



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
October 18, 2013
Ashford Fire Station
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Edna Fund – Lewis County
Amy Kruver – Pierce County
David Troutt – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Cindy Wilson – Thurston County
*** CAC Representatives (1)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Fred Michelson
Rosalea Pruitt
Steve Pruitt*

Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith

Guests

Rhonda Cluff – Pierce County
Chris Ellings – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Chris Schutz – Pierce County

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Morgan Greene – Nisqually River Foundation
Justin Hall – Nisqually River Foundation
James Morrill – Nisqually River Education Project

Sheila Wilson – Nisqually River Education Project
Ashley Von Essen – Nisqually River Council

1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Call to Order – David Troutt called the meeting to order at 9:43am.

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

2. Introductions, Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Steve Pruitt reported that the CAC is working to create a first draft of the Citizen Conservation Certification. This task has proven to be a challenge, but has allowed the committee to think about ways they can develop their skills as watershed stewards.

The committee's Co-chair, Jean Shaffer, has been very active in the forestry community and has played an instrumental role in establishing the Forest Guild Pacific Northwest Regional Meeting at Mount Adams. This grassroots effort is aimed at increasing awareness and development of alternative forestry practices. This year's summit will focus on community forest opportunities and will include a presentation from the Joe Kane of the Nisqually Land Trust.

An informal meeting was held at the Tribe's Natural Resources office on Oct 8th and allowed Steve to brief the newest CAC member about the history of the NRC and the goals of the committee.

- *Chair Report* – David shared that he has been in Dayton, WA for the past couple days and is glad to be back on this side of the hills. He has been working on budget issues concerning the NRC and NRF. His attempt to channel funds may result in a supplemental request from the Senate in the coming quarter.

David mentioned that the federal government is officially back in action. The shutdown has had significant financial strain on small communities of the Nisqually Watershed, as well as the country.

David will be taking part in an upcoming conference pertaining to sustainable forestry, October 29th and 30th. This regional conference will look at developing new funding mechanisms, along with a capitol investment district for watersheds. This could mean a more streamlined approach to funding projects, pushing them through faster and investing directly into our natural resources.

The Nisqually Weir was operating as well as could be expected through the month of August, passing an estimated 200,000 pinks and a fair amount of Chinook. Following the first high waters of September, the crew noticed scouring around the weir, leading to the formation of holes. After the holes had been patched, the weir fished for another couple of weeks. With a second high water event moving through, comprised mostly of rain and not the typical snowmelt, not only did discharge rise to above 2000 cfs, but flow temperatures rose as well. With Tacoma Power's prediction of continued high waters and the timing of the run, the decision was made to remove the weir last Friday. This year marked another season of learning and developing adaptive management. It is the Tribe's hope that high waters will not be apart of what climate change has to offer the Nisqually Watershed. Salmon runs are very much weather and flow dependent. Spawning surveys have shown that the Nisqually River system is still full of fish. Pink salmon are literally everywhere! It is guessed that well over half a million fish have made their way back, with the possibility of reaching the predicted 750,000 humpies. This means that an incredible amount of marine derived nutrients have been deposited in the Nisqually's upper reaches, supporting the next stock. These fish should all be dying, simultaneously, over the next few weeks.

A published journalist, with pieces appearing National Geographic, visited Muck Creek with David last Friday for a story on this year's astonishing pink run.

- *Staff Report* – Ashley reported that the 24th Annual Nisqually Watershed Festival took place Saturday, September 28th at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. This event, though a very soggy one, was a definite success. Because of the weather, attendance was down an estimated 75%, but the committee received a number of compliments on the positive energy and smiles being seen throughout the festival. This marked the first time that rain had been seen in such high amounts on that weekend. The experience proved very helpful in developing a contingency plan in case of inclement weather. Chris Schutz, who volunteered and staffed a table for Pierce County, shared her two favorite highlights of the day: Home Depot's booth where guests could make bughouses and watching Justin's daughter Sophie play her ukulele at the music Mainstage.

Tomorrow, the first ever Eatonville Salmon Fest takes place at Mill Pond and Smallwood Parks. Set-up for the festivities is happening right now with a team of volunteers, as well as the Tribe's Restoration Crew. A number of family-friendly activities will be available, along with educational displays, and great food—including a Nisqually salmon bake. The NRF staff will be heading to the Town to assist with decorating, following today's NRC meeting. Anyone looking to lend a helping hand is welcome to join the fun!

Ashley also shared that for those that have visited Justin and her office know of the 15,000 Nisqually Good Neighbor Handbooks that have formed a wall of boxes. She is happy to report that Justin has completed the letter to accompany the mailing. This letter, along with the envelope for mailing the materials, is currently at the printer. The NRF staff will be holding an envelope stuffing party Thursday, November 7th. Dinner and other refreshments will be served to those willing to volunteer their time!

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – No report given.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila reported that Water Quality Monitoring Day, held Thursday, October 17th, went off without a hitch. 45 teachers made their way to 37 sites throughout the Nisqually River system with approximately 900 students. 60 students from The Evergreen State College assisted teachers on the field trips as part of their ongoing partnership with NREP. Sheila tripled her networking meetings and water quality monitoring trainings this season, leaving her and her teachers feeling more prepared. Prior to yesterday's Water Quality Monitoring fieldtrips, James was able to visit 8 schools and 12 classrooms, providing pre-trip presentation to over 300 students.

Sheila has been busy scheduling tree planting fieldtrips trips, offering 30 slots to teachers throughout the end of October and early to mid-November.

NREP, South Sound Green (SSG), and the Chehalis Education Consortium (CBEC) were awarded \$88,000 of \$91,000 they applied for through the EPA. This award originally called for an AmeriCorps Individual Placement (IP). However, because of applying to Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) instead Washington Service Corps (WSC), the cost difference leaves enough funding for only one year of service. Sheila is more than confident that Morgan and James will be able to fill the gap of the missing IP based on the amazing work they've been doing.

Sheila, along with Stephanie Bishop from South Sound Green, will be attending a training at the Pacific Education Institute in North Bend next week.

Sheila has been awarded a grant that will help support NREP and Yelm teachers (\$1850 towards each) to coordinate Environmental and Sustainable standards, promoting formal and non-formal partnerships.

Brian of the Nisqually Community Shellfish Farm recently contacted Sheila about providing Nisqually Nearshore fieldtrips for students. Nearshore trips generally include freshwater to saltwater education, including ocean acidification and ecosystem services education, shellfish tasting (with waivers), plankton/marine life observations, and in-class presentations from Taylor Shellfish. Funding is available through Thurston County Shellfish Protection District. Early discussions include the Nisqually Reach Nature Center playing the host for these trips, with a hike up to the National Shellfish Farm. Each of the organizations listed above are already on board!

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin mentioned that the Foundation is pleased to welcome Morgan Greene, a WCC Individual Placement who will be working to develop a Nisqually Climate Adaption Plan through Model Forest Policy Program's Climate Solutions University. This program will begin February 2014. Morgan has had the opportunity to travel from the lower to the upper watershed, spending time on the Sound, taking part in spawning surveys and fish sampling, and is ready to pull her first 6 day work week.

The Foundation staff has been holding bi-weekly meetings to take a closer look at the goals of the Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan (NWSP). Morgan will be researching objectives that have been discussed and will be compiling inventories of each of the NWSP's indicators.

Justin recently took a trip to Maine with Joe Kane, Paula Swedeen, and Kirk Hanson as part of the effort to create a community forest in the upper watershed. The group visited the Downy Watershed, whose community forest had grown to encompass 29,000 acres, with 22,000 acres soon to be purchased with the help of a conservation TIMO. The town of Grand Lake Stream has a population of 136 and a very viable eco-tourism economy that serves the "old money" of the East Coast. Guided tours are available for those wishing to enjoy outdoor activities, including salmon fishing, both natural origin and hatchery-supplemented. The town was able to raise \$13 million for the land and will need an additional \$17 million for the acquisition of the new parcel. Guides were able to obtain donations from tourists interested in conserving the area. Unfortunately, no successful community forests have been established in Washington State due to steep prices for land and timber and deals that have been unable to finalize. The Nisqually Community Forest Committee is currently writing up their notes and will look to make a presentation to the NRC in December.

Justin has received word that Microsoft is looking to offset their carbon footprint. This could be a great opportunity seek funding via eco-system services and develop a viable partnership.

Justin was recently contacted by the Department of Ecology about an extra \$10,000 in their WRIA water quality program funding budget for this year and \$25,000 for next year. Ecology is looking to fund a project in Nisqually, possibly Morgan's task of developing a Climate Solutions Adaptation Plan or for the Ecosystem Services project. This may be the result of a recent conversation David Troutt had with Ecology about the holes in the NRF/NRF budget. Justin has also applied for the Tribe's Charitable Donation Fund in the amount of \$75,000.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don, the Eatonville Salmon Fest Director, is currently in Eatonville helping with the set-up for tomorrow's Eatonville Salmon Fest.
- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris mentioned that there are two major collaborative projects for salmon habitat and recovery involving the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG), the Nisqually River Foundation, the Nisqually Land Trust, and the Nisqually Tribe.

1. McKenna Reach Project

The project, one of the highest ranked projects for restoration in the Puget Sound, is currently in its design stage, visiting the site to discuss potential restoration opportunities. The design team is currently drawing up a concept to pursue this long-term project. Challenges include: a National Gas pipeline that runs across the property and the Centralia canal. The land will be appraised for its purchase price, with and without Larry's home, in the event he decides to stay on site. The team has been working through the restraints this may cause, but are willing to remain flexible on the matter. From a salmon protection standpoint, this project has great potential. A natural spring exists on the property, with a constant flow of several cfs at a perfect temperature. It is hoped that the land will be purchased in the next year with the \$3 million in funding designated by PSAR.

2. Ohop Restoration, Phase 2

This project is in its fundraising mode, with final designs being laid out at this time. Funding has come from a number of different sources. Chris is seeking approval from the Council today to submit an application for \$200,000 in supplemental resources from the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Fund. These funds can be used for capacity, but are not include outreach and/or education. Chris and Kim have put together a competitive proposal, surrounding the Ohop project, which will fuel capacity support for non-profit partners, allowing them to attend meetings and participate in re-vegetation projects and monitoring, as well as project construction. SPSSEG will be turning in the application to the Puget Sounds Partnership, including \$100,000 for construction, and \$30,000 for each NRF, NLT, and SPSSEG. These funds will help synchronize partnerships and move the watershed forward. David Troutt has entertained a motion to submit the proposal, which passes unanimously.

Chris is happy to report that fish will be at this year's Eatonville Salmon Fest! This opportunity to see wild salmon spawning in the Mashel River will allow interaction between salmon and the community, providing a valuable learning experience and connection to the watershed's natural resources. The committee could move the festival each year wherever spawning salmon is occurring or could look into developing a trail system to observe spawning, or both. The Peterson Farm could be a great place for a trail system.

3. Nisqually River Education Project Teacher/Student Evaluations

Sheila Wilson, Program Director, Nisqually River Education Project

Over the years, Sheila has been working to develop a way to evaluate her program as to find out if NREP is accomplishing the task it set out to achieve. Fieldtrips with students are always fun, especially those that take them outdoors, but have they been effective in reaching students on an environmental and educational level? NREP, which targets 3rd grade through college level students of the Nisqually Watershed, aims to focus on changing

behaviors and attitudes toward conservation and the environment, as opposed to just measuring the intelligence of students.

Sheila's end-of-year survey looks to measure the opinions of student participants at the beginning of the calendar year, the mid-point, and again at the end. Results from last year's water quality monitoring were the only ones to show a decrease in scores, possibly because students only repeat the activity twice throughout the school year. Students rarely have the opportunity to repeat the experience, not participating in chemical testing independent of the program. Results possibly show that students are not making connections with their data and the potential effects of poor water quality, but do show that they are sharing this information with parents and peers.

Of 42 teachers, 21 turned in their surveys. These 21 teachers are probably more responsive to the other parts of the program as well, meaning the data may be somewhat skewed. Results showed that all participants enjoyed habitat restoration fieldtrips and Student GREEN Congress. Teachers were mostly satisfied with Water Quality Monitoring and highly enjoy the Eye on Nature trips to the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. Overall, teachers seem to be very satisfied with their participation with NREP.

Sheila's upcoming habitat restoration fieldtrips will all take place in the Ohop restoration area. It is hoped that the application to be submitted for supplemental PSAR funds will help support this work over the next two years.

Sheila has also received a grant from Ecology Public Participation Grant to allow NREP, CBEC, and SSG to capture 2013-2014 program evaluations with the help of Todd Johnson, a data and research professional with ESD 113. They are currently working to develop a new survey for students. The pilot is to be released this year with an online version being made available the 2014-2015 school year. Sheila will provide Ashley with a copy of this survey to distribute to the NRC for comments and suggestions.

However, how will these evaluations help make changes for the future? How can the information being collected be implemented to effectively communicate this knowledge and share passion with young people? Chris Ellings added that this is especially important because NOAA is changing the ways their funds can be spent, which specifically exclude education and outreach. This could be because there is a lack of means to measure accomplishments. Evaluations could be vital in keeping environmental education programs funded and moving forward.

Would it be possible to capture those who have history of participating in the watershed, their communities and/or NREP on film? Talking to early program participants and documenting where they are now could be very useful in demonstrating the effectiveness of education and outreach. What did these participants walk away with? Are they continuing to make sustainable choices or working to champion local communities? Other ideas were to cover a wall with paper at festivals or developing a website to allow attendees to list their history in the watershed and participation. If this task can be accomplished, it may be possible to channel funds back into outreach and education programs. James mentioned that Dixie Reimer, the science coach at North Thurston Public Schools, administers a mandatory biology evaluation to 10th grade students at the end of the school year. Doing so has helped track students that began participating in 5th grade. Establishing a credible research project could also be very helpful in tracking down those involved in the program. A list of questions should be compiled that may facilitate an investigation that may be helpful in relating environmental education and outreach and how it furthers the mission of the NRC.

4. Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan

Justin Hall, Executive Director, Nisqually River Foundation

The NWSP Planning Committee has been continuing to meet twice a month to discuss the objectives of the plan. Morgan will be taking on the task of researching and/or taking inventories of each. For example, for the objective relating to recreation, Morgan will be attempting to put together a map of all watershed trails, what kind of trails they are, difficulty, etc. It is hoped that this research and partner outreach will help determine projects that can fill in any program gaps. This could also lead to a larger NRF staff and need for increased capacity.

It is Justin's intent to organize NRC's 2014 meetings so they align with each the NWSP's 12 topics. The new format will allow the NRC to explore each topic further, examining inventories and identifying gaps. Presentations will also be arranged according to topic, as they allow. Because goals will be worked on at each meeting, this could

mean elimination of the Annual March Retreat. Also, meetings could go longer than 3 hours, with lunch being provided on those days. As projects are identified, the NRF will seek funding to execute goals of the NWSP.

David asked Justin to draw up a formal proposal to present to the Council either in November and December. David would like to see the retreat stay, but have it serve as a celebration away from regular meeting locations.

Justin would also like to find more a productive role for the NRF Board, bringing them closer to work of the NRC. Chris mentioned the difficulty in boards putting out a specific product, but that they can be much more effective in reviewing project ideas. Maintaining capacity funds to carry out specific projects may produce a significant challenge. In certain cases, it may be more beneficial to contract out particular jobs. This could be very helpful in developing distinct projects, having the NRC/NRF Board make decisions related to contracts. A clear outline and schedule will be very helpful for inviting staff and community that have working knowledge on specific topics.

4. For the Good of the Order

- If time allows, attendees should take a moment to visit the Ashford County Park. It is currently being prepped for an amphitheater and culture center addition.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 11:52pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, November 15, 2013, 9:30am – 12:30pm
UW Pack Forest*