



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Nisqually River Council Meeting**  
**April 15, 2016**  
**Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge**  
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

**Council Members**

**Amy Cruver** – Pierce County

**JW Foster** – City of Yelm

**Darric Lowery** – WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife

**Amber Martens** – JBLM

**Doug McClelland** – WA Dept of Natural Resources

**Glynnis Nakai** – BFJNNWR

**Darin Swinny** – Mount Rainier National Park

\* CAC Representatives (1)

**Citizens Advisory Committee Members**

**Steve Pruitt\***

**Fred Michelson**

**Marjorie Smith**

**Bob Smith**

**Guests**

**Roger Andrascik** – NLT/NSS

**Tom Crawford** – Thurston Climate Action Team

**Andrew Deffobis** – Thurston County

**Chris Ellings** – Nisqually Indian Tribe

**Curtis McFeron** – NOAA

**Rosie Strom** – Pierce County SWM

**Chris Schutz** – Pierce County

**Ashley Von Essen** – Nisqually Indian Tribe

**Charissa Waters** – Thurston County

**Staff & Associated Nonprofits**

**Justin Hall** – Nisqually River Foundation

**Joe Kane** – Nisqually Land Trust

**Aleks Storvick** – Nisqually River Ed. Project

**Sheila Wilson** – Nisqually River Ed. Project

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

**Call to Order** – Steve Pruitt called the meeting to order at 9:10 am.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes and Agenda** – There was a motion to approve the March meeting minutes as presented. They were approved, as was the agenda for the day.

**2. Reports**

**Advisory Committee Reports**

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – The CAC did not meet this month. Fred provided an update on coal trains.
- *Chair Report* – David was not at the meeting but spent the last week at the North of Falcon process negotiating salmon seasons for Puget Sound
- *Staff Report* – Morgan is canoeing a river in Utah this week. She recently completed the first draft of the Nisqually River Water Trail Concept Plan. There will be advisory committee meeting to discuss the report on April 20<sup>th</sup> from 2-4.

**Allied Programs**

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – The Land Trust has added a new board member. The annual fundraiser was held on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and raised \$133,000 so far. NLT also just transferred the buildings of the Burwash property in Ohop to Eatonville School District for use as a STEM campus. All the buildings will go into the historic register.
- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila just got back from vacation in Hawaii! The NREP has completed three of seven Eye on Nature field trips. Sheila helped the Chehalis Basin with their Student GREEN Congress. She also volunteered to review some NOAA grants, which was a very informative

process. The NREP received pilot funding to get students out to the prairies of the watershed. There will be a garden work party on Earth Day at the Tribe's Community Garden. Lastly, six field trips are upcoming for Nisqually Nearshore program.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin reported that NRF didn't get the PPG grant. He will be starting the new Nisqually Community Forest NEP grant this month. He has continued representing the NRC at AHSS and Pierce Conservation District Advisory Committee.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris reported that there are lots of field activities happening. The planting crew is finishing Ohop plantings and tubings, and Canoe Journey is pulling the crew away for other work. A big steelhead survival study will be ongoing. A part of that study included the installation of an acoustic receiver line by Nisqually Marine Services, to help document the impact of seal predation on salmon recovery. The Nisqually Tribe has been working with WDFW to capture seals in the Nisqually area, including Eagle Island and Gertrude Island. After capture, the seals are fitted with a backpack GPS. In other news, the Tribe is working to overcome the big challenge of managing Chinook stock without the weir, by trying a more decentralized approach to controlling hatchery composition on the spawning grounds.

### 3. **Thurston Climate Action Team** – *Tom Crawford, Board Member*

In June, the Thurston Climate Action Team (TCAT) conducted a community survey, which demonstrated broad support for a variety of local renewable energy and energy conservation efforts. As a result, TCAT is working to develop a countywide clean energy program, and is working with Thurston Thrives and other existing programs.

The local effects of climate change include receding glaciers, lower flows, warmer water, extreme flooding, fewer salmon and more. TCAT was founded in 2008 and incorporated in 2009. It has representation from community activists, elected officials, and businesses. Its goals are to: address climate change (especially reducing our local carbon footprint); encourage, coordinate, and collaborate with others; and fill the gaps.

Thurston county emissions are mostly from built infrastructure and on road vehicles. Sustainable Thurston aims to reach 80% of 1990 emissions levels by the year 2050, which will result in cost savings, more jobs, and improved health. To achieve this, Tom noted several promising solutions, including: Thurston Energy (energy efficiency), solar installation, building on electric vehicle infrastructure, expanding commute trip reduction programs, farmers' transportation cooperatives, incentives for efficient vehicles, transportation management areas, and community education and engagement.

The survey was created to determine community attitudes towards addressing climate change. Funding stemmed from LOTT and Thurston County, and was completed in partnership with St Martins, South Puget Sound Community College, and The Evergreen State College. It was developed with input from community agencies, and implemented by student-made phone calls between 6/22 and 6/30 2015. The results were compiled and analyzed. Topics covered included community and environment, climate change, renewable energy, home energy, informational sources, and demographics.

Survey Results:

- Community and environment – rated mostly excellent or good. Top concerns were traffic, population growth, homelessness, and growth management. Water quality was the top environmental concern.
- Climate – 85% of responders said that people affect climate change. 79% believed climate action was important, and 77% believed inaction would lead to serious local problems.
- Clean Energy – Most responders showed strong support (strongly agree or agree) for promoting clean energy sources.

