



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
January 18, 2013
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Nick Bond – *Town of Eatonville*
Bryan Bowden – *Mount Rainier National Park*
Bob Burkle – *WDFW*
Edna Fund – *Lewis County*
Cindy James – *Department of Ecology*

Doug McClelland – *WA Dept. of Natural Resources*
Sandra Romero – *Thurston County*
David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
*** CAC Representatives (1)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Steve Pruitt
Karelina Resnick*

Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith

Guests

Otis Bush – *TESC MES Program*
Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Kim Gridley – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Eric Grossman – *USGS*
Ashley McBee – *TESC MES Program*
Chris Schutz – *Pierce County*
Kevin Senderak – *US Forest Service*

Stephanie Suter – *Puget Sound Partnership*
Erica Taecker – *US Forest Service*
Terry Turner – *Trout Unlimited*
Ken Wieman – *US Forest Service*
Cindy Wilson – *Thurston County*
Barb Wood – *Thurston County*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*
Anita Montgomery -- *Nisqually River Ed. Project*

Don Perry – *Nisqually Stream Stewards*
Christian Sartin -- *Nisqually River Education Project*
Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually River Council*

1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Call to Order – David called the meeting to order at 9:06am.

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

2. Introductions, Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Karelina reported that the CAC is moving forward on the Citizen Conservation Certification assessment and intends to meet with Steve Pruitt, Co-chair, to further development assessment documents. The CAC is also looking to recruit new members, having held a potluck in December to celebrate work done in 2012 and to share information with prospective members.
- *Chair Report* – David reported that the program he introduced in December, the National Blueways Program, had intended to visit the Nisqually Watershed this month. Due to scheduling conflicts, they were unable to attend this NRC meeting, but will try to give a formal presentation in February. If the

organization cannot make the regularly scheduled meeting, a meeting of the NRC Executive Committee meeting will be established.

David will be spending much of his time in Olympia working to support the Governor's 2013 PSAR budget, which if pushed through, will provide a great financial resource for Phase 2 of the Ohop restoration.

- *Staff Report* – Ashley reported that she has been organizing the Nisqually River Council's electronic files, in preparation for a move to an internet-based storage and support system, such as iCloud. The use of this management system will allow for all documents to be regularly backed up, as well as providing staff with access to the most recent and up to date documents. Ashley has also been archiving past NRC and NRF hard copy documents.

Final reporting for the Pierce County Benthics Program has been completed and sent to Carla Vincent at Surface Water Management. As a part of the 21st Annual Student GREEN Congress State of the Rivers Sessions, Ashley will be leading a session that includes analysis of aquatic insect data collected for this program, similar to that of the chemical water quality session. The session will allow students that collected samples from selected stream reaches to compare and contrast BIBI data, identifying hot spots and reasons for their findings.

This year's NRC Retreat is set to take place at NW Trek Wildlife Park, outside of Eatonville. The date for the annual retreat usually falls on the third Saturday of the month, March 16th. However, the Nisqually Land Trust's Annual Conservation Dinner and Auction is to be held on that same day. Instead of holding the meeting the following week, it was asked if there was any interest in having the retreat on the regularly scheduled third Friday of the month. There were no objections to moving the retreat to Friday, March 15th.

Ideas for the retreat include bringing in a facilitator to assist the Council in moving forward on the Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan. The Salmon Recovery Council recently received a presentation from Nancy Lee of the University of Washington on strategic planning and developing a comprehensive social marketing plan to move forward efforts for specific programs. Nancy's work could help the NRC evaluate ongoing projects, develop a strategy, set goals, and evaluate objectives to ensure these goals are being accomplished. The NRC should look to become more effective with outreach, reaching the full community instead of merely preaching to the choir.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe Kane reported that the Land Trust did successfully acquire the Burwash property, the centerpiece property of the Ohop Valley restoration. This acquisition will allow the second phase of the Ohop Restoration to move forward. The Burwash Property will be a live estate for the next 2 to 3 years. Another successful acquisition included 57 additional acres to the Mount Rainier Gateway Initiative, a timber-filled property near filled Mt. Tahoma Road. This parcel will be amongst the first to be used in the carbon sequestration market.

Overall, it was a very good year for the Nisqually Land Trust. 2012 was the second best for land acquisition in Land Trust history. 2012 also saw a great expansion in their volunteer database, a growth in which they will aim to continue throughout 2013.

Joe has received an offer from National Geographic to write a follow-up to his book "Running the Amazon," after it was discovered that there may be a new source of the Amazon River. Joe is currently working through the logistics with National Geographic, but it looks as though he will take a leave of action in the last part of April to explore the new source, weather and water flow depending.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Christian reported that NREP's salmon tossing fieldtrips are in full swing. Sheila has been looking into the Tacoma Green Partnership Fund for financial support of next year's salmon tossing programs.

Important Dates include:

- February 7th, Winter Networking Meeting for Teachers
- February 11th, Winter Networking Meeting for Teachers, Eatonville
- February 13th, Water Quality Monitoring Teacher Training
- February 19th, Water Quality Monitoring Teacher Training
- February 14th and 21st, Water Quality Monitoring

Sheila is currently in the process of applying for ALEA funds as a means for supporting next year's tree planting fieldtrips.

Christian also reported that the students participating in the TRiO program at The Evergreen State College are looking for science-based internships in the Olympia area. Christian will communicate with these students over the next month and bring report of those looking for specific internships to the February NRC meeting. Any interested NRC members or associates should contact Christian for more details.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin reported that the NRF Board met Wednesday, January 14th at the Center for Urban Waters in Tacoma. The Board unanimously approved the 2013 budget, which supports 5 employees, 3 interns, and 6 programs, including Nisqually Sustainable, the Nisqually River Council, the Nisqually River Education Project, Ecosystem Services, Low Impact Development (Eatonville Raingardens), and employment of 2 Refuge Technicians. The budget is available in both Excel and narrative formats upon request.

The artwork commissioned and presented to Norm Dicks at October's Daniel J. Evans Stewardship Award event has been successfully delivered to the refuge and will be hung in the Visitor Center very soon.

The Saving the Ocean episodes of "River of Kings" will air back to back on KTS-9 on Monday, February 25th during primetime television hours. The NRF is currently working with Long Live the Kings, KTS-9, and Saving the Ocean's PR Firm to put together a viewing, either as a fundraiser or an outreach event. This event will be open to the public. Information will be sent out as plans come together. The episodes are now available on the NRC's website, please visit www.nisquallyriver.org.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don Perry reported that the Salmon Watchers have been monitoring Nisqually tributaries for the last few weeks, recording essential data about this season's runs.

Don has been recruiting more volunteers and is currently looking to fill this year's Stream Stewards training course. Next month, he will give a presentation at Eatonville's Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Stream Stewards has a tube removal volunteer event on February 9th, from 9am to noon, at the Braget Marsh. Contact Don for more details.

Don would like to lead a side tour at an upcoming NRC meeting, possibly of the Braget Marsh. This would allow members of the Council to view ongoing restoration efforts in the watershed. He will coordinate with Ashley to further develop this proposal in the coming months.

This year will mark the first year of the Eatonville Salmon Fest, a new event to take place in Smallwood and Mill Pond Parks on Saturday, October 19, 2013. This festival will be a family-friendly event filled with fun and education.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris reported that focus has been on the annual Chinook Recovery Program Review. This review will take a look at this year's effort across each of the 4 H's: hatcheries, habitat, harvest, and hydropower. The public portion of the program review will take place February 7th at the Red Wind Casino. Breakfast and lunch will be served. Presentations to be given by the WDFW, as well as NIT Program Managers. Topics are to include results of this year's weir

project, habitat restoration activities from the year, an introduction to the Steelhead Recovery Program, and a look into the 2013 agenda.

This year's winter chum run was the lowest on record. It seems the fish returned early and the run was remarkably small. The fishery was closed well before the historical peak, right after the Christmas holiday. Chum salmon are essential for the Nisqually Tribe's winter food supply and cultural needs. It is thought that freshwater and ocean conditions may have played a very large factor in the small run size. Historic escapements show an average of 27,000 fish returning each year. This year's escapement is estimated at half of that, with 5,000 of those fish being caught by local fisherman. However, surveys have shown a successful season for coho, which are still being seen on the spawning grounds.

Funds for Ohop Phase 2 construction have been included in the Governor's 2013 budget. Supplemental funds are currently being sought after to ensure the project has ample financial support. Project engineering and permitting should begin this year, with construction commencing the summer of 2014. It was suggested that video footage be taken to document the site before and after the restoration efforts. One such company to contact for this project is Leaping Frog Films, who documented the footage for the Elwha Dam removal.

3. Sediment Dynamics of the Nisqually

Eric Grossman, Research Geologist, USGS

A coastal geologist by training, Eric's work has included mapping the sea floor and collecting sediment cores to measure the effects of the Brown Farm Restoration at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge on nearshore ecosystems. At 760 acres, this project represents the largest tidal marsh restoration in the Pacific Northwest. His research not only looks at the response of these efforts, but the amount of sediment that moves through the delta, how it moves, the composition of these sediments, and its effects. Eric and his associates use three methods to evaluate these metrics: GIS Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP), a Hydrodynamic Model, and Field Measurements.

Sediments are carried down the Nisqually River System, through the delta to the Puget Sound and brought back to the delta with each rising tide. The RAP shows that 20,000 to 100,000 tons of sediment travels down the Nisqually each year. The question is how much is being returned to the restoration area versus what is being pushed out to sea. Findings show that between 11 and 28% are deposited in the delta.

The Hydrodynamic Model uses water level loggers and current meters set in locations throughout the restoration area. The rough topography and on-site vegetation doesn't seem to be accounted for in the data being produced. However, the Modeled Connectivity does show that the river is more connected to the restoration site during the second high tide of the tide range. This model corroborates the data measured by the GIS RAP Model.

Field measurements were taken throughout the year for river and channel discharge, sediment composition, tides, currents, and turbidity. Measurements reflect that the composition of sediment making it down to the delta is mostly fine, including silts and clays. The turbidity monitored both the amount of suspended sediment in the river and the marsh. Findings showed that the river has much higher turbidity levels, while the marsh fluctuates daily. Looking at flow conditions of the smaller sloughs, there is a small net flow in the system overall, representing <6% of the overall river flow. Overall, with each of these factors considered, channel sediment flux shows a 370 m³/yr flux into the marsh through McAllister Creek. This represents a total possible accretion of .12 mm/year.

Mount Rainier sheds a great deal of coarse and fine material in the upper basin. Much of this is deposited and trapped in Alder Lake due to construction of Alder Dam in 1945. Since then, it has been estimated that 44 million cubic meters of sediment has been allowed to accumulate. If this sediment were to no longer be trapped, accretion at the delta would increase significantly, between 14-70 times more than what is currently deposited annually.

Eric's research has also looked into the nearshore response to the Brown Farm Restoration, as well as how fish are using the area. Extensive channel incisions have been identified, allowing his team to observe how sediments are being redistributed and how channels are being carved. It has also been noticed that large sand features are

forming, and as they grow larger are moving seaward in both the nearshore and McAllister Creek, approximately 50 meters in the last 6 months. Substrates are becoming coarser, with the mean grain size only increasing since 2009. If this continues, the area may see a subsequent shift in the invertebrates that reside in the nearshore, representing a reduction in diversity and biomass.

In his research, Eric has been working to identify what effect climate change will have on the area. With general warming impacting glaciers and snowmelt, sea-level rise is at 3.75 mm/year. Though some models are showing that sea level rise is currently slowing, possibly due to wind stress, this is only temporary. In order to take in consideration the changes that may occur and to use adaptive management effectively, Eric has been working with USGS, the Nature Conservancy, and Western Washington University to establish the Puget Sound Coastal Resilience website. This framework works to raise awareness, assess risk, identify choices, and take action in managing natural resources and protecting human coastal communities. Visit: <http://coastalresilience.org/> for more details.

Eric is always looking for people to lend a hand and get involved with his research. Graduate students and volunteers are welcome to help pursue this study. Interested parties should contact him for more details.

Eric's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare website. Please visit: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-delta-sediment-budget-transport-dynamics>

1. **The Nisqually Thin Project**

Kevin Senderak and Ken Wieman, US Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest

The Nisqually Thin Project is a commercial timber-thinning project on a legacy stand owned by the U.S. Forest Service. With the applied thinning treatments, will come a number of restorative projects aimed to increase public access and recreation, as well as to enhance fish and wildlife habitat. The stands to be thinned are between 40 and 60 years old, having undergone a clear-cut many decades ago. The stands were identified as spatially heterogeneous, both vertically and horizontally. Treatments will be applied as to create gaps in the upper canopy, allowing more water and light to infiltrate the stand, increasing stand growth. Some trees will be left as down wood or topped to create standing snags to provide food and shelter for the forest's inhabitants.

The project first began with identifying the best location to apply the prescribed thinning treatments. Information was exchanged between the U.S. Forest Service, the Pinchot Partners, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and local tribes using resources such as, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the Northwest Management Plan, the Nisqually Watershed Analysis, and the Late-Successional Reserve Assessment.

Restoration opportunities have been incorporated in the project design and are to be paid for by the profits to be made from the sale of the wood. They include: Dispersed Recreation, which will aim to reduce illegal activities, ground disturbance, and the use of motorized vehicles; Road Management, which will allow for increased passage of aquatic organisms, analysis and maintenance of road systems, and maintenance of hydrologic processes; Stream and Riparian Reserve Restoration, which will provide protective buffers to streams and wetland, keeping water temperatures down and increasing habitat and diversity of fish and wildlife; and Wildlife Management, which will provide habitat security for big game and listed species, reducing forest fragmentation and human traffic.

Public comment is still being taken on the Nisqually Thin Project. Questions and comments should be directed to Erica Taecker, etaecker@fs.fed.us, or Ken Senderak, ksenderak@fs.fed.us, with the Cowlitz Valley Ranger Station.

Kevin and Ken's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare website. Please visit: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-thin-project>

2. **NRC Nomination Committee**

With annual NRC Chair and Vice Chair nominations just around the corner, both Cindy James and Chris Schutz, have volunteered to sit on the Nomination Committee. Karelina will speak to the CAC to find a volunteer to represent the Citizens Advisory Committee.

3. NRC Awards

In the past, the NRC has given awards to various members of the communities and the NRC for work done throughout the year. This is something staff would like to continue to do in 2013. Ashley will email the NRC Contact List a list of the awards to be given out, as well as nomination information.

4. For the Good of the Order

Nothing at this time.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:06 pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, February 15, 2013, 9:30am – 12:30pm
Ohop Grange, Eatonville*