



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
January 17, 2014
Northwest Trek, Eatonville
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Roger Andrascik – Mount Rainier National Park
Bob Burkle – WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Amy Cruver – Pierce County
Edna Fund – Lewis County
Ted Keeley – WA Department of Natural Resources
Glynnis Nakai – Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

Rene' Skaggs – Pierce Conservation District
Stephanie Suter – Puget Sound Partnership
David Troutt – Nisqually Indian Tribe
Cindy Wilson – Thurston County
*** CAC Representatives (2)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Phyllis Farrell
Fred Michelson
Rosalea Pruitt
Steve Pruitt*

Karelina Resnick
Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith

Guests

David Bakter – Earth Economics
Bryan Bowden – NRC Alumnus
Lola Flores – Earth Economics
Ed Fund – Lewis County Resident

Mary Kay Nelson – Visit Rainier
Chris Schutz – Pierce County
Tracey Stanton – Earth Economics

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Morgan Greene – Nisqually River Foundation
Justin Hall – Nisqually River Foundation
Joe Kane – Nisqually Land Trust

Nathan Mead – Nisqually River Ed. Project
Ashley Von Essen – Nisqually River Council

1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda, Introductions

Call to Order – David Troutt called the meeting to order at 9:39am.

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 today. David took a moment to recognize Bryan Bowden and his years of service with the NRC, Mount Rainier National Park, and the Nisqually Watershed. He was presented with a plaque and a Tribal blanket. The Town of Eatonville and Mount Rainier National Park are holding a retirement party in Bryan's honor at the Town's Visitor Center, tomorrow from 2:00 to 4:00pm. Joe added that Bryan would be the first invited to join the Nisqually Community Forest Board of Directors.

2. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Steve Pruitt shared that the CAC has identified 4 goals for the coming year. These include completing the Citizens Conservation Certification, participation in the formation of the Nisqually Community Forest and the Upper Nisqually Scenic Byway, as well as the implementation of the Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan (NWSP). The CAC will be organizing their monthly meetings around the NRC's schedule of NWSP topics in order to efficiently further these objectives. The CAC also intends to support the Mount Nisqually Heritage Trail Project.

At this time, the CAC would like to nominate Phyllis Farrell as the committee's newest member, and asks the NRC review and approve her application at this time. The motion carries and passes unanimously.

- *Chair Report* – David has attended a number of meetings recently, including a lunch with JT Wilcox in search of sustained funding for the NRC. JT plans to work closely with the NRC in order to find a way to channel funds to the organization, either through Ecology or other supplemental sources. JT Austin, an advisor to Governor Inslee, has requested to receive updates from the NRC on project prioritization and progress made towards goals.

David and Justin also had the opportunity of lunching with Bill Bryant and Chris Bailey, the pilot who flew the NRF and the Russell Family Foundation over the watershed, a trip that resulted in thousands of dollars in donations. During the meeting, Bill noted that there is a great lack of private investment in the watershed. David, Bill, and Justin intend to meet with Dan Evans and Bill Ruckelshaus to find a way to access private funding, including those of corporations like Microsoft, Eddie Bauer, and Patagonia, for both the NRC and salmon recovery.

- *Staff Report* – Ashley was glad to report that the Nisqually Good Neighbor Handbook (GNH) was finally mailed to watershed residents in late November/early December. After two years, it's great to see this task completed, especially with the obstacles that presented itself throughout the process.

The Nisqually Watershed Festival Committee held a follow-up meeting to discuss the successes of the 24th annual event. Ashley was proud to share that FIN, the Giant Wild Salmon, has been secured for the 2014 festival.

Ashley also shared that she is excited to be taking on a new task, assisting Salmon Recovery with the interface of two databases, Habitat Work Schedule and Prism. These two systems are vital in communicating valuable information for the purposes of gaining funding on projects and sharing accomplishments and data to Congress, the Legislature, local, state, and federal agencies, the public, etc. This project is expected to take a great deal of Ashley's time in the first half of the year.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe shared that the NLT recently completed the acquisition of the Anderson Property, the final piece of the Mashel Shoreline Acquisition, finishing the permanent protection of a 3-mile corridor. This was the key piece of land for a project lead by Bryan Bowden, establishing the Greenbelt Trail in the heart of Eatonville. Funding must still be secured to build a bridge crossing the Mashel, completing the Bud Blancher Trail. The Land Trust will now be focusing the Middle Mashel and parcels deemed critical for steelhead recovery.

The Land Trust recently received a generous donation of 40 acres of working forest from the Ivers family, their first donation of its kind. This parcel will be managed for the long-term, using 50 to 100 year cycles that will eventually provide supplemental funding to the NLT.

The Land Trust's 25th annual auction will be April 26th at St. Martin's University. Save the Date cards will be hitting mailboxes very soon.

Glynnis Nakai, NNWR Manger, and Joe will be leading Denny Heck on a tour of the Refuge, providing him with background information of the restoration and future watershed projects. Denny has been in contact with other watersheds as well, to learn more projects and concerns in the Puget Sound.

