



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
July 18, 2014
Alder Lake Park
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Roger Andrascik – *Mount Rainier National Park*
Stephanie Suter – *Puget Sound Partnership*
David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Sandra Romero – *Thurston County*
Edna Fund – *Lewis County*

Glynnis Nakai – *Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge*
JW Foster – *City of Yelm*

* **CAC Representatives (2)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Member

Phyllis Farrell
Fred Michelson*
Karelina Resnick*

Bob Smith*
Marjorie Smith

Guests

Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Bryan Bowden – *NRC Alumni*
Chris Schutz – *Pierce County*
Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

Don Perry – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Ed Fund – *Lewis County Resident*
Randy Stearnes – *Tacoma Public Utilities*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Morgan Greene – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*

Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*

1. NRC Nominations and Elections

The Nominating Committee received a number of nominations for the chair and vice-chair. Several of those who were nominated were either not eligible or unwilling to take the position. However, David Troutt was nominated and willing to continue in his role as chair, and Sandra Romero was nominated and willing to continue in her role as vice-chair.

Bob made a motion to make a unanimous vote for both Sandra and David to continue in their roles. It was approved! Both Sandra and David are honored and excited to continue their relationship with the NRC.

2. SRF Board Project List Review

Ashley sought approval from the NRC on three items. The first was an amendment request to go to Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) to take \$40,000 from the Ohop PSAR funds and use it instead for land acquisition at the Powell Creek Complex. Karelina wanted to ensure this wouldn't impact Ohop restoration at all. It won't: there are extra funds available in Ohop, so the reallocation will not hinder progress. The changes were approved by the Council.

The Nisqually Tribe received \$200,000 in PIDA PSAR funds to develop a scope of work. Of that, \$110,000 went to Ohop construction, and the rest was distributed evenly through the NLT, NIT, and other partners. Along with other funding, there is not a lot of money being dedicated towards planting projects in the Ohop Valley. As such, some of those funds could be better used at the Busywild project. Ashley is proposing that \$23,000 of PSAR

funds go instead to fund the Busywild Tree Protection Project. This will help secure the first two sections of land for the Nisqually Community Forest and is vital in protecting Steelhead habitat. This request was approved by the NRC. For clarification, the changes still must be approved by the Salmon Recovery Council.

Lastly, the Nisqually Salmon Habitat Work Group recently ranked all projects in the following order:

1. Middle Ohop Acquisition: purchase 60 acres in the Middle Ohop, which would help with the next Ohop Restoration Phase.
2. Upper Ohop Acquisition: purchases 202 acres near and around Ohop Lake. The current landowner is Hancock Timber.
3. Complete feasibility studies around Wilcox and the possibility of removing dikes on the land. This is medium priority.
4. Nisqually knotweed monitoring. While this project is very important, it is in maintenance and monitoring now, and was therefore ranked as a lower priority than the other projects.

All these projects are requests for funding in the next round but the priority ranking helps to identify where money should go first. Additionally, all these projects have gone through the technical reviews and did not raise any flags. Final funding applications are due August 15th. Ashley is requesting that the NRC accepts the ranked list for approval. The list was unanimously approved.

For clarity, the large PSAR project does not have to be included in this ranked list. Stephanie noted that although it doesn't need to be ranked, it does need to be approved by the community. It was approved by the NRC.

On another note, there was a party at Ohop Valley last Saturday at the Burwash Farm. It was a great chance to see heavy machinery and parts of the new creek bed. The day included a salmon bake, several speakers, and a celebratory groundbreaking. Mr. Burwash himself spoke; Morgan will pass along the video of his talk. He was incredibly excited about the project and thinks it's a fantastic way to carry on his family legacy! Sandra shared a few quotes that she enjoyed from the day:

"It [the restoration project] is a great send-off for the old farm." –Mr. Burwash

"Everything thrives on appreciation." –Steve Pruitt

"There are 60 projects just like the Ohop that are going on in our state." –Jeanette Dorner

"You're going to be saving orcas by saving salmon." –Jeanette Dorner

3. Nisqually Land Trust Letter of Support

Before Joe presented his agenda item, he wanted to welcome new members of the Nisqually Community Forest Board, three of whom were present at today's retreat. Bryan Bowden is the president; Justin is vice-president and Joe is the secretary. Welcome to all!

Joe is seeking a letter of support for a proposal to the WA Wildlife and Recreation program to fund purchases on Upper Busywild Creek. He is asking for \$1.1 million to buy the first three sections of the new Nisqually Community Forest. If these funds and the PSAR money come through, they would act as matching funds.

The NRC unanimously approved writing a letter of support.

Fred wondered about the timeline of the project, and for clarity on how it benefits Steelhead. Chris replied by noting that although the Steelhead situation looks dire, in reality the freshwater survival of Steelhead is fantastic. Instead, it's the early marine survival that is the problem. If we can solve the early marine component, the Nisqually community is poised to take advantage of the increased survival. According to some research, Nisqually Steelhead are on the brink of extinction; the reason they are still here is because of the restoration work in the river! Therefore, by further protecting freshwater habitat, we can help ensure that the Steelhead population does not go extinct.

Chris also shared some early results on Steelhead survival monitoring. Due to uncertainty surrounding Steelhead survival, the Nisqually Tribe and other partners are performing a reciprocal transplant study. The process involves receivers set-up across Puget Sound, and Steelhead tagged with transmitters. As a fish passes a receiver, scientists are able to learn about the fish's movement. The goal is to determine differences in survival of fish from two different rivers in Puget Sound. Fish from the Nisqually and Green Rivers were tagged and placed in the opposite river; all demonstrated strong freshwater survival. The difference is the time the fish spend in Puget Sound: Green River fish spend much less time in the Sound than Nisqually fish, and also have a much greater survival rate. New data is still coming in and will be available soon, but this suggests an issue in the health of Puget Sound and its impacts on Steelhead survival.

4. Pierce County Ordinance Update: Electric Lights in Upper Nisqually

Roger received a call not long ago from two community members with concerns about the latest Pierce County Comprehensive Plan Updates. The Upper Nisqually Community Plan prohibits electric signs in order to maintain a rustic and rural feel. Now, there is supposedly a new ordinance to change that throughout the county. The two community members are exploring ways to re-open the discussion. When Roger spoke with the community members, he passed along contact information for David and Joe. For further information, the new ordinance number is 2013-30S2.

The new ordinance would supposedly allow electric signs in lands designated as a natural resource area, which Ashford is classified as. The changed ordinance would change the feel of Ashford, and in a negative way. According to the two community members, there was no public notification or public approval beforehand. If they are able to re-open the discussion, they may seek letters of support from places like Mount Rainier National Park, the NRC and the Nisqually Land Trust.

The Council will do some additional research to understand exactly what's going on. David will contact some people, and as everybody learns things, they will report back at the next meeting. The NRC will also research what the scenic byway designation means for the new ordinance. Perhaps that will exclude the Nisqually Scenic Byway from the changes? This topic will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

For the Good of the Order

Don wanted to thank David, Justin and several CAC members for coming to this week's Stream Stewards meeting. They spoke on the successes of the NRC and the importance of the CAC. A few members have already decided to join the group. Don thinks this should become a regular part of the Stream Stewards class.

Because the SRF Board Project List is due on the date of the next NRC meeting, Ashley and Chris would appreciate if the meeting could be moved to either a week before or after August 15th. Morgan will check out the possibility of moving it.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:20pm.

Next Meeting: Friday, July 18, 2014, 9:30am – 12:30pm TBD – Annual Retreat!