



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
May 18, 2012
UW Pack Forest Conference Center
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Ron Averill – *Lewis County*
Bryan Bowden – *Mount Rainier National Park*
Christopher Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Cindy James – *WA Dept. of Ecology*
Fred Michelson – *NRC Forestry Committee*

Mark Thibo – *WA Dept. of Natural Resources*
David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*

* **CAC Representatives (3)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Deborah Crosetto
Paul Crosetto*
Mary Foster*
Karelina Resnick
Steve Pruitt

Jean Shaffer
Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith*
Sunny Thompson

Guests

Chris Magirl – *USGS*
Jessica Moore – *NW Trek*
Pat Saunders – *UW Pack Forest*
Chris Schutz – *Pierce County*

René Skaggs -- *Pierce County Conservation*
Terry Turner – *Trout Unlimited*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*

Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually River Council*
Sheila Wilson – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*

2. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Call to Order – David called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

Approval of Meeting Minutes and Agenda – There was a motion to approve April's meeting minutes as presented. They were approved, as was the agenda as presented.

3. Introductions, Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Deborah reported the CAC met at Wilcox Farms, following last month's Council meeting. They had the opportunity to take a tour of the family farm

aboard the Wilcox tour bus. Chris Wilcox showed them the egg boiling facility, which is now in operation, the egg house for sorting and packaging shell products, and the liquid egg facility. This locally owned facility ships products across the western United States and works very hard to ensure the consumers are getting a quality product.

Due to lack of attendance, the meeting was adjourned after the completion of the tour. April's agenda will be postponed until the June meeting. Items up for discussion will include looking into creating a Nisqually Sustainable certification program for residential homes in the Nisqually watershed and declaring new officers for 2012.

- *Forestry Committee* – The Forestry Committee will be reporting at the end of the meeting with a discussion of whether or not to pursue the DNR's Community Forest Trust Program.
- *Chair Report* – David has been approached by Bill Ruckelshaus, who proposed that the Nisqually watershed take on the task of providing mentorship to neighboring watersheds. This mentorship program would provide additional annual funding to the Nisqually River Foundation to support involvement of a staff member to take on this project. Justin Hall would be a possible candidate for this opportunity.

At the June meeting, the Council will look to set priorities and determine the direction they wish to pursue in the upcoming year. The Council will have a discussion on what projects they wish to take on, including seeking funding for a consultant position for the NRC's Forestry Committee.

Recently, David was approached by Jim Wilcox who seemed to be having trouble obtaining a permit for mitigation of drainage ditches on the Wilcox Farm property. This permit was essential for moving water out of upland sites and the management of water in certain non- fish bearing areas. David made a phone call to Washington's Fish and Wildlife Federation, in hopes of helping the family. Due to David's influence and the idea a tribe and a farmer attempting to help one another, the permit was put in place the next day. This is a great example of what can be accomplished when project partners form connections.

David, as well as other members of the Council, will be working to increase the attendance of project partners at the monthly meetings. The goal is to motivate individuals and organizations of the watershed and bring them back to the table.

- *Staff Report* – Ashley reported that Wild and Scenic Film Festival took place on April 28th and 29th at Yelm High School in conjunction with the Nisqually Home, Garden, and Trade Show. Quite a bit of traffic was seen at the hands-on activity booths, with low attendance in the theater. The project partners, South Sound Estuary Association, Nisqually Land Trust, Nisqually Stream Stewards, Thurston County Stream Team, Thurston County Environmental Health, and the Nisqually River Foundation, collectively made over 120 contacts to add to mailings and newsletters.

A spring edition of the Nisqually River Notes is in the final stage of revisions and should hit the stands in time for the River Council's June meeting.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe Kane reported that the Nisqually Land Trust’s 20th Annual Auction took place in March, setting a record as their most successful. Profits were up 8% from 2011. Cindy Schorno was the event’s auctioneer and JW Foster was the Emcee for the evening.

Nisqually Community Forest met last week to discuss possible funding sources for the community forest. The committee was given a presentation from Jean Shaffer describing the Community Forest Trust opportunity put forth by DNR.

The Land Trust has been looking to hire a Development Director, interviewing a number of applicants. They have narrowed it down to 2 finalists, one of which Joe will be interviewing this afternoon.

Joe’s Tedx Talk, which he gave last month in Tacoma, is now available online. Check it out at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFAEIDeId1M>.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila Wilson reported that “Eye on Nature” fieldtrips are in full swing. Earlier this week, Pioneer Middle School kids came out to the refuge to connect with nature and experience the flora and fauna that resides there.

NREP has 7 site openings for water quality monitoring for the upcoming school year, with a number of teachers coming in to fill the available spots. Sheila is looking to update procedures and protocols in the water quality manual, as well as redefining optimum values to be found in reaches of the Nisqually. She is currently looking for funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation and Wells Fargo to fund this program through the next calendar year.

Sheila met with principals from the Yelm School District, as well as the Curriculum Director and Superintendent. Feedback from the presentation ensured her that the school district will be looking to encourage more teachers to take part in the program in the upcoming school year. A follow-up meeting will be set for sometime in August.

Summer Teacher Institute will take place June 25, 26, and 27 at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. The theme for this year will be “Coming Home: Salmon, Sense of Place, and Time: A time of learning, sharing and renewal while experiencing the outdoors.” There will be a number of local speakers, field workshops, and Native American Curriculum and will align with the National Next Generation Science Standards.

Sheila will be receiving evaluations from teachers and students that participated in the program this year. She is also looking to hold an annual advisory committee meeting with

teacher, council members, and project partners. An email will be sent out soon to establish interested parties.

Natural Resources Youth Camp is taking place at Pack Forest this year, from July 22nd-28th.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin Hall reported that the Dan J. Evans Stewardship Award event would not be held in June, due to Norm Dicks' busy schedule. The Foundation will look to plan the event for the August recess.

The Nisqually River Foundation Board of Directors met for the second time this year on May 9th. Items discussed included a Conflict of Interest Policy, salary compensation for staff, NRC's Forestry Committee need for a consultant, and the Nisqually Watershed mentorship possibility. Meeting minutes are available upon request.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don was unable to make the meeting, but did want to share that there are still seats available for the 2012 Stream Stewards course, which begins June 6th.

Also, Don has established a Facebook page for the Stream Stewards program.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris Ellings gave a brief summary of the 3-Year Work Plan. This plan includes the direction that salmon recovery in Nisqually will take over the next few years. The plan has been submitted to the Puget Sound Partnership, but must be reviewed by the Council before it can be approved.

The plan describes projects and land acquisitions that are in alignment with the Stock Management Plan, including monitoring of Chinook salmon populations and utilizing the newly installed weir at Tank Crossing. This 3-year plan is a way for the tribe to provide an update to NOAA's Recovery Implantation Technical Team (RITT) with current intentions of restoring sensitive habitat and salmon populations in the Nisqually, as well as the progress that has been made over the last 20 years. It also allows the tribe to be strategic with habitat recovery and allow the modeling tools to run through scenarios, predicting thresholds for salmon in our streams using adaptive management.

There was a motion to approve the 2012 3-Year Work Plan. The motion was unanimously accepted and seconded.

A selective fishery will take place this year, occurring at the height of the fall run, through the use of tangle nets. Biologists have predicted that 20,000 hatchery chinook will be returning this year along with 3,000 to 4,000 natural fish. Catching swimmers bound for the upper Nisqually at the site of the weir and allowing only the natural to continue up river will let the tribe reach their harvest goals without weakening the genetics of natural stocks.

Interns will be coming on to assist at the site of the weir throughout the summer months and volunteers are always welcome to lend a helping hand.

4. Conservation and NatureMapping with NW Trek

Jessica Moore, Conservation Program Manager at NW Trek

NW Trek has been in operation since 1975 and since has accumulated over 725 acres of land near the Town of Eatonville. Their mission is to conserve, educate, and provide recreation by displaying, interpreting, and researching local wildlife. They currently house 45 different native Pacific Northwest animals and welcomes around 185,000 visitors each year.

Conservation pursuits at NW Trek include the propagation and release of over 40 cygnets of trumpeter swans within the perimeters of the park in the last 10 years. This work also consists of protecting these birds from predators and releasing them into the Midwest U.S. Flyways where they were previously extinct.

Since 2008, NW Trek has been working with a number of project partners, including WDFW and the Department of Corrections, to collect and rear Oregon spotted frog eggs until their juvenile frog stage, when they are released back into the wild. This pilot program is currently on track to meet its projected goal of releasing 5,000 Oregon spotted frogs at Dailman Lake on JBLM lands. This program has also paved the way for citizen science opportunities, such as completing survival and breeding surveys of the released populations. WDFW is now seeing, through this project, how valuable citizen science can be for data collection.

