

NRC CAC Meeting
December 10, 2019
Nisqually Natural Resources Office
6:00-8:00pm

Present: Phyllis Farrell, Lois Ward, Jonathan Bradley, Robert Smith, Marjorie Smith, Howard Glastetter, Paula Holroyde, Jeaniel Thomas, Glen Thomas, Fred Michelson, Ed Kenney, Emily McCartan (staff)

1. Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping

Phyllis called the meeting to order at 6:08pm. Minutes were reviewed and approved with amendment.

Emily advised the CAC that the Nisqually Tribe's Fish Commission has scheduled meetings from 5:00-6:00pm on the second Tuesday of the month. Members decided to change CAC meetings to 6:30-8:00pm to allow more of a scheduling buffer and will revisit if necessary.

2. Issue Updates

Eatonville wastewater and Mashel toxins – Fred requested a rundown of the situation with Eatonville's wastewater, what is allowed under the permit, what type of treatment they use, and if there are plans to change it. It is an important area for steelhead and Chinook. The CAC would like a presentation from Eatonville or other knowledgeable entity about this when feasible.

Biosolids – Ed is working with Phyllis to approach Sierra Club and other organizations about adopting a statewide campaign to address biosolid contaminants. Policy specifics are still to be developed. Several CAC members are strongly supportive of thermal decomposition and a ban on land application.

Thurston County Mineral Lands Review – Thurston County is very short-staffed, and staff have advised Phyllis that the Nisqually Sub-Area plan will likely not be addressed until 2021. Mineral lands review will begin again in February with a recap of the work group to the Planning Commission. Draft plan more than doubles the areas designated mineral lands (56,000 acres to 144,000 acres), which could drastically expand mining in the County. Buffers proposed to be shortened to 50 feet. Land Trust lands were specifically excluded from critical areas requiring buffers. Sand and gravel is the top mining export of Washington State and is plentiful in Thurston County, and mining representatives attend most meetings. Agricultural interests are divided on co-designation of agricultural and mineral lands. The final decision will have implications for Nisqually Land Trust and water planning. The CAC is interested in hearing about how other counties handle mineral lands zoning.

Aquaculture Permitting Decision – Next step will be the judge deciding if the proposed remedies are adequate and how to proceed from there. Major implications

for aquaculture statewide. Legislature has funded a study of chemical pesticides to control ghost shrimp, which is an issue for (non-native) oyster cultivation.

Yelm Sewer System – Yelm’s sewer system has been troubled for many years. A citizen’s group pressed the City to build a better system that complied with the Clean Water Act in the 1990s. The current treatment center has had problems with failures and polluted runoff to the Nisqually River through the 2010s. There is not consistently enough material being processed for the system to work efficiently, so it does not producing reclaimed water reliably over the summer. Current maintenance is out of date, and implementation of plans to fix it have been slowed because of funding challenges. The CAC would like to request a follow up presentation and possible visit to the plant.

Thurston County Habitat Conservation Plan –The county has submitted an HCP for pocket gophers to Ecology for approval. Funding for mitigation had been a challenge. They have now designated half the Conservation Futures Funding for 30 years to be available for gopher habitat mitigation (the other half will remain available for conservation projects). Awaiting approval from Ecology.

NLT Weed Control Test Project – Ed is working on acquiring mulch to apply at test property for phasing out chemical weed control at Land Trust sites.

3. For the Good of the Order

Final numbers for salmon runs are not available yet. Spawning surveys for Chinook have just finished this week and data needs to be processed. Chum returns are looking very poor.

Phyllis attended a state-level overview of hatchery salmon production. Part of orca recovery plan is producing more hatchery fish, although there are concerns with that (timing, resource use, smaller size of hatchery fish).

Jonathan introduced himself. He is a UWT student in a class on community environmental policy. Will recommend the NRC to fellow local students looking for capstone opportunities.

The Sierra Club recently held a presentation about homelessness and environmental impacts. This is a significant issue for South Sound and watershed communities. There is interest in having a presentation on local data and responses at NRC.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.