



**Nisqually River Council
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2017, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Nisqually Tribe's Natural Resources Office**

CAC Members Present: *Phyllis Farrell, Carl Rotter, Marjorie Smith, Bob Smith, Ed Kenney, Fred Michelson and Lois Ward*

Staff Present: *Morgan Greene*

Welcome and Introductions

Phyllis called the meeting to order at 6:07pm. There was a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. They were approved, as was the agenda for the evening.

Member Updates

Phyllis is recovering from eye surgery. Lois will be in Mexico for the rest of the month. Morgan has been skiing powder with her husband. Bob has been busy keeping the house warm and Marjorie has been going for a walk everyday. Carl hosted a holiday gathering, with 10 people staying over. Ed has been steelhead fishing on rivers on the Olympic Peninsula. Fred has been focused on recovery.

Water Pollution – Ed Kenney

Ed began by noting that the orca named “Granny” just passed away, at over 100 years old. Even though its sad she passed away, Ed reminded the group that despite all the pollution in Puget Sound he’ll talk about tonight, Granny was able to survive it all. He also noted that orcas are among the most contaminated mammals in the world, because the pollutants in their food sources accumulate in their fat.

For the last few months, Ed has been researching pollution types/sources found in the Nisqually River and Puget Sound. Different pollutions comes from different places; for example, nitrogen is typically sourced from waste management systems. Stormwater runoff inputs a variety of pollutants, but Ed was specifically interested in copper, which is one of the most significant. Copper disables a salmon’s sense of smell at just 10 parts per million (ppm) in the water. Recent research from WSU and other partners includes the installation of underground filtration systems, similar to the rainbarrels that David Hymel installs. These systems filter stormwater runoff through sand, gravel, compost, woodchips and other materials; the result is water that is clean enough for salmon to survive in it. The application of these systems is just being explored, but Ed thinks they could help to reduce water the runs off of roads (as opposed to houses/buildings like typical rainbarrels). There is a potential to apply the filters to large-scale projects, like the stormwater ditch system in Lois’ neighborhood. Phyllis is on the Thurston County Stormwater Advisory Committee and will make sure the group is aware of the technology.

In addition, Ed found that nitrogen concentrations lead to fish kills and dead zones in Puget Sound. He has seen the impact of nitrogen while diving in the area. Other contaminants that are found in the water are generally found in sub-lethal concentrations, but are not treatable in current wastewater systems. The Nisqually River has high levels of PCBs, and the Nisqually Delta was part of a recent study that found surprising amounts of chemicals in the water. Fred agrees that nitrogen is a problem: in Puget Sound, anywhere close to a wastewater treatment site has a significant nitrogen blob nearby.

CAC Member Goals:

- 1) Watershed trails/river access & hikes – There is a lot of snow in the mountains right now! Chains are required in the park, but the snow at Longmire is gorgeous. There are avalanche concerns at Paradise, but some parts are still open. Eatonville residents are getting out and enjoying the Bud Blancher Trail. The Middle Mashel Falls are beautiful right now, as is the bottom part of Yelm Creek.
- 2) Current issues – Fred noted that the Commissioner of Public Lands denied issuing a permit for the Longview Coal Terminal. Carl recently met an old timer that has a map of old Forest Reserve Areas, which then became National Forests. The film “The Greatest Good” dives further into this topic. In Carl’s opinion, the map highlighted that most of the recreation sites are on the east side of the Cascades and that the Nisqually Watershed was largely ignored when it came to setting aside recreation land.
- 3) Water quality – See above.
- 4) Systems Management – N/A

Hirst Case Follow-up/Nisqually Implications – Phyllis Farrell

Carl wanted to learn more about Pierce County’s moratorium on the driving of private wells. As Phyllis understands it, the Hirst Case required counties to ensure existing water rights are met before allowing further development under the Growth Management Act. As a result, some counties have enacted a moratorium on drilling new wells. She noted that the legislature is considering a few bills that would either overturn the Hirst Case or change existing water code. Ed wondered if there is a tracking system for exempt wells; he wants to be sure that he can prove his senior water rights if necessary. Carl thinks the Department of Ecology maintains a list of all exempt wells.

NRF Staff Report – Morgan Greene

Salmon carcass tossing began with students today and will continue into early February. The Nisqually Stream Stewards are hosting an MLK Day of Service Carcass Tossing event on Monday January 16 from 9-12. Meet at 9:00 at Smallwood Park in Eatonville, and be prepared to get slimy. There is a new intern at the NRC, though she will only be here for another month. The NRF staff will have their annual retreat next week. Winter water quality monitoring is on February 16th and the 25th annual Student GREEN Congress is on March 23rd.

For the Good of the Order

Important dates:

- Next NRC Meeting is on January 20 from 9:30-12:30 at UW Pack Forest.
- Next CAC meeting is on February 14 from 6-8 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.