The Nisqually Community Forest Committee has been working to formerly set up twin ownership entities, including both a non-profit and a for-profit. This will allow them to quickly begin acquiring land, while keeping the projects separate from the NLT. The committee will be meeting with EcoTrust to negotiate purchasing and holding selected properties from Hancock, keeping them until Nisqually is able to obtain them. They are currently considering land purchases in the Busywild for its critical value in salmon recovery.

Joe noted that the NLT has big plans for 2014, beginning with an easement on the Peterson Farm and then the McKenna Ranch Acquisition and Restoration, a major long-term project.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Nathan shared a report in Sheila’s absence, who is busy tossing salmon carcasses with elementary students today. This marks 7 of 14 tosses to be held this month. Nathan and James have been working very hard to ensure that each classroom receives a pre-trip presentation.

Nathan, who was brought on to aid the Chehalis Basin Education Consortium (CBEC) and South Sound Green (SSG), along with NREP, has been working with the organizations to create a watershed pledge for students. He has also been working with CBEC to transform tree-planting fieldtrips into field investigations that align with the New Generation Science Standards, a task NREP will be taking on as well.

NREP will be taking part in the de-watering of Ohop Creek as part of the next phase of the Ohop Restoration Project.

NREP has four water quality networking meetings coming up next month, including: February 6th in Lacey, February 10th in Eatonville, February 11th in Nisqually, and another in Bethel which has yet to be determined. NREP and SSG are currently looking for volunteers to help at this year’s Student GREEN Congress, scheduled for March 21st.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin mentioned that he and Ashley worked to complete the 2014 NRF budget. Towards the end, it appeared as though there was going to be a sizeable deficit to fill. However, last minute funds from the Department of Ecology for Climate Change programs and a generous donation from the Tribe’s Charitable Fund filled the gap. Justin took a moment to review specifics from this year’s budget. Documents, including a spreadsheet and narrative, are available on request.

A schedule for 2014, available on the sign-in table, outlines the NWSP topics to be discussed at upcoming NRC meetings. The plan is to focus each meeting around one particular objective, this month being recreation. Discussions will highlight current projects, gaps, and ideas for the future. This schedule is available upon request and will be published on the NRC’s web calendar. The annual NRC Retreat will still take place, but will be regarded more as a celebration of the watershed for members to explore a part of the watershed together.

Justin would like to propose a change of date for March’s NRC meeting, due to a scheduling conflict. This year’s Student GREEN Congress has been scheduled for the same date. Justin and/or Ashley will communicate with the group to put a new date on the calendar.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don was unable to attend due to illness, but left a Stream Stewards report with Ashley. At last, the latest edition of the Yil-me-hu, the Tribe’s salmon recovery newsletter is off the press, with many interesting articles and salmon habitat restoration information, as well as a new face or two.

December was a productive month, training a new group of salmon watchers, and recruiting new Stream Stewards (5 signed up for June-July 2014).

60+ people attended our volunteer salmon toss in December, with 500+ fish being tossed in strategic locations in the watershed.

Kim Bredensteiner (NLT), Jessica Moore (NW Trek), and Don are working to hold a Bio-Blitz in the Ohop Valley prior to construction in April if adequate funding can be secured. There hasn’t been a biological assessment of the lower Ohop Valley, and it would be good to arrange one before construction begins to restore Ohop Creek in that lower segment of the creek.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – David gave a report for Chris, who is on vacation. The first draft of a steelhead recovery plan has been written and will go through a series of reviews and edits before it hits the NRC for

final approval. This process has allowed Salmon Recovery to identify and take a closer look at other critical areas otherwise unknown because unused by chinook populations.

Salmon Recovery is looking to organize projects for this year's round of Salmon Recovery Funding (SRF) Board. With Kim Gridley moving on from the Lead Entity Coordinator position, Chris is will take the lead on this endeavor.

It has been recommended by Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council that now is the time to develop a 2015 PSAR project list to ensure that projects are truly shovel ready for when funds are made available. It has been noted that other projects are slightly behind and want to ensure this doesn't affect future potential funding awards.

One major watershed project that unfortunately won't qualify for PSAR due to its size, the I-5 Pier System Project, has been gaining momentum. National Marine Fisheries Service has agreed to organize a meeting with the Tribe, JBLM, WSDOT, WDFW, as well as a number of other organizations. Neither a cost analysis nor a conceptual design has been prepared, though the project is estimated at a billion dollars. The Tribe will be building their proposal as to communicate the biological need for critical microhabitats and putting together a team to look closer into project details.

In the last three years, populations of marine mammals have dramatically increased in Nisqually. California Sea Lions, never seen in 1987, as well as their larger Stellar cousins, who weren't seen as little as 7 years ago, are showing up in very large numbers. One photo taken by the Tribe's restoration crew last year captured 400 sea lions in the lower Nisqually. It is thought that they are being drawn to the increasing Nisqually chum run, which has ranged between 20,000 and 100,000 fish. The Tribe is now looking into how they can better manage sea lion populations before they negatively affect the work being put forth by salmon recovery efforts. The escapement goal for this year is 18,000, though they are estimating only 11,000 will return to spawning grounds. With the Marine Mammal Act up for review this year, the Tribe may look to speak to this issue, but will need to have the science to back up any suggestions or proposed solutions.

