

**NRC CAC Meeting**  
**November 17, 2020**  
**6:00-8:00pm**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Present:** Phyllis Farrell, Lois Ward, Ed Kenney, Howard Glastetter, Martin McCallum, Karelina Resnick, Paula Holroyde, Emily McCartan (staff)

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Phyllis called the meeting to order at 6:10pm.

Several members attended last week's LWV Thurston County water forum and had positive reports. The issues of septic systems, water treatment, and wells fundamentally important to planning community growth.

**2. Member Issues**

*Thurston County RAP* – The Lakeside proposal is advancing to the Board of County Commissioners (hearing and comment deadline of December 1). The NRC submitted a letter of qualified support to the Planning Commission, stipulating the need for best management practices (BMPs), oversight, and a strong statement that no mining should occur below the water table in the area. Phyllis has commented as a citizen and for the Sierra Club with environmental concerns about separating this proposal from the full Nisqually Subarea Plan update and inadequate study on the risks of RAP being stored in the Nisqually Valley. The County Commissioners are likely to rely heavily on the Nisqually Tribe's lead, and sees the NRC as closely aligned with the Tribe. Members discussed the history of the issue and substantial concerns with how the process is going and what the environmental outcomes will be, including separation from the holistic view of the Subarea Plan, and whether BMPs will be adequate to prevent leaching from a RAP pile and protect from flood risks. The CAC is interested in understanding the positions of other NRC members while following up on these concerns.

*Alder Dam Flood Concerns* – Howard shared the status of his complaint regarding Tacoma Power's operation of Alder Dam during the flood in February 2020. FERC reviewed the complaint and concluded that TPU had been in compliance with their license. Howard believes the license should require winter flood control actions, which it currently does not. Howard also shared instances in which TPU has been out of compliance with their license requirements for summer minimum levels in Alder Lake and for streamflow. TPU seems to have changed how they have operated the dam over summer 2020. His hope is that they will voluntarily keep the water level lower through the winter. Howard believes that floods in the Nisqually Valley are caused primarily by dam operations and not by climate change. Members discussed avenues for addressing the issue in the absence of a license change. Quality of life for watershed residents is a factor in the NRC's Stewardship Plan, as are streamflow and sediment processes affecting salmon recovery.

*Chehalis Basin Flood Control Dam* – Martin shared that tonight is the comment deadline for providing input to the Army Corps of Engineers’ NEPA process for a flood control dam proposed in the Upper Chehalis River. Federal guidelines currently don’t allow agencies to mention climate change, so comments about those impacts are especially helpful. The Chehalis is currently undammed and supports wild stocks of Chinook and steelhead which would be adversely affected by a dam. The Governor has convened a stakeholder group to propose solutions for flood control and aquatic species restoration. The aquatic species restoration plan would have benefits for flood control via ecosystem approaches of floodplain channel connections and barrier removals. Martin has sent members an email with instructions for commenting if desired. Flooding is a major issue on the Skokomish due to environmental changes.

*DuPont Settlement* – Ed has been working on this issue for over 25 years and it has been resolved with a settlement this week. JBLM has agreed to release water to restore flow in Sequelitchew Creek (sometime next year). Nisqually Delta Association and CalPortland have agreed to reclaim 3.5 miles of the creek, working with SPSSEG, to preserve Chinook rearing habitat in an eelgrass bed. CalPortland will do some mining closer to DuPont and below the water table, but 5 environmental groups have signed on due to the overall benefits. Washington Environmental Council has been a major driver in the negotiations. David Troutt met with parties and advised that the risks of expanded mining below the water table are less in this area than in the Nisqually Valley. There is some contamination already flowing into Puget Sound, but experts don’t think it is likely to accelerate based on these actions. Preserving the shoreline from Solo Point to the Refuge from gravel mining is a significant win.

### **3. For the Good of the Order**

WRIAs 22/23 (Upper and Lower Chehalis watersheds) have approved their Streamflow Restoration plans. WRIAs 13 and 14 (Deschutes and Kennedy-Goldsborough) are continuing to work very hard on their plans.

The Powell Creek planting site, between NLT, NREP, and NRC volunteers, is completely planted for the year. Ed is working on small groups of volunteers to prep the next part of the site for future years.