



**Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Meeting
October 15, 2021
Online Meeting**

Attendees:

NRC Members:

Cathy Hamilton-Wissmer – Aegis-JBLM
Darrin Masters - WDFW
Rene Skaggs - Pierce Conservation District

Kevin Skerl - MORA
David Troutt - Nisqually Indian Tribe

CAC Members

Phyllis Farrell
Howard Glastetter
Paula Holroyde

Ed Kenney
Lois Ward

Guests:

Jesse Barham – City of Olympia
Anne Baxter - Department of Ecology
Annette Bullchild - Nisqually Indian Tribe
Christina Chaput - Thurston County
Rachel Collins - MORA
Miles Cruger - College Student
Andrew Deffobis*Dennis Dixon - Pierce County
Greg Dudgeon - MORA

Chris Ellings – Nisqually Indian Tribe
Daniel Hull – NRNC
Sela Kalama - Nisqually Indian Tribe
Sarah Montero – JBLM
Julie Rector – City of Lacey
Etsuko Reistrofer - Stream Steward
Larry Stickney - Pierce County Council
Teri Tucker - MORA
Ashley Von Essen – Nisqually Indian Tribe

Staff:

Jeanette Dorner – NLT
Julia Fregonara – NRF

Justin Hall – NRF

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

David called the meeting to order at 9:05am. Minutes were approved and the agenda was approved.

2. Committee Reports and Updates

Advisory Committee Reports:

Citizens Advisory Committee - Phyllis Farrell

The CAC did not meet.

Chair Report – David Troutt

Have been mainly focussed on three areas: I-5 project - update \$5 million from legislature to look at design alternatives and cost estimates to get ready for the 23-25 biennial budget. The Nisqually Indian Tribe working on a memorandum of understanding with Washington State Department of Transportation. We are breaking new ground. The Request for Proposals for the project should come out at the beginning of November. Have been taking everyone who has an interest in this project on tours to see the potential project. David has become the lead spokesman for the Tribes on tire dust issues. This is the 6PPD Quinone, which is an ozone preservative, issue with coho. Even if they can get it out of the tires, it will be 10-15 years before the tires that use it are gone. Therefore they are looking at bioremediation that can treat it in the short term. Lastly, has been meeting with Lakeside with their recycled asphalt permitting. Thurston County has asked for an increased intensity of water quality sampling (size and frequency). Pre-permit discussion with the County will be in four or so weeks. Then the permit application will go in after that, sometime early next year. There are questions around RAP and 6PPD Quinone. Lakeside will be covering the current pile as soon as they can.

Staff Report

No report.

Thurston County Subarea Plan

No report.

Allied Program Reports:

Nisqually Land Trust - Jeanette Dorner

The Nisqually Land Trust had their annual meeting via Zoom last night. Tim Ransom gave a great presentation about his book on the Braget family and the Nisqually Delta. The NLT just closed on a new 10.5 acre property in the lower Ohop Valley. It is floodplain and creek and is adjacent to existing NLT properties in the Ohop. The previous owner has been on the property since 1976. The NLT bought just the floodplain portion of her property. This Saturday is Orca recovery day which is sponsored by the Conservation Districts. The NLT will be doing willow and cottonwood cuttings to prepare them for a future restoration planting. There will also be a guided bird watching event on Saturday. The NLT is hiring! Looking for a finance and operations manager.

Nisqually River Education Project - Julia Fregonara

Our NTPS 5th grade trips have been going really well. Have been doing Water Quality monitoring at the schools since the students can't go on field trips. Has been a good trial run for new teachers. The 5th graders at 7 Oaks are looking to do a letter writing campaign around water quality. They have also been doing pre-trip presentations to prepare for the October 21st water quality monitoring day. Nantz has been coordinating with the Nisqually Indian Tribe's Youth Center to pull together a kayaking trip. Tree planting, plant placement

will start at the end of October. Very few or no schools are being allowed to do field trips so we will be looking for help getting the trees in the ground. Putting together a proposal for the EPA Environmental Education grant. Potentially focussed around water quality monitoring.

Nisqually River Foundation - Justin Hall

Interviewed candidates for the Nisqually River Council Program Coordinator position. Have continued discussion with the Dambo Troll project. Connected the Artist with the Nisqually Indian Tribe, specifically councilmember Hanford McCloud. Hired a contractor for the Muck Creek Streamflow project. Have finally submitted our Scope of work for our legislative funding and am waiting to hear back from RCO.

Nisqually Community Forest - Justin Hall

Harvest continues. We are currently working on cutting in a study by our partner NNRG around snow accumulation in gaps and climate adaptation around seed stock for trees. I have been meeting with contractors around moving gates and road work, specifically road brushing. We also finished the carbon verification and now are waiting on paperwork to have our full carbon credits. The Northwest Community Forest Coalition is planning our next Forum event.

Salmon Recovery Program - Christopher Ellings Ashley Von Essen

SO much going on. First they wanted to talk about yesterday. Chris toured McNeil Island to look at restoration potential. Went with staff of WDNr and WDFW. They have a restoration plan for the island. Have started to implement some things but are constrained by financial and the special commitment center. Prison system was mostly self-sufficient, with farms, and their own water system. They dammed the creeks to make ponds to raise the fresh water level in the wells and then that was pumped up to a reservoir. The supporting infrastructure is massive. The prison shut down in 2009 or so. Only thing left is the Special Commitment Center. All the infrastructure is still there. Before it was a prison it was an island community. Had sawmills etc. Now that the prison has reduced in size and the infrastructure is out there but not being used. The entire island is public owned with a combination of Department of Social and Human Services, Department of Corrections, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. McNeil is the single biggest opportunity for large scale restoration for Puget Sound shorelines. Really amazing tour. So much potential. Can rewild an entire massive island in Puget Sound. Obstacles are daunting but it's not impossible. It's a matter of political will and money. There is an opportunity for the Nisqually Indian Tribe and the Nisqually River Council to play a role in this. Miles and miles of anti-torpedo netting that was repurposed as bulkheads on McNeil. The island as a whole has been heavily impacted. The area is very important for juvenile Chum salmon.

3. Nisqually-Paradise Corridor Plan

Kevin Skerl and Rachel Collins, NPS MORA

The Nisqually-Paradise Corridor Planning Project has been ongoing for almost 2 years. This is an update on progress so far.

Introduction. Mount Rainier has a unique role in the NPS. 97% is designated wilderness. The rest is in the Mount Rainier historic landmark district. “Parkitecture”.

The Nisqually-Paradise is the most visited corridor in the park. Road was designed to keep you close to the wilderness with river and mountain views. The planning process will address issues related to visitor experience and resource protection throughout this corridor.

Plan Background - Rachel Collins Project Manager. Update from a year ago. There was a 30% increase in visitation between 2008 and 2018. The vast majority (70%) is July to September. Most use is concentrated in a small number of destinations including the Paradise Area. Key Issues - Quality of visitors experience from arriving to leaving the park. Traffic congestion leading up to the park entrances and on the Nisqually and Paradise Roads. There is a lot of congestion at parking lots. Quality of the experience at visitor facilities, scenic viewpoints, and along trails, damage to subalpine meadows, streamside vegetation and other natural resources. Protection of culturally significant transportation assets like roads, trails, and bridges.

Project goals. Reduce roadway congestion and improve the visitor experience. Appropriately disperse visitors throughout the many key destinations in the corridor and the park. Provide adequate trip planning and crowding condition information to visitors, Align public expectations with availability of resources or infrastructure. Enable visitors to easily navigate and find parking in the corridor. Restore and maintain trails and meadows in the corridor to desired conditions. Preserve and interpret the historic integrity of the cultural landscape and significant transportation features. Examine current and potential visitor opportunities and develop long-term strategies for providing safe access, connecting visitors to key visitor experiences, and managing use. Incorporate best practices for managing visitor use to protect resources and promote high-quality visitor experiences while meeting legal requirements. Using the Visitor Use Management (Interagency Use Management. Developing Desired Conditions, Figuring out Indicators, Setting Thresholds, Define Visitor Capacity.

What they heard last summer: Entrance Station queues, roadway and parking lot congestion, impacts to alpine meadows and other resources, crowded visitor experience, lack of facilities and services, staffing levels.

Strategies: improvements to entrance stations and other facilities, timed entry/reservations, visitor capacity, education and enforcement, visitor dispersal, shuttles.

Over 750 letters have been received that provided comments and ideas. They have been very thoughtful and have depth.

Potential Strategies - Need to be effective, desirable and feasible. Timed entry for corridors, parking lot reservations Trip Planning strategies. Improve visitor orientation and information outside the park. Add an additional gate at cougar rock to have the option to open the road segment between Longmire and Cougar rock on days when the road to paradise does not open. Expand camping season at Cougar Rock. Improve trails and directional signage. Redesignate parking areas for different uses. Westside Road restoration is a possibility. Shuttles from Cougar Rock to the Paradise and Paradise Loops. Require a significant increase in operating costs.

Next steps - refine the strategies, conduct analysis, and draft a plan. Hold public meetings and civic engagement events, finalize the plan.

4. Thurston County Habitat Conservation Plan

Christina Chaput, Thurston County

Why an HCP - Difficult to get permitting with different rules for different agencies.

Covered species - Oregon vesper sparrow, Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly, Oregon Spotted Frog, Mazama Pocket Gopher. Covers most development except for mining.

Permitting process - an application is submitted, the applicant determines the acres of impact pays mitigation fee, County stays ahead of impacts, county uses fees to create a Conservation Land System or applicant pursues their own HCP with the federal government.

Conservation program - minimize impacts, protect and enhance and maintain new reserves, enhance and maintain existing reserves, secure and maintain working land easements.

Conservation land system will be implemented in priority areas and reserve priority areas.

The Conservation Land Area will target pocket gopher habitat and other terrestrial species lands and Oregon spotted frog areas. Total acres needed is 3,468 acres. This will be phased in with 2 year goals and 30 year goals. They are working hard to find willing sellers. Lands will be professionally managed. Moves away from onsite mitigation.

Mitigation credits will be given on a sliding scale with less credits on areas with no management on less preferred soils, no gophers, more credits on areas with some management on more preferred soils with gophers within 650 feet and the most credits on areas with full management on more preferred soil with gophers present.

Habitat Calculation Tool is used to determine the percent of optimal conditions. Thurston County is ready for uncertainties. Adaptable and responsive to climate change. If new species are listed they will need to be addressed separately. Timeline - started in 2014. Have reached the EIS part of the process. The Board of County Commissioners review and adoption is expected in the second quarter of 2022. Visit ThurstonHCP.org

5. Thurston County Shoreline Master Plan

Andrew Deffobis, Thurston County

Land-use & Zoning regulations for County Shorelines. Shoreline Master Plans have been in use since 1971. They contain both policies and regulations to protect and provide access to and use of the shorelines. Goals of the Thurston County Shoreline Master Plan update, Is to protect shorelines, protect the public from hazards, provide flexibility for landowners, enable public access and water dependent uses, meet requirements in the law that have changed since the 1991 plan (30 years). This will be done through an open public process.

The Shoreline Master Plan applies to all marine waters, which includes 108 linear miles of shoreline, lakes greater than 20 acres, which is approximately 132 miles of shoreline across 38 lakes, and streams with flow greater than 20cfs. It also applies to associated wetlands and floodplains. Critical areas within shoreline jurisdictions and their buffers and shorelands associated with shorelines.

Process to date includes inventory and characterization of shoreline environment designations, work sessions with stakeholder committees, planning commission review of the current Shoreline Master Plan, and a virtual open house. There is a public hearing upcoming on Oct 20th 2021. Written public comment period open until October 22, 2021.

Inventory and Characterization - gathers existing data on watershed and shoreline conditions, characterizes ecosystem wide process and shoreline ecological function, provides a baseline to update shoreline environment designations, goals policies and regulations. Shoreline Environment Designation report builds on the Inventory and characterization. Thurston County proposes to use five designations from ecology's menu. Shoreline residential, rural conservancy, urban conservation, and natural aquatic.

There was an overview of the sections of the document which is available to view in the presentation.

What's changing? Mapped shoreline jurisdiction has been updated. There are proposed changes to buffers and designations - options exist for a range of buffer sizes, increased flexibility and options for the public, and then updates to comply with current state law. All permitting for critical areas in Shoreline Master Plan jurisdiction will be conducted through Shoreline Master Plan, the County will monitor no net loss at project and permit level.

Areas of focus - Shoreline Environment Designations and Buffers, nonconforming structures and uses, aquaculture, rules for lakes vs other shoreline types, shoreline residential areas/private property rights, no net loss of ecological function. Draft options have been created in various areas for public comment.

Next steps - There will be a planning commission public hearing, planning commission work sessions and recommendations, Board of County Commissioners review, then a Board of County Commissioners public hearing and work sessions. Board of County Commissioners adoption, Department of Ecology review and approval.

6. For the Good of the Order

Tomorrow is Puget Sound Recovery Day. Pierce Conservation District is doing a rain garden in Tacoma and a couple other plantings in Pierce County. betterground.org/ord/

Nisqually Reach Nature Center is still looking to hire an education director and a caretaker at the site. Upgrades are still going on. The new toilet was just installed. Paving is upcoming starting on the 25th through November 5th. There will be a full closure from the 31st of October to November 5th. The Nisqually Reach Nature Center was broken into a couple days ago. Nothing was really stolen, just from a person who had a psychotic break. Windows were broken.

The 2021 Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant round went on without a hitch. All 4 projects were approved. New grant round starts immediately. This round has up to \$1.5 million available

The Nisqually Indian Tribe's Charitable grants program is currently open.

Olympia is hiring a stormwater engineer.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:53pm.

*Next meeting: Friday, November 19, 2021
Online*