



**Nisqually River Council  
Citizens Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
January 13, 2015, 6:00 – 8:00 PM  
Nisqually Tribe's Natural Resources Office**

**CAC Members Present:** *Fred Michelson, Karelina Resnick, Bob Smith, Marjorie Smith, David Thorp, Phyllis Farrell, Debbie Anderson, Grace Ann Byrd, Carl Rotter and Ed Kenney*

**Guests:** *David Troutt*

**Staff Present:** *Morgan Greene*

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 6:07pm. There was a motion to approve December's meeting minutes. Ed has some changes to make to the minutes, which he will email to Morgan. Pending these changes, the minutes were accepted, as was the agenda for the night.

On a side note, Morgan will send an electronic version of Eatonville's response to the Lynch Creek Gravel Mine Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to David Troutt and anyone else who would like it.

**Nisqually Natural Resources History** – *David Troutt, Director, Nisqually Indian Tribe Natural Resources*  
Before David began his presentation, Fred noted that it is important for CAC members to understand the role each NRC member plays in their respective agency or organization. He's particularly excited to introduce David, speaking today as the Director of Natural Resources, as opposed to Chair of the NRC.

David has been in his role since 1987, working to achieve the Natural Resources (NIT NR) mission to protect, restore and enhance the utilization of the Nisqually Indian Tribe's cultural resources and treaty rights. It's important to realize that everything the Department does links back to the Medicine Creek Treaty. The program itself was started as a result of the Boldt Decision in 1974. The decision guaranteed tribal rights to access fish and other resources, but also meant tribes had responsibility in managing those resources. The Boldt Decision established a precedent that Tribes hire professional biological scientists to manage those resources, as well as co-manage resources alongside the state.

Despite getting off to modest starts, the Department now has 8 major program elements. David showed an organizational chart of the department, which Morgan will share digitally with the CAC. The program elements are:

- *Harvest Management, Program Manager: Craig Smith.* The program has 5 employees and provides biological expertise to the Fish Commission to manage salmon fisheries. It also monitors commercial fisheries and conducts spawning ground counts.
- *Environmental management, Program Manager: George Walter.* The program has 2 employees and is responsible for any land use issues with the objective of protecting treaty rights. This includes providing policy analysis and recommendations on issues from waste treatment to timber harvesting.

- *Enhancement Program, Program Manager: Bill St. Jean.* There are 9 employees in the program, which produces quality fish to support fisheries and resource objectives. The program also operates the season weir in the river.
- *Shellfish Program, Program Manager: Margaret Homerding.* This program has three employees and provides biological expertise to Fish Commission to manage shellfish fisheries. It also develops harvest opportunities for shellfish resources throughout Usual & Accustomed Fishing Areas (U&A) and monitors commercial fisheries. This program is still growing, but already a significant amount of income is brought to the Tribe as a result of geoduck fishing. Note: the Nisqually Shellfish Farm is NOT a part of this program.
- *Salmon Restoration, Program Manager: Chris Ellings.* There are 8 employees in the program, who work to implement recovery plan objectives. The program also monitors actions, conducts research, and provides public outreach, involvement and education.
- *Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Program Manager: Jen Cutler.* This program has 2 employees, and provides spatial data and analysis to support program and community needs. They also create maps and assist in the development of publications and information materials.
- *Marine Restoration, Program Manager: Dennis Lucia.* There are 3-5 employees in the program, who conduct research in Puget Sound related to salmon recovery. It also assists the Shellfish Program with sampling and survey work; identifies and designs marine based restoration; and uses the help of Nisqually geoduck divers during the off-season. The program is getting ready for a derelict gear removal project this spring.
- *Administration, Program Manager: David Troutt.* Last but not least, the Administration Program has 5 employees and 2 attorneys, who provide leadership for program elements. They also provide services to the community; assure consistency and progress; and represent and protect the Tribe's interest in various forums.

David also shed light on the Department's funding, which stems from several sources. First, \$1,200,000 originates from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to support fisheries. Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) provides \$870,000 annually to help run the Clear Creek Hatchery. The Shellfish Program has an annual budget of \$250,000, which stems exclusively from a tax charged per pound of geoduck. Additionally, the Salmon Recovery Program is funded largely through NOAA's Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF). The Department also receives between \$1.5-2 million in funding from the Tribe's Supplemental Funds; a large portion of this money supports the planting crew. Lastly, money originates from Centralia Light and Power as well as a few other sources. As a side note, JBLM does not provide much financial assistance, but the Tribe does hold a permanent land lease with the base. Also note: some portions of the budget remain stable year-to-year, while other components vary greatly.

To get a better understanding of work completed recently, David shared several stories. In 2012, for example, the GIS Program worked with 22 different entities. This includes almost all Departments in the Tribe, along with outside organizations like the Nisqually River Foundation and Nisqually Land Trust. The Program also assists individual tribal members as needed. Grace Ann shared a personal story: the GIS program helped map several culturally important trees on JBLM! Currently, the GIS program is developing a way to track current and active permits in the watershed, which eventually may be available to the public.

Another example is the work completed by the Salmon Recovery Program. The Recovery Plans developed in response to Threatened and Endangered Species listings identified key recovery areas. Within the areas, there are goals to be achieved. As of now, the Estuary Restoration has achieved 95% of that goal—raising I-5 is the last major step. Mainstem protection is about 77% completed; when that effort was started, only 3% of the mainstem was protected. Additionally, the Ohop Valley Restoration Project, started in 2009, has

created miles of new salmon habitat. Lastly, since 2007, the Tribal Planting Crew has installed over 200,000 plants on over 190 acres throughout the watershed.

The Department also conducts extensive monitoring to make analysis if restoration sites are responding in the desired way; if they're not, monitoring helps explain why. For example, Chinook monitoring in the restored estuary shows that restoration sites are starting to mimic control sites. Marine monitoring efforts include fyke, beach seining and lampara—or deep water seining—in order to determine the importance of eelgrass beds, among other things.

David also noted recent progress made in Nisqually Steelhead Recovery Planning. Thanks to a recent study, the Tribe is learning more about the importance of marine mammal predation on salmon. They also tracked marine survival of the fish, and found that while freshwater survival is high, a large proportion of fish die once they reach Puget Sound. Sea lions are increasing rapidly in population—over 400 Stellar sea lions were documented last year. The year before, there were no Stellars at all. In fact, last year, seals ate an estimated 30,000 chum. In light of these high numbers, the Tribe is contributing \$75,000 to start a marine mammal monitoring study.

Other highlights include the ability to accurately predict and manage the 2013 Chinook run and fishery. This included meeting the 2013 harvest goal of 10,000 Chinook—a very different picture than the 2014 run, which was hindered by warm water off the coast of Washington, Alaska and British Columbia. Also, the new fish counter at the Centralia Dam has recorded chum and Steelhead salmon passing through. Lastly, the Marine Services and Shellfish Programs have removed a lot of derelict material from Puget Sound, and conducts frequent surveys.

David also showed several videos. The first was of a beach seine, which helps determine the species of fish using the near-shore habitat. Scientists also measure the weight, length and stomach content of each fish. The second video showed hundreds of sea lions on the barge by the estuary—the sea lions even chased the boat filming! The third video showed two Dungeness crabs caught inside a pot. The Nisqually has the oldest and biggest crabs around; Margaret's research shows an average weight of about 3 pounds, which is about 2 times the average weight of crabs caught elsewhere. The next video showed divers cutting pilings with an underwater saw. That video was followed by one of pink salmon in Much Creek, featuring a special début of a natural, unmarked Chinook! The final video showed two divers conducting a geoduck survey; this prevents overharvesting.

In conclusion, the program is ever evolving to meet the needs of the Tribe and the larger community. David predicts a growing importance in the Community Forest and Ecosystem Services sector in the future. David also noted that he spends about 70-80% of his time outside of the watershed, so that he can deal with regional issues. He noted that for the Nisqually to be successful, its necessary to make others successful too.

The presentation yielded many questions. First, Ed wanted to know if there was an active Salmon Water map. The information is tracked, but Morgan will have to ask Jennifer about how to view it. Also, would improving herring numbers lessen predation impacts on salmon? The Tribe has certainly considered improving herring, though no significant actions have taken place yet. David thinks its necessary to protect natural habitat and create artificial habitat for spawning.

Fred also asked: "What could the CAC do to improve?" David noted that the value of the CAC is to be un-tethered from a governmental view. He doesn't want to infringe on that freedom at all.

To end, if there are any particular questions relating to the NR Department that the CAC would like to explore, please let Morgan know. Also, Morgan will send a small copy of the organizational chart to the CAC.

#### **iNaturalist Citizen Science Opportunity – Morgan Greene**

After seeing the great positive response to the CAC Facebook page, Morgan & Sheila thought it would be a good idea to share a citizen science opportunity. iNaturalist is an online photo sharing site where people can identify and tag pictures from around the region to help develop a biodiversity index. Through the website, it is possible to create projects focused on a specific geographic area—Morgan has created a Nisqually Watershed Project that others can join. If any CAC members do use the website, please give Morgan or Sheila feedback: is it a good platform? What are the drawbacks?

Carl noted that this website provides a snapshot of time, rather than a constant tracking of individual species.

#### **Proposed Agenda Item: Master Gardening/WWOOF-ing – David Thorp**

David will be at a conference in California on farming and organic foods. This year, for the first time, one of the topics will be on Watershed Management, which is focused on approaching climate adaptation on a landscape scale. David thinks this is a great time for the Nisqually Climate Adaptation Plan to get notice. David will also be attending a lecture on land trusts and organic farming. This lecture will be revolving around work completed by the PCC Land Trust in Seattle.

Both of these topics are very interesting for David, who is a Master Gardener, Community Gardener and member of the World Wide Organization of Organic Farmers (WWOOF) WWOOF-ers pay to go to an organic farm, but then receive free room and board in exchange for their labor. David sees potential applications of WWOOF-ing here in the Nisqually. Even better, people can visit farms varying lengths on time—anywhere from a couple weeks to several months. Because of his passion, David would like for Master Gardening and WWOOF to be added to the annual member goal reports.

Fred wondered if David could develop a goal statement for this topic. This would make it more achievable. Perhaps it could be tied into the existing NWSP indicators surrounding farming—Morgan will email him a copy. There may also be ways to tie into the Pierce and Thurston County agritourism trails, or into GRUBB.

#### **Education & Youth Expansion – CAC Subcommittee**

There was a meeting today regarding the Youth Council. Phyllis, Debbie, Karelina and Morgan will be drafting a proposal, which will be brought to the CAC next month for approval. Phyllis is taking the lead in drafting this proposal, but all subcommittee members will be contributing as they can. There is another meeting scheduled for January 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM.

At the meeting, the subcommittee agreed on a focus for the Youth Council: to connect with existing high school environmental groups to arrange meetings via Skype, so students can get exposed to natural resources professionals.

#### **Member Goal Reports**

- *Access & Hikes (Ed and Carl):* See below.
- *Membership App (All):* Maybe the CAC could advertise future meetings in a local publication? Karelina has a list of contacts that she will send Morgan.
- *Emeritus Board (Karelina):* There is a tentatively scheduled meeting after the next NRC meeting.
- *Youth Council (Karelina):* See above.

- *Neonicotinoids (Fred & Bob):* Nothing at this time.
- *Climate Change (Morgan):* Nothing at this time.
- *Tribal Member on CAC (Bob & Fred):* Nothing at this time.
- *Protected Marine Areas (Ed):* Nothing at this time.
- *Coal & Oil Trails (Grace Ann):* The Lummi Nation put in a petition to Army Corps of Engineers to stop the Cherry Creek Coal Terminal. Can Grace Ann get information?
- *CCC (Karelina):* Utilizing Evergreen interns to compile all CCC documents could get the ball rolling. Karelina has contact information.

**January Saturday Hike – Ed & Carl**

The recently planned hike was unable to be completed due to several factors. Most people are available on Saturdays, for when it is re-scheduled. Saturday January 31<sup>st</sup> from 2-5 is a potential date for another hiking date. Fred and Carl will work to set it up.

**For the Good of the Order – All**

- Important Dates:
  - Next NRC Meeting: January 16, 2015 from 9-12 at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.
  - Next CAC Meeting: February 10, 2015 from 6-8pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.