

NRC CAC Meeting
November 16, 2021
6:00-8:00pm
Virtual Meeting

Present: Phyllis Farrell, Ed Kenney, Howard Glastetter, Carl Rotter, Paula Holroyde, David Troutt, Martin McCallum, Lois Ward, Justin Hall, Tristan Olson (staff)

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Check-In

Phyllis called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. Members introduced themselves to new NRC Program Coordinator Tristan Olson.

2. Staff Update

Tristan introduced himself to the Committee.

3. Issue Updates

Flooding – Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) and Thurston County showed a high degree of cooperation in mitigating a potential November Nisqually flood when most Western Washington rivers were flooding. Thurston County requested and TPU released 4,600 cubic feet per second (cfs) (twice the generator capacity) for a day and a half before the storm. In the midst of the storm TPU was attempting to raise the release to 6,500 cfs or higher. Thurston County requested this be cut back, because the Mashel River tributary was adding 5,000 cfs below the dam. TPU complied. Moderate flooding was avoided.

Howard emailed Thurston County prior to the storm and said they have to let water out now due to very high NOAA forecasted inflows (predicted 20,600 cfs in two days, but this dropped about 12,000cfs). TPU almost immediately complied. Later Ed Kenney contacted the county and said TPU must lower the increased outflow from the dam because of flood waters the Mashel was already adding to the Nisqually. Ed came to his conclusion via the McKenna USGS gauge and ended up never seeing it above 11,200cfs.

Howard stated concern that TPU has no flood control in the winter. Could they hold the reservoir no lower than 7 feet capacity, allowing them to drop to 20 feet capacity in spring and summer? Phyllis inquired as to whether there is a middle ground to protect fish as well as prevent flooding. David Troutt mentioned this is a complicated situation as it is a fairly small reservoir and its ability to deal with flooding is not great. The license is due in 12 years (currently locked in) and so which studies we should evaluate for the next license (flooding & salmon) is the question, while also asking how they are adjusting for climate change. Nisqually River Coordinating Committee oversees operations and annual management for the reservoir. Typically, during floods they make changes and update David. When looking at long range projections they reach out to Federal NRCC (Ecology, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, etc.)

Shoreline Master Program (SMP) – Howard (as a resident) made public comments on the asphalt plant mining, channel migration zone, and bridges. SMP is trying to give a little something to everybody like the Nisqually Subarea Plan tried to do, but the County needs to update that plan. Holroyd wants to mine 100 feet below the aquifer. The Subarea Plan prohibited recycled asphalt next to Lost Lake, but did not prohibit the asphalt plant itself - any gravel mine that wanted an asphalt plant could have one. Holroyd and Lakeside could bring gravel in from another pit to phase it out, as they do not currently go below the water table. Regarding the channel migration zone, the 500-year flood plain, in 2020 a woman and her family were flooded when TPU allowed the reservoir to rise to two feet below capacity during one of the rainiest seasons in Washington (10,000cfs).

George Walter is tracking how the draft SMP applies to the watershed. The County is long overdue in updating SMP as they are operating off of the 1990 version and were supposed to have it updated and approved by 2020. Advocacy for marine and riparian buffers is important as some drafts propose to shorten those, which does not align with necessary climate change considerations. Plans also advocated to reduce plastic use by the aquaculture industry. Josh Cummings is meeting with a county commissioner who wants to improve public engagement and transparency. If the public wants to provide input, they should focus on code revisions. CAC is asking for a code to actually measure indicators regarding no net loss on permitting and zoning practices.

Howard mentioned the SMP does not address a FEMA study which is aware that the reservoir has no flood responsibilities – so flood levels are set at the 1996 flood levels. County should appeal the FEMA decision if that is the case. Phyllis commented that lake management districts were vocal about being able to widen docks and eliminate current requirements that multifamily docks should be considered. David mentioned that the Tribe tends to focus on areas that impact salmon and won't get too involved if salmon are not involved

[Treaty Rights Presentation](#) (SRC Meeting) – Phyllis noted that this was an excellent presentation given at the most recent Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council Meeting.

