



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council
February 21, 2014
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

Council Members

Roger Andrascik – *Mount Rainier National Park*
Bob Burkle – *WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife*
Amy Cruver – *Pierce County*
JW Foster – *City of Yelm*
Edna Fund – *Lewis County*

Renee Mitchell – *Pierce Conservation District*
Stephanie Suter – *Puget Sound Partnership*
David Troutt – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Cindy Wilson – *Thurston County*
*** CAC Representatives (2)**

Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Phyllis Farrell
Ed Kenney
Fred Michelson
Rosalea Pruitt
Steve Pruitt*

Karelina Resnick
Jean Shaffer*
Marjorie Smith
Robert Smith

Guests

Doug Beagle – *Town of Eatonville*
Chris Ellings – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
John Richardson – *JBLM*
Martin McClellum – *Nisqually Stream Steward*

Mike Schaub – *Town of Eatonville*
Chris Schutz – *Pierce County*
Dave Stepetin – *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Carissa Waters – *The Evergreen State College*

Staff & Associated Nonprofits

Megan Brady – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*
Morgan Greene – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Justin Hall – *Nisqually River Foundation*
Joe Kane – *Nisqually Land Trust*

Nathan Mead – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*
James Morrill – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*
Ashley Von Essen – *Nisqually River Council*
Sheila Wilson – *Nisqually River Ed. Project*

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

Call to Order – David Troutt called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

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

2. Reports

Advisory Committee Reports

- *Citizens Advisory Committee* – Fred shared that the CAC has been discussing toxins, such as neonicotinoids, and the harmful effects that they can have on bees and other pollinators. Fred and Bob Smith have set a meeting with Mark Emrich of the Washington Beekeepers Association for Tuesday, February 25th to further discuss this matter. Fred recently met with Sandra Romero to further discuss efforts to with the Beekeepers Association and the Washington State Department of Agriculture to limit neonicotinoid use to certified applications only. This task has proven to be very difficult. There is a Beekeepers Association Board meeting to be held this weekend, Saturday February 22nd.

The CAC has been looking into issues surrounding public access and the necessity to create river access points throughout the watershed.

Steve also shared that they have been following the NRC's NWSP discussions, participating in the bi-monthly goal setting meetings and having discussions at CAC meetings as to how members can contribute to these objectives.

Phyllis has been working with the Pierce County Democrats to add items to the pool of possible tasks relating to environment issues in the 2nd legislative district. Matters concerning the environment are reported to have received high priority ratings and will be revisited at the upcoming caucus.

- *Chair Report* – David mentioned his continued work with the Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) committee, which works to bring together entities across the Puget Sound. It has been noted that a bulk of the funding for regional projects has either not been spent effectively or is being not spent locally. The committee has been attempting to review the current model to find a more efficient way to apply funding, using the NRC and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) process as a guide. It is David's attempt to pull together agency leaders to come up with a process that works for everyone. The key to the sustainability of this watershed is to working with surrounding watersheds as well, which in turn will help promote salmon recovery and interests of Nisqually.
- *Staff Report* – Ashley recently attended training for Habitat Work Schedule (HWS), facilitated by the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office and Paladin, the database's host. This database allows the public, legislators, etc. to view where and how salmon recovery dollars are being spent.

Ashley has been putting together the next edition of the Nisqually River Notes, which will now be an e-newsletter, due to loss of funding. She is hoping to have the remaining articles submitted by next week, getting the publication out by the beginning of March.

Allied Programs

- *Nisqually Land Trust* – Joe shared that the Land Trust is looking to close on the Peterson Ranch Easement March 3rd. This parcel includes 230 acres and 1 mile of mainstem property that will be designated as permanently protected. Owners of the property have donated a portion of the land, valued at nearly a quarter million dollars, with an additional \$425,000 being contributed by Pierce Conservation Futures. Over the years, the Nisqually Tribe has been pursuing restoration work on Yelm Creek and this parcel will provide an excellent opportunity for future endeavors.

The Ecosystem Services Project, involving Swedeen Consulting, WA Department of Natural Resources, and the City of Olympia, is looking at an acquisition of parcel on Lake St. Clair to protect the wellhead of Olympia's drinking water. The team has been given six months to put the deal together, with the Lynch family generously willing to donate some of property as part of the deal.

Joe has also been working with the legislature to rally against the dismantling of the Conservation Futures Program.

Joe has been meeting with state Associations of Land Trusts, discussing how land trusts should be operating and how each will proceed into the future. Also, with 220 land trusts across the nation, questions have arisen as to when should a land trust bow out gracefully.

