



**Nisqually River Council
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2015, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Nisqually Tribe's Natural Resources Office**

CAC Members Present: *Steve Pruitt, Phyllis Farrell, Fred Michelson, Karelina Resnick, Bob Smith, Marjorie Smith, Debbie Anderson, and Lois Ward*

Guests Present: *2015 Nisqually Stream Stewards, Sheila Wilson, David Troutt, and Justin Hall*

Staff Present: *Morgan Greene*

Welcome and Introductions

Tonight's meeting was held in conjunction with the Nisqually Stream Stewards, as a chance to introduce the Stream Stewards to the Nisqually River Council, Foundation, Education Project and CAC.

Nisqually River Council – David Troutt, Chair

David shared a video, called *From the Mountain to the Sea*, about the Nisqually Watershed, and the many people who work to protect it. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5xWSwvpRs&list=PLR9R-F84iY86qvd205i9EYsDKkcLamdBs>.

The video introduced the topic of David's presentation: landscape scale conservation and the importance of strong partnerships. In his opinion, the Nisqually is unique in its pristine state, but that isn't by accident: the watershed has been the center of attention for many people for thousands of years, starting with the Nisqually Tribe. He noted that the commitment to the watershed was largely prevalent in the 1960s, when the Delta was slated to become a landfill or a deep-water port, before a group of citizens fought for its permanent protection. Ultimately, the land was purchased and protected as a national wildlife refuge.

In 1985, the legislation called for development of a Task Force to develop a community-based management plan for the watershed. In the beginning, however, many community members feared that the plan would lead to infringements on private property rights. After limited accomplishments, members of the Task Force decided to have closed door meetings. The largest turning point of the process occurred on a tour of the watershed: the bus broke down, and Jim Wilcox and Billy Frank began to talk about everything BUT the Nisqually Watershed. The conservation sparked a long friendship, and a renewed commitment to respect the goals of the Nisqually Indian Tribe and private property rights. The Task Force became a powerful expression of the common desire to protect the watershed.

The original Nisqually Watershed Management Plan only considered the river corridor and adjacent 200 feet. The Task Force was comprised of those with a political interest in the watershed, and 3 voting citizen seats. The original plan included over 80 actions to be completed, including the establishment of the Nisqually River Council. The NRC began to meet monthly throughout the watershed, and has continued ever since. In David's opinion, the greatest success was the creation of a watershed community in an atmosphere of respect and trust.

The NRC has had many successes. It is a forum to deal with difficult issues, and avoid regulatory action when possible. Additionally, the Nisqually Land Trust was created to acquire and protect key properties; in 1989, 3% of the Nisqually mainstem was in permanent protection, and is currently 78% protected. The Nisqually River Education Project works with thousands of children every year, and has done so for 25 years. The NRC

also designated the Nisqually Tribe as the lead in watershed planning, creating a smooth transition into water right planning.

Despite the successes, the watershed still faces challenges. Population growth is projected to increase by tens of thousands of people, and threatens environmental health. To manage this challenge—and others—the NRC launched an adaptive management process in 2003, which resulted in the Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan (NWSP). The NWSP is a vision for the future, and considers the whole watershed, not just the river corridor. It recognizes connections between land, water and people, as well as economic, social and ecological sustainability. The NWSP is frequently reviewed to identify projects that further the mission.

David noted that a plan without action is just a plan; to put plans into action, people are needed. He noted that the CAC and Nisqually Stream Stewards (NSS) help fill that gap. No matter where members reside, they can make a difference. Everyone impacts Puget Sound; everyone can help protect it.

One of the NRC's latest ventures is to promote economic stability by keeping resources local. In 1987, Weyerhaeuser was the largest landowner in the watershed; today, the majority of forestland is owned by investment companies headquartered on the east coast. The forests are managed under 10-year rotation plans. The Number 1 beneficiary of the Nisqually Watershed is the Plumbers Union in Paris, France. To return ownership to local hands, the NRC works to buy and manage lands and to keep timber local. The Nisqually Community Forest would manage lands in a sustainable way and to keep the money local. Recently 7,000 acres were for sale, but the NRC bid was unsuccessful.

David's presentation is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-river-council>.

Questions:

- 1) Phyllis: Do all the major rivers have watershed councils? No, but they are all moving in this direction. Some places are just starting, and other places must build trust before they can move forward.
- 2) Candra: How did the Habitat Conservation Plan affect the Nisqually Chinook Recovery Plan? State plans generally don't go far enough in outlining buffer regulations. The HCP increased buffers around fish bearing streams, but on a large-scale. The Recovery Plan is on a finer scale.
- 3) Richard: How will the NRC obtain 7,000 acres of timberland in 10 years, when accounting for inflation? The NRC is trying to plan ahead by developing relationships with environmentally friendly investment firms and the timber companies. This recent bid attempt was a Lessons Learned—the NRC will now start to plan much further in advance. Justin added that the Community Forest wouldn't remove land from the tax base, but it would support harvesting while also providing for salmon recovery, recreation and more.
- 4) Gair: An initiative in New Zealand works to designate landscapes as people; she recommends the NRC research that program.

