



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Meeting
August 19, 2016
Mount Rainier National Park
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

Council Members

Amy Cruver – Pierce County
Randy King – Mount Rainier N.P.
Darric Lowery – WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife
Amber Moore – Puget Sound Partnership

Rene' Skaggs – Peirce Conservation District
David Troutt – Nisqually Indian Tribe
* CAC Representatives (1)

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Phyllis Farrell*

Guests

Roger Andrascik – NLT/NSS
Jeff Barney – Pierce County
Tara Chestnut – Mt Rainier N.P.
Chris Ellings – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Mark Frey – Mt Rainier N.P.
Curtis McFeron – NOAA
Sarah Scott – Rd to Rainier Scenic Byway
Ashley Von Essen – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

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

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 – David called the meeting to order at 9:39 am.

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

Randy welcomed the NRC to Mount Rainier National Park. He provided a quick update on the park: It's the Centennial of the National Park Service! The Park is seeing some of the highest visitation numbers ever, including the filling of every backcountry camping site. There will be multiple celebrations on August 25th in various locations throughout the park. Finally, the "Every Kid In A Park" program will continue next year and ideally further into the future.

2. Road to Rainier Scenic Byway – Sarah Scott, Byway Coordinator

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is spearheaded by the Nisqually Land Trust, and was started by Nicole Hill in 2013. Sarah is the Byway Coordinator, and among other things, oversees the development of the comprehensive management plan and website. Sarah encouraged the NRC to visit the Byway website, www.roadtorainier.com.

The Scenic Byway Committee has representation from the Friends of the Upper Nisqually, Pierce County, the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce, Nisqually River Foundation, Nisqually Indian Tribe and other local organizations/businesses. The Byway begins at the intersection of Hwy 702 and Hwy 7 and forms a loop for a portion of its path (map available in presentation; link is below). Travelers are encouraged to take one half of the loop going to the park, and the other half on the way back. The communities included are: Eatonville, Elbe, Ashford and Mineral.

The Mission is to enhance the region's cultural, historical and recreational amenities while creating a memorable experience for visitors from around the world. There are 6 goals outlined in the comprehensive plan, including introducing visitors to rich experiences unique to the area; protecting, preserving and enhancing the byway's natural habitat; promoting the byway with a dual The byway has several goals, including introducing visitors to the rich experiences unique to the Byway; strengthening local economies; increasing tourism; and providing

effective support to the oversight to the organization. Before becoming official, the Byway Committee will approve a Corridor Management Plan; this is expected to happen soon. Sarah noted that there is no longer a federal Scenic Byway program due to budget cuts; however, funding is not impacted by the lack of federal designation.

The Scenic Byway has a newly developed website and brochure (www.roadtorainier.com) which includes route information, as well as details on the local communities and surrounding attractions. The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is a comprehensive document required for many funding sources. The draft plan is available here: [link]. Sarah welcomes any comments on the CMP.

The next steps are to review the CMP with local stakeholders as well as the general public. All public comment will be incorporated by November 30, and the final CMP will be filed with WA Department of Transportation. After that, the Byway management/marketing/oversight team will be established; road markers will be designed and installed; widespread marketing will occur; and alliances with communities and the Scenic Byway Foundation will be forged. The plan calls for a part time staffer who would provide oversight, but the maintenance would likely rely heavily on volunteers. Sarah does believe that part time staff is key to the success of the Byway.

The slides are here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/road-to-rainier-scenic-byway>. The CMP is here: <http://www.roadtorainier.com/wp-content/uploads/Road-to-Rainier-CMP-20160801-navigable.pdf>. All comments are due by September 16, 2016.

3. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Phyllis reported that the last CAC meeting was on July 12th and largely focused on the elections of officers. Steve Pruitt will continue as the Chair, Phyllis Farrell will continue as Vice-Chair, and Lois Ward will serve as the third voting member. The CAC will continue to pursue their yearly goals, and Steve will be focusing on using Systems Management to manage the watershed. Phyllis is interested in water quality. Roger noted that Steve Craig mentioned that McKenna is going through a developmental boom, and is located directly on the Nisqually River. Justin will conduct some research.
- *Chair Report* – Canoe Journey happened last month! It was a hugely successful event. There is an Executive Committee meeting scheduled for September 8th. David is working to arrange for a presentation on the NRC at an upcoming Nisqually Tribal Council meeting to strengthen ties between the Nisqually Community and NRC.
- *Staff Report*– Morgan returned from vacation this week; prior to that, she volunteered at Canoe Journey, and has therefore been away from the office for a few weeks. The Nisqually Stream Stewards class is up and running with 31 people enrolled. The NSS graduation will be held at 12:15 at the Nisqually Watershed Festival in the amphitheater. Finally, Ashley and Morgan will co-volunteer coordinate at this year's Eatonville Salmon Fest; volunteer recruitment will be starting soon. The festival will be on October 15th from 10-3.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Roger announced that the NLT submitted 8 applications in the current PSAR grant round. Additionally, an NLT project ranked 3rd in the Thurston Conservation Futures grant cycle. Communications with Hancock Timber are moving along well in regards to purchasing the first section of the Nisqually Community Forest. Sunny Thompson has joined the Land Trust Board, and Candi Tobin is leaving for a new job. A position description should be available soon. The Nisqually Land Trust Annual Meeting will be on September 18th at Oddfellows Park – Morgan will email the invitation to the NRC mailing list. Finally, the NLT river floats were held in July with over 117 people attending over two days.
- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila met with Krestin Barr (Eatonville School District) earlier in the summer, and learned that the school district is the largest user of water in the Town, largely due to athletic field maintenance. Krestin is interested in reducing the school's usage, and is looking for grant or other assistance to complete projects. Chris noted that RCO might have a grant opportunity; replacing a

football field with artificial turf could cost around \$1 million. Mark noted that it's important to consider wastewater runoff from the fields themselves.

On another note, school is starting soon and teachers are looking ahead to the new NREP schedule. Sheila seeks feedback on the water quality program, and a partner survey will be distributed soon. As one of the oldest citizen science programs established, she is looking for ways to reinvigorate the program. Sheila submitted a grant through the Trout and Salmon Foundation to fund a tree-planting project on JBLM along Muck Creek, and another to continue Nearshore Field Trips. The Climate Resiliency Fellowship, available to teachers in NREP and South Sound GREEN, will launch on September 27th and will assist teachers as they implement climate curriculum in their classrooms. This is a part of the 3-year NOAA grant. Water Quality Monitoring training is on October 1 at Tumwater Falls Park.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin visited the first 3 sections of the Community Forest over the course of 3 days. Hancock Timber has accepted the appraisal for the first section, so the purchase will happen before the end of the year. This makes up the westernmost and lowest elevation portion of the forest. Canoe Journey happened this month, as did a renaming of the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. David, Paula and Justin met with JT Wilcox to talk about wolves moving into western Washington. Paula works very closely with farmers in eastern WA to reduce cattle predation; she hopes to move those successes west of the Cascades. An upcoming NRC meeting will be dedicated to discussions around wolves in the watershed; a planning process will likely follow. David thinks it's important to get in front of these issues before the wolves arrive. Last month, Justin spent 3 days at OSU for training in the VELMA model, which models hydrological impacts under various timber harvesting scenarios. This will be used in the Community Forest. The EDT model will be added as well, which is used by the Tribe to determine the areas of highest importance for salmon.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Ashley began by noting that last year, the Lead Entity submitted a grant proposal along the whitewater reach, downstream of McKenna. One of the landowners had an additional 2.6 acres of land available for purchase, and the Nisqually Land Trust moved on the acquisition. On behalf of NLT, Ashley asked for a scope change to the original proposal. The changes are: adding an additional 2.65 acres; increasing the project amount by \$255,963, and extending the project end date to December 31, 2018. For clarification, the original funds stem from PSAR, and this extension would not affect the current grant round. The NRC requested that Joe provide more information on the changes at the next NRC meeting, before approval. Ashley will circulate the memo that will be attached to the scope change, along with a map.

Final applications for the SRF Board and PSAR grant rounds were submitted on August 12. They next go to the SRF Board Review panel throughout the end of the year. The funds are designated in early December. Additionally the South Sound Science Symposium will be on September 20th at the Little Creek Casino Convention Center. Bob McKane will be the keynote speaker, and multiple Nisqually projects will be highlighted. The Nisqually Watershed Festival is on Saturday, September 24 from 10-4 at the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. The Eatonville Salmon Fest is on October 15th from 10-3 at Millpond Park.

