



Nisqually River Notes

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The Nisqually, “River of Kings”

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As an educational intern for the Nisqually River Foundation for the 2010-2011 school year, I was allowed to witness firsthand the amazing projects and places of beauty that exist in the Nisqually Watershed. As the school year and my time with the Foundation came to a close, I received my diploma for a Bachelors Degree in Science from the Evergreen State College and headed to Ketchikan, AK for a long summer of hard work. Towards the end of summer, you could imagine my surprise when I received a phone call from Justin Hall, Executive Director of NRE, inviting me to be a part of filming a television show for PBS about the Nisqually Watershed.



Carl Safina, Host, and Jean Takekawa, Manager, Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (Photo Taken by: C. Safina)

I wasn't surprised that the Nisqually Watershed had been chosen to be a part of their series. My experience over the previous year had explained their decision. The Nisqually is the only river to have its headwaters inside the boundaries of a national park and its estuary in a National Wildlife Refuge. People of the Nisqually have also created and maintained powerful and almost unheard of partnerships between Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and local farmers, such as Wilcox Farms. One of the Tribe's two hatcheries, seated on creek behind locked military gates, is a direct result of these prevailing connections. Then there's the Nisqually River Council, an organization that has united a community with local, state, and federal agencies and non-profits, while completing a series of action items for over 25 years. Not to mention, the Tribe's adaptive salmon recovery plan which is currently implementing a weir project unlike anything else attempted in the Puget Sound. Why would someone want to capture the work of the Nisqually Watershed on film? I think the question is more like, why not? But how? How had a production company on the east coast gotten wind of the happenings of a watershed over 3,000 miles away? The answer is one article that appeared the New York Times that just happened to be read by John Angier, Co-founder of Chedd-Angier Productions, a company based out of Boston, Massachusetts.



*John Angier, Producer of "Saving the Ocean"
(Photo Taken by: J. Hall)*

So, what's a girl to do? Book a flight home and meet with John Angier and his talented team that would film the episode, that's what! For the week that followed, I drove them and the show's host, Carl Safina, Founder of the Blue Ocean Institute, to every corner of the watershed. We hiked through the muddy sloughs of low-tide at the Nisqually estuary, ventured to Eatonville to see how the town is working to curb the effects of stormwater run-off and to the Mashel River in search of spawning Chinook, to learn about the benefits of logjams, and to meet the biologists working to ensure salmon continue to survive in the Nisqually River system. We witnessed a traditional tribal fishery, got a close look at the Nisqually Weir Project and the Tribe's two hatcheries at Clear and Kalama Creeks, and sampled the South Sound with lampara nets.

With such incredible and in-depth footage, “River of Kings”, as the episode is titled, had to be split into two parts. Both episodes are available through the Nisqually River Council's website at: www.nisquallyriver.org. Visit the site today to take your personal guided tour throughout the Nisqually Watershed. You will appreciate even more the work of the Nisqually River Council, the Nisqually Tribe, the Nisqually Land Trust, and all the individuals who have come together to make a difference for the salmon, the community, and the watershed.

A letter from the Executive Director...

The 2012 Daniel J. Evans Nisqually Stewardship Award



On October 24th the Nisqually River Foundation awarded the second Daniel J. Evans Nisqually Stewardship Award to Congressman Norm Dicks. The award is given once every five years to an individual or organization that has shown incredible commitment and dedication to the Nisqually Watershed.



Almost as soon as Congressman Dicks was first elected in 1976, the Nisqually Watershed community was coming together around the ideals of cooperation and conservation. The forerunner to the Nisqually River Council was started in the mid 80s, and with Congressman Dicks' help, the council has become a pioneer in local solutions.

Congressman Dicks has helped obtain funds for the expansion of the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge and helped direct funds to the refuge for the biggest estuary restoration on the West Coast. With his help, over 900 acres of estuary was restored on the Nisqually in recent years. This was a huge accomplishment and the largest of its kind in the region.



The best way to ensure salmon have habitat to return to is to protect it from degradation in the first place. In the Nisqually, we've spent a lot of energy and money making this kind of protection happen by helping landowners put their land into protective status. Congressman Dicks' leadership with Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery funding has been critical in helping protect over 75 percent of the Nisqually River's mainstem habitat. Throughout his time in Congress, Congressman Dicks has been instrumental in getting funds to implement innovative approaches to salmon recovery throughout the watershed.

We are honored that Congressman Dicks was our second recipient. You can see the artwork created in his honor in the Visitor's Center at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.

23rd Annual Nisqually Watershed Festival

Saturday, September 29th, the 23rd Annual Nisqually Watershed Festival took place at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. Arriving at the venue, an estimated 1,200 guests were guided through the entrance by a school of colorfully painted fish racing to where the fun began. Starting at the Education Center, exhibits were shared by local organizations displaying their work and providing education to the public. Upon leaving the building, guests were serenaded by the Celtic charm of Fiddlehead and the soulful jazz of Scott Cossu.



2012 Poster Contest Winner - Best in Show
"Nisqually is Our Home" - Megumi Miyashita - Hansen Elementary

On the way to the Visitor's Center, tables were lined and filled with exciting activities for the family. Many hands-on activities were offered. Fish prints could be made on both t-shirts and paper, keychains explaining the life cycle of Pacific salmon were assembled, and wooden fish could be painted that would line the entrance to next year's festival. Taking a stroll through "Critter Corridor", one could find exhibits from Wolf Haven, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, FIN, the Giant Wild Salmon, For Heaven's Sake Animal Rescue, and the owls of West Valley Learning Center. Every hour, guests could be spotted dressed as brightly-colored critters parading through the lot making animal noises and laughing joyously.

The Main Stage saw the return of a number acts, including the Olympic Highlanders, Brad Wood and his Live Raptor Show, Sabrina, the Reptile Woman, and the Squalli-Absch Canoe Family with the Shooting Stars. They were joined this year by new acts, Stefan, the mystifying water magician, and Nick Swan's "Hoot Show."

Would you like to be a part of next year's festival? Contact us at info@nisquallyriver.org to volunteer your time or contribute services or ideas. As always, we look forward to seeing you the last Saturday of September!



The Nisqually River Education Project

Twice a year, the students of the Nisqually River Education Project monitor the water quality of many of the tributaries and mainstem of the river. We help teachers and students become aware of how land use issues are impacting our local waters through participation in these meaningful watershed education experiences.



This fall, every fifth grader attending school in the Yelm School District participated in the Nisqually River Education Project's (NREP) water quality monitoring program. Many of the 5th grade Life Science Standards were addressed, including the topics of Ecosystems and Structures and Functions of Living Organisms. It also provided an opportunity for students to plan and participate in scientific investigations within a real world context.



With additional teachers coming on board in Eatonville, NREP had it's largest and most successful water quality monitoring to date with 47 teachers monitoring 39 sites with 863 students, and 169 volunteers. The Evergreen State College provided 48 of these volunteers who were trained in water quality monitoring and were of great help to our teachers.

Habitat Restoration Continues...

In cooperation with the Nisqually Tribe, Nisqually Land Trust, Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, NREP conducted 12 planting events at 3 separate sites with 673 students and 130 adult volunteers. Participating schools included:

- Chloe Clark Elementary
- Clarkmoor Elementary
- Eatonville Elementary
- Lackamas Elementary
- McKenna Elementary
- Meadows Elementary
- Nisqually Middle School
- Prairie Elementary
- River Ridge High School
- Shining Mountain Elementary
- Yelm High School
- Wa He Lut Indian School
- Weyerhaeuser Elementary



Meet the NREP Interns



Christian Sartin I am currently a Junior at The Evergreen State college pursuing my degree in Environmental Science. The outdoors have always played a role in my life and I have a lot of good memories growing up in the Nisqually Watershed. So I decided at a young age that I wanted to have a career that allowed me to work outside. Growing up and being a Yelm graduate, I remember doing water testing in 5th grade and learning about the salmon cycle from my teacher Ms. Knight-Palmer. I have been interning for the Nisqually River Education Project since September and my work with them has been very rewarding. The opportunity to work with kids and allow them to build their own experiences is really moving. It kind of goes full circle to be able to give something back to the watershed and know that the future generations are also having some of the same connections that enriched myself as a person.



Desiree Andersen I am currently a Junior at The Evergreen State College studying field ecology. I love working on projects outdoors, and after I graduate from Evergreen I hope to have a career in restoration ecology. I have been volunteering/interning with NREP since September and I've helped with water quality monitoring, benthics testing, tree planting, and salmon tossing as well as doing various projects at the office.



Anita Montgomery I am a student intern from Evergreen State College who is studying Visual Art and Design. I have a background in zoology, scientific illustration and graphic design and am currently learning about the Nisqually River Education Project and applying my skills towards helping with educational materials and displays.

Important Dates, Happenings, and Information

2013 Nisqually River Council Meeting Dates and Locations

March 15th	Annual Planning Retreat, NW Trek, Eatonville
April 19th	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Olympia
May 17th	Wilcox Family Farms, Roy
June 21st	Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Olympia
July 19th	UW Pack Forest, Eatonville
August 16th	Mount Rainier National Park, Ashford
September 20th	Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Olympia
October 18th	Ashford Fire Station, Ashford
November 15th	UW Pack Forest, Eatonville
December 20th	Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Olympia

Contacts

- NLT -- Nisqually Land Trust
- staff@nisquallylandtrust.org
- 360.489.3400
-
- NNWR -- Nisqually National Wildlife
- Refuge (I-5 at Exit 114)
- http://www.fws.gov/Nisqually
- 360.753.9467
-
- NRC -- Nisqually River Council
- info@nisquallyriver.org
- 360.438.8715
-
- NREP -- Nisqually River Ed. Project
- sheila@nisquallyriver.org
- 360.438.8715 x 2153
-
- NSS -- Nisqually Stream Stewards
- perry.don@nisqually-nsn.gov
- 360.438.8687 x 2143
-
- NW Trek
- jessica.moore@nwtrek.com
- 360.832.6117

Please contact 360.438.8715 or ashley@nisquallyriver.org for more information about the Nisqually River Council or any of these events!

Visit www.nisquallyriver.org to access our watershed-wide events calendar!

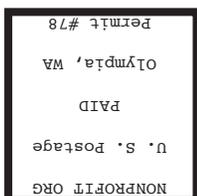
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