



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Meeting
September 20, 2019
Yelm Community Center
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

NRC Members:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Molly Carmody – City of Yelm | Amber Martens – JBLM |
| Amy Cruver – Pierce County Council | Andrew Reed – DNR |
| Gary Edwards – Thurston County BOCC | David Troutt, chair – Nisqually Indian Tribe |
| Abby Gribi – Town of Eatonville | |

CAC Members:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Phyllis Farrell | Marjorie Smith |
| Ed Kenney | Bob Smith |
| Karelina Resnick | Lois Ward |

Guests:

| | |
|---|--|
| Brad Beach – NIT TPHO | Sheila Marcoe - Dept. of Ecology |
| Warren Bergh – NLT/NSS | Susan McGowan |
| Stephanie Bishop – Thurston Cons. Dist. | Rachael Mueller – NW Trek |
| Doug Boyden – Seattle YMCA | Michelle Penick* - NSS |
| Michelle Brigham – Preserve the Commons | Noll Steinweg – WDFW |
| Meredith Cambre – Seattle YMCA | Etsuko Reistroffer – NLT/NSS |
| Annie Cubberly – NSS | Jim Resitroffer – NLT/NSS |
| Chris Ellings – NIT | Maya Teeple – Thurston County |
| JW Foster – City of Yelm | Ashley Von Essen – NIT |
| Paula Holroyde – LWV Thurston County | Nora White – Thurston Conservation Dist. |
| Daniel Hull - NRNC | |

Staff:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Joe Kane – Nisqually Land Trust | Maya Nabipoor – NRF |
| Emily McCartan – NRF | Sheila Wilson – NRF |

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

David called the meeting to order at 9:05. The minutes from the August retreat were approved without amendment, as was the agenda for the day.

3. Committee Reports and Updates

Advisory Committee Reports:

Citizens Advisory Committee Report – Phyllis Farrell

The CAC met on September 10. Discussed fish returns, RAP Subarea letter, proposed resort near Mount Rainier, and the WRIA 11 report. CAC priorities for the next year further WRIA 11 streamflow planning, opposing RAP in the Nisqually subarea, continuing biosolids permit

monitoring, waste reduction in river and nearshore, use of Conservation Futures Funds, promoting educational field trips with NREP, and recruiting younger people and tribal members to CAC.

Ed reported on an update on the proposal to spread class B biosolids on a site outside of Yelm near the Nisqually River. All three Thurston County commissioners opposed the proposal and had staff look into it. The Tribe and County wrote letters, and large landowners joined in opposing. With public pressure, landowner dropped out of the deal. Ed's citizen group (Preserve the Commons) met with Ecology staff to ask they withdraw their determination of non-significance (DNS) for the project. Ecology has not agreed to that, but has agreed not to use that site and to inform the group about any class B biosolids used in this part of the county. There is still active spreading of Class A biosolids nearby which is not regulated and can still contain industrial chemicals and fire retardants. Preserve the Commons wants to start a campaign of public education for landowners, and Ecology may contribute a public letter on the status of the project. Preserve the Commons is hosting a presentation tonight by Richard Honor about the issue and alternative treatment methods. It was noted that high-heat or other treatment methods exist in Europe and are being looked at by the state legislature, and that it is a challenge to process this material which communities inevitably generate.

Chair report – David Troutt

The Evans Event on September 4 was a spectacular night honoring Jim Wilcox for all of his years of service in the Nisqually Watershed, as well as the family's impact on the Nisqually. Gov. Evans attended and spoke, along with Justin, Bill Bryant, and David. Jim felt very honored and humbled and gave a great speech encouraging full funding for salmon recovery. David also attended an event for Bill Ruckelshaus in Seattle this month. Bill appreciates the work that we do here and remembers moderating a national panel at a collaborative conservation conference in 2005, citing the Nisqually as a role model for the country.

Thurston County Subarea Planning – Maya Teeple

No updates on RAP or Subarea plan. County staff are doing in-house work now. Comprehensive Plan hearing (excluding RAP and Nisqually Subarea) is set for October 15, 5:30pm.

