



**Nisqually River Council
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2014, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Nisqually Tribe's Natural Resources Office**

CAC Members Present: *Karelina Resnick, Ed Kenney, Fred Michelson, Steve Pruitt, Phyllis Farrell, Jean Shaffer*
Staff Present: *Morgan Greene*

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

There was a motion to approve April's meeting minutes. They were accepted as written. There were minor additions to the agenda.

Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan (NWSP) – Culture and Arts

This month's NWSP topic is Culture and Arts. The five relevant indicators revolve around farmers markets, co-ops, heritage facilities, artisan communities, watershed events, and a sense of a local watershed community.

There was a brief discussion in remembrance of Billy Frank Jr. The CAC recognized the important role he played in bringing tribes, governments and private landowners together, despite conflicting viewpoints. His influence is evident in the core indicators of the NWSP, including economic sustainability of businesses in the watershed and a sense of watershed community.

Steve mentioned that this NWSP indicator has large potentials for the CAC to become involved. In essence, this indicator revolves around the people of the Nisqually; the CAC could serve as a bridge between the NRC and the local residents. For example, Karelina's Citizen Conservation Certificate is a great example of fostering a sense of community. This certificate offers a chance for individuals and businesses to become recognized for their sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.

Fred wondered which members of the CAC visit local farmers markets, and which markets they attend. He feels it is important to be familiar with each. The CAC should arrange to visit each watershed farmer's market and then report to the NRC about the different groups. Morgan shared a map of all the South Sound farms and markets that she received recently from Lucas Patzek, of the WSU Extension Office. Lucas' research shows local farms are decreasing in size and becoming less financially successful. Karelina added that mid-size farms are essentially nonexistent today; instead, it's either small hobby farms, or huge production ranches. However, Lucas' research shows that a majority of farmers would like to sell their goods locally. Perhaps this is an opportunity for the CAC/NRC to connect local producers to local buyers.

Since a majority of CAC members already utilize local farm stands, co-ops and markets, Steve asked whether members would be interested in documenting their local food-buying process. The "journals" could then be published online, so others could learn more about which farmers sell which products. It might inspire readers to shop locally, too. The documentation project could be advertised to others in the watershed, too,

so other interested parties could join the adventure. Phyllis wondered how it could be connected to the Bountiful Byways project in Thurston County.

Ed wondered if there could be a system that would pick up extra food resources from local people. It would be great if there could be a trucking system that would pick up extra food and distribute it to farmers markets, co-ops, food banks, etc. This would help eliminate food waste and connect valuable food resources to those who need it. Phyllis shared that there are a number of community gardens in Olympia that work with local schools, and then distribute to food banks.

Morgan mentioned that the NWSP committee had also suggested CAC members attending local watershed festivals, too. There is a display already, and a number of local watershed events throughout the year.

Fred wondered where all of the heritage sites are. If it's going to be in the NWSP, it is important that CAC is educated. Morgan mentioned a website she has found through the Washington State Heritage Program. Karelina added that the scenic byway project also has a map. All members agreed that this information should become widely available. Steve reminded the CAC about an idea to establish a binder for organizing research, ideas and progress on each indicator, so that the information can be shared more easily. Steve also mentioned that Morgan could work on updating the website so that information could be accessed by everybody. It would be great if the NRC website could have information relating to each NWSP indicator.

The CAC will ask NRC at this Friday's meeting about the possibility of adding staff time or a new staff position that would complete this project. Each NWSP indicator could have either its own webpage, or contain hyperlinks that direct curious users to other, already established resources. Steve will not be able to attend Friday's meeting; Morgan will send a summary of tonight's discussions to Fred prior to the NRC meeting.

CAP Discussion

Morgan shared a draft forest resources prioritization matrix that she and several others, including Jean, Phyllis and Fred, filled out. The idea is to begin the process of identifying the stressors and risks that our forests are facing. It is the first step in realizing potential solutions and areas of greatest weakness. Morgan mentioned that since that initial meeting, she has been working on updating the chart to make it a little bit more user friendly. She has added columns that make it easier to consider both physical and political/socioeconomic impacts and solutions. There will be a second CAP meeting sometime next week to continue to fill out the chart—the next step is to create a preliminary list of solutions. An email will be sent out this week with details on the meeting.

Fred's Concerns

Fred wanted to speak about (1) suggestions for increasing agency representation at NRC meetings; (2) prairies; and (3) actions to present to NRC.

