well presence or absence of salmon. The question was, how could local stakeholders compete at a market level and be involved in the ownership of their watershed? It is predicted that in about 3 years time, Hancock will begin to divest large, bare blocks of land. The committee wants to be ready with the necessary funds to acquire these parcels. Property near Mineral Lake and Vale are also viable options. The committee brought in planners, contractors, and other members of the timber industry to seek counsel and compile research for a project of this scale. Decisions will need to be made whether providing recreational and economic attractions and opportunities would be of priority and whether a new market credit system would be appropriate for the chosen parcel.

After 18 months, the committee has completed a draft report summarizing their actions and is ready to move into Phase 2. They are now in search of available funds or investors to support the purchase of sizeable piece of property. The next step is to decide who will own the land. Options included: purchasing the land under a subsidiary of the NLT, purchasing the land under the umbrella of the NRF, developing a new non-profit or for-profit organization or creating a Nisqually TIMO, to name a few. It was decided that a new subsidiary would be created under the NLT to avoid forming another Nisqually non-profit and because of the experience they have with land acquisition and the timber industry. Possible disadvantages include: whether or not the NLT can undertake a project of this size, while maintaining and keeping separate the everyday operations of the two branches. Though the Land Trust will continue to discuss this idea, the committee is looking for an endorsement from the Nisqually River Council. The goal is to have an ownership entity established by the end of 2013.

The Community Forest will eventually become a self-sustaining entity able to make its own decisions, such as whether to harvest timber, at what rate, and whether acquiring an onsite mill will be necessary. Any accumulated profits will go back into the working forest or put towards the purchase of additional tracts of land. It is hoped that the Community Forest will be able to provide an economic engine for the local community.

The paper is to be completed by the end next week and at that time will be open to public comment. The Council will review the document and decide on an endorsement at that time. Ashley will distribute the report as soon as the final revisions have been made.

More information on the Nisqually Community Forest is available at: www.nisquallycommunityforest.org.

6. For the Good of the Order

Nothing at this time.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:13 pm.

*Next Meeting: NRC Annual Retreat
Friday, March 15, 2013, 9:30am – 3:30pm
NW Trek Wildlife Park, Eatonville*