3. Seattle YMCA Mountain Camp Project

Meredith Cambre, Senior Executive Director, Camping & Outdoor Leadership

The Seattle YMCA's environmental education programs serve over 12,000 youth every year at two camps (Camp Colman and Camp Orkila). Current programs are at capacity and need to expand. Most students are 5th and 6th graders coming for overnight experiences through school, along with 1-2 week summer camps and family camps.

Overnight camps help kids build 21st century skills needed by employers:

- 1) Thinking critically and making judgments
- 2) Solving complex, open-ended problems,
- 3) Creativity and entrepreneurial thinking
- 4) Communicating and collaborating

5) Taking charge of financial, health, and civic responsibilities

Overnight camp is experiential: actually doing things, not just hearing/reading about it.

Practicing skills at camp helps young people develop their fullest potential. Kids learn social integration and citizenship, environmental awareness, self confidence and personal development, emotional intelligence, and positive attitudes about physical activity.

- Overnight, away from home = builds independence
- Small group and icebreakers = belonging
- Group and individual trials = resilience and problem-solving
- Gardening, composting = sustainability

King County, the Seattle Y's service area, is expanding rapidly: 354,000 kids ages 5-19 in 2015, expected 390,000 by 2035. Need to keep meeting changing demographics and needs not just for people who traditionally experience overnight camp. In 2010, Seattle Y camps served 4,000 kids; in 2016, they served 6,000 campers with 600 students on the waitlist; and 2019 served 7,000 campers with over 600 waitlisted. Plans to meet expansion needs include growing current camps a little (don't want to overload and reduce the quality), creating new programs to stretch capacity during peak summer periods (backpacking and adventure programs), partnering with existing underutilized camps, and, finally, creating a new overnight camp for the first time in 100 years.

New camp site is located on Mineral Lake, identified after long search. The Y wanted a property in the mountains since there are already 2 waterfront camp, with natural water to swim. It's a very large property (2,111 acres, to Camp Orkila's 400), currently owned by large timber development entity. The Y is talking with local partners, including Nisqually Land Trust, about land conservation and other options for purchasing and managing that much land. Next steps are to enter a purchase agreement, do diligence, site planning, and fundraising. Phases 2 and 3 will depend on how fast fundraising proceeds. Programs will include BOLD and GOLD (Boy/Girl Outdoor Leadership Development), which includes backpacking, climbing, and rafting in the wilderness, similar to trips now out of Orkila. Y camps are very involved in salmon education and habitat preservation.

- Phase 1 – negotiating property purchase now. Close to having an agreement for a portion. Start some backpacking and leave no trace camping in 2020.
- Phase 2 – Building infrastructure, platform tents, bathrooms, shelters (temp structures)
- Phase 3 – full buildout, dining lodge, cabins, bathrooms, program areas

Discussion:

- Seattle Y wants to learn what's important to NRC members and fit in to the watershed community.
- Family experience of these spectacular Y camps. It'll be a great neighbor and great way of getting more kids into the Nisqually watershed. Great synergy with NREP's programs.
- Will property be logged? It has been steadily harvested commercially for last 4-5 years. YMCA's timber manager is is Northwest Natural Resource Group, same as Nisqually Community Forest. Don't do commercial harvest, but maintain healthy forests.
- Are current outdoor programs for schools? Yes, 2-3 night school programs, many using significant financial assistance. The Y is committed to accessibility; 1 in 5 summer

campers receive financial assistance. Half of King County Youth are living in poverty. Want to expand these experiences to all kids.

- The NRC has been worried about the fate of this property for some time, so we're excited to see it going into good hands. Want to see the whole 2,100 acres protected. Y is trying to purchase the 500 acres now, and tie up a 2-year transferable option on the remaining portion so the Y or other partners can purchase. Appraisal was done in early 2010s and is not updated. Negotiating between parties on the values. Expect folks will get excited about fundraising. David would like to have the NRC community support this effort.