Biosolids Presentation – Ed gave a presentation to the local Sierra Club focusing on finding good compost and mulch for garden restoration. Compost is also being explored as a way to stop tire particles from getting into streams and killing Coho. The pilot project for stormwater treatment along highway 7 has formed an agreement with Cedar Grove compost and permits are in place for an 8x10 box with a compost media module to be put in place to test effectiveness against 6PPD compounds.

CAC members commented on the lack of availability for clean, local compost. Local sources almost always contain biosolids and contaminated yard waste. Tacoma's compost is bad; Fire Mountain Farm is bad (20% was dangerous waste); Fort Lewis plant wasn't working; and Silver Springs LeMay waste contained micro plastics, nano plastics, dusts, and more. King county has good compost though. Testing is being done regarding biosolids permits (mothers' breast milk containing PFAST chemicals are being found) – more updates in early 2022.

Jenifer McIntyre's presentation on 6PPD (anti ozone preservative that firms up tires - 5 pounds per tire) has led to state task force and federal task force. Tire industry is engaged and interested in finding solutions, but going slow. When in front of regulators they say one thing and in private another. Lawyers are going to try and put pressure on them and make sure that if there is a substitute, it isn't toxic as well. Worldwide tire dust studies are being done on fish and humans. A lot of people in China have this in their lungs (80%) and we need funds for research on Steelhead and Chinook (it affects Coho, but not Chum). What about Birds, Mammals, Walleye, etc.? Hoping this becomes an international issue so that it can be banned.

David mentioned in regard to the culvert replacement that he is confident proper stormwater treatment will also be put in place. While I-5 & 101 pour right into Budd inlet, most of that run off is oil water treatment, but no toxic chemicals or hazardous metals.

Hatcheries Talk – While this is a sensitive topic, Chris Ellings research suggests it is likely that the Nisqually estuary is at capacity for Salmon and adding more fish could have a negative impact. Some people just want more fish put into the sound, but they would have to rear in the Nisqually Delta. Habitat improvements will be included in infrastructure funding.

Wild Fish Conservancy gathers science regarding where the salmon are, salmon survival, and selective fishing techniques while also engaging in litigation. They are staunch advocates for wild fish, but do not see the value of hatcheries. If we don't have hatcheries, we don't have salmon – so there is some conflict. They do raise good concerns about wild fish conservation which isn't bad (you need tension on both sides to reach that middle ground)

They have litigation against Washington State hatchery facility changes and 15 different hatcheries. Capital lake program in partnership with tribe (3.6 million chinook) – the Tribe is not being challenged as they are going after State run facilities.

A State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review should've taken place as WFW recently abandoned science in support of more fish. The Hatchery Genetic Management Plan (HGMP) is now in front of NOAA – The Federal government never approved the Nisqually plan.

The ability to develop more estuary habitat relies critically on the I-5 project. Places such as the Stillaguamish, Skagit, and Nooksack also have the ability to create more capacity (nearshore habitat and pocket estuary). Nisqually to Everett has pocket estuaries where the capacity is first for wild stock and then for hatchery salmon. Capital Lake net pens go to Nisqually, so if they had an estuary that would help out capacity a LOT.

Chum salmon run is currently big and these next couple of weeks are a great time to see the fish! Nisqually late chum run is projected to be low (fall and winter runs don't necessarily predict each other). Rebuilding the Kalama creek is taking place (salmon trail down to the mouth of the Nisqually).

Justin mentioned the community forests finished harvesting and there is two feet of snow that melted with more coming soon.

Commissioner Edwards videos showed six spawning chairs with fish moving under the enhancement bridges and spawning in 2 inches of water (very shallow).

4. For the Good of the Order

In person meetings are still not scheduled to resume as most people are still remote and Pierce County covid cases are still too high.

The December meeting was cancelled. Next CAC meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 11th.

Meeting adjourned 7:32pm