



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Meeting
May 18, 2018
UW Pack Forest
Information: 360.438.8715

Attendees:

Council Members:

Dan Calvert – Puget Sound Partnership
Molly Carmody – City of Yelm
Matt Curtis - WDFW
Amber Martens – JBLM

Abby Gribi – Town of Eatonville
Kevin Skerl – Mt. Rainier National Park
David Troutt, chair – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Citizens Advisory Committee Members:

Phyllis Farrell
Ed Kenney
Fred Michelson
Karelina Resnick

Robert Smith
Marjorie Smith
Lois Ward

Guests:

Roger Andrascik – NLT/NSS
Jeff Barney – Pierce County Public Works
Warren Bergh – NLT/NSS
Jennifer Grant
Shannon Hader – Shannon Hader for
Congress
Ted Jackson

Chip Jenkins – Mt. Rainier National Park
Don Johnstone
Kathy Johnstone
Callan Martinez – Shannon Hader for
Congress
Ashley Von Essen – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Staff:

Brandon Bywater – NRF
Emily McCartan – NRF

Sheila Wilson – NRF

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

David called the meeting to order at 9:05. Welcomed the new faces to the Council and acknowledged the shooting this morning in Texas. Our thoughts go out to the families. The minutes were approved, as was the agenda for the day.

2. Committee Reports and Updates

Advisory Committee Reports

Citizens Advisory Committee – Phyllis Farrell

Phyllis, David, and Emily met this week and calibrated the role and contributions of the CAC in providing community perspective. At the CAC meeting, Kim Bredensteiner from the NLT presented about public access policies. CAC members also discussed aquaculture practices and litigation around Puget Sound, of interest because of shoreline management implications and possible effects on salmon and orca recovery. Howard provided additional information

on Alder Lake levels and flood risk. The CAC would like to learn more about the effects of I-5 on the estuary and the possibility of raising the freeway. The CAC nominated officers for upcoming term. David added that he and Phyllis discussed bringing more presentations to the CAC for greater information sharing.

Chair Report – David Troutt

David reported that the I-5 project is gaining momentum. The Nisqually crossing is one of two key areas in the study zone (101 interchange is the other). At issue are lane limitations creating traffic issues, channel changes poised to take out I-5, and habitat restoration barriers to sediment distribution and sea level rise. David has been participating in meetings with WSDOT and local partners, negotiating USGS contract to model potential alternatives. The first deliverable will be sometime this fall to be ready for request next legislative session.

David also attended a PSP Ecosystem Coordination Board meeting, with a presentation on a Seattle-corridor effort to support middle and high school environmental education. Their vision is to establish large endowment to support regional education opportunities – starting with King County, but would like to talk to NREP about collaboration on setting something up in South Sound.

Staff Report – Emily McCartan

Emily, Sheila, and a number of Stream Stewards volunteers helped with the Nisqually River Cleanup last month. The event was a great success, with about 70 volunteers (mostly on boats, some on land) who collected 2,080 pounds of trash. Thanks to the boating clubs and especially volunteer Greg Provenzano for organizing it. Registration for this summer's Nisqually Stream Stewards is open now. Eatonville Weyerhaeuser Elementary Schools received Green Ribbon Education Awards from the US Dept. of Education for environmental education, citing the Nisqually River Education Project as a partner. Emily also noted on behalf of Thurston County Planning that they have an online survey and storymapping tool for the Nisqually Subarea Plan are available on their website, and they are encouraging anyone to provide input. Justin is at AgForestry this week. He has been working on NEP and budget reports.

Allied Program Reports

Land Trust – Roger Andrascik

Roger recapped announcements from the NLT's recent Board Meeting. Outreach coordinator Cris Peck is leaving at the end of the month to work with Kayak Nisqually. Administrative assistant Henry Smith will be leaving at the end of August to join the Peace Corps. There are a number of land acquisitions in process that Joe discussed at the last meeting. Roger also noted the Eatonville SD awards – 46 awards are given nationwide, so two from the same district is a big deal. They also cited the Burwash farm, donated by the Land Trust.

Nisqually River Education Project – Sheila Wilson

NREP has three sets of field trips running simultaneously: Nearshore, Invasive Species Removal with NLT, and Eye on Nature at the Refuge. Summer Teacher Institute Registration is open for June 25-27, with spots for 45 teachers. The theme is climate change and sea level rise in PNW, focusing on the Deschutes Watershed, but we would also welcome any

speakers from NRC jurisdictions with information about sea level rise or climate change. NOAA Environmental Literacy Grant is finishing up with Climate Resiliency Fellow action projects, meeting in early June. NREP is also being considered a NOAA B-WET grant for next year.

Salmon Recovery – Ashley Von Essen

Planning has begun for the 29th Annual Nisqually Watershed Festival coming up on Sept. 29. Now that the capital budget is in place, Ashley is also working on Yil Me Hu (publication this fall). The Tribe's restoration crew has been busy all week in Ohop battling reed canary grass (mowing and herbicide as needed, then planting trees to shade it out, with spraying and mowing in subsequent seasons if necessary). They are finishing NRCS grant with the Land Trust (over 150,000 trees planted so far) and working with NLT to treat and prep Middle Ohop 3 planting, Mashel 3 construction, and TPU mainstem plantings. Karelina asked about the impact of herbicide on the river. Ashley stated that they use the safest county-approved product available, and don't spray in the river or in wet areas. Herbicide isn't a great tool, but it's been proven that with reed canary grass, there really is no other way.

Ed asked if there was news about steelhead redds. Last number Ashley heard was over 300; David thinks there are more. Last surveys will be next week. David noted that this is the first year we've had returning adults from the anchovy boom years. WDFW has been surveying in the Mashel and seeing lots of redds; NIT is focusing on the mainstem. Bob and Ed have both seen some. David stated that the Nisqually escapement goal for steelhead is 2,000, and we may make it this year for the first time in 25 years (since the Sound-wide collapse in 1992). The last time we were close was when the transient whales gave the juveniles an escort. Seals and sea lions are definitely an issue.

3. Shannon Hader, candidate for Congress, 8th District (D)

Shannon introduced herself to the Council. She was invited by Karelina to come speak with the NRC at an Eatonville town hall recently. The 8th district spans Eastern and Western WA (Samammish to Lake Chelan) and is a politically diverse "purple" district, with widespread commitment to the environment (over 50% public lands). Shannon noted that incumbent Rep. Dave Reichert has been fair on environment overall, but she feels we can be a leader for the country in mitigating and recovering from the effects we're already feeling on climate/environmental issues. Shannon is a 5th generation Auburn native and a medical doctor with experience at the CDC working to fight disease national and internationally as part of the Commission Corps of US Public Health Service. Most recently, she was the director of the Global HIV/TB Division, which has 15 years of unanimous bipartisan support in Congress. She hopes we can get to that level of consensus on environmental issues and outlined a three-pronged approach: protection, mitigation/recovery, innovation. As a scientist, she believes in evidence-based solutions and programming, and sees urgent need to intervene on environmental issues.

Questions/Comments

Fred asked about the primary schedule. Filing deadline is at 5pm today, so then we will know who is on the ballot for the August primary (Top-2 system, so anyone can vote for any candidate in the primary and the top 2 advance to the November ballot).

David noted that restoring salmon in Puget Sound/Nisqually watershed has never been funded to the level that it needs to be successful. The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund was created in 2000 and not sufficiently funded then, and has since been halved while more states were added. It addresses less than 10% of the identified need, and without more action from Congress, we will lose the battle to recover Chinook, and steelhead, as well as Southern Resident Killer Whales and the human communities and cultures that depend on them. Shannon asked what level of budget you would need to get the job done. David stated that when we developed Puget Sound Recovery Plan, estimate was that \$100 million over 10 years would change the curve toward recovery for Chinook. We've been 20% of that mark over the last 15-20 years. Fully funding the \$100 million plan would make a difference. Shannon noted that she recognized the need to do enough work at a transformative scale to get to the next plateau.

Molly noted that public transportation, which is being cut, should be considered part of Puget Sound recovery efforts. Shannon noted that transportation is the #1 issue she has heard from mayors. Along with funding, inadequate parking and lack of trust that investments will be followed through on are challenges for this region, and she hopes to see that change.

Ted suggested we challenge ourselves to think more globally about fish recovery. We're the only country with a limited offshore boundary for fishing. Russian and Asian communities are overfishing and tearing up shelf habitat. Salmon live most of their life in the ocean.

Dan encouraged highlighting the economic benefits of recovery efforts. "Environment vs. economy" is a false dichotomy. PSP has many examples of protecting infrastructure and maintaining agriculture while also providing salmon recovery and ecological benefits. Shannon noted that she hopes to rely on the expertise of groups like the NRC which involve numerous stakeholders in solutions.

Kathy stated that as an educator, she saw huge impacts from hands-on environmental education. Some kids are inspired by plantings and nature in ways that they aren't from reading. The future voters are sitting in classrooms right now. Shannon noted that engagement does make a difference, and that there are reasonable concerns about proposals to raise entrance fees at national parks that could reduce visitation and public interest in those lands in the long run. She noted that most eligible students at Eatonville High School said they were not registered to vote, and would like to see that change.

Fred observed that everything people bring up here is deeply felt, and noted that there is a lot of difficult work needed to bring about change. Shannon stated that she shared a sense of urgency, particularly having worked at the CDC under the current administration for 9 months and observed how agency work can be slow-rolled.

Roger noted that the NRC has historically been a place to bring strange bedfellows together and build relationships that help develop points of commonality, from the beginning with Billy Frank and Jim Wilcox on the broken-down bus. He is concerned about buyouts and loss of institutional knowledge and relationships in federal agencies, which has been going on

across the government and across administrations for 20 years. Shannon agreed that government work is invisible if we do it well, and propaganda against federal employees has made the public see staffing cuts as unobjectionable. Government work is invisible if we do it well. She referred to her experience working on global HIV/AIDS issues as an example of how to build commonality around goals among stakeholders who have diverse motivations.

David thanked Shannon for joining us and invited her to come back any time to “the little watershed with big ideas.”

4. Washington’s Scenic Byway History – Don Johnstone, author

Don is a local author and historian (his wife Kathy Johnstone was an NREP teacher in for many years). His book *Road To Rainier Scenic Byway* will be published by with the South Pierce County Historical Society on July 31. He is here today to share slides of historic photographs from the book.

Travel transportation was a significant challenge from the beginning of European settlement in the watershed. Much of the inland territory between Ashland and British Columbia was prairie over 100 years ago (3% remains). Native people managed prairies through fire every 5-10 years, which controlled invasives and allowed camas and other species to renew. In old-growth forests through the mountains, travel and trade were conducted initially along “trace” routes, which eventually developed into trails. James Longmire, the most prominent white explorer of our area, migrated from Indiana to Walla Walla in 1858, then got a contract to explore a new route to Puget Sound. He planned to go up the Naches River and down the Green, but wasn’t successful because of escarpments that they couldn’t get around and had to spend days lowering wagons down them. He settled as a farmer in the Yelm Prairie, and continued to explore the mountains in the summer while his family tended the farm. His goal was to find the route that local guide Indian Henry (Sutelik) took to bring horses through the mountains.

In the 1840s and 50s, the established route to Puget Sound was to come from Portland (down the Columbia, up the Cowlitz to Toledo, then on to Tumwater via Tenino, where you could get on a ship and go up the Sound. River estuaries were significant impediments to wagon travel. In the Ohop Valley, for example, crossing the swampy creek areas in heavy wagons required going up to Lynch Creek and back down the other side, a detour of miles. The Nisqually Delta is four miles wide, and the lowest dry crossing route (at 10 feet above sea level) is 2-3 miles upriver at Frank’s Ferry Crossing. Between Tacoma and Seattle, travelers had to go through Sumner to avoid the swamp of the Puyallup estuary. This drove overland traffic into the foothills. River crossings added days to Longmire’s trips from Yelm to Longmire Springs or Paradise.

The first improved road in southern Pierce County ran 9 miles from Eatonville to Elbe in 1895 (“corduroy road”, made of split logs). It cost \$18,000 and had up to 34% grades in places. Bicyclists were major early advocates for roads in the mountains. Bike clubs, including both men and women, ran expeditions from Tacoma to the mountain and advocated for road taxes. Early road projects featured a feud between T.C. Van Eaton and Torger Peterson in Ohop Valley (Van Eaton rented horses to vehicles going over the Mashel

Mountain, essentially operating it as a toll road). Norwegian and Swedish settlers in the Ohop/Swan Lake area built a new road through the canyon from 1905-1910. To vote on local matters, men had to pay \$8 or give two days of labor to the county road system. As the road improved, it took two days off the travel time from Ohop to Longmire and boosted tourism significantly. Tourism was the first major industry of the valley – Longmire Springs Hotel opened in 1885, and by the turn of the century 4,000 people were up on the weekends. Local farmers sold food to the hotel and travelers. In the early 1910s, Indian Henry’s family band invited Ohop settlers to first fish celebration feasts every few years (photographs of filleted salmon drying in the traditional method).

In 1910, Tacoma voted for a power utility and built first powerhouse at LaGrande. It was expanded in 1944 with additional turbines. Because of the canyon drop, salmon did not get above LaGrande even before the dam. In 1912, the American Nitrogen Company opened an ammonium nitrate production facility near the dam to take advantage of the electricity. The nitrate finished processing into explosives at DuPont. The LaGrande building burned down in 1927. Tacoma City employee housing near the dam and factory, built with the dam, had no chimney and was one of the first all-electric homes in the country, but it wasn’t very reliable. Still, electricity revolutionized household work like laundry for local women (Don shared a picture of a woman sitting next to an electric washer, reading the course schedule for the University of Puget Sound).

Mill Pond Farm Spring House/Tofu House, another local landmark, had cement walls and floor with water flowing through to keep milk and other products cold. The local historical society is moving it to Mill Pond Park to be restored. From 1903-1942, a large portion of the semi-skilled workforce in the valley were Japanese Issei or Nisei – there was a Nisqually Valley Japanese baseball team.

Don mentioned initiatives happening today in the valley like salmon tossing and tree planting with NREP (which his wife Kathy participated in as a teacher for many years). Kathy’s classes replanted over 160 acres to help restore damage done by people who wanted to get across Ohop valley without going upriver!

Don’s book will be out July 31, with a celebration at Elbe Junction. It will be on sale at the Historical Society Arts & Crafts fair in Eatonville in August. The book will have 70 pages of pictures of Eatonville, and 122 pages with images from other places in the valley. It strives to give tourists and visitors an understanding of what we do here and how it fits in with local history: managing tourism, timber harvest, economic development, and now restoration.

- 5. Nisqually 2018 Grant Round & New Project List** – *Ashley Von Essen, NIT*
Presentation link: <https://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/2018-srfb-psar-project-list-for>
Ashley presented the Lead Entity grant projects for this year, funded through the state Salmon Recovery Fund Board (SRFB) and PSP’s Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund (PSAR).
- 2018 SRFB allocation: estimated \$400,000
 - 2019-2021 PSAR planning year: estimated \$1.4 million

Allocations can change based on various factors, but the goal is to put forward \$1.8m of projects in the Nisqually Watershed. There were 8 pre-applications, totaling \$2.9m in requested funds (sponsors have to provide at least a 15% match). All of these projects are shovel-ready. Once the pre-applications are received, Ashley takes the state SRFB reviewers out to view them on site and support with the best available science, which took place last week. Kim Bredensteiner with NLT had 7 of the 8 projects on this year's site visit agenda. NLT proactively seeks funding from other sources as well, and will likely get other resources to carry out projects that we can't fund.

Projects spread from McKenna to Ohop:

- McKenna Reach Protection and Restoration (NLT; \$528,689 for acquisition of 65 acres along the mainstem and stewardship activities)
- McKenna Reach Small Lots (NLT; \$237,362 for acquisition of 6.4 undeveloped acres along the mainstem near McKenna park at risk for future development)
- Nisqually River Wilcox Reach Restoration Design (SPSSEG; \$510,000 for further design work on restoration opportunities to reengage up to 100 acres of floodplain, side channels, and wetlands, pending approval of design alternatives from Wilcox Family)
 - David noted that he's been involved in these discussions and they hope to have a commitment from the family by mid-June.
- Lackamas Flats Protection and Restoration (NLT; \$505,428 for acquisition of 49.5 acres along Lackamas Creek and site planting)
- Nisqually Middle Reach Acquisition and Restoration Project (NLT; \$289,874 for acquisition of 60 acres along mainstem and site planting in Powell wetland complex)
- Lower Ohop Protection and Stewardship (NLT; \$469,844 for acquisition of 90 acres and additional stewardship activities along Lower Ohop following on Restoration Phases 1-3)
- Middle Ohop Protection Phase II (NLT; \$219,138 for conservation easement on 35 acres on Middle Ohop and planting/enhancement)
- Upper Ohop Protection and Restoration Phase 2 (NLT; \$148,162 for acquisition of 25.3 acres in Upper Ohop Valley and plantings)

Timeline:

January 31 – Nisqually Four Year Work Plan approved/submitted
April 23 – Draft applications due in PRISM
May 14 – Project site visits with SRFB Review Panel
June 15 – Present ranking criteria update to NRC for consideration
July 11 – NSHWG develops ranked project list for approval
July 20 – Present ranked project list to NRC for approval
August 9 – Final applications due
Aug-Nov – Review panel provides project comments
Nov 7 – Final ranked list due
Dec 6 – SRFB funds awarded
July 1, 2019 – PSAR funds awarded

6. Plastic Reduction – *Molly Carmody, City of Yelm*

Presentation link: <https://www.slideshare.net/secret/DdWCSKeirGPttG>

Molly presented a proposal before the Yelm City Council to ban single-use plastics. She showed a bag of plastics she had accumulated in the last 2 weeks, noting this was from someone who tries to be conscientious about disposable plastics and it's still quite a bit. 8 million metric tons of plastic enter the ocean every year. Microplastics are smaller than a fingernail and account for 236,000 tons. By 2050, it is estimated that there will be a greater volume of plastics in the ocean than fish. It's damaging for marine animals, coral, shellfish and freshwater species (research is just emerging in the impact on freshwater systems). In the Nisqually, Yelm has 10,000 residents, and the region supports a significant tourism industry from the Red Wind Casino to the Mount Rainier Gateway, all of which may be contributing to plastics in our water systems.

Efforts in Yelm to address this issue have included:

- City clean-up of homeless site on the bank of the Nisqually River (controversial).
- Small cleanup of about 1 mile near future Yelm Bypass – filled a pickup, mostly with single-use plastics (lids, straws, forks).
- On City Council, there are 3 possible votes for a ban on single use plastics, 2 definite nos, and 2 maybes.

Molly noted that the NRC represents very diverse interests but we all care about the environment around the river. She stressed the need to bring academic research to inform action. She asked that the NRC write to Yelm and Roy City Councils, asking for a ban or fee structure on single-use plastic bags and bottles, and a ban on straws/utensils. She also encouraged those present to speak at City Council meetings, which makes a difference in convincing council members, and to continue educating NRC volunteers and children's groups.

David asked for the sense of the Council on drafting a letter to local governments about this. Phyllis and other CAC members strongly supported. Phyllis noted that it's not just a plastics issue, it's a littering issue, and that it can be framed as an environmental concern that doesn't have to be political. Lois added that she has found she can get by just fine without plastic bags since Olympia banned them. David asked that we draft a letter and circulate it to the Council for comment and input before sending it out. David's inclination is to not be too prescriptive to local governments about specific actions – our role can be to identify and call out the problem and insist on some action, and allow officials to determine the best course of action. NRC members who aren't here today may have different perspectives to include. The big goal is to reduce plastics pollution worldwide, and we should be able to focus on that and find agreement. Jennifer suggested that giving some options (i.e. ban or fee structure) could help local governments take faster action. She would follow up with conversation with Shannon if she is elected. May be able to change national rules around plastic packaging and production. Ted suggested recommend to fishing suppliers that they use cardboard or paper instead of styrofoam and plastic lids. Roger asked how Thurston and Pierce counties are handling recycling. Recycling products are being shipped to China for processing, where it is often landfilled instead of actually recycled. Molly noted that LeMay collects in both Thurston and Pierce County. Sorting recycling that has plastic bags in it jams their machines

and requires workers to pull them out, a dangerous and expensive process. Sheila stated that the NRF has been in touch with EPA project on plastics reduction in freshwater – will try to make it part of Stream Stewards and Summer Teacher Institute. Lois mentioned that National Geographic issue this month is on plastics, and they shifted this month to a paper wrapper instead of a plastic one. David noted that the NRC has the opportunity to inform and advocate as a body, but we also have the ability to take this information as individuals, and should continue the conversation at home.

7. For the Good of the Order

Sheila - Kayak Nisqually is offering us a discount for Nisqually Stream Stewards and Council – half day trip on July 13, full day on July 14. Block it out on your calendars and wait for more info.

Molly – Yelm just contracted with Johnson Controls to design a new water reclamation plant. It will be much more efficient, using a membrane instead of single-batch processing.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 11:52am.