



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
November 15, 2013
University of Washington's Pack Forest
Information: 360.438.8715**

Attendees:

Council Members

Bob Burkle – *WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife*
Dave Cass – *Pack Forest*
Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
JW Foster – *City of Yelm*
Edna Fund – *Lewis County*

Glynnis Nakai – *Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge*
Allison Osterburg – *Thurston County*
Stephanie Suter – *Puget Sound Partnership*
*** CAC Representatives (2)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Phyllis Farrell
Mary Foster*
Fred Michelson
Steve Pruitt*

Karelina Resnick
Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith

Guests

Ed Fund – *Lewis County Resident*
Kim Gridley – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Chris Schutz – *Pierce County*

Rene Skaggs – *Pierce Conservation District*
Corrie Smith – *Pierce County*
Dan Wrye – *Pierce County*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Morgan Greene – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*
Nathan Mead – *Nisqually River Foundation*

James Morrill – *Nisqually River Education Project*
Don Perry – *Nisqually Stream Stewards*
Sheila Wilson – *Nisqually River Education Project*
Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually River Council*

1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Agenda, Introductions

Call to Order – Steve Pruitt called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

Approval of Meeting Minutes and Agenda – There was a motion to approve October's meeting minutes as presented. They were approved, as was the agenda for today. The agenda is organized a bit differently for this meeting to accommodate one of the morning's presenters.

2. Pierce County Surface Water Management Update

Dan Wrye and Corrie Smith, Pierce County Surface Water Management

Dan and Corrie are here to present Pierce County's 2012 Surface Water Health Report card, a program that has collected and analyzed chemical and biological data since 2008. This inventory captures two programs being implemented by Pierce County, Watershed Health Status and Trends, an annual program which assesses progress towards healthy watersheds, and the NPDES Stormwater Permits. Streams are analyzed, those with the lowest water quality scores targeted as part of the "Raise the Grade" Program for the following year. Pierce County also collects information from weather stations and participates in shellfish monitoring and lake health parameters.

More information on these programs can be found at: <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/index.aspx?NID=1852>, with archived Report Cards available at: <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/Archive.aspx?AMID=146>.

Dan and Corrie's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare website at: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/pierce-county-watershed-health-trends-2012>.

Dan also shared an update pertaining to the County's watershed plans. From 2002 to 2007, Pierce County adopted 7 basin plans, leaving three to be adopted, Nisqually being one of them. Unsettled matters between the County and residents of the upper watershed, such as concerns associated with reducing maintenance on the levee system at the entrance of Mount Rainier National Park, forced the plan to be shelved. Resolves have been mitigated, with a reevaluation scheduled for November 26th.

3. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Steve Pruitt stated that adaptive management should continue to play a role in the development of plans for the watershed. More focus should be placed on economic and sustainability factors, as opposed to continuing to emphasize environmental objectives.

The CAC is continuing to work on the Citizens Conservation Certification, which aims to help local homeowners manage their property sustainably. The program will include objectives and indicators of the NWSP, outlining economy, community, and environment. It is the committee's intention to tie the program to the NRC's Good Neighbor Handbook, using it as a watershed resource.

The CAC has been continuing to play a role in forestry. Jean Shaffer has been spearheading these efforts, but unfortunately is ill and unable to share a report with the NRC at this time.

- *Chair Report* – David was unable to make the meeting due to a Vegas Vacation.
- *Staff Report* – Ashley reported that the NRF staff and a team of amazing volunteers stuffed 15,000 Nisqually Good Neighbor Handbooks and cover letters into envelopes and delivered them to the mailers. The Foundation is currently awaiting approval from the post office before distribution can occur.

Ashley has had the opportunity to participate in habitat restoration fieldtrips in the Ohop Valley with the Nisqually River Education Project, to which Sheila will share more details during her report.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe mentioned that many buildings are no longer standing in the Ohop Valley. The area has been cleared of a number of structures to make way for habitat restoration. The Land Trust participated in a big planting event with the Tribe off Kjestead Road about three weeks ago. The NLT took the opportunity to lead two tours of the area for anyone who was interested in learning more about the history and restoration of the Ohop Valley.

