

NRC CAC Meeting
June 9, 2020
Virtual Meeting
6:30-8:00pm

Present: Phyllis Farrell, Ed Kenney, Martin McCallum, Paula Holroyde, Ariona, Emily McCartan (staff)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Phyllis called the meeting to order at 6:39pm. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Issue Updates

- Update on Powell Creek (Manke) property: The Nisqually Land Trust applied for a Streamflow Restoration grant to acquire and protect 240 acres before clearcut, which Ariona. It was not funded in 2018, but the Community Forest reapplied in 2020, expect a decision this fall.
- **Black Lives Matter.** Recent events are having a huge impact on our nation. Emily: Several NRC member agencies and some non-profit partners have made statements acknowledging systemic racial injustice. Most agencies have not, and state and federal agencies are likely restricted in their ability to comment. Natural resource agencies are involved in law enforcement actions around the country (National Park police, WDFW in Seattle). We know that governments are responding to public pressure – writing and calling elected officials at this extraordinary moment is the most impactful thing individuals can do. The NRF has a lot of work to do in our internal capacity to contribute to advancing the causes of diversity and equity. Things we are doing: sharing BIPOC voices on social media, NCLI grant for tribal youth, hoping to add at least one Nisqually Tribal member to our board. Things I hope we will commit to doing: diversifying NRC speakers, expanding connections to environmental justice groups in the Tacoma and JBLM communities, making an effort to recruit and hire BIPOC as staff. Your voices can help keep us accountable. It's important to make real and sustained changes over time and not just a one-off statement at a moment of heightened awareness.

Lois stated that she has been reading and thinking through things that she can do. The longer racism is not addressed, the harder it will be to save the planet. If we lived in a just and fair world, we could put all of this energy toward the environment. We don't want to sweep it under the rug, and take it on as a personal responsibility to not let this fall back again.

Phyllis attended a Thurston BOCC meeting where the commissioners discussed making a statement. County commissioners allocate resources

toward law enforcement, which is the largest program in the county budget, but the law enforcement operation is under the sheriff, who is separately elected, and needs to be included. State legislature will also need to play a role in reducing drug-related convictions and prison policies. There are economic as well as racial issues in place, and economic opportunity stems from education. We need to recruit minority staff in environmental positions.

Paula noted that the budget is a moral document. We should think in terms of what kind of community we want and avoid “they vs. us” and make it “we.” A positive vision from the protests is people of all races working toward the same direction.

Ed noted that a protest in Yelm started last week with 12 kids on the side of the road, and they were harassed with eggs thrown at them. Over the next few days, the protest grew to 100 people and has raised discussions about funding and been generally positive.

Martin agreed that actions are the most important thing and that diversifying hiring and educational opportunity are important. There are three areas where the public can be close to the Nisqually River: at the Refuge, near the Nisqually State Park, and Smallwood Park in Eatonville.

- **Nisqually Camp access road permit hearing.** Thurston County had a hearing this morning on a project proposed to build an access road to an LDS property called “Nisqually Camp” off of Durgin Road in the valley. They want to build a culvert over a small stream that is a flood relief channel for the Nisqually River. The Tribe submitted comments advocating for more detailed floodplain and impact analysis and proposing a bridge instead of the dam and culvert design. The concern is it would worsen flood impacts if that channel was blocked, and may incur liability for the county.
- **Chehalis Basin Proposals.** Public comment on the Chehalis flood retention (dam) proposal ended on May 27. Phyllis and others testified at a public hearing on behalf of other groups. Many commenters were opposed, including the Chehalis and Quinault tribes due to the expense and environmental impacts. There is a group proposing several different alternatives. The Legislature commissioned a Chehalis Aquatic Restoration Plan through the Department of Ecology, which has a lot of good science. The effort has brought together numerous environmental groups across constituencies. The data and public opposition that the board knows they need to consider alternatives. There is a proposal for treating runoff along China Creek, a Chehalis tributary, that might be of interest for I-5 in the Nisqually basin.

- **Other Regional Issues.** Today was the deadline for public comment on regulating whale watching tours for SRKW protection. Members would like an update on out-of-basin water uses and potential bottled water facilities on the Cowlitz. Thurston Regional Planning Council has put together a Climate Mitigation Plan, to meet established climate targets, and environmental groups are encouraged to contact elected officials about it: <https://www.trpc.org/909/Thurston-Climate-Mitigation-Plan>
- **Maple Poaching.** Ariona noticed damaged maple trees with bark pulled off on her property in Powell Creek, as well as surrounding properties including Cascade Camp. Maple poachers pull back back looking for birdseye maple, a particular kind of figured pattern that is extremely valuable for making electric guitars. They cut down several trees illegally and planned to harvest. The sheriff's office took it seriously and the community came together, and the person behind it has been arrested and charged. Want people to be aware of the problem so they can report it if they see skinned trees like this. It happens on DNR and Capitol forestland. Yew trees used to be poached in the area for pharmaceutical uses.
- **TPU Response to FERC.** Howard requested that the group be updated that TPU has filed its dam operations data with FERC in response to his complaint about the February 6-7 flood.

3. For the good of the order:
Eye On Nature fundraiser is Thursday. Emily will send a link.

Nisqually Valley News reporter is working on articles about salmon in the Nisqually.