69% of survey responders were willing to pay \$10/year or more to finance clean energy options, and 63% were okay with a small increase in sales, utility or property taxes. Other facts of interest were that 74% of responders said energy efficiency would influence their next home choice. TCAT also asked about the source of participants climate change information, including TV (29%), web/social media (24%), or no information (1.4%).

In general, the survey shows that county residents feel positively about quality of community life, are concerns about local climate change impacts, favor county-wide efforts, would support clean energy programs with money,

and are receptive to small tax increases. This opens several opportunities, including in policy and program development. For instance, policy could consider impacts of decisions and projects on energy and climate.

Thurston Thrives (TT) brings together community partners to promote collaboration on public health and social services, and to align efforts to make a greater difference in community health. TT has several action teams, including housing, food, environment, community resilience and economy. The TT Coordinating Council formed a Climate & Clean Energy work team in collaboration with TCAT, which pulled together participants from various community sectors. The team is currently developing a clean energy plan, including funding.

The Climate and Clean Energy work team meets on the third Thursday of every month at 3:00pm at the Thurston County Public Health Building. TCAT holds forums on the second Thursday of the month at 7pm at Traditions Café. In addition, TCAT has a Facebook page, Google Groups listserv, and is always looking for volunteers. Tom's presentation is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/thurston-climate-action-team-perception-survey-on-clean-energy-and-climate>.

- 4. Puget Sound Partnership 2016 Action Agenda** – *Stephanie Suter, Ecosystem Recovery Regional Manager*  
Rescheduled for a future meeting.

- 5. Thurston County Prairie Habitat Plan** – *Andrew Deffobis, Associate Planner*

The Washington State Growth Management Act directs counties to identify and protect critical areas including listed species and sensitive habitat. The County Critical Areas Ordinance was updated in 2012. The GMA also requires the County to plan for and facilitate economic development. The County must also satisfy requirements outlined by the Federal Endangered Species Act. Andrew focused on prairie habitat and species, and Oregon white oak. Less than 10% of historic prairies remain, and very little of what's left is in good condition.

There are multiple ESA species in Thurston County, with the first listing occurring in 1997. Species include Oregon Spotted Frog, and Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly. A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is needed for Thurston County because of the recent listing of 4 species. A HCP provides predictability and local control, limits the liability of the County and private land owners, and promotes common sense conservation.

Without an HCP, impacts to listed species on public lands require a US Fish and Wildlife Service permit, HCP, and the NEPA process. On private lands without a County HCP, impacts also require a US Fish and Wildlife Service permit, as well as individual HCPs, adding additional delays and cost, plus the need for mitigation. In contrast, with a County HCP, actions on both private and public lands experience faster permit times and lower total costs, the need for limited site surveys, limited involvement of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and conservation occurs in advance at a scale that can lower costs.

The County has been researching HCPs since 2010, and has received \$2.5 million from the Fish & Wildlife Service. In 2013, the County hired the Willamette Partnership to create a credit/debit methodology. In 2014, the Willamette Partnership/Institute for Applied Ecology was hired to craft HCP documents. In 2015, a NEPA/SEPA contract was awarded to the Confluence Environmental Company.

In a nutshell, an HCP is a tool to forecast, manage, and permit defined impacts to endangered species. It holds regulatory assurances for 30 years, and is for identified and quantified impacts. The County HCP will include a background; description of covered species, lands and activities; impacts; conservation strategy; and implementation. The covered species are the streaked horned lark, mazama pocket gopher, Oregon spotted frog, vesper sparrow, Taylor's checkerspot, valley silverspot, hoary elfin, Oregon branded skipper, Mardon skipper, Puget blue, western gray squirrel, and the slender-billed white-breasted nuthatch. It will cover actions on private lands, public services (eg., school and fire station construction), and County actions (eg., development and utility permit issuance, transportation activities, water and wastewater management, and land management and habitat restoration.)

By 2045, project prairie habitat impacts will largely stem from residential development, though commercial development will also play a large role. In the HCP, the County is projecting 88% build-out to zoned capacity to estimate the affected area per development unit, and to overlay projected development with habitat.

The Conservation Program will avoid/minimize impacts, and will work with willing landowners who want to manage habitat on their working lands. It will also protect land to support prairie – oak and riparian/wetland habitat. It will manage and enhance the habitat on those lands, while tracking progress and adapting to ensure the County is practicing common sense conservation. Strategies to be used include: avoiding impacts, conserving land in the most important places, enhancing and stewarding natural lands, and supporting working lands conservation.

Financing will cover conservation strategies in the HCP, as well as HCP management and administration. These items should be financed early in order to get conservation “in the bank” before impacts occur. Funding is necessary on an ongoing basis. Funding sources include mitigation fees, permit fees, conservation futures, purchase of development rights, open space tax program, real estate excise tax, USFWS Section 6 Acquisition Grant, and other state/federal grants.

The HCP development will continue through 2017. In 2016, the County will hold several public meetings and develop an EIS/SEPA. The draft HCP/EIS will be available for public review in 2017, and the Take Permit is slated to be issued at the end of 2017. The presentation can be found here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/thurston-county-habitat-conservation-plan>.

**6. For the Good of the Order**

There is a Puyallup River Study Public Meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Puyallup Activity Center.

The Commissioner for Public Lands is an open seat this year.

Mount Rainier should soon begin public scoping on their management plan and on fishing regulations.

A tubing and staking event will be held on May 6<sup>th</sup> from 9-1 in Ohop Valley.

**Adjourn** – Meeting was adjourned at 11:40am.

*Next Meeting: Friday, May 20, 2016  
Northwest Trek, 9:30-12:30  
NWSP Topic: Culture and Arts*