4. Allied Program Reports:

Nisqually River Education Project – Sheila Wilson

NREP has been working on No Child Left Inside grant activities, including Nisqually Youth Salmon Camp (4 days of activities). Next activity is on horseback riding with Servine Horses in Roy. New AmeriCorps member Maya Nabipoor started on Monday. She is a recent Evergreen graduate. Tomorrow is water quality monitoring training with partners for fall WQM Day on October 17. NREP has had some meetings with Yelm teachers who want to be involved in the program, after no district participation last year. Two are returning to the program and one is new. Teachers still have concerns about the way the district controls their communication and access to NREP programs. CLAMSS NOAA grant starts on October 4, with middle and high school classes looking at ocean acidification, harmful algal blooms, low oxygen events connected to climate change. Tree planting dates are set and will be shared with volunteers. Working on coordinating trips to McLane Nature Trail to look at the chum run.

Nisqually Watershed Festival is coming up on September 28, 30th anniversary of the festival. Returning and exciting new mainstage presenters. Salmon for lunch is secured. Volunteer shifts still needed!

Staff Report – Emily McCartan

Evans Event raised \$56,000. 150 people attended. Amazing support from the community and a great night of celebration. Emily is working now on shaping the NRC's agenda for the next year and beyond: WaterSmart grant and other initiatives to help support us in defining priorities and action items. Letters will be circulated last week as discussed at earlier NRC meetings: supporting the expansion of the Nisqually Aquatic Reserve, and requesting thorough on-site study and review of BMPs for Thurston County RAP before a decision is made.

Salmon Recovery Program – Chris Ellings

NIT has transported 1,000 Chinook from hatchery to the spawning grounds so far this year as part of the "colonization phase" of the recovery plan. Goal is 2,000 fish released to spawn naturally. Experimental approach trying to reestablish a natural Chinook population in the Nisqually across many 5-year generations of Chinook (5 years). No literature on it yet, but we know that the fish can colonize areas and take off if the habitat exists, so that's what we're trying to do. Don't know what the natural spawning component is yet. Next phase is local adaptation, re-wilding the population, which has monitoring components and research. Beginning groundbreaking research on genetic parentage assessments. Genetic samples taken

from every trucked fish, and eventually from every fish through planned adult trap at Centralia, which will enable genetic sampling at smolt traps to match juvenile fish with parents and track them through time over generations. Hope is they will produce more and more offspring. Transported fish are meant to be a representative sample of the run, mostly 3 and 4 year-olds, sometimes 5s, with a representative proportion of sizes and a small portion of jacks. In the past, hatcheries selected for biggest fish – then geneticists got involved, and pointed out that we don't know the natural selection issues that produce varying sizes in a population. Lots of strategies for reproducing not tied to size. Hatcheries went to randomized mating for recent decades. However, that has produced smaller and smaller hatchery fish. Age composition of returns is getting younger. Orca need more Chinook if the fish are smaller. Smaller females produce fewer eggs and can't spawn in as many places. Side experiment at Kalama is going back to purposely spawning the largest fish and comparing to a control group. Nisqually Tribe is fortunate, because the Tribe are the primary harvesters, owns the two hatcheries, and is the lead on habitat recovery agenda, so the efforts can be very integrated. This is the 3rd year of trucking at this level. Genetic assessment results should be shareable this time next year, using adults trucked in 2017 and 2018, paired with offspring collected in 2018 and 2019.

Run size is coming in close to the forecast for Chinook. Predicted 24,000 Chinook in total, looks like it will be 23,000-24,000. Pinks are hard to predict because smolts are hard to find and count. Predicted 15,000, and there are probably 200,000 out there right now, visible all along the lower river. Low summer flows made the fish ladder at the Centralia Diversion Dam a challenge, have worked with the Centralia power folks to adapt it. They are gradually getting upstream. Should see fish in the Mashel and Ohop this week. Hope to receive the flame retardant study's report soon.

NIT has also been involved in discussions on the Ohop Creek violation. David and Chris are working to keep the focus on the ultimate goal: functional salmon habitat. Can we get to a better state than before the damage occurred? Regulatory/enforcement side may or may not get to that outcome; working with the landowner to restore may have a more positive salmon impact. Joe, Chris, and David have met with the landowner to try to get to that goal on a voluntary basis, perhaps by creating a conservation easement. Would take a few months. Then we can look for resources to correct the problem. Landowner doesn't have the financial resources to correct it properly. Other desired outcome: he becomes a strong advocate for salmon in his community, educate him about what fish need, and hope he talks to his neighbors and colleagues about what's necessary for fish. Getting the regulatory agencies to stand down is a challenge, because this is an unusual approach.

5. Thurston Conservation District Update

Nora White, Education and Outreach Specialist and Stephanie Bishop, South Sound GREEN Coordinator

Conservation Districts are a local, non-regulatory, and voluntary approach to conservation. Established after the Dust Bowl (Thurston's in 1947). They are community-driven and adaptive organizations, as science and land use and natural resources have changed. Provide education, technical assistance, resources, and funding to landowners and operators.

- Public education: free workshops on variety of topics, such as flexible farming, energy efficiency upgrades for farmers, and managing agricultural land for new pests and other climate change impacts This year, lots of workshops planned on irrigation and drought, as majority of Thurston County watersheds are in a declared drought.
- Youth education: South Sound GREEN has been around for 3 decades and is a longtime partner of NREP. Serves Deschutes, Totten, Eld, and Henderson watersheds. Work with K-12 students in urban areas, wide range of school cultures. Student GREEN Congress gets a lot of community support and water quality data is shared with stakeholders (Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Thurston County, Squaxin Island Tribe, online to public). Teacher PD and climate education, including partnerships with NREP on NOAA B-WET grant (CLAMSS) and others.
- Supporting local agriculture by helping private landowners implement conservation practices (equipment rental to implement recommended practices, free soil testing to prevent over fertilization, creating pathways to markets/consumers)
- South Sound Farm Link – land access and successional planning to prevent loss of farmland, matching service to register land that’s available to farm and farmers looking to buy. Trying to reinvigorate this program now.
- Stewardship of habitat:
 - Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) – working individually with landowners to create stewardship plans for their lands that meet county habitat goals
 - Shore Friendly Thurston – technical support and connection to resources for waterfront residents and free non-regulatory site visit/assessments to advise about issues and options for bulkheads and shoreline management. Focused on marine shorelines, but can visit lake properties with other funding sources.
 - Site-specific assistance – every property is different. Workshops share information, but CD staff also visit properties and provide advice and assessments. Can often offer cost-share resources to build infrastructure (keeping livestock out of a creek, improving infiltration for water quality, etc.)

Upcoming Engagement Opportunities:

- Orca Recovery Day (10/19) – 40 events taking place statewide. TCD is hosting one in Olympia’s West Bay Park for invasive removals and planting.
- BOCC hearing on rates and charges (9/24) – Renewal of local public funding rates and charges system. Historically, TCD has been funded through property taxes. Public comment accepting written or at hearing.

Questions:

- What are VSP enrollment numbers? First year ended in July 2019. Exceeded enrollment goal (25). Created in 2011 by Legislature as alternative to critical resource areas. Did significant PR push with radio and mailer ads. Almost all of Thurston County qualifies as a critical area because of soil types, endangered species habitat, etc. Hope there will continue to be funding to pair VSP with cost-share dollars, so people with VSP plans can get cost-share to implement the improvements.
- Will TCD be able to re-engage with River Council, Habitat Work Group, and other entities as staff renews? That’s the hope. TCD has doubled staff in the last four months. Have not had capacity to be present at a lot of community meetings. As new staff come

on board, reengaging with NRC and other groups will be a priority. Historically, some of funding was set aside through shellfish protection district, which hasn't been the case for the last few years, which changes how TCD's funding is spread. Lot of money to work in Chehalis now, less activity in other areas. Reach out to Sarah Moorehead, Executive Director, to ask a staff member to attend.

6. Caring for Chiroptera (Bats!)

Rachael Mueller, NW Trek Conservation Program Coordinator

Bats have a scary reputation, but they are very cool. Only mammal capable of flight. They live in almost every type of climate and perform vital ecological functions by controlling insects and spreading nutrients and seeds. 15 species of bats in WA, 11 west of the Cascades. Local bats are the primary predator of nocturnal insects, including mosquitos – 1 bat can eat 1,000 mosquitos per hour, up to 3,000 per night. NW Trek has a colony of 600 bats, consuming close to 2 million insects per night. Help farmers by eating bugs. Breeding period is spring and babies are born May/June, all flying by August. Most migrate out of the area in the fall. Not clear if they hibernate in western WA, but some evidence at Trek.

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) is a deadly fungal disease which has killed millions of hibernating bats in Eastern North America and is spreading rapidly (first discovered in NY in 2006). Confirmed in King County in 2016, first incidence west of Nebraska. WNS damages bats' wings and makes them unable to fly, as well as invading deep skin tissues so they burn up fat reserves during hibernation and starve. It doesn't affect people, pets, or livestock, but can survive in underground environments like caves for years. NW Trek partners with WDFW to study, since it is not known how impacts may differ for western bats that hibernate in smaller colonies. Now in 4 counties in WA, just confirmed in Kittitas County. Experimental treatments are in process, including vaccine and habitat changes.

NW Trek naturally hosts a bat colony and has staff and citizen science initiatives to monitor. Summer Colony Emergence Counts – collect baseline information on summer colonies (size, sites, species composition, impact of WNS over time). The first step is identifying roost sites, then training staff and volunteers to count bats emerging and subtract bats that go back at sunset. 2017 counts got 155 and 346 bats (after finding a large roost at the main NW Trek building). 2019 counts got 455 and 673. We know the colony is much bigger, but logistics limit where counting can occur. Without capturing and handling the bats, species identification can only be done by echometer that records vocalizations. Identified species include little brown myotis, Yuma myotis, California myotis, and silver-haired bats. Waiting for WDFW to confirm others. They weigh about 4 grams.

To study health and presence of WNS, bats must be captured. WDFW brought nets to roost site, but bats can fly over the nets using echolocation, so they were only able to trap 4 Yuma myotis. They don't have many natural predators besides snakes. Swab nose and wings, weigh and measure, look at wings under ultraviolet light for signs of WNS fungus. Want to get 30 samples total. Testing soil, roosts, and guano for fungus – negative since 2018.

How to get involved in helping native bats:

- Provide a home for bats at your house, observe and count the bats, and report to WDFW. If your bat house isn't attracting bats, it may have temperature or location issues – see resources for troubleshooting.
- Reduce bat disturbances and protect pollinator gardens
- Exclude bats from your home without hurting them (close up entries after breeding season)
- Clean shoes and gear before going into caves where bats may roost
- Report large groups to WDFW so they can be monitored
- Report unusual bat behavior, like flying in daytime, roosting in sunlight, struggling to fly
- Never handle or touch a live bat. They can carry diseases – rabies is rare, but all Trek people handling bats have been inoculated. Bats are harmless when left alone!

If you have a bat colony in your neighborhood, report it to WDFW so they can monitor the population for disease: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bat-white-nose>

7. For the Good of the Order:

Personal appeal to vote no on I-976 (Eyman-sponsored initiative to cut transportation funding by capping car tabs at \$30.) Would cut 70% of the multi-modal fund, including light rail, high way improvements, ferries, paratransit, WSP. Will delay projects and affect other budget issues for many communities including those in the watershed.

Thurston County has just completed major renovation of Toboton Creek culverts. This would be a great opportunity for somebody to do baseline monitoring on that creek to see how salmon migration changes with the barriers removed.

Youth Climate Rally is today at the Capitol.

Nisqually Land Trust salmon bake is on Sunday.

*Next Meeting:
Friday, October 18, 2019
Longmire Community Center, Mount Rainier National Park*