Two properties are to be acquired with money awarded from Pierce Conservation Futures, one in the Ohop Valley and another near NW Trek by Ohop Lake. The Land Trust is also looking at acquiring the Anderson Property in early 2014, the final shoreline piece along the Mashel River. This will finish the Mashel Shoreline vision that began 6 years ago.

Land bought by an outside timber management company in the Mineral area, in which attempts for re-zoning for development purposes have recently been reversed by the local community, may be up for sale very soon. This could be a great property to be purchased by the NLT. Edna mentioned that a particular Lewis County resident was very excited to hear about a potential Mineral Lake Community Forest Concept. Joe mentioned that with the community forest project, some trees will need to be harvested to help pay for the land, which may or may not fit into the community's expectations. The Community Forest Project is still looking at who will take over ownership of the future property.

The Muckleshoot Tribe is now the owner of 10,000 acres in the Mineral area. This \$313 million purchase, makes them the largest Tribal owner in the watershed. This could mean economic development for the Tribe, as well as potential timber harvesting and securing hunting and fishing rights on the land. More information to come.

Joe shared that there have been some advances in the carbon market, in which a fair amount of timberland in the watershed could potentially participate. In the state of California, it is now legally required for carbon credits to be regulated and paid for. 90% must happen on site, with 10% able to be mitigated elsewhere. The first participant was the Downy Lakes Watershed, recently visited by the Community Forest Committee. The Nisqually Watershed is hoping to register 520 acres on the market, as a way to test the market in an attempt to sell these credits as a potential funding mechanism.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila reported that NREP has been spending time in the mostly sunny Ohop Valley, along with 602 students and 93 adults, with only 3 mud fights to report. James has been working tirelessly to supply each of these students with pre-trip presentations.

Water quality monitoring data continues to trickle in from NREP teachers.

Ecology's Public Participation Grant will supply NREP with funding to further the actions projects produced at each year's Student GREEN Congress. Staff is looking at Nisqually at 6th Avenue as a great potential project site. This could include removing trash, curbing inputs of fecal coliform, and painting a mural on the covered area. NREP is looking to partner with TCTV as part of their "Look at My Watershed Program."

Sheila has been working with E3 Washington, who is attempting to better integrate informal and formal educators. Funding provided by the EPA will be used to help school districts strategize goals and supply technical support. If Yelm School District doesn't begin to show more support for NREP-related activities, they may be forced to transition their focus to the Eatonville School District.

NREP is set to begin salmon carcass tossing in January.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin mentioned that he continues to chair the Council for the Alliance for a Healthy South Sound at regular meetings.

He recently attended the Northwest Environment Forum. This is the event that kicked off both the Community Forest and Ecosystem Service Projects three years ago.

The Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan Goal Setting Committee has been moving forward, continuing to meet every other week. Morgan has been flushing out details discussed at these meetings, while compiling inventories for each topic.

Justin would like to thank those who came to the Stuffing Party and helped get the Good Neighbor Handbook out the door. It took 25 people five hours to get the job done.

Justin and Ashley have been working to develop the NRF's 2014 budget, to be presented at the next NRC meeting.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don shared that Nisqually Salmon Watchers have been busy since September. Spawners have been seen doing their thing in Ohop Creek off Peterson Rd. Another Salmon Watcher training is set to take place December 7th at the Tribe's Natural Resources Office.

A frozen salmon toss is scheduled for December 14th, gathering at Smallwood Park at 10am and travelling to various tributaries to deposit marine derived nutrients.

Don is putting the finishing touches on the newest edition of the Yil Me Hu, to be released by the next NRC meeting.

The first annual Eatonville Salmon Fest was held October 19th at Mill Pond and Smallwood Parks. The sun was shining, the mountain was out, and pink salmon were spawning in the Mashel River. Don shared a series of photos from the day's activities. Thanks to everyone who helped put the event together!

A volunteer planting was held October 26th, which finished up the habitat restoration prescribed for Phase 2 in the Ohop Valley, with Phase 3 right around the corner.