The upcoming Northwest Community Forest Forum will take place May 5th and 6th at the Skamania Lodge. This event will aim to generate funds, influence policy and create a sense as to why a community forest is needed in the region. Registration is required to attend. RSVP's should be made to Susanne Cox at the Columbia Land Trust by April 5th: 360.696.0131 or scox@columbialandtrust.org. Cost is \$50, meals included.

The NLT's 25th Annual Auction and Conservation Dinner will take place April 26th at St. Martin's University from 4 to 9pm.

Joe is finding that there is a lot of money available for acquisition projects, but is always looking for the most efficient ways to leverage these funds.

- *Nisqually River Education Project* – Sheila reported that the salmon carcass-tossing season closed with a record number of 14 field trips.

Spring Water Quality Monitoring took place yesterday and included 45 sites throughout the Nisqually Watershed. Sheila has begun working with a new professor at the Evergreen State College and received help from number of Eatonville High School students to fill the gaps of volunteers needed at each site.

The NRF staff will be assisting the crew with tube and stake removal in the Ohop Valley on March 13th. Those wanting to participate should contact Sheila for more details!

The 22nd Annual Student GREEN Congress is scheduled for March 21st at the Evergreen State College. The event will include brand new workshops and the use of Google Drive to organize and share student presentations. Funds supplied by Ecology's Public Participation Grant will be used to further action projects recommend by this year's Eco-Team Leaders.

Sheila is in process for applying for grants through the Tacoma Green Partnership Fund and Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA).

Sign-ups have begun for this year's Summer Teachers Institute. The event takes place each June at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.

- *Nisqually River Foundation* – Justin reminded the group that March's NRC meeting would be held on the 28th, the fourth Friday, due to a scheduling conflict with Student GREEN Congress. The meeting will take place at UW's Pack Forest from 9:30 to 12:30.

Justin has continued to work on the Ecosystem Services Pilot Project, as well as the Nisqually Community Forest. The Model Forest Policy Program's Climate Solutions University (CSU) has finally begun. Morgan, who has taken the lead on this project, explained that there are 4 other communities working to develop a plan alongside the Nisqually. She shared that CSU is incorporating ecosystem services into this year's program, and with the watershed analysis completed by Earth Economics, Nisqually is way ahead of the game. Morgan would love to see local stakeholders and NRC members contributing regularly to the project. Those interested participated should contact her directly at morgan@nisquallyriver.org.

Justin is in the process of applying for Ecology's National Estuary Program (NEP) grant with the support of the Nisqually Tribe. Justin emailed a draft Letter of Support to the NRC mailing list and was very pleased with the number of responses from partner organizations. Justin would like to draft a letter from the NRC and is looking for approval from members today to do so. He will be sure to share the letter with the NRC for final approval before mailing. The application is due at the end of the month.

A discussion pertaining to the NWSP will take place at the end of today's agenda.

- *Stream Stewards* – Don has been working to update the 2014 Stream Steward's agenda, which will focus on water quality and its effect on salmonids. He will be recruiting new volunteers at Cabela's annual sale, which anticipates 10,000 visitors in one weekend. This event is a great opportunity to hear comments and share information with the public.

Don has been working with Emerald Ridge High School, providing them with opportunities to fulfill community service obligations and make contributions to the Nisqually Watershed.

Don was successful in applying for the Connecting People with Nature grant through US Fish and Wildlife. These funds will be used to execute a bio-blitz in the Ohop Valley on Saturday, April 5th. This will allow for a complete evaluation of wildlife present prior to the next phase of restoration.

- *Salmon Recovery Update* – Chris mentioned that Natural Resources is in the process of filling the Lead Entity (LE) Coordinator position. Interviews take place next week.

The Habitat Work Group (HWG) met two weeks ago to begin assembling the list of restoration action project lists for this year's round of Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) funds. Chris has been fine-tuning the prioritization criteria, to ensure partners and species are being thoroughly considered. Projects include:

- Construction of the last phase of placing engineered logjams on the Mashel River.
- Match for two acquisitions in the Ohop Valley. First part of funding was awarded to the NLT through the Pierce Conservation Futures Program.
- Another round of knotweed control with the Pierce Conservation District. This program has had huge success and has become a model for other noxious weed control programs.
- Restoration of the Schorno Property in the McKenna Reach. This would supply funds for the restoration design, as well as plantings.
- Wilcox Reach, a project being scoped out by George Walter for years. This project would take a look at a riprap levee, as well as some engineering and design to get this project off the ground.

Large capital projects were requested to be organized earlier, ensuring the Salmon Recovery Funding Board acquires ample funding to complete all prioritized projects and to guarantee projects are truly shovel ready when funds are made available in the next biennium. HWG has decided to focus on the Nisqually Community Forest, requesting a sum of \$10 million to secure a large parcel of land and complete some restoration work. Headwaters of the Mashel are vital for chinook and steelhead recovery and protecting forests and buffers, as well as for natural processes and nutrient cycling. Nisqually is able to submit up to three projects for this competition.

Joe mentioned the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) grant, which is made available every two years, and potential opportunities to leverage for riparian protection.

A draft of the Steelhead Recovery Plan should be completed and ready for NRC approval by the March 28th meeting. Once approval has been provided by the NRC, along with the Fish Commission, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and the Nisqually Indian Tribe's Co-managers, the plan becomes a working document that can be drawn upon future projects/funding opportunities.

A staff person from WDFW has been assigned to implement the model for the Mashel Basin, looking specifically at hydrology in the Busy Wild area of the upper watershed.

There are currently a couple of papers in the peer review process pertaining to the last 3 years of Nisqually nearshore monitoring. At this time, the Tribe is looking to transition into marine survival research that would look at stage specific growth of salmonids as they move out of the river through the estuary. Stomach content analyses of sampled chinook from the Nisqually nearshore demonstrate a diet of insects, crustaceans, and zooplankton, specifically crab larvae. The Tribe intends to sample zooplankton to examine community composition as an indicator of environmental parameters that can shape the strength of any particular run of salmon. Data collected will be used to build a model and forecast future salmon runs.

Monitoring and adaptive management is moving right along with the help of the Tribe's new biologist, Jed Moore. Jed has been very focused on ecological modeling, translating Nisqually models into models that can be recognized on a regional scale.

3. Eatonville Stormwater Plan

Doug Beagle, Town of Eatonville Administrator

Doug took a moment to thank the Tribe for their support of the Town and to recognize the journey of collaboration between the two entities. An update of the Eatonville Stormwater Plan has been submitted to Town Council and is awaiting final approval. Though Eatonville lies within a non-NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination

System) jurisdiction, they are very much dedicated to water quality. Doug was also proud to report that the Town recently installed its first roadside rain garden to aid in these endeavors.

An engineering consultant was hired to help identify potential funding sources to prioritize and implement projects outlined the Stormwater Plan, as well as to develop a road map outlining how to proceed in the future. David Troutt assured Doug that the Tribe and the NRC would continue to support their efforts in furthering the community and the environment.

Mike Shaub, the Town's new mayor, took a moment to introduce himself to the NRC. He is the fourth in the administrative line to work towards minimizing stormwater from running into Nisqually Tributaries. He is very excited to carry on the powerful partnerships that have developed over the years.

4. Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) Fish and Wildlife Program Update

John Richardson, Fish and Wildlife Program Field Biologist

Jon shared that JBLM's Fish and wildlife program, which runs independently from any other agency, exists in order to maintain the various ecosystems on the installation, to promote native biodiversity and support the military mission. Today, only 3% of Washington prairies remain intact, and of that, 97% is on JBLM. In order to maintain and enhance these parcels, restoration is divided into three phases, beginning with invasive species removal and native re-vegetation, to which JBLM utilizes seedbeds to propagate native plant species and has partnered with the Sustainability in Prisons Project to aid in this endeavor. Finally, restoration of habitat processes, facilitated through the use of controlled burns, is the cornerstone of prairie restoration. There are three fire dependent ecosystems, each adapted to frequent, and low intensity burns. Working with small, controllable plots, JBLM works with Center for Lands Management to burn an average of 1,000 acres each year, with a goal of burning upwards of 3500 acres.

The Nisqually Tribe and JBLM have continued to maintain a partnership over the years in regards to salmon recovery and should look to take part in prairie restoration as well. David Troutt is an excellent candidate to bridge these two entities. Participation in the annual Chief Leschi Honor Run/Walk is one of the only ways to gain access to the artillery area and see historical Tribal land and the prairies that still exist in WA State. This year's event will take place May 3rd.

John's presentation has been made available on the NRC's SlideShare website:
<http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-watershed-council>.

5. NWSP Discussion – Biological Diversity

Justin introduced the discussion of further developing indicators associated with Biological Diversity in the Nisqually Watershed. Morgan has been compiling research, communicating with UW's Pack Forest, Mount Rainier National Park (MORA), JBLM, and the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (NNWR).

- UW Pack Forest: A thriving ecosystem which includes 240 acres of 190 year old mature forests and 100 acres of 600-700 year old trees. Developed a multi-objective optimization model taking into consideration timber revenue, standing carbon, and old growth forests to effectively grow and monetize ecosystem services.
- MORA: Focusing on ecosystems and landscape scale, with current priorities to protect species most threatened by stressors, including climate change, air toxins, habitat fragmentation, and threatened and endangered species. There is a lot of opportunity for research and monitoring at the park, but is continues to look at how best to use this information and engage the public. Don mentioned that he would like to bring the Stream Stewards to the mountain to take part in plant surveys or other citizen-based science opportunities.
- JBLM: Focuses include managing oak stands, prairie restoration, removal of Scotch broom and other invasives, Muck Creek restoration efforts, annual monitoring of chum, steelhead, and amphibians, and efforts to increase threatened and endangered species.
- NNWR: A majority of restoration efforts were completed between 5 and 10 years ago, including the connectivity of 762 acres of historic tidal habitat in the Puget Sound. Sediment transport from the river and accretion to the estuary may be a limiting factor in the restoration of historic habitats. They have provided a list of important habitats that could be potentially monitored over time. Their focus remains on research

surrounding migratory waterfowl, neuro-tropical migratory birds, and the recovery of threatened and endangered species. Very interested in remaining informed on this NWSP topic.

Biodiversity Indicators:

1. Harvestable amounts of culturally important species present.
 - Urban areas are the biggest causes of concern for deer and elk, with populations decreasing in Lewis County, along with the number of hunters.
 - Weyerhaeuser is changing the way it operates and allows hunting at the Vale Tree Farm.
 - Waterfowl hunting is excellent in the estuary. WDFW showed an increase of specific waterfowl species in the South Puget Sound Region, with others slowly declining.
 - Martin mentioned that Morgan should look at culturally significant plants species as well, such as camas. Chris mentioned that permits for plant gathering could help tease apart some numbers of native/significant species. Bob Smith mentioned John Harding, a Yelm resident, who purchases a number of plants and could be contacted for information on what is being gathered locally.
2. Invasive species eradicated or managed.
 - There seems to be more information on plants than on animals.
 - At least 33 invasive species in the watershed: 2 are Class A (required to be removed by law), 14 are Class B (abundant only in certain areas with the goal of containment), and 17 are Class C (noxious weeds managed by individual counties).
 - Each of the organizations Morgan spoke with mentioned actions for removing invasives, but at various levels of commitment.
3. Diverse community of native plants, with fish and wildlife thriving.
 - There are a great number of species present in Nisqually, providing evidence of a very diverse watershed.
 - 90 animal species appear on Priority Habitat and Species list, threatened and endangered species lists, and gap analysis studies combined, two of which are fish.
 - All 4 places are doing work to protect federally listed species.
 - 20 threatened and endangered plant species exist in watershed.
4. There are active, federally supported ESA plans being implemented, but many species have not yet been considered.

Morgan intends to put this information on the website for public access. With NatureMapping data being collected by both NREP and Stream Stewards, it would be great to share this info, linking data to either the NatureMapping website, or e-Bird, which is used by NNWR.

Chris would like to see data for this project paired with watershed ecosystems, developing a GIS program to layer ecosystem types with key watershed species. For example, spotted owl and marbled murrelet surveys could be utilized, with their presence being noted in forested areas of the watershed. Other information could be drawn from the State's Biodiversity Council website, as well as Jen Cutler, GIS specialist for the Nisqually Tribe.

Are there any specific projects that could be taken on over the next year?

- Engage the public with the NatureMapping/e-Bird data and social media.
- Go through ecosystems and suite of indicator animals. Establish sites to be monitored by Stream Stewards and watershed volunteers--similar to the upcoming Ohop bio-blitz.
- Bob Burkle mentioned Michelle Tierhe and Larry Phillips as excellent contacts at WDFW, as well as using data from the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count.

6. For the Good of the Order

The Community Bee Fair will take place at the Evergreen State College (TESC) on March 8th at 6pm. More information is available at the Oly Beekeeper's website, <http://www.olympiabeekeepers.org>.

Roger shared that Sally Jewell recently spent the day at Mount Rainier National Park talking climate change, snow melt, and other climate impacts at the park level with National Park Service and USGS staff.

NNWR's Visitor Center is to be renamed for retired Congressman Norm Dicks. Dedication to take place sometime this summer.

Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 12:05pm.

Next Meeting: Friday, March 28, 2014, 9:30am – 12:30pm @ UW's Pack Forest