Chris and Joe met with the WWRP Board earlier this week regarding the acquisition of the Heely property, upstream of Wilcox Farms on the Pierce County side. The property has over a mile of shoreline with fabulous floodplain habitat and is one of the 3 major parcels left along the Nisqually corridor downstream of the dam. Public access is one of the most highly ranked categories for the WWRP process, and funds are highly competitive. The need for this acquisition is great: if the Land Trust is unsuccessful, a developer will build a clustered housing community on site.

The Tribe is updating their EDT model, which tracks the state of recovery in the watershed. As a part of this process, it is becoming apparent that the Engineered Log Jams (ELJs) installed are limited in their ability to recruit wood from the surrounding habitat; the increased availability of wood depends on the recovery of Nisqually forests. All available science suggests that this is an 80-year recover time from the moment that timber harvesting practices change in the watershed. Chris is also collaborating with WA

Department of Transportation to brainstorm ways to change the I-5 corridor and increase sediment loads reaching the Nisqually delta.

Justin asked if the Community Forest should include ELJ source wood as a management priority; Chris feels that creating problem solving like that will be necessary. David mentioned that WDFW designated the Nisqually River as a wild genetic Steelhead pool, along with the Elwha River.

- 3. Conservation and species recovery in protected areas: examples from MORA – Tara Chestnut, Ecologist**
Tara has lived in the PNW since 1992, mostly in Washington and Oregon. She has a PhD from WSU, and has worked primarily with amphibians. She arrived at Mount Rainier about a year ago, after having worked with USGS. The NPS mission is to conserve the scenery and natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. This unique mission requires unique management strategies and goals compared to other natural areas.

There have been numerous mass extinctions, most recently when the dinosaurs disappeared. Now, scientists refer to the current age as the “Anthropocene” which recognizes that conditions and processes worldwide are profoundly impacted by human activity. The NPS has an inventory and monitoring program, which seeks to answer multiple questions including: what do we have? What’s happening to it over time? Why and how are resources changing? What’s driving the change? Finally, what can we do about it?

Tara noted that when the biodiversity of a system is intact, it is more resilient to change. Factors such as habitat disturbance, fragmentation, destruction and the introduction of exotic species negatively influence biodiversity. Factors such as protected areas or restoration projects improve biodiversity. A local example of these influences is the plight of the Northern Spotted Owl, which is negatively influenced by habitat disturbance, fragmentation, destruction and exotic species. Although the NW Forest Plan was developed to reduce these impacts, the expansion of the Barred Owl will lead to the eventual extinction of the Spotted Owl, unless populations are curbed. There are Spotted Owls at Mount Rainier, but reproduction rates are not high enough to recover the population. Another example is the pike, which is influenced by habitat fragmentation and climate change. This example poses the unique challenge of unknown impacts of climate change. A recent study showed that pike numbers depend largely on site locale and microhabitat resiliency; Mount Rainier National Park has over 700 occupied pike territories, and Tara is currently examining population change over the last several years. Diseases are another contributing factor to the loss of biodiversity. Mount Rainier National Park has an “early detection rapid response” program to combat diseases, including within the bat population to reduce the spread of white-nose bat syndrome. The disease is now found in Washington, with 2 confirmed cases just 30 miles north of the park. MORA was able to mobilize a response team to develop a coordinated response plan.

An on-going project at the Park to increase biodiversity is the reintroduction of the Fisher, which were overexploited in the 1800s for their pelts. The first release of fisher into the Cascade Recovery Area was last year, at the Cispus Learning Center. A total of 23 fisher were released, as a part of a collaborative effort between scientists and trappers. This coming season, more fishers will be released within the Park boundaries. The project requires the ongoing monitoring of the animals. The majority of the first fishers released are doing well, although 2 females died. The presentation will be made available soon on the NRC slideshare account.

4. For the Good of the Order

Happy birthday, Amy!

Rene’ has \$5,000 available in cost share to be used for match. PCD has worked for the last 2 years to get a no-till/reduced tillage drill; it is available for rent at maintenance cost.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:00am.

*Next Meeting: Friday, September 16, 2016
Yelm Community Center, 9:00-12:00
NWSP Topic: Sustainable Businesses*