The Washington NatureMapping Program is another way the community can contribute in citizen science projects through NW Trek. This program allows participants to identify what plant and animal species are being found where and at what times and seasons. NatureMapping is currently being done in both Pierce and Thurston Counties on Nisqually Land Trust properties, including the Ohop Creek restoration, NW Trek's longest running site, Wilcox Flats, and Powell Creek, with new locations being introduced on the Railway Road property, the Van Eaton Homestead, and the Allen Parcel.

Jessica's presentation is now available on the Nisqually River Council's SlideShare account. Visit: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nw-trek-naturemapping-update-2012>

5. Aggradation in the Upper Nisqually

Chris Magirl, USGS

Chris has been working with a team of scientists and researchers to complete "Monitoring of the geomorphic response of rivers downstream from retreating glaciers on Mount Rainier, Washington", a study put forth by USGS which examines total sediment loads in the Nisqually River, accumulating sediment in Alder Lake, and Mount Rainier's sediment production due to glacial retreat. The study also takes a look at future predictions on these topics.

The Nisqually System starts in Mount Rainier National Park, and includes Kautz Creek, Tahoma Creek, and the Nisqually River. This system is fed by a series of glaciers that are eventually carried out to the South Puget Sound. As the flow makes it way downstream it runs it the Alder Dam, which was

completed in 1945. Surveys have been completed, in 1945, 1956, 1985, and 2012, to compare the baseline data of deposited sediment in Alder Lake and the tributaries of the Nisqually River System. Studies have seen a varying amount of increased sediment loads during this time. Total sediment accumulation has been seen in three main areas, including the Nisqually River delta with 1.2 million tons/year, 120,000 tons moves past the main body of Alder Lake each year, and the Little Nisqually River delta accumulates 7,800 tons/year.

The Alder Dam keeps a substantial amount of sediment from pouring into the Puget Sound, considering volcanoes are known to produce significant amounts of sediment. The increased occurrence of rock falls due to the crumbling and weathering of mountain systems seem to be the direct cause of the increased total sediment loads downstream. Studies show that larger storms and local flooding are sending a substantial amount of this sediment down river, and as our active channels widen and change, there is more room for this debris to flow. The USGS has found no direct correlation between increased sediment flow and glacial retreat. The glaciers merely help the debris move downstream, with flooding acting as added aid.

Models have been developed for to predict sediment transport in the years to come, highlighting the hydraulic character of the Nisqually River, sediment transport times, and what can be expected to occur in both 25 and 50 years. Research suggests that if sediment release is maintained, the river system will be able to handle anticipated sediment loads. However, if sediment release is significantly increased, the river may not be able to withstand the debris flows.

Chris's presentation has been made available on the River Council's SlideShare website. Visit: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/aggradation-and-sediment-in-the-nisqually-river>

5. DNR's Community Forest Trust Program

It was proposed that the NRC Forestry Committee be suspended until resources can be acquired to hire and fund a professional consultant to write a watershed-based forestry plan. The committee has approached the Nisqually River Foundation in attempt to seek aid in locating funding to support this position. The proposal was unanimously accepted and there was a motion to approve. The motion was seconded. There will be a discussion at the next meeting to decide the priority of this committee and seeking out resources.

There was a brief discussion on whether the River Council or the Land Trust should pursue DNR's Community Forest Trust pilot program. DNR is using this program as a means to keep forestland conversions rates down, while producing a self-sustaining revenue to fund ownership and property management, while developing and maintaining community relations. Proposals for this program should be submitted by July 2nd.

Steve Pruitt and Bryan Bowden have been looking at possible nominations of lands, ideas for funding, and interested parties. A map of potential project sites can be accessed by clicking the following link: http://nisquallyriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Forest_10yrPriorities_email.pdf

An executive meeting will be established to further discuss this option.

6. For the Good of the Order

A public hearing pertaining to progress of the Mount Rainier Resort at Park Junction will take place in Ashford at Pierce Fire and Rescue Station Wednesday, June 6th at 9am. More information can be found at the following website:

<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/xml/abtus/ourorg/pals/docs/agendas/060612heagenda.pdf>

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:25pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, June 15, 2012, 9am – 12pm
The Braget Farm*