Fred is concerned that certain NRC members don't actually attend the NRC meetings. Examples include:

- Tacoma Public Utilities. Fred is trying to meet with folks from TPU, and would like people to join him.
- Department of Defense
- US Forest Service
- WA Dept. of Agriculture;
- WA Dept. of Natural Resources
- WA Dept. of Transportation

- WA Dept. of Economic Development;
- WA State Parks and Recreation

Steve mentioned that there is a great opportunity for these agencies to help implement the NWSP. It doesn't seem unreasonable for agencies to examine each other's plans and projects to identify areas of overlap. This idea has been brought up in the past, but without meaningful results.

One of the biggest challenges in maintaining agency representation is keeping track of employee turnover. This problem could be mitigated if a letter was sent to the head of the organization or agency requesting a new representative to be appointed. Steve wants to make a formal request to the NRC asking for an Executive Committee meeting to discuss the problem and work on solutions. Steve will follow-up individually after the NRC meeting. Karelina mentioned that Phyllis will be attending Sandra Romero's coffee chats in the upcoming weeks. She could talk to Sandra Romero so that she would have a personal connection with a CAC member, especially because Phyllis is from Thurston County.

Fred also wanted to speak about prairies. He has been busy visiting people to speak with them about the health of prairies and has learned along. The most significant fact is that the prairies are not connected at all. Historically, there was a flow between these prairie zones; today, that flow is gone. Luckily, there are several agencies and organizations that are doing excellent conservation work. On the other hand, the NWSP has always been somewhat vague when regarding prairies. Steve mentioned that he would like to see the NWSP reflect what's being done, what else could be done, and who else is working on it. A basic "report card" should be presented over time to track changes in the ecosystems. The problem is figuring out the right questions to ask. Perhaps a prairie expert could be given a copy of the NWSP to identify overlap between agencies and help provide a deeper understanding. There were several ideas on how to engage a prairie expert; in the end, the CAC decided the best person was Joanne Scollini. It is best to start a conversation with David Troutt to figure out the best way to connect with her. This should also be an Executive Committee discussion.

Lastly, Fred wanted to speak about bees and Neonicotinoids. There are 15 minutes scheduled for the CAC at the next NRC meeting to discuss this problem. A year ago, Thurston County Commissioners wrote a letter to the WA Dept of Agriculture asking for strong regulation of the pesticides. Fred would like to go over the reply letter.

- According to the letter, impacts are complex and not fully understood although studies do show negative impacts to bees. The letter promises follow-up action, including information in pesticide presentations; labeling by the EPA to inform of potential negative impacts; provide technical assistance to pesticide applicators and more. Fred wonders if this has been done. He wants a status update. The CAC will ask for permission from the NRC to prepare a draft reply letter requesting an update. Fred made a motion to be given the freedom to work with Sandra Romero to draft this letter, to report to NRC and to send it off. The motion was approved.
- Fred would like the CAC to do a bit of research themselves to see how many registered pesticide applicators there are in the state, etc. That way, CAC will be able to respond to Mr. Hoover showing where there is evidence of his actions or not.
- Fruit farmers would be a valuable input. Steve shared that he, Phyllis and Morgan will all begin attending local meetings with farmers, which could provide opportunities to gain a supportive audience.

Murray Creek Discussion

Steve shared that Stuart Hauser shared information about Miles Sand and Gravel's impact on Murray Creek. Obviously, self-monitoring is not a great idea. Instead, it is important to get a monitoring system in place between the company, the county and the citizens that ensures better protection of the creek and ultimately the Nisqually River.

Steve mentioned that public access has been an important issue with the CAC for years. David Troutt is suggesting that public access be folded into the NWSP, so it's time to identify which agencies are in charge of implementing the public access portions of the plan. Steve would like an update of public access at the next CAC meeting so that they can be informed before addressing the River Council.

Nominations

Elections will be held in a few months. No nominations were made at this time, so the topic will be revisited in June. Nominations are needed for a president, vice president and voting representatives for the River Council.

For the Good of the Order –

- Next CAC Meeting: Tuesday, June 17th, at NNRB #2, from 6:00-8:00 pm.
- Important Dates:
 - NRC Meeting, Friday May 16th, 9:30am to 12:30pm, at the Ashford Fire Station.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.