



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Nisqually River Council Meeting**  
**December 21, 2018**  
**BFJNNWR**  
Information: 360.438.8715

*Attendees:*

**Council Members:**

Amy Cruver – Pierce County  
Abby Gribi – Eatonville  
Amber Martens – JBLM  
Glynnis Nakai – BFJNNWR

Rene’ Skaggs – Pierce CD  
Kelly Still – WDFW  
David Troutt, chair – Nisqually Indian Tribe

**Citizens Advisory Committee Members:**

Ben Dennis  
Phyllis Farrell  
Howard Glastetter  
Fred Michelson

Karelina Resnick  
Robert Smith  
Marjorie Smith

**Guests:**

Jeff Barney – Pierce County  
Andrew Deffobis – Thurston County  
Lloyd Fetterly – NLT/NSS  
Daniel Hull - NRNC  
Ted Jackson – Big Tent Coalition  
Joe Kalama – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Becky Kowalski – JBLM  
Colleen Glastetter  
Karen Povey – Metro Parks Tacoma  
Jim Reistroffer – NLT/NSS  
Etsuko Reistroffer – NLT/NSS  
Max Webster – WA Environmental Council

**Staff:**

Brandon Bywater – NRF  
Justin Hall – NRF  
Joe Kane – NLT

Emily McCartan – NRF  
Chrissy Webb – NRF  
Sheila Wilson – NRF

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

David called the meeting to order at 9:09. November minutes were approved with date corrected, as was the agenda for the day.

**2. Committee Reports and Updates**

**Advisory Committee Reports:**

*Citizens Advisory Committee – Phyllis Farrell*

The CAC heard updates on WRIA 11 exempt well planning, Alder Dam reservoir levels, and the upcoming plastic bag ban bill in the Legislature. The CAC also discussed Thurston County mineral lands expansion and noted their disappointment with the County Commissioners, who voted exclude Land Trusts from the 1000-foot buffer from mineral lands.

Howard informed the Council that Alder Reservoir has been at an unusually low level this fall, and TPU cut back its outflow rate to preserve the water level if needed to meet minimum instream flows for salmon. It is an example of good dam management to keep the river in balance while continuing to generate power. CAC members noted they feel it is very

important to understand TPU's model and how they make dam management decisions, and to encourage them to be conservative with water levels through winter storm season to prevent floods.

*Chair Report – David Troutt*

David will be representing PSAC and the Nisqually Tribe at the Legislature this winter to try to increase funding available for salmon recovery. He is also involved in the WRIA 11 planning process. The timeline given us by the Legislature is very tight, so the submitted plan will be conceptual at this stage.

The Orca Task Force response is moving along. The recommendations, if fully implemented, would make a difference; unfortunately, the Governor's budget remains woefully short (covering only 20% of the identified need in Washington.) The Nisqually is making tremendous progress on salmon recovery, but we can't do it alone: we need habitat restoration to continue along the way. Small tributaries in particular are getting ignored. We knew this was a crisis in the 1990s: Billy Frank expressed that at the time. Yet we have still spent only about \$1 billion on a \$20 billion problem. If we are going to make a difference for orcas and salmon, we need to pick up the pace statewide.

*Staff Report – Emily McCartan*

Emily has been mostly working on the 6091/WRIA 11 Planning document, which is due to Ecology in mid-January. It sounds like grant awards for the program will be announced sometime in January as well.

*Thurston County Subarea Plan – Andrew Deffobis*

The subarea update community process will begin in 2019. If you signed up for email updates, you will start receiving them as those meetings begin. The consultant contract has been extended, and there will be a public meeting when their report is finished (expected in first half of 2019). Community members involved have deep background in earlier rounds of planning.

**Advisory Committee Reports:**

*Nisqually Land Trust – Joe Kane*

NLT hopes to hear soon about marine conservation initiative acquisitions on Anderson Island, funded by Pierce Conservation Futures. They have also requested funding from the Legislature for a conservation easement on a former church camp property on Key Peninsula, which would protect the shoreline and keep the camp open for environmental education. NLT is concerned about the availability of important Conservation Futures funding for salmon recovery projects (Thurston County has suspended for a year, and Pierce County Council voted recently to prioritize farmland this round). CF funding provides key local match to leverage significant state and federal funding – there are significant and disturbing implications for salmon recovery if it is not available. Similar concerns with Thurston County's recent decision on excluding land trust properties from mineral lands buffers.

Joe attended a great NREP/Stream Stewards planting at Ohop in October. He counted 21 eagles at the Refuge recently – used informally as a marker of the salmon run.

### *Nisqually River Education Project – Sheila Wilson*

It is salmon tossing season! Fewer field trips this year because salmon returns were low (four out of five school trips complete, plus a community event). Teacher trainings for the NOAA BWET CLAMSS and Climate Resiliency grants are underway, and NREP is reapplying for the next year of that funding. Sierra Club has donated funds for GREEN Congress, coming up March 21. Application for a State Parks “No Child Left Inside” grant is coming up in January, working to tie together all aspects of NREP’s programs targeting high-need youth. 750 students came out to plant trees this year, a new record that we’d like to sustain.

### *Nisqually River Foundation – Justin Hall*

NRF had its annual planning retreat last month to discuss finishing up the report and developing next year’s priorities. Justin has been representing the NRC in the 6091 planning process. He has visited the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla and the Port of Seattle with AgForestry, and will be heading to Ecuador for the AgForestry overseas trip in February. He will also be at the Legislature this spring seeking funding for the River Foundation and support for the Community Forest legislation.

### *Community Forest – Justin Hall*

Justin and other board members visited the harvest site with NW Natural Resources Group. Harvesting is thinning, to put overly dense stands on a better track for forest health. Thinnings are more expensive and difficult - the harvester loves it, works the site himself, and the Community Forest wants to develop a consistent working relationship with his operation. Joe has been contacted by colleagues in Columbia Land Trust to help advise the Cowlitz tribe on creating a Community Forest.

### *Salmon Recovery Program*

The annual Yil Me Hu newsletter is now available in digital and hard copy:

<https://www.slideshare.net/Nisqually/yil-me-hu-winter-201819>

- The Tribe's Native Plant Restoration Crew is gearing up for this year's planting season. They have 3 projects lined up:
  - A 7-acre planting as part of the Mashel Eatonville Restoration Phase III, including the tops of 9 recently installed logjams.
  - A 7.6-acre riparian planting at the Land Trust's Middle Ohop III property.
  - A 15-acre under-story planting along the Nisqually River mainstem on property owned by Tacoma Public Utilities. This is the second year of a 6 year project to enhance habitat for fish and wildlife.
- The Salmon Recovery Board recently announced the award of nearly \$18 million in grants for projects to protect and restore habitat. This includes Nisqually’s allocation of \$376,000, awarded to the Nisqually Land Trust to protect 90 acres of floodplain in the lower Ohop Valley.
- This year’s chum run has been challenged because the mouths of intermittent prairie streams where they spawn have remained dry late into the fall. The run was about as large as predicted, but may not be able to get to spawning grounds, which could cause smaller runs in 2-4 years.
- The Tribe is investing disaster funding from NOAA (from the poor fisheries on Chinook, coho, and chum in 2015) in infrastructure improvements at the Kalama Creek Hatchery, which was built in the 1970s and needs to be modernized to deal with current salmon recovery challenges. Through same funding, hope to install adult fish trap (with cameras, if possible to secure them) at Centralia to sample adult salmon moving upriver.

- Daniel Hull noted that there are about 80 Steller sea lions hanging out at the Reach now, eating chum. What kind of impact do they have on salmon runs? WDFW is working on a report and we will ask them to present to the NRC. Sea lion control gets controversial but the Orca Task Force is evaluating it. They come to the Nisqually because it has the last run of chum.
- The Nisqually Tribe and other hatcheries is hoping to send some surplus Chinook to Minter Creek Hatchery to cover their huge loss from last week's power outage. Hatchery staff did their best, emergency generators had been recently tested, but the backup system just failed.

### 3. Conservation Engagement at Metro Parks Tacoma

*Karen Povey, Conservation Engagement Manager*

Karen is the Conservation Engagement Manager for Northwest Trek and the Point Defiance Zoo. She gets people connected to nature and excited to take action to protect it. Engagement work takes place on site, by connecting animals and guests, but increasingly also by activating community members in stewardship. These sites are about creating connection with people and animals that you can't get anywhere else. The goal is to leverage that connection into action on the environment. Initiatives like citizen science, sustainable seafood, fisher recovery, and plastics campaign are done in partnership with other organizations working in the community.

The theme of the new Pacific Seas Aquarium at Pt. Defiance Zoo (opened in September, most advanced energy-efficiency aquarium in the world) is: "We share the ocean, and the responsibility for protecting it." Want people to leave understanding that they have a role to play in keeping animals safe. Pt. Defiance is a Pacific-rim themed zoo: mostly animals found along the Pacific Rim (no rhinos or zebras). The aquarium has animals local to the Salish Sea, and down the Pacific Coast, including the new Baja Bay exhibit. It incorporates lots of art, a hands-on Tidal Touch zone, and lots of interpretive staff to help visitors have an immersive, one-on-one connection. It intentionally frames messages of ocean conservation issues in terms of positive actions that help people feel empowered (not overwhelmed with messages that are scary and sad) – tree plantings, minimizing pollution, etc. They accept and share media (photos, short videos) of partners working on positive action.

#### *Plastic Free Initiative*

- First step: get our own house in order. Parks made some difficult operational decisions, and committed to messaging transparently about how challenging it is to make these changes. It's a journey to reduce reliance on disposable plastic products. No longer selling water in plastic bottles was a major shift (it was a big revenue source and guests rely on having water available). Water is now sold in aluminum cans, and filling stations for reusable water bottles are installed throughout facilities. Higher price point for guests buying water, but did not get much pushback.
- Campaigning in community to reduce plastic: youth volunteers engaging businesses to offer straws on request instead of by default.
  - Ocean Friendly Restaurants (partnership with Surfrider)
    - <https://www.pdza.org/care/plastic-free/ocean-friendly-restaurants/>

- Nationwide aquarium plastics reduction program – text STRAWFREE to 49767 for a week of daily tips on reducing plastic. Aquariums use different opt-in words to track how many people sign up. Tacoma is currently in the lead!

### *Community Science Projects*

- Gets people out into nature, enhances capacity of local fish and wildlife staff in monitoring species of concern. Programs are structured as a tiered approach based on how complicated it is to get involved, so people can pick an entry point that's comfortable for them.
  - Explore the Shore – hosted by the Zoo in the summer during extreme minus tides. No sign-up, naturalist teams on the beach help identify marine invertebrates. 500-1300 people participate annually.
  - Spot the Swallows – with WDFW, monitoring Purple Martins (species of concern in WA).
  - Monitor the Marsh – amphibian monitoring, primarily at NW Trek, trains volunteers to identify egg masses for 8 species, including 2 endangered and 1 invasive bullfrog.
  - Peaking for Pikas –Partnership with Oregon Zoo to record presence of pikas in the mountains. Held training for Mountaineers in 2017. Currently opportunistic for people hiking, want to make it more systematic.
- Bat Monitoring (mostly staff project at NW Trek)
  - Count roost exits twice in a week - Trek is the second-highest roost place in WA for bats. Bat detector analyzes call frequency and pattern to track types of bats. Monitoring for whitenose disease by guano collection.

### *Fisher Monitoring of Cascades Reintroduction*

- Fishers were extirpated in 1800s from overhunting. They have been reintroduced to Olympics starting 10 years ago and Cascades from 4-5 years ago. NWTrek does ongoing monitoring after release. Fishers are implanted with a transmitter before release and signals are tracked through aerial flights. Visitor services staff have gotten to participate in the flights via a lottery – great reward for staff who helped get funding by asking visitors for entry donations. Flights were able to determine the location on one animal that helped find the den, got pictures of the mother carrying prey back to her kits. The receivers last 1-2 years, and after that monitoring will be ground-based.

### *Grit City Urban Carnivore Project*

- UW Tacoma project using the Urban Wildlife Information Network (nationwide protocol for comparable data). Installing many wildlife cameras along two transects for 30 days, 4 times a year (January, April, July, October) to understand distribution of carnivores along the urban-rural transect in parks, green spaces, cemeteries. Want to understand anthropogenic factors influencing animal distributions, ambient light effect with sky quality meters. Major community engagement campaign to engage and hopefully celebrate animals with real-time storytelling and iNaturalist recording of sightings.

*Political advocacy on behalf of wildlife* - Grizzly Reintroduction Coalition, Return the Red Wolf, Ban the Bag, I-1301, Ivory/Wildlife Trafficking bill, Endangered Species Act

*Questions:*

- Mountain beavers? Yes, they're around! You don't see them often.
- Fishers in Eatonville? Sightings have been mostly elsewhere.
- Where does the volunteer engagement base come from? Mostly pretty local. BioBlitz and Pika program draw from larger areas, and Parks would like to keep expanding as staff capacity allows.
- School participation in community science? Not usually, don't have site capacity for whole classes at a time for those programs at this point.
- How often do fisher flights happen? About 14 flights last winter, each about 6 hours. Very weather dependent so it's hard to book them regularly.
- How do you feed a jelly in captivity? Zoo has one of the world's leading authorities on jellyfish propagation and aquaculture program to grow their own feed: lots of tiny brine shrimp.

#### **4. Washington Community Forest Funding Legislation**

*Justin Hall, Nisqually River Foundation/Nisqually Community Forest*

*Max Webster, Washington Environmental Council*

The Nisqually Community Forest was started by the Nisqually Land Trust, recognizing that the easiest way to change forest management is to own the land yourself. Until 15-20 years ago, timber companies were vertically integrated: the company owned the woods, the mills, and the rails. In the 1990s and 2000s, when Wall Street noticed that timber lands were undervalued, Timber Investment Management Organizations (TIMOs) began forming investment pools to break up and sell assets for maximum value. Timber companies sold significant amounts of land, separated ownership between mills and land, financializing the land ownership so the focus became making money from sale of timber, rather than long-term sustainable yield. While not universally the case, this is how a majority of timber companies operate now. WA has some of the strongest timber environmental rules, although the adaptive process to change regulations (such as for salmon recovery goals) requires consensus, so it's difficult to change the rules. Buying the land is easier than trying to change the rules.

There are a variety of reasons that people want to do community forests. In Nisqually, salmon recovery is key. In other places, goals include adapting to wildfire risk, protecting from development conversion, water quality concerns, and long-term carbon storage. The Nisqually's goal is to raise the average age of the trees in the community forest. Modeling done in the Nisqually (VELMA) indicates that increasing the average age of trees from 40 years to 80 or 100, it will increase flows in the Mashel during critical low-flow period in August up to 12-13 cfs, helping salmon recovery, Town of Eatonville's water supply, more.

Community forests are different than Land Trusts, because it is intended to be a working forest, not exclusively conservation lands never to be harvested again. Trees will be cut down in a community forest. Ownership varies, with some in public ownership (tribe, municipality, local gov), some non-profit owned with effectively public ownership. Work with community advisory committees and with community support, because it's possible to have more access in community forests (timberlands have become more limited access since conversion from old timber company ownerships).

WEC has studied the Mt. Adams Community Forest for effects on local community and economy. It is a 400-acre forest outside of Glenwood, one of the oldest community forests, managed in partnership with a national wildlife refuge on adjoining land. Since its creation in 2014, has generated \$8 million in local economic activity and 59 FTE months of work in Klickitat County. Forest goals are fire resilience, protecting underrepresented forest communities. Goal is to have 5000 acres, provide baseline of local forest economy jobs into the future.

**Legislative Opportunities:** One of the main challenges is finding funding to enable outright land purchases, when competing against TIMOs and other financial heavyweights. The NW Community Forest Coalition, WEC, and Nature Conservancy are supporting a community forest grant program to enable local ownership and management. Looking for \$8 million the first year, to be prioritized among 20 WA projects: 8 have land ready to purchase. RCO would be the funding arm and DNR would help select the projects. Projects are across the state, bipartisan districts, so they are hoping for a lot of support. Working forests across WA have seen degradation of conservation values of those lands, with limited state resources to buy lands or incentivize management that restores those values. The grant program would provide flexibility for community forest landowners to buy land outright or buy conservation easements that direct management. It allows more creativity to manage for community interests based on local needs. There's currently no support available for these type of efforts, and lots of land out there that needs to be restored.

*Questions:*

- Are there approaches that look into selling very long-term investment bonds for private investors? You can do that, but the regulations and overhead to administer that is challenging. Long-term goal is to have private support that matches public funding support, but need to get the ball rolling with public money to make it more attractive for private investment. Current legislative approach for grants has a lot of legal analysis to determine what the state can constitutionally do.
- What is community access and hunting policy for the Nisqually Community Forest? Still working on it. No access from the south in the summer through Land Trust lands for ESA conservation. Could hike in from other points, but it's a difficult way in. The goal would be to have it open with measures to prevent dumping/abuse. Most forestlands are used for hunting, so it probably would be permitted.
- How many jobs does a mill provide? Moves toward automation and efficiency have brought down some of the employment numbers – largest are several hundred employees. BC community forest has its own small on-site mill with about 6 employees, producing around \$500,000 revenue from lumber sales each year. It's a possibility for Nisqually in the future.
- Where does funding come for operational expenses? The goal is that forest supports itself. Initial purchase is very expensive, but once acquired, it should largely operate on the revenue from harvests.
- Community Forest Coalition encourages support in contacting legislators (individually or organizationally). WEC has many resources available by request.
- Was there an attempt to run it through DNR as part of budget request? Timing was a few weeks late this year. DNR is on board – they won't actively advocate for it but they're not opposed. RCO and Governor's office have supported.

## 5. For the Good of the Order

- Ted Jackson: Big Tent Coalition's legislative objectives for this session:
  - Nonprofit umbrella representing 50 member organizations of recreational users.
  - Continue funding for outdoor recreation policy advisor
  - Maximize investments in outdoor recreation – including No Child Left Inside
  - Bicycle and pedestrian grants in transportation budget
  - Grants for user access improvements
  - Outdoor rec as tourism driver for rural areas
  - Support DFW legislation for cooperative access agreements to expand recreational access on private lands
- Kelly Still introduced herself as the new WDFW rep to the River Council. She is our new area habitat biologist (Nisqually, Chambers-Clover, and part of Gig Harbor). Matt Curtis is now the unit supervisor and may be back as his schedule permits.
- Daniel Hull – NRNC met with NLT and DNR last month, working to incorporate state lands into Aquatic Reserve (McNeil Island, South Puget Sound Wildlife Area, Nisqually Reach areas). They would like to get NRC support.
- Rene' Skaggs– Pierce Conservation District and other Puget Conservation Districts held the first Orca Day in November, galvanizing volunteers concerned about orcas. Mostly planting projects, lots of partner agencies out educating people. Want to continue it as an annual event and work with NREP/NSS on next year's event.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55pm.