Bob Burkle added that a new biologist would be assigned to the technical committee for the Nisqually Watershed, due to some changes taking place at WDFW. Darric Lowery, replacing Gina Piazza, has a great amount of experience and should be a great fit in Nisqually.

3. Visit Rainier Update

Mary Kay Nelson, Visit Rainier Executive Director

Mary Kay gave a brief introduction and shared information about Visit Rainier's eTourism Program, which provides digital-based marketing to the public. Funded solely by lodging tax dollars charged by local tourism services that "Put head in beds," these accumulated funds must be reinvested back into the community and by law must be spent on tourism. This means has been very effective, with the funding pot growing each year. Visit Rainier has a number of partners in the Nisqually Watershed and covers a large portion of the watershed.

Their website is highly visited by the public, receiving over a thousand visits each day. Visit Rainier has now gone mobile, which has been highly effective in channeling traffic to the site. They are always looking to grow and add new information to the website. Mary Kay mentioned the trail list that was provided for today's NWSP topic of Recreation, and will ensure of each these trails are still accessible and have been included on their site. Visit Rainier also keeps a complete events calendar of dates in and around the mountain, as well as weather forecasts for snow play, hiking, and other activities. Their goal is to fully prepare visitors for their experience (what to wear, what to bring, etc) making sure they fully enjoy the attractions the area has to offer, can create connections with precious resources, and will return in the future.

Visit Rainier is also very interested in the Upper Nisqually Scenic Byway Project because of the potential funding and marketing the program could provide, as well as the added benefits associated with the connection of the Byways of Rainier and the increased number of visitors it could bring.

Mary Kay's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare account, which can be accessed at: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/2014-vr-presentation-nisqually-river-council>.

4. Nisqually Funding Mechanisms Summary

David Bakter, Lola Flores, and Tracy Stanton, Earth Economics

Earth Economics has come today to share their report of funding mechanisms that may provide alternative funding sources via the watershed's natural capital. Their goal has been to secure resources for the full implementation of the NWSP, as well as chinook and steelhead recovery. On a larger scale, Earth Economics would like to see multiple levels of funding developed: watershed, Puget Sound level, and statewide. The top options for Nisqually include:

1. Watershed Protection Fee (Driven by Utilities)
2. Watershed Stewardship Fee
3. Special Watershed Assessment.
4. Development of a Watershed Investment District, benefitting WRIA institutions
5. Puget Sound Regional Restoration Fund
6. Corporate Voluntary Give Back

Adding together the moderate calculations from each funding mechanism brings a total of just over \$3.1 million dollars in annual revenue. This amount could largely vary based on the amounts calculated and rates enacted for each mechanism. Specific calculations for potential funds that could be acquired through each process are listed on Earth Economics' PowerPoint presentation.

A final report of Earth Economics' findings will be circulated to the NRC when completed, at the end of January or beginning of February.

5. NWSP Discussion – Recreation

Justin led the discussion to further develop indicators of Recreation in the Nisqually Watershed. Morgan has begun to compile a list of hiking trails, camping and other attractions in the watershed, and has developed a page promoting recreational opportunities on nisquallyriver.org. The committee will be working with Jen Cutler (GIS at NIT) to place these attractions on an interactive map as part of a Nisqually Earth concept. They intend to communicate and work closely with Visit Rainier to continue to develop these efforts and share information.

What is missing in the Nisqually watershed that will help us further develop and implement the NWSP?

- Who builds/maintains trails in Nisqually? Washington Trails Association, Student Conservation Association. Should develop connections with these organizations to keep trails accessible.
- Mount Nisqually Heritage Trail Plan will create connections in the heart of the watershed.
- Development of a River Recreation Management and Access Plan: Bryan suggested that the NRC approach Mount Rainier and apply for support for this project. Applications are due August 1st. Bryan believes this resource should be tapped and is willing to help draft this application, bringing it back to the NRC for approval in June. The NRC will revisit the topic of Recreation at that time.

There is an open call for information to be sent to Justin and Ashley, including comments, suggestions, and resources.

6. For the Good of the Order

Bryan was nominated as a member of the CAC. His nomination passed unanimously. Welcome, Bryan!

David wanted remind the group that NRC members are here as volunteers, so when discussing potentially implementing taxes and fees, the group must communicate these thoughts to others for the betterment of the watershed.

Rene' shared that Pierce Conservation District (PCD) has increased the farm cost share to \$25,000. She added that PCD would love to participate in fencing projects, so please send any potential opportunities her way. Also, a developer, Ron Hanson, is interested in participating in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program for his

property. He has reported a blockage of sorts on his property, to which WDFW will check in the near future. If it can be removed, with permitting, it would mean conservation of 180 feet along the mainstem.

Bob Smith brought up the fact that the Tribe has no representation at CAC meetings. David Troutt mentioned that he has someone in mind that he will approach about membership.

Stephanie shared that there is a new Executive Director at the Puget Sound Partnership. Also, Senator Murray was able to acquire \$65 million for Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:27pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, February 21, 2014, 9:00am – 12:00pm
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge*