



**Meeting Minutes  
Nisqually River Council  
December 19, 2014  
NW Trek  
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

**Council Members**

**Roger Andrascik** – *Mount Rainier National Park*  
**Bob Burkle** – *WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife*  
**JW Foster** – *City of Yelm*  
**Edna Fund** – *Lewis County*  
**Sandra Romero** – *Thurston County*

**Stephanie Suter** – *Puget Sound Partnership*  
**David Troutt** – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*  
**Luis Yanez** – *Pierce Conservation District*  
**\* CAC Representatives (3)**

**Citizens Advisory Committee Members**

**Bryan Bowden**  
**Phyllis Farrell**  
**Ed Kenney**  
**Fred Michelson\***  
**Karelina Resnick\***

**Marjorie Smith**  
**Robert Smith\***  
**David Thorp**

**Guests**

**Doug Beagle** – *Town of Eatonville*  
**Lisa Breckenridge** – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*  
**Brian Combs** – *SPS Salmon Enhancement Group*  
**Aaron Cobato** – *WSU Stormwater Center*  
**Chris Ellings** – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*  
**Ed Fund** – *Lewis County Resident*

**John Hayes** – *Mt Rainier Institute*  
**Rachael Mueller** – *NW Trek*  
**Lisa Rozmyn** – *WSU Stormwater Center*  
**Chris Schutz** – *Pierce County*  
**Ashley Von Essen** – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*  
**Charissa Waters** – *Thurston County*

**Staff & Associated Nonprofits**

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

**Joe Kane** – *Nisqually Land Trust*  
**Tyler Willey** – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*

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

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

**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.

**2. Reports**

**Advisory Committee Reports**

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – The CAC met on December 10<sup>th</sup> and had a discussion about the proposed gravel mine above Eatonville. The group feels strongly about keeping up-to-date on the progress of the mine's environmental impact statement and development. The project would have a large impact on Eatonville traffic.

At the meeting, the group also learned about Yelm's Sewage System, which was updated 10 years ago. Ed was impressed with the progress that's been made: this summer, Yelm used nearly 100% reclaimed water. Ed received these updates as a part of an agreement with the Nisqually Delta Association, National Fish & Oyster and Tacoma Audubon Society.

Additionally, several CAC members are interested in establishing a Youth Council. David Stepetin attended the last meeting, and there are potential collaborative opportunities between David and the CAC. Last month the CAC welcomed Grace Ann as it's newest member. Lastly, the CAC now has a Facebook page that is used to highlight community events and share pictures.

- *Chair Report* – Over the last several months, David has been working with Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) and Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AAHSS) to reshape how the EPA will invest their national estuary funds so that they are focused more locally. AAHSS took a leadership role in the process. In the past, less than 2% of the money has been used in the South Sound; the EPA will make a decision in January.

Over the summer, David reported that Senator Ranker wanted examine ways to better support watershed groups. PSP took the lead and issued a report recently; the report is now at the legislature. It recognized the roles of watershed groups and lead entities, but also recognized the need for increased staffing and funding resources.

In other news, the Governor's proposed budget fully funds the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRF Board). All other programs were funded, though some less than anticipated. For example, the PSAR large cap acquisition account and WWRP accounts received funding, but there was no funding approved for the Lead Entities. In some cases, therefore, funding will need to come from creative sources. On another note, WDFW is facing significant budget cuts, mostly in fisheries. However, the habitat program will not face any cuts. The proposed budget is at the legislature right now.

Lastly, David recently testified in front of the Pierce County Council; see more in the Nisqually Land Trust report.

- *Staff Report* – As climate adaptation planning winds down, Morgan is now starting several other projects. She, Bryan and Justin will be working on a Nisqually River Recreation Access Plan in partnership with the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program of the National Parks Service—see the NRF report below. She also met with Chris and folks from the NNWR to brainstorm ways to compile research regarding the delta restoration efforts. Additionally, Morgan has participated in water quality monitoring, helped with next year's budget and is working to update the NRF website and NRC display.

### **Allied Programs**

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe reported that the long campaign around the Busywild Community Forest has been a success! The proposed PSAR and WWRP budgets will provide funding--\$6 million and \$50 million respectively--for the project, because the Community Forest is ranked first in both budgets. Because WWRP requires 50% local match, Joe approached Pierce County Conservation Futures for funding too. The supportive Citizen's Advisory Board sent the proposal to City Council for approval. In the end, proposal was approved with a 6-1 vote. Joe thanked David and other watershed residents for testifying at the council meeting or providing the science behind the project.

In regards to the future of the Busywild Project, the Governor's budget is a very good starting point. Pending land sales, there will soon be a Community Forest. Also, NOAA's designation for Busywild Creek will soon be "critical" in terms of importance. The designation will be approved by the regional director soon and will have regulatory impacts if any federal actions take place. The designation may also open up federal funding to the area and provide leverage for local governments.

In other news, the Community Forest board will have a retreat in January. Lastly, the Nisqually Land Trust has two new board members: Martin McCallum and Bryan Sullivan.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Salmon tossing is starting in January, with 9 of 12 trips already scheduled. Twelve Eye on Nature trips will begin in Spring. Eye on Nature generally costs \$12,000 and the Friends of the Refuge have guaranteed \$3,000 in funding, with a promise to fully fund the rest if no other funds are available. Nearshore trips will also take place in the spring. Sheila is working on an ALEA grant

for tree planting supplies. Because ALEA does not pay for staff time, the hope is it will supplement a successful 319 Grant application through Ecology. In addition, she is working on a public participation grant. Later in the month, she will participate in teacher workshops for the newly developed pollinator guide, Eye on Nature and the E-birds software.

Tyler is working to align the Nisqually Watershed Pledge with the Next Generation Science Standards, an outcome of last year's Student GREEN Congress. He is also working with teachers at Chloe Clark and Columbia Crest to accomplish two different raingarden projects. Yesterday, Tyler helped Weyerhaeuser Elementary School students monitor water quality and plan for an on-site tree planting activity. Student GREEN Congress will be in March, so planning is underway.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – The Community Forest Board will retreat on January 20<sup>th</sup> to determine the goals for the forest. Most of Justin's time next year will be paid for through community forest planning, with some of the funding originating from the Salmon Recovery Program. He will be developing priorities for forest activities, including trails and parcels. Joe has secured funding too, and money is being requested through NFWF for Kirk Hansen. Lastly, Washington Environmental Council (WEC) will help sponsor Paula's time.

On another note, WEC will be releasing a carbon-offset program so landowners can invest in the Nisqually Community Forest. A third-party certifying group based in California is measuring the amount of carbon being sequestered by the forest. Additionally, some foundations have already expressed interest in making future investments.

The Nisqually River Recreation Access planning effort will have a kick off meeting in late January. There is a draft list of people who will be contacted soon asking to participate. Also, AAHSS continues to represent the Council. Justin is still working on the budget. Finally, it's the time of giving – please consider donating to any of the NRC's allied programs!

- *Nisqually Stream Stewards* – In FY2012, NOAA—the agency that manages the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF)—issued a new list of priorities that governs funding for the future. In those priorities, Education & Outreach programs were listed as the last priority. Additionally, the PCSRF provides \$65 million that must be spread throughout California, Washington, Alaska and Oregon. Prior to 2012, Washington received a majority of the funding. Since the priority changes, more funding has been funneled to Oregon because the money was funding projects, not people. In the past, the Tribe's Salmon Recovery Program was flexible enough in funding that different sources could be pieced together. However, because all tribal applications get lumped together throughout the region, it was necessary to make changes to the program to stay more competitive as a state.

As such, the Tribe is no longer applying for education and outreach funds, which covered the majority of Don's funds. His position, therefore, has been cut, in order to keep stability for the overall program. The Stream Stewards Program is a high priority for the Tribe, so there is an effort to keep the program running despite losing a staff position. This is an opportunity to increase collaborations and redistribute workloads. Since the Stream Stewards is a cooperative program of the NRC and NIT, collaboration and partnerships will be arranged so that the program stays in place. There will be another report in the new year on how the program will be reorganized.

Don has done a tremendous job with the Stream Stewards Program and other activities. He did not want to have a good-bye ceremony, however anyone who wishes is welcome to contact him via Morgan. The NRC should also consider sending a certificate of appreciation.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – The Tribe's fish counter has successfully been installed on the Centralia diversion ladder, though the process was not without its challenges. The fish counter experienced some software breakdowns, but since the technology comes from Iceland, customer service is difficult due to language and time barriers. They recently received a new computer system, which will mitigate the problems. Chris hopes to share video images from the counter at an upcoming meeting. The camera has proved to be very useful already. On the first day, it documented 300 Coho that passed by, which would

have passed unnoticed otherwise. The primary purpose of the counter is to count Steelhead, and will supplement helicopter and raft trips. One of the next steps is to run Wi-Fi to the camera, so that it can be remotely accessed in live time.

Chris mentioned that the Governor's budget also proposed to fully fund marine survival programs. This money, if secured, will help implement Phase 2 of the investigation into the marine survival rates of Puget Sound Steelhead. Chris noted that the research opened the Tribe's eyes to heavy predation rates on Steelhead populations. The next phase of research will be to understand the specifics of those predators, include the species and why they so heavily prey on salmon. They will examine disease loads in fish, especially in the context of reduce swimming performance resulting in easy prey. This research will take place for approximately 5 years. There will be a longer presentation in early 2015.

Lastly, Chris shared this years weir figures. The total number of Chinook was very low, but the proportion of natural to hatchery was reversed. Normally, the weir passes 75% hatchery fish, instead of natural fish. This year, they passed 89 natural Chinook, and had to pass 51 hatchery Chinook. In addition, the weir passed 700 Coho, way before any peak Coho season. It also passed 4 pinks, even though it is an even year. The weir also saw one natural Steelhead and a handful of hatchery Steelhead strays. Lastly, several trout and suckers made their way through the weir.

**3. Wilcox River Trail – Bryan Bowden, CAC and NRC Alumni**

This presentation begins with a background story. When the NRC was being formed in 1985-1987, Jim Wilcox was adamant about prohibiting public access to his land. Today, Bryan is here to talk about the establishment of a public river trail on the Wilcox Farm.

Last spring, Bryan was invited to the farm to discuss the possibility of providing a trail across Horn Creek, so people can see salmon. At that meeting, Bryan recommended the farm develop a vision and concept for the plan, and he's been helping them ever since. Mapping is being provided by the Nisqually Tribe's GIS program. As the planning as gone on, it's become apparent that the Wilcox family wants to not only create a trail; they also want to create better access for school groups that visit the farm. The plan also notes constraints to trail development, but provides a framework for the future.

The currently proposed trail would be approximately 1 mile round-trip. Additionally, the plan is to build a school-bus road that would greatly reduce hiking time for younger students; this road would not be open to the public. The trail will feature a bridge over Horn Creek, leading to a large covered deck. This trail will have access to a vault toilet and will be ADA accessible. From there, an unimproved trail will continue to a second viewing deck. Eventually, the trail will lead to the Centralia Diversion Dam.

The plan thus far is to open the trail to public use on the weekends, allowing school groups full access to the trail year-round on weekdays—this is subject to change. Additionally, the Wilcox family hopes to have a strong partnership with the NRC, so that volunteers can meet school groups and speak about salmon. Bryan reported the development concept plan is nearing completion. The next steps include setting up meetings between the Wilcox family and the NRC, so that implementation can begin quickly. Developing a funding plan and rough cost estimate are also steps that will be taken soon. The map is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/wilcox-trail-plan-draft>. Please note: it is in the draft stage.

It was noted that the concept map should be shown at the NRF Board meeting in January. Also, it may be beneficial to contact the Town of Eatonville in regards to the building costs of bridges.

**4. Ohop Valley Restoration Project – Brian Combs, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group**

Brian is the Project Manager of the Ohop Valley Restoration Project. He manages permits, designs processes and construction contracts. On behalf of SPSSEG, Brian is honored to be a part of the project.

Brian started by noting, "the past is the future": Ohop Creek is being returned to historic conditions for a better future. The valley used to flood naturally each year, however when settlers arrived, the water was diverted into

channels and ditches so that it could be farmed. Toger Peterson, the first European to live in the valley, wrote accounts detailing a heavily forested valley full of beavers. Now, over a century later, the old Peterson Farm was the site of the first phase of restoration.

Restoration is taking place in four major locations. Phases I & II occurred upstream of the highway, and was completed in 2009. Phase III is just downstream, and connects to the Nisqually State Park. It was started in 2014. Phase VI will take place upstream of Phase I. Please note: originally, the project was broken into three phases. However, the restoration completed in 2009 was broken into two phases, resulting in four overall phases. Brian's PowerPoint does not reflect this initial name change.

At the end of Phases I and II, nearly one mile of stream channel was reconstructed. They also installed 40 logjams, and replanted 100 acres of floodplain with 65,000 plants. Challenges included installing logjams near the Highway 7 Bridge, which is very old; dislodged logs could pose a major safety hazard. Another challenge revolved around the storage of the 35,000 cubic yards of soil that was removed in order to form the new channel. It had to be stored over winter, before being placed in the old ditch. The first phase had many successes, too. For example, several logs were placed in the old ditch, creating great bird habitat. Additionally, volunteers helped at the first fish-out event, establishing an extensive baseline species database.

Although those phases were completed as recently as 2009, the results are readily noticeable. The trees installed are establishing a forest, which in turn provides shade and prevents erosion. The new channel is filled with native aquatic plant species, rather than the invasive species previously present. Sediment banks are forming too, a reflection of the creek's renewed ability to flood during winter months. Lastly, the first beaver dam in many years has been established upstream.

Phase III, located at the Burwash Farm, has been in the works since 2010, when designing and planning began. Construction began in 2014, picking up where the previous phases had finished. Project partners improved upon designs by incorporating the perennial cold water springs found in the area, allowing the cold water to control temperatures favorable to salmon. Additionally, the old ditch was filled in, except in discrete locations that now allow water to create backfill areas. These areas will be filled with large woody debris, and are expected to be filled with cold spring water, forming rearing habitat for salmon. In addition, large woody debris was scattered throughout the floodplain, providing microhabitat for birds and amphibians. The channel formation is also improved, featuring more complex shapes. Lastly, the contractors mitigated soil storage issues by forming a long berm alongside the old channel; once construction was finished, they simply filled in the old streambed.

One of the challenges encountered this year was a high water table. This slowed construction, because even during the dry summer months, the new channel was flooded with ground water. The contractors had to adjust their schedule and modify the contract so that alternate techniques could be used. The high water table, though difficult for construction, will contribute fresh, cold water to the new creek. The modified schedule means construction will be finished during the summer of 2015, although a majority of the new creek bed was completed this year.

One of Brian's favorite moments from this year's construction was witnessing the water first flow through the new channel. The Burwash Family was also present, including Mr. Burwash, who had farmed in the Ohop Valley for decades. Brian also recognized the enormous number of partners and amount of coordinating necessary to complete the work. Specifically, he recognized the contractors who worked 6 days a week, for 12-14 hours, so that construction could be completed before winter. All project partners, he noted, were very committed to getting the work done.

In summary, Phases I through III have resulted in 2.4 miles of new channel, the equivalent of a 50% increase in stream habitat. Additionally, 1,000 logs have been installed as large woody debris and 10,000 organisms moved between two fish-outs. Students and volunteers have installed 75,400 native trees and shrubs, and around 200 acres are preserved in perpetuity. Lastly, funding and partnerships stem from at least 15 organizations. Brian's presentation is available on the NRC Slideshare account: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/ohop-valley-restoration-project-2014-summary>.

It was noted that an educational sign placed at the Highway 7 overview might be a good investment, so community members can better understand the work. This project also has high importance for the whole watershed: because

the Nisqually is tributary poor, improving as many tributaries as possible makes a large impact. Finally, Joe shared the NLT is very close to closing on properties for Phase IV restoration, upstream of the initial project.

**5. Nisqually Story Map – Lisa Rozmyn & Aaron Cobato, WA Stormwater Center**

The Washington Stormwater Center is a collaboration between WSU and UW Tacoma, tasked by the legislature to reduce water pollution. The story map project works to inform people 1) what a watershed is and 2) the pollution present locally. In addition to speaking here, Lisa recently presented at a Nisqually Sustainable training.

The Nisqually Story Map begins with a brief history of the watershed, followed by a map of the boundary. Additionally, the story map talks about the importance of the glacial headwaters. It then introduces the idea of TMDL impairments and marks each impaired water body. Please note: the map only highlights areas in the upper watershed. From there, the story map defines TMDL, discusses the Clean Water Act and highlights the 303(d) list.

The next section of the story map focuses on each impaired water body, and includes information about the problem pollutant and prevention tips. Each impairment includes a listing ID number that can be used to learn more about the samples taken. These pages also include information on the impacts of each impairment to fish and wildlife.

After discussing each impaired location, the story map highlights local organizations that improve water quality. It was noted that the NRC should be included. It also discusses current restoration projects, local hatcheries and the Tribe's weir. It includes tips on preventing stormwater runoff including Low Impact Development projects; rain garden installations; and green roofs. Lastly, the story map takes the viewer to the WA Stormwater Center's homepage to access more resources and references.

It was noted that Lead Entities are also working on story maps. Perhaps this is a good time to make maps standardized between organizations. It may also be worthwhile to include information on dams and sewage treatment plans. Finally, it would be valuable to include information on contacts should a problem arise. Roger noted that there are many groups involved with water quality, but it's not always clear how to report problems. Perhaps the NRC or PSP could help streamline this.

The story map can be viewed here:

<http://wsuniv.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/?appid=7c1694c0fe1941ffab1aefc9931f2b83>. Though it is available to the public, the story map has not yet been peer reviewed.

**6. NWSP Objective Discussion: Watershed Education – Morgan Greene**

There was no time to discuss this. It will be re-scheduled for the January meeting.

**7. For the Good of the Order**

Sandra noted that the impact of neonicotinoids on pollinators has been a topic of concern for the NRC for some time. She is pleased to report that Thurston County (1) has banned the use of neonicotinoids on county properties and (2) is taking the lead on a MOU among various jurisdictions. The MOU, ideally between LOTT, Olympia, local school districts and others, would strengthen the commitment of other organizations against using the chemicals. If other jurisdictions are interested, please consider signing onto the MOU.

Chris mentioned that the phone number to report illicit discharge in Pierce County is 253-798-4274.

There are many changes happening in Mount Rainier. Barbara Samora is retiring at the end of the month after 27 years at the park. The North Cascadia Adaptation Institute recently published their climate adaptation plan. Joe recently presented to the Eatonville School Board on taxes and non-profit groups.

Happy holidays!

**Adjourn** – Meeting was adjourned at 12:36pm.

***Next Meeting: Friday, January 16, 2015, 9:00am – 12:00pm  
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge***