



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Meeting
November 18, 2016
Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually NWR
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

Council Members

Amy Cruver – Pierce County
JW Foster – City of Yelm
Darric Lowery – WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife
Amber Martens – JBLM

Amber Moore – Puget Sound Partnership
Rene' Skaggs – Peirce Conservation District
David Troutt – Nisqually Indian Tribe
* CAC Representatives (3)

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Steve Pruitt*
Phyllis Farrell*

Lois Ward*
Ed Kenney

Guests

Jeff Barney – Pierce County
Janell Blacketer – Nisqually Indian Tribe
Grace Ann Byrd – Nisqually Indian Tribe
Diane Gallegos – Wolf Haven

Martin McCallum – Nisqually Land Trust, SPSSEG
Curtis McFeron – NOAA
Brian Sullivan – NLT/Pierce Conservation District
Paula Swedeen – WA Environmental Council

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Linsey Fields – Nisqually River Ed. Project
Morgan Greene – Nisqually River Council
Justin Hall – Nisqually River Foundation

Joe Kane – Nisqually Land Trust
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 9:16 am.

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

David asked the NRC to keep longtime member Fred Michelson in their thoughts, as he is recovering from surgery. Paula Swedeen, in addition to her work with the Washington Environmental Council, works with Conservation Northwest on carnivore recovery. She, David, Justin and JT Wilcox recently met to discuss wolf recovery and management on the west side of the Cascades; this meeting's theme stemmed from that conversation.

2. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- ***Citizens Advisory Committee*** – The CAC remains engaged in a number of issues, including watershed trails and the Yelm Wastewater Treatment Plant. The new Wastewater manager spoke at the October CAC meeting, and Steve noted that a similar presentation may be of interest to the NRC.
- ***Chair Report*** – The Governor is working on his budget, which includes issues like salmon recovery and water quality. The budget should be available in the next few weeks. As chair of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, David recently sent a letter of support for key issues in the budget. He noted that a similar letter from the NRC may be an appropriate action to take. The NRC Executive Committee will review the budget and draft a letter at their next meeting. David, Phyllis and Steve spoke earlier about the recent HIMARS rocket testing on JBLM. He noted that various entities collected information, and the base is currently drafting a proposed management plan. Given the CAC's interest in the HIMARS, David suggested the group wait until the draft plan is produced before further discussions. Lastly, David noted that the blob of warm water in Puget Sound/Pacific Ocean broke up and reformed, although ocean conditions appear to be better now than at this time last year.

- *Staff Report*– Morgan reported that 23 Nisqually Stream Steward volunteers graduated at the Nisqually Watershed Festival on September 24. The Stream Stewards, along with the Nisqually Indian Tribe and Nisqually Land Trust, hosted a Halloween Volunteer Tree Planting in Ohop Valley, as well as a Tube and Stake Event this week. Morgan has been spending some of her time with the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group conducting culvert and habitat assessments on some of the tributaries of the Nisqually.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe reported that long time NLT Board Member Mary Foster moved to Sequim; Sunny Thompson, Ashford resident and business owner, joined the Board in her place. Candi Tobin left the NLT staff, and her position was filled by Susan Calendar. Molly Parsons recently joined the staff part-time as an Administrative Assistant. The first parcel (640 acres) of the Nisqually Community Forest will be purchased in the coming weeks. The Scenic Byway process has hosted several public meetings; this is the final stage in the development of the management plan.
- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Fall Water Quality Monitoring Day was October 20, and had record-breaking attendance. Sheila noted the program is increasingly valued by teachers and administrators; both Eatonville and Yelm School Districts are exploring ways to better support NREP. Sheila introduced Linsey Fields, a senior at Evergreen and an NREP intern this year. Kalicia is continuing her work with NREP, but will also be spending part of her time with the Nisqually Community Garden. Kalicia is working with Eatonville School District to apply for grants and install a healing garden at the Burwash Farm STEM campus; Rene’ noted that Pierce Conservation District’s Harvest Pierce County could be very useful as well. Tree planting season included projects in Ohop Valley and at Red Salmon and Muck Creeks: 748 students and 125 adult volunteers planted over 2,400 native trees and shrubs. Sheila thanked those who participated in the water quality monitoring survey, and noted that the results came back very positive. Many partners committed to helping with monitoring events and/or Student GREEN Congress. The 2017 Congress will mark the 25th anniversary of the event, so Sheila will be hosting a planning meeting early in the New Year to discuss ways to highlight the accomplishments of the program.
- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin was able to attend a few of the tree planting events last month. He thanked the NRC and other partners for attending the NRF’s recent strategic planning retreat. The NRF staff has continued to meet with Amara Oden to develop strategies for the goals developed at the retreat. He noted that one of the largest issues that arose was the realization that the NRF lacks a sustainable purpose; this question will be approached internally and with key partners, then brought before the NRF Board and NRC. In order to better “tell our story,” the NRF’s blog will be renamed as such—the first edition will be available today. Other strategies will be to maintain/nurture partner relations, continue/expand education programs, increase accountability/professionalism within the NRF, and diversify our funding. The process will be completed in January, and a draft plan will be presented to the NRC at that time.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – David offered the report. Chinook return numbers are in, and forecasts were very accurate. In addition to adults, the jack run was very large this year. The Tribe and other partners are in the midst of negotiations with NOAA on moving forward with Chinook Recovery options, including the possible installation of an adult fish trap at the Centralia Dam. The counter camera at the dam is working very well and has proven a useful tool. Chum returns are the lowest forecasted in many years, prompting the decision to close chum fisheries. If models determine that escapement has been met, the Tribe and State will consider opening a late season fishery. Transient orcas have not been in South Sound for about a year, and marine mammals have been more prevalent in the area.

3. Wolf Biology – Diane Gallegos, Wolf Haven International

Diane is the Executive Director of Wolf Haven International (WHI), and serves with Paula on the Wolf Advisory Group. WHI has Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries accreditation; the only wolf rehab sanctuary in the world to have such an accreditation. Their programs include animal rescue/sanctuary, conservation advocacy and education/outreach services. Diane explained that education is one of the key tools in wolf recovery: understanding proper behavior in the presence of wolves and the dangers of wolf-dog breeding are two of the leading topics. Historically, wolves were found across North and Central America. Grey wolves were distributed across the Continental U.S., Canada and Alaska. Red wolves were found in the southwestern states. By 1970, grey wolves were only found in Alaska and parts of Canada; red wolves had disappeared. Wolves were extirpated from Washington by the 1930s; in the last decades, small numbers of wolves entered the state via Canada, Idaho and/or

Oregon. Today, wolves are listed as a state endangered species. Additionally, wolves are a federally listed endangered species to the west of I-97; to the east of I-97, they are not federally listed as endangered. This listing does not impact tribal lands and sovereign nations.

The Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) put together a management and wolf recovery plan for the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), which has four main goals: restore populations, manage conflicts, maintain a healthy prey base, and develop public understanding/promote coexistence. In terms of the plan, a “pack” is defined as 2 wolves travelling together; a “breeding pair” is defined as 2 mating wolves with 2+ pups that survive until the end of the calendar year. The plan’s recover objectives required for delisting is for the state to have 4 breeding pairs in each of 3 geographic areas in, plus at least 3 other breeding pairs anywhere in the state. At the end of 2015, there were 90 wolves, 19 packs and 8 breeding pairs in Washington, all of which were located in the northern Cascades or eastern Washington. The next count will be available in approximately March 2017. Researchers have noted about a 30% population increase per year, and expect that rate to increase within the next few years. Diane’s presentation can be viewed at: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/wolf-haven-international>.

- 4. Wolf Conservation and Management Plan/Wolf Advisory Group – Paula Swedeen, Conservation Northwest**
- The Wolf Conservation and Management Plan guides the management of wolves in Washington State. It was written by a diverse group of stakeholders and approved in 2011. The plan’s 4 goals are: 1) restore the population in Washington to a self-sustaining size and geographic distribution that will result in wolves having a high probability of persisting in the state for the foreseeable future; 2) manage wolf-livestock conflicts in such a way that minimizes livestock loss while at the same time not negatively impacting the recovery or long-term perpetuation of a sustainable wolf population; 3) maintain healthy and robust ungulate populations in the state that provide abundant prey for wolves and other predators as well as ample harvest opportunities for hunters; and 4) develop public understanding of the conservation and management needs of wolves in Washington, thereby promoting the public’s co-existence with the species. Delisting requirements are expected to be reached in 2021; currently, there are 8 breeding pairs in the state.

Paula noted that wolf-livestock conflict management is an important component in successful recovery. Livestock is present in almost all the same places Washington’s wolves reside. In 2015, 4/18 packs preyed on livestock. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) uses multiple techniques to minimize these conflicts: wildlife conflict specialists, preventative measures, coordination with producers, compensation, and lethal control are a few examples. Prevention tools include range riders, livestock carcass removal, guarding/herding dogs, hazing and others. WDFW developed it’s own lethal removal plan shortly after the Conservation and Management Plan was approved. Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements (DPCAs) are plans that are developed in coordination with local conflict specialists and aid in the implementation of preventative measures, and include a cost-share option of up to \$10,000. Paula noted that Conservation Northwest uses staff and volunteer power to partner with landowners to minimize conflicts; currently, Conservation Northwest has partnerships with 6 different families.

The Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) is a group of 17 citizens representing conservation, livestock, hunting and general public interests. It includes residents from western and eastern Washington, and is facilitated by an outside Third Party Neutral. When WAG was originally convened, the group lacked resiliency and trust amongst members. The Third Party Neutral worked to develop deeper communication and trust between the members, eventually leading to a new Mission: “to promote equitable, inclusive, and respectful dialogue and decision-making among diverse people to foster durable peace by transforming the root causes of social conflict and providing high quality recommendations on wolf recovery, conservation and management.” Paula noted that Tribes are not currently a part of WAG because tribes manage their treaty rights directly with WDFW, and not through this process.

The facilitator, Francine Madden (Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration) uses Conflict Transformation in the hopes that rural/urban communities can come together to create thriving communities, strong animal populations and greater resiliency. Paula concluded by inviting interested citizens to WAG meetings, which are open to the public. They occur quarterly and meeting dates are available online and on Facebook. The Advisory Group will be accepting new positions in the near future. Her presentation is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/wolf-conservation-and-management-plan>.

Questions:

- Phyllis – have there been any conflicts between recreational users and wolves? Typically, wolves are very skiddish of humans. The biggest conflict that Diane expects to see are conflicts with people and off-leash dogs.
- David – In terms of the Nisqually Watershed, what are some of the next steps that should be taken to prepare? The first is to establish a relationship with the regional conflict specialist, and to meet with Donny Montorello (WDFW wolf policy lead). Hosting a community meeting with vulnerable livestock owners would be valuable, as would conducting an assessment of vulnerabilities, resources needed and interest levels.

5. For the Good of the Order

The Nisqually Basin signs on I-5 have been removed; the Department of Transportation is not interested in reinstalling them. However, the NRC felt it was important to examine the opportunities a little more.

Rene' noted that PCD is rolling out 2 new programs: Fire Wise and Renewable Energy assistance. The renewable energy assistance program is applicable in Pierce, Thurston and King Counties – please spread the word!

Grace Ann sought to understand more about the Nisqually Community Forest; Joe offered to send her more information.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday December 16, 2016
BFJNNWR; NWSP Topic: Watershed Education*