

Meeting Minutes Nisqually River Council Meeting January 15, 2016 UW Pack Forest

Information: 360.438.8715

#### Attendees:

## **Council Members**

Amy Cruver – Pierce County John Hayes – UW Pack Forest Rebecca Lofgren – Mount Rainier National Park Amber Martens – JBLM

**Citizens Advisory Committee Members** 

Phyllis Farrell\* Ed Kenney Fred Michelson Karelina Resnick\* Marjorie Smith Bob Smith Lois Ward

#### Guests

Roger Andrascik – Stream Stewards/Land Trust Hannah Andrascik – Land Trust Intern Curtis McFarren – NOAA Ashley Von Essen – Nisqually Indian Tribe Chris Schutz – Pierce County

**Stephanie Suter** – Puget Sound Partnership

**David Troutt**—Nisqually Indian Tribe

Charissa Waters – Thurston County

\* CAC Representatives (2)

# **Staff & Associated Nonprofits**

Morgan Greene – Nisqually River Council Justin Hall – Nisqually River Foundation Joe Kane – Nisqually Land Trust Aleks Storvick – Nisqually River Ed. Project Sheila Wilson – Nisqually River Ed. Project

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

<u>Call to Order</u> – David Troutt called the meeting to order at 9:39 am.

<u>Approval of Meeting Minutes and Agenda</u> – There was a motion to approve the December meeting minutes as presented. They were approved, as was the agenda for the day.

#### 2. Reports

### **Advisory Committee Reports**

- Citizens Advisory Committee Phyllis reported that the CAC met on Tuesday. Carl and Ed reported on access and hikes, and Fred updated the group on neonictinoids. The group is gearing up to work on a brochure and video that would educate citizens on the watershed and help recruit new members. Fred will be leading the subcommittee and Karelina will work to make the brochure. Currently, the CAC is exploring videography options.
- Chair Report Before the holidays, David started discussions with WA Dept of Transportation around the issues on I-5. Morgan will coordinate with DOT to share a presentation as conversations move further along. In other news, the Canoe Journey celebration will occur the last week in July and first week in August. The renaming of the refuge and dedication of the treaty tree will likely happen around that time

The legislative session started yesterday and David will continue to report on the session to the NRC. The Executive Committee will meet before the next NRC meeting to provide more flexibility on pressing issues should they arise. Lastly, the Puget Sound Partnership is providing notes on bills in front of the legislature and an analysis of the impact on salmon recovery efforts. Stephanie will share the information with Morgan, who will forward to the NRC.

• Staff Report – Morgan reported the Nisqually Stream Stewards hosted a salmon carcass tossing event on Saturday, with nearly 60 people in attendance. The Nisqually River Water Trail planning team hosted a river float last week, and an Advisory Committee meeting will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup> from 1-3p. Morgan has submitted Letters of Interest with the Brainerd Foundation and Murdoch Charitable Trust; if accepted, the applications would support strategic planning. Finally, the Natural Resources Department and NRC staff have moved office locations—Morgan will share directions to the new space soon.

#### Allied Programs

- Nisqually Land Trust Joe reported that the Year End Appeal was a success; the goal was to raise \$30,000, and the NLT raised almost \$60,000. The Martin Luther King Day of Service event is on Monday, with a planting event planned in Ohop. The annual Auction and Dinner is on April 2<sup>nd</sup> at Indian Summer Golf Course. Invitations to the dinner are in the mail. The price is a little higher this year, but includes dinner, an oyster bar and a voucher that can be used at the event.
- Nisqually River Education Project Sheila reported that a fun-raiser will be held on January 27 from 5-9pm to support Eye on Nature field trips. There will be live music, a silent auction, and a raffle. It will be at Fish Tale Brew Pub, which is now family friendly. Sheila has also been busy with salmon tossing field trips and has 7 remaining. Water quality monitoring day is on February 11<sup>th</sup>; volunteers appreciated. Student GREEN Congress is on March 15<sup>th</sup> (a Tuesday this year) and volunteers are still needed. Ed will be leading a new class on his personal observations of climate change impacts in the watershed. Canoe Family will be the keynote speaker. In a strange twist of events, the NRF was awarded the PPG grant afterall; the details are still pending further information. The kick-off event for the NOAA Environmental Literacy grant will be on April 21<sup>st</sup> from 4-6 pm. Further details will be shared later.
- Nisqually River Foundation Justin reported that the Foundation is attempting to have a better social media presence including through blogging, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Each month is divided by week and by program. Please "like" all of our pages—this helps our presence and our reach. NRF is still working on setting up the strategic planning process; Justin has a meeting with the Community Foundation of South Puget Sound to determine what their support might look like. The Community Forest Board met recently to approve their strategic plan, and is working on a management plan for the first 3 sections of the Forest. This will likely be available in the second quarter of 2016.
- Salmon Recovery Update Ashley reported that the Yil-Me-Hu was published earlier this month; it is available in hardcopy or electronically on the NRC website. The Habitat Work Group met last week to begin talks on the 2016 grant round; SRF Board funding will be available next year, as will 2017 PSAR funds. Ashley is accepting proposals for watershed projects; Morgan will send the press release when it is available.

David noted that although the weir has been in operation for 5 years, it has been a difficult management tool. The co-managers are working to review that management system to make the weir more effective. He also noted that the salmon returns this year have been some of the lowest ever recorded. The Tribe and the State closed chum fisheries last week as a response.

3. 2015 State of the Sound – Stephanie Suter, Puget Sound Partnership Ecosystem Recovery Coordinator
Normally, Stephanie helps support on-the-ground salmon recovery projects. The woman who usually presents on the
State of the Sound program is away, so Stephanie will forward questions she's unable to answer. The Partnership
(PSP) is required to report on progress towards recovery targets bi-annually to the legislature. The four components
(report to the Governor; report on Puget Sound Vital Signs; report to the Community; and the website) make up the
State of the Sound.

The Puget Sound Action Agenda is put together every 2 years by regional and local entities. The three strategic initiatives are habitat, shellfish and stormwater. Near Term Actions (NTAs) are projects that can be completed within 2 years and make strides towards progress in one of the 3 initiatives. The 2012 and 2014 Action Agendas are incorporated into the 2015 State of the Sound, and revealed that 75% of NTAs are underfunded; part of that shortage may be because about 50% of projects in 2014 are local, not regional, projects. Unmet needs for the strategic

initiatives were \$300M/year for habitat projects, \$40M/year for shellfish projects, and \$100-\$250M/year for stormwater.

Vital signs include topics like Chinook salmon, marine birds, southern resident orca whales and more. Each indicator has a set of recovery targets, slated to be achieved by 2020, a goal set by the Governor and legislature. PSP is offering the opinion that recovery will take much longer, because ecosystems take years to respond to restoration. Overall, 10 vital signs are improving, 6 are not changing, 4 have mixed results, and 5 are getting worse. 13 have no data. This means that the State of the Sound is mixed—pressures continue, change is slow, and few vital signs will reach the 2020 targets.

## Things that are improving:

- New installation of shoreline armoring is on the decline
- Conversion of forestland to developed land is declining
- The length of riparian corridors is increasing annually.

### Things that are declining:

- Chinook salmon population sizes
- Southern resident orca whales
- Conversion of ecologically important lands to other land use types is increasing
- The marine water condition index shows declines across the region. Stephanie will share information on the parameters in the index.

The PSP recently added human wellbeing as a new component of the Vital Signs. This helps relate healthy human populations and quality of life to the health of Puget Sound. New vital signs were just adopted by the Leadership Council, which includes indicators like outdoor activity, air quality, local foods and drinking water.

In all, some indicators are improving but most are not. Funding is the biggest barrier towards progress. For next steps, PSP will help develop concrete and achievable NTAs, as well as mobilize funding and share stories about progress made. Stephanie's powerpoint is available here: <a href="http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/2015-state-of-the-sound">http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/2015-state-of-the-sound</a>.

The group agreed that education, especially aimed at adults, is an under tapped resource, but can have enormous impacts. Sheila noted that the Pacific Northwest Climate Leaders webportal could be used as a template; she will provide a copy of the narrative to the NRC so the group can brainstorm ways to bolster messages.

4. Nisqually Land Trust Carbon Credits -- Joe Kane, Nisqually Land Trust Executive Director
As a reminder, NLT recently collaborated with Microsoft to complete the first carbon credit deal in Washington
State. The process began 2 years ago when NLT worked with Paula Swedeen to launch conversations about the
carbon credit market. After cruising timber on an NLT property near Ashford, NLT discovered that the timber was
old enough to qualify the site for a carbon credit deal. Ideal tree ages are between 40-150 years old; very young and
very old trees don't sequester much carbon.

The property is located just outside of Ashford, near the Mount Rainier Gateway project, Elbe Hills State Forest, and Mount Rainier National Park. It's also located adjacent to the future Nisqually Community Forest. The site also includes a smaller parcel that was purchased from a private landowner. After Board approval, NLT began the verification process, which includes a re-cruise of the forest, modeling of the site, and working through technical issues. The process is led by the California Regulations Board. Under that process, trees must sequester carbon for 100 years. Reviews occur every 5 years, and if the property goes out of regulations, NLT will owe money to the Regulations Board. NLT paid into a reserve of carbon credits to cover losses in the event of a natural disaster.

Four months ago, the verification team announced that the property had successfully passed the test. The Climate Action Reserve reviewed all paperwork, then passed it along to the CA Air Resource Board—the final organization that issues the credits. Credits are typically worth 40-50% of the price of harvested timber. At this point, Joe and Paula connected with Microsoft, which has its own voluntary carbon credit program to render itself carbon neutral. Up until this point, all their projects had been in the European market; this site was attractive because it was close enough to host work parties for Microsoft staff.

An existing model provided a baseline for the amount of carbon in WA forests; the Land Trust is able to sell the difference between the baseline carbon stored and the amount of carbon on a property. Over time, growing trees sequester more carbon and generate more credits. The project was 520 acres in size, bundled into another project to make it more feasible for Microsoft. In all, it has about 37,000 carbon credits.

As of right now, NLT does not own any other eligible properties, because there is a window of time between purchase in which a property is eligible. However, NLT will potentially pursue other properties that may generate more carbon credits. The property will likely generate between \$8,000-\$10,000 per year, which will support some of Charly's time to keep an eye on the project.

5. Nisqually River Water Trail Recommendations – Morgan Greene, NRC Program Coordinator
As a reminder, the Nisqually River Water Trail is a two-year planning effort, with technical assistance provided by the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. The effort began in January 2015, and a final plan is slated to be produced in Fall 2016. The NRWT aims to increase non-motorized boating access to the Nisqually River from Nisqually State Park to Luhr Beach. In addition, the floatable trail will tie into land-based trails as appropriate.

The vision of the trail, in part, is to create high quality public recreation opportunities that are aligned with efforts to protect areas of cultural importance and the natural environment. Four goals have been developed, with include increasing access, creating minimal impacts on salmon habitat, providing interpretation opportunities for users, and recognizing the personal responsibility of users.

The first year of the planning efforts was dedicated to conducting inventory and gathering public input. Initial findings revealed that the confluence of the Mashel and Nisqually Rivers is one of the most culturally significant locations for the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and one of the most ecologically important areas for rainbow trout and Steelhead. The confluence of Ohop Creek and Nisqually River is also culturally significant for the Nisqually Tribe. From a recreation standpoint, developing additional access sites between Nisqually State Park and McKenna Park is highly desirable, as is the development of signs, maps, and other informational materials.

The overall recommendations for the trail are to create a map and guide, both in print and available online; develop water trail signs to be installed along the trail; and develop additional access points as opportunities arise. Specific recommendations have been drafted for each reach of the river, too.

- Nisqually State Park to McKenna Park: develop a new access site and day use area near the Ohop Confluence, and leave the Mashel Confluence undeveloped. Identify additional access sites downstream to create a shorter reach, and develop interpretive opportunities on cultural and ecological significance.
- McKenna Park to Centralia Powerhouse: widen the ramp and improve signage at Centralia Powerhouse; explore ways to reduce crowding at McKenna Park; tie-in to additional site above the whitewater, including the Yelm-Tenino Trail; develop interpretive opportunities, especially on safety hazards.
- Centralia Powerhouse to 6<sup>th</sup> Ave: develop interpretative opportunities on safety hazards, cultural significance, and JBLM access. Coordinate with JBLM to explore ways to increase access to base, and clean-up the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave access point.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Ave to Luhr Beach: Develop interpretive opportunities, including safety concerns and the ecology of the area.

The Advisory Committee will meet on January 25<sup>th</sup> from 1-3pm at the Nisqually Tribe's Natural Resources Office. The next several months will be spent finalizing recommendations, and a draft plan will be released in March 2016. There will be opportunities for public input after that, and a final plan will be available in the fall. The presentation is available here: http://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/nisqually-river-water-trail-draft-recommendation.

## 6. For the Good of the Order

The first beer college of 2016 will be on Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> from 5-7 at Beer Werks. **Adjourn** – Meeting was adjourned at 12:21pm.

Next Meeting: Friday, February 19, 2016 Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, 9:00-12:00 NWSP Topic: Biodiversity