Eatonville has elected a new Mayor, Mike Schaub. Don had the opportunity to meet with him at the community salmon dinner held the night before the festival. Mayor Schaub is very excited to work with the Nisqually Tribe and other local organizations that continue to do great work in the Town. Don would like to invite him to an upcoming NRC meeting to welcome him to the Nisqually Family.

Fred asked about the survival rates of the tree plantings, which was mentioned by Jim Wilcox at a recent NRF Board meeting. Chris mentioned that the Tribe is very grateful to have a full time plant maintenance and monitoring crew. This along with strategic planning is necessary to ensure success. The plantings done at Wilcox Farms was an unusual case because of a small grant awarded for habitat restoration in the area. This site was especially challenging because of a large elk population, sandy soils, a migrating river channel, and a lack of funding for ongoing maintenance. Other sites have been given much more time and attention to ensure the survival of plants. Cathy Sampselle, the Tribe's Restoration Biologist, has compiled survival rate research, as well as other data including canopy cover. Sheila mentioned that Cathy would be a great presentation for the NRC, reinvigorating partners with the benefits and successes of habitat restoration projects.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris mentioned that when in discussion about the Tribe's long-term plans for restoration and recovery, one question always arises, "when will they be done?" The answer is "never." The Tribe is currently in an active phase of trying to reverse 100 years of degradation. In time, this will transition into active watershed maintenance, which will always require time and attention. The more successful you are, the more work is created for the future.

The Tribe is in process of crafting the Nisqually Steelhead Recovery Plan, which has required them to update the habitat model for the basin using Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT). The model has been updated based on the current condition of the watershed, taking into account previously implemented restoration projects and will be used to help protect the watershed while prioritizing future projects. The model shows that the watershed is actually in pretty great condition, reflecting that recent efforts have gone a long way. Using data collected from smolt traps set up by WDFW near Yelm and spawning surveys, they have a general idea of how many steelhead smolts are leaving the Nisqually River system, an estimated 140 smolts leave per returning adult. Fish are very dependent on the freshwater resources for rearing, and it seems that marine survival is what is difficult. Crunching the numbers within EDT, results show that population is so close to going extinct, but hanging on because of the work being done for freshwater systems. Funding has been acquired to place a counter at the Centralia diversion dam, counting returning fish in upper basin. The EDT analysis is almost complete, with side channel input needed because they function differently for steelhead and chinook populations. A draft plan should be put together by the end of the year, to be reviewed in early 2014. The plan won't be official until federally approved, which may take years. However, with approval from WDFW, NRC, NIT, as well as other organizations, they will be able to begin working on projects prioritized by this plan.

3. **Mount Nisqually Heritage Trail Project Update**

Jessica Moore, Conservation Program Coordinator for NW Trek

The Mount Nisqually Heritage Trail Project began when Steve approached Jessica a couple years back about the need for a trail that would connect NW Trek to Pioneer Farm. This trail network would be used to promote tourism and out "heads in beds" in the Town of Eatonville. Steve submitted a grant application to the National Park Service and was awarded staff time for a planner, Bryan Bowden, from Mount Rainier National Park. The original planning document was reviewed in 2012, incorporating a variety of additional stakeholders and developing a map of current and future trail systems in and around Eatonville.

Bryan Bowden has written a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for stakeholders to consider, without deadlines or promises of financial support. The MOU has been presented to a number of organizations, with a number of them agreeing to either support the project including Forever Green, Mount Rainier National Park, NW Trek, the

Eatonville Chamber of Commerce, NLT, and Pioneer Farm. The Town of Eatonville has reviewed, commented, and agreed to be the convener of a forum, not unlike the NRC, of interested parties meeting twice a year to share plans, updates, and resources. Doug Beagle will be taking on leadership of this group. With Bryan retiring next month, the group is very confident that they will be able to move forward into 2014.

Jessica's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare account, which can be accessed at: <http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/mountain-nisqually-presentation-for-the-nrc>.

4. For the Good of the Order

- Karelina ask that people take a look at the Pierce County Farm Bill, a new legislative piece that make cause some regulation concerns effecting small family farms and those using sustainable practices for organic products.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:27pm.

*Next Meeting: Friday, December 20, 2013, 9:00am – 12:00pm
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge*