

NRC CAC Meeting
November 12, 2019
Nisqually Natural Resources Office
6:00-8:00pm

Present: Howard Glastetter, Ed Kenney, Phyllis Farrell, Marjorie Smith, Bob Smith, Fred Michelson, Lois Ward, Paula Holroyde, Martin McCallum, Emily McCartan (staff)

1. Welcome

Phyllis called the meeting to order at 6:12pm.

2. Chehalis River Alliance – Martin McCallum

Martin is a Nisqually Land Trust board member and Stream Steward. He attended a recent presentation by Lee First, of Twin Harbors Waterkeepers, regarding the proposal is for a flood control dam on the upper Chehalis River. A handout from the Chehalis River Alliance was distributed for members. Chehalis is the largest watershed entirely within Washington State (other than the Columbia). Upper Chehalis Basin gets 120 inches of rain a year and has been heavily impacted by logging. Runoff and infiltration do not function naturally and cause significant flooding. Flooding in the lower reaches has repeatedly closed I-5. The goal of the flood control dam would be to slow down floodwaters and shorten flood-related closures and is supported by businesses and WSDOT. However, there are environmental concerns with installing a new dam, which would damage forest, salmon and steelhead habitat and impact water quality. The Legislature created a Chehalis River Basin Council, including local governments and tribes to look at this proposal and other potential flood solutions, but has not yet approved the dam or major funding. Public comment opportunities will be coming up and Martin would like to distribute a link to CAC members. Chehalis River Alliance is a coalition opposed to the dam, including American Rivers, American Whitewater, Audubon Society, Lead Entity for Chehalis Basin Salmon Recovery, Chehalis Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation, Coast Salmon Partnership, Conservation NW, Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team, Friends of Greys Harbor, Orca Network, Pacific Rivers, Trout Unlimited, Twin Harbors Waterkeepers, Wild Salmon Center, Wild Steelhead Coalition, and several others. Phyllis believes the local chapter of the Sierra Club also plans to write a letter supporting the Alliance in opposing the dam. Goal of Chehalis Alliance is to offer an alternative by restoring natural floodplain function to the upper Chehalis basin via habitat restoration, culvert removal, and dechannelization, as well as limiting development within the floodplain, to protect infrastructure without negatively impacting the environment.

Bob noted that this is a similar proposal to the Mud Mountain Dam above Enumclaw. The Chehalis project would have much greater impact on fish. There is still a large wild steelhead population in the Chehalis. It is a very large and complex watershed in terms of geography and economic issues. Members noted that the local watershed institutions in the Chehalis have limited staff and may not have the

capacity or leadership to respond, so it is good to see the large coalition coming together on this. The CAC would like to stay updated on it.

3. Thurston County Flood Hazard Annual Meeting - Howard Glastetter

Howard attended the annual county Flood Hazard Mitigation Planning meeting. The plan was adopted two years ago and is now having annual follow up meetings. 20 initiatives recommended in the plan. Howard's suggestions to the county were:

- Remove trees blocking empty culvert under Old Pacific Highway (former route of Medicine Creek prior to 1996 flood, may become a flood channel in another event). Funding may be a challenge.
- Road repair and reconstruction should include functional gutters with driveway culverts to keep water off the roads.
- Use state and federal data collection sources for flood modeling.
- Address erosion/meander pressure at Old Pacific Highway Bridge.

Howard felt there was less impetus to be proactive about implementing these plans from the county, which has seen some staff turnover. He appreciated Kevin Hansen's interest in some of the suggestions. Retiring emergency manager Andrew Kinney had collected significant records of flooding in the Nisqually Valley and had good relationships with TPU and other entities, which helped get good results. FEMA reevaluation of the lower Nisqually Valley designates it as all floodplain, instead of denoting zones of 100-year or 500-year flood risk.

4. Member Issue Updates

Aquaculture Court Case – Phyllis reported on the US District Court's recent ruling against the Army Corps issuing aquaculture permits. They have some time to submit recommendations for fixing the issue, but the judge can suspend permits if not satisfactory. An appeal is expected. The ruling is likely to have a significant impact on the industry. Taylor Shellfish withdrew an application to use pesticides against ghost shrimp in Willipa Bay after public pushback.

Net Pens – Cooke Aquaculture and Jamestown-S'klallam Tribe plan to farm steelhead in net pens. Position of other tribes is not known; some do net pen farming with native species. Members hope to see clarification to address the environmental concerns with net pens.

Chemical Contaminants – Local organic farms have concerns about chemical use on neighboring properties affecting their organic certification. Some positive shift in practices to be more environmentally friendly, but concerns about spreading across properties. Ed is working with the Nisqually Land Trust to test manual methods of invasives control on a 3-acre property near his house, rather than using glyphosate. The Tribe's crew also wants to phase it out as much as possible. Local company is willing to donate mulch, and hoping that will be an effective method of control.

Biosolids – Ed reported that Ecology approved reclassifying Fire Mountain Farms' mixed industrial chemical waste and biosolids as non-hazardous waste, which

would allow it to be landfilled in regular facilities. This undoes a lot of previous efforts to prevent this. Public comment period opens tomorrow. Ed will share the link with members to comment if desired.

5. Staff Update

Welcome to the new location! Move has been positive with some logistics still being worked out.

Salmon runs and water levels update requested for Friday's NRC meeting. Salmon data may not be available yet for 2019.

6. For the Good of the Order

Better lighting and signage for the new building are in the works, to help visitors find it in the dark.

Wind farm being proposed at Skookumchuck Ridge between Yelm and Centralia. They bring in highly paid jobs needed in the area. Some concerns about noise from neighbors. Audubon Society is working closely with them to protect bird populations and is in favor of this wind project as a renewable energy source.

Recent article about declining local bird populations as an early warning sign of climate change.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.