Nisqually River Foundation – Justin Hall, Executive Director

David describes the work of the NRC, and the Nisqually River Foundation (NRF) is the organization charged with implementing that work. The NRF was created 11 years ago to provide the staffing and funding for the NRC. The non-profit designation provided flexibility in grant applications, tax status, and more. Justin is the Executive Director, Sheila is the director for the Nisqually River Education Project, and Morgan is the coordinator for the NRC.

The NRF houses the Nisqually River Education Project. It hosts the Nisqually Watershed Festival and Eatonville Salmon Fest, and completes other projects as necessary. Examples include the completion of a Climate Adaptation Plan, and a river recreation access plan.

Questions:

1) Richard: What is the NRFs fiscal year? The NRF operates on the calendar year.

Nisqually River Education Project – Sheila Wilson, Program Director

Sheila presented on the NREP and the multiple field experiences that she offers to schoolchildren. NREP works with about 50 teachers and their students per year. Teachers attend two water quality monitoring days per year, and have the option to join other trips as well. Additional trips include tree planting, salmon carcass tossing, Eye on Nature and Nearshore trips.

NREP works with a significant number of partners, including those who manage land, provide funding or give other resources. All NREP programs are aligned to Washington State Learning Standards, particularly the Next Generation Science Standards.

Sheila's presentation is available here: https://prezi.com/b_2a9byazptt/nrep-nss-2015/.

CAC Goal Reports – All CAC Members

This meeting is an opportunity to introduce Stream Stewards to the goals and projects of the CAC.

- 1) Access and Hikes (Ed) Increased public access has been a discussion topic for years. Currently the NRC is planning a water trail on the Nisqually River. Ed also shared information on the best places to hike this fall. He suggested anywhere with a view, especially Mt. Wow and Eagle Peak. With pink salmon returning, it's also a great time to go to the Nisqually-Mashel Confluence.
- 2) Neonicotinoids (Fred) Neonicotinoids are a type of pesticide that harms the nervous system of destructive invertebrates. The chemicals also impact beneficial invertebrates too, like honeybees, bumblebees and butterflies. The CAC works to inform members about the chemicals and how to avoid their use. Members of the CAC are writing letters to various entities, calling for a ban on the chemicals. On a happier note, Thurston County recently signed an MOU banning neonicotinoids on county property.
- 3) NRC Youth Council (Karelina) Karelina, Phyllis and Debbie noticed a lack of youth on the NRC and CAC. Working with Sheila, they are brainstorming the implementation of a Youth Council based off the Sustainability Ambassadors of the Cedar River Watershed. More information available here: www.sustainabilityambassadors.org.
- 4) Citizens Conservation Certification (Karelina). The CCC is the concept of a free certification for homeowners that use environmentally friendly practices. The program is a work in progress for the CAC and is loosely based off the Nisqually Sustainable program.
- 5) Emeritus Board (Fred). The concept is to develop a Board for retired representatives of the NRC, as approved by the NRC. This is an on-going project.
- 6) Membership (All). The CAC is continually working to increase its membership, especially with younger people. The group is considering developing a PowerPoint presentation, brochure or other public outreach material to help educate community members. Phyllis thinks that networking with other groups is key for finding new members. Bob always wants to increase tribal involvement in the CAC. Grace Ann is a member of the CAC, but usually has other commitments.
- 7) Protected Marine Areas (Ed). Ed has travelled the world scuba diving in Protected Marine Areas (PMA) and thinks it's a good idea to have one in Puget Sound. He is currently educating members on PMAs and

the keys to success. Ed believes that a successful PMA requires community-based support, constant monitoring and a financial base.

- 8) Coal and Oil Trains (Grace Ann & Fred). Grace Ann is passionate about preventing increases in coal and oil train traffic in the region. Fred also does a lot of research on the number of trains that travel through the area. The CAC is keeping an eye on the public comment periods of all EIS documents released.

Fred noted that all people are welcome to join the CAC—it is a great forum to explore topics of interest. Steve hopes the Stream Stewards recognize the importance of networking with the people who have worked to protect the watershed.

For the Good of the Order – All

Some CAC members are interested in becoming more politically active and have created a Limited PAC. This is not associated with the NRC or CAC; contact Karelina for more information.

Important Dates:

- Next NRC Meeting: September 18, 2015 at Mount Rainier National Park.
- Next CAC Meeting: October 13, 2015 from 6-8pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.