



**Nisqually River Council
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 11, 2013, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Nisqually Tribe's Natural Resources Office**

CAC Members Present: *Karelina Resnick, Bob and Marjorie Smith, Jean Shaffer, Carl Rotter, Mary Foster, Bryan Bowden, and Joe Kane*
Staff Present: *Ashley Von Essen*

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:10pm.

There was a motion to approve May's meeting minutes. They were approved as written, as was the evening's agenda.

Nisqually Land Trust Properties and Community Access – Joe Kane, Nisqually Land Trust (NLT)

Joe Kane, Executive Director of the Nisqually Land Trust and Vice President of the Washington Association of Land Trusts (WALT), has come to share the NLT's position on public access for their properties. The Nisqually Land Trust was formed in 1989 with wildlife habitat conservation identified as their overall goal. As identified in the Nisqually Tribe's Chinook Recovery Plan, the NLT would acquire and permanently protect shoreline habitat for salmon recovery, focusing attentions to the Upper Watershed because of the ideal conditions for salmon spawning and propagation. Since the formation of the organization, the Land Trust has had no mission focusing directly on access for the public.

Over the years, the Land Trust has continued to grow and acquire properties for the purpose of protecting a number of threatened and endangered species, while restoring areas where habitat has been degraded and modified for land-use purposes. Grants acquired for purposes of conservation, such as the USFWS's Endangered Species Conservation Fund, specifically outline public access restrictions for the protection of wildlife. People are purposely kept out to avoid the food scraps and trash left behind, which promote the introduction to crows in particular areas. Crows are direct predators to the marbled murrelet, an endangered species that inhabits the Upper Watershed. However, it is the goal of the NLT to include public access where possible for people to develop a connection and a passion for conservation work.

The NLT hopes that the future opening of the Nisqually State Park will open access to the Upper Watershed, complimenting public trails, such as those within the gates of Mt. Rainier National Park, the Mt. Tahoma Ski Trails to Copper Creek Hut, and the soon-to-be-built Eatonville Greenbelt Trail to Boxcar Canyon. Access in the Lower Watershed proves to be more difficult because the lands were not acquired to facilitate access for the public. The NLT has been working with the City of Yelm to open access to the McKenna Reach Property, potentially developing a trail system that would run parallel to railroad tracks that lie on the property. Trails must be built and maintained, both being laborious and expensive. There is also an issue of liability, which would fall on the shoulders of the Land Trust, would an accident occur. However, certain mandates, such as the Good Neighbor Law, state that as long as no fee is charged for entrance, liability is unnecessary pending

all trails and any structures are up to code. Keeping trails up to standard requires a lot of time and volunteer and staff assistance. Up to this point, keeping up with outside trash and vandalism has been difficult to keep up with.

Karelina inquired about the public access rating system, which has recently begun to be identified through a series of color-coded signage and how access levels are determined. Joe responded by explaining that access is decided by a number of factors, including the grants awarded to help acquire the lands, the fragility of the habitat, ease of site access, and maintenance requirements. If only a "Property of the Nisqually Land Trust" sign is posted, one can assume that access is permitted.

The Land Trust continues to look for opportunities to increase access, keeping this in mind when pursuing new properties. However, they must first and foremost move forward with their mission of purchasing and acquiring properties for the good of the watershed. The NLT is introducing a series of walks this summer, available for donors and volunteers, designed to get people onto their properties to see what it is they are trying to save. Those interested should contact the Land Trust for more details.

Nisqually Community Forest Update – Bryan Bowden, Mt. Rainier National Park, and Joe Kane, NLT

The Nisqually Community Forest is a project being headed by the NLT, with contributions from the NPS and NRF, to acquire an area of actively managed forest for the good of the economy and the community. For years, timber investment management organizations (TIMO's), or those who work for TIMO's, have been acquiring ownership of watershed forestlands to beef up 401k plans for investment companies. These properties are managed very aggressively for a short time, cutting as needed until lands are bare, and then sold to the highest bidder. It is feared that larger parcels will be fractionated and sold for development purposes to increase profits. Harvested timber is then sold overseas to Asian markets, with TIMO's paying an only excise tax at domestic rates.

The NLT submitted an application to the National Park Service for support to begin the process for planning this large working forest, set to encompass between 20,000 and 30,000 acres. The process included bringing together a stakeholders advisory committee consisting of 25 members of the community and representatives local organizations. Meetings have been held for the past year and a half, with a document of this process being recently released to the public. The Phase I Summary also includes what a Nisqually Community Forest would look like, potential forest products, opportunities to establish a small forest product economy, and benefits for wildlife habitat.

After review of the summary, the project was declared a realistic pursuit and has begun moving into Phase II, the establishment phase. Included is the decision of which entity would take ownership of the forest. Joe and the NLT are currently working to create a subsidiary non-profit for the purpose of this project. The NLT Board of Directors are somewhat hesitant about taking on this project and have many questions pertaining to the funding and organization of this project. Following the decisions and the pursuits outlined in Phase II, the NLT will move onto Phase III, the acquisition of an appropriate parcel.

Joe has received a number of inquiries from those interested in investing in this project. It has been seen with a recent 200-acre parcel put on the market by Hancock, once lands become available, next steps move very quickly. For this particular parcel, a mere 6-week window is being provided for the development and submission of proposals from interested organizations. The committee has spoken with Steve Barger, recently retired from Northwest Cascade, who has recommended that a full-time position be opened up to get this project moving forward ahead of the curve.

Forest Buffer Zone Update – Bryan Bowden, Community Planner, Mt. Rainier National Park

An NRC sub-committee formed about a year ago to discuss a potential Forest Buffer Zone in the Nisqually Watershed. This Buffer Zone, inspired by a meeting of the Pierce County Task Force, would include a very narrow strip of forestland establishing a boundary between the edges of sprawling urban growth and agriculture and the watershed's working forests. This barrier would work to contain both commercial and residential development and could be considered a deterrent for elected officials when looking into re-zoning areas and properties. A potential area for this buffer lies just east of Eatonville, running from north and south. Over time, an urban growth line has been unofficially established in this area. This project could create permanent protection from the flexibility of zoning.

An Executive Committee meeting was held to discuss this matter with the Council. David Troutt expressed that the NRC would be supportive of these pursuits, however, there is a limited amount of resources in the watershed and they may be better spent on the Community Forest project at this time. He did encourage the committee to look further into this project, working with the Tribe's GIS specialists to research current zoning and forests at high risk of conversion.

There is currently no energy being put towards this project at this time. Bryan believes that the best way to move forward is for someone to begin working with Jennifer Cutler and/or watershed maps to see where this idea would be best fit. From there, research could be done to see where funding could come from and potential supporters (local partners, elected officials.)

Jean Shaffer and Debby Crosetto volunteered to take the lead on this project. Karelina will approach Jennifer for help in pursuing this project. Jean, Debby, and Bryan will meet with Jennifer to explain the goals of the project. This committee will then bring maps and any other ideas to the CAC for further discussion. The goal is to have something tangible by October.

Ecosystem Services Report

The meeting for this sub-committee was postponed until next week. An update will be provided at the July meeting.

Update on Eatonville Raingarden Project

The Town of Eatonville has submitted a grant proposal to Pierce Conservation Futures and it looks as though funds will be awarded. The Town will be using funds to promote raingarden development in Karelina's neighborhood, adjacent to Eatonville schools. The goal is of this project, as well as the entire Stormwater Initiative, is to eliminate stormwater runoff into Lynch and Ohop Creeks while increasing flow in the Mashel. Karelina has called together a community group, who will be meeting tomorrow evening. Students will be involved in these projects, so the location is very convenient. Future endeavors will include water collection and infiltration in the community.

For the Good of the Order –

- Meeting Location for July – Carl will look into meeting at the Alder Community Club.

- Karelina will be out of town next week, missing the June NRC meeting. She will then be taking a 6 to 8 week leave from the CAC due to personal reasons. This will begin after the July CAC meeting. No meeting will take place in August.
- Jean has been very into Broccoli sprouts and neuroplasticity . Broccoli has anti-cancerous properties and has the ability to change DNA and the resistance to cancer in offspring. She has introduced them into her daily diet to absorb some of these health benefits.
- The CCC Assessment will be added to the July agenda and will continue with “Gardens,” led by Mary Foster.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.