



Meeting Minutes
Nisqually River Council Meeting
May 21, 2021
Online Meeting

Attendees:

NRC Members:

Glynnis Nakai – BfJNNWR
Dan Calvert – JBLM Sentinel Landscapes
David Troutt, Chair – NIT
Roger Andrascik – NSS

Michael Steadman – Lacey City Council
Gary Edwards – Thurston County
Commissioner
Amy Cruver – Pierce County Council

CAC:

Lois Ward
Paula Holroyde
Howard Glastetter

Yanah Cook
Ed Kenney
Phyllis Farrell

Guests:

Daniel Hull - NRNC
Ashley Von Essen – NIT
Mike Noone – ECY
Jana Brock – NTPS
Todd Tatum – State Parks
Brian Yearout – State Parks
Christopher Ellings - NIT
Brian Hess – Yelm Community Garden
Darrin Masters - WDFW
Dee Dee Korsikas-Fogg – WDNR
Etsuko Reistroffer - NSS
Jesse Barham – City of Olympia
John Hayes – MRI at Pack Forest

Sela Kalama – NIT
Shannon Shula – Thurston County
Terry Kaminski – City of Yelm
Nora White – TCD
Heidi Smith – Bounty for Families
Dixie Reimer - NTPS
Lisa Breckenridge – NIT
Janet Shonk – State Parks
Bob Droll – Landscape Architect
Jihan Grettenberger – LOTT
Hattie Osborne – Pacific Education Institute
Jeff Zahir
Jeff Barney – Pierce County

Staff:

Sheila Wilson – NREP
Julia Fregonara – NREP
Joanne Park - NRC

Maya Nabipoor - NRF
Justin Hall - NRF
Lloyd Fetterly – NLT
Jeanette Dorner – NLT

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

David called the meeting to order at 9:01am. Last month's minutes were approved. This is Joanne's first NRC meeting, welcomes exchanged.

2. Committee Reports and Updates

Advisory Committee Reports:

CAC Report – Phyllis Farrell

Updates from the last CAC meeting were shared. The CAC heard about the multiple moving parts to the Sequatchew Creek Restoration Plan and learned about the new community forest purchases. Howard attended a hearing on Tuesday to learn more about the asphalt pile in Nisqually Valley and believes there needs to be best testing done to ensure it is not contaminating the groundwater. Several CAC members submitted comments suggesting the storage pile be tested for chemicals. There was also a discussion about a timeline for in-person meetings.

Chair Report – David Troutt

There was a special mention of Andrew Barkis who represents the Upper Nisqually Watershed. He has worked hard to secure a budget for the design alternatives and costwork for a transportation project for I-5. The landfill in Eatonville was used by Pierce County and the town of Eatonville through the 1980s. It was a municipal landfill, which means there is a fair amount of municipal and industrial waste there. There have been a number of springs that emerged through the landfill and it is eroding away at the landfill cap. There has been some water quality testing to test for potential water quality issues. There are a lot of unknowns so they are just trying to stay ahead of any issues that would potentially arise. They are hoping to find resources with the Department of Ecology for alternatives to the landfill issue in Eatonville. In partnership with the town of Eatonville and Weyerhaeuser, they will be issuing funds and hiring consultants to look at alternatives to take a look at the Eatonville landfill in the coming weeks. They are in line for the next budget for the next construction request. By 2025, there should hopefully be a permanent project in place to replace the landfill. Willy Frank was recently elected chair of Nisqually Indian Tribe. KBTC wants to do a special on water quality issues related to the salmon restoration issues and how it's affecting steelhead. David and Chris Ellings will meet Tom in June to discuss what will be featured in the show.

Staff Report – Joanne Park

Joanne has recently taken over for Emily as program coordinator. Joanne updated NRC about what she is learning and working on – coordinating NRC and CAC meetings and helping develop the Stream Stewards program. Most recently, she is working on updating the Ecology report with the Nisqually Watershed Planning Unit.

Thurston County Subarea Plan Report - Shannon Shula

They are in the policy making and public outreach phase as they are going over the agriculture reviews. Shoreway master plan is going through planning commission. There are lots of big projects. A question was asked about the SMP plan and how it affects the tributaries. A link was shared in the chat with more detailed information.

<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/planning/Pages/comp-plan-agriculture.aspx>

Allied Program Reports:

Nisqually Land Trust Report – Jeanette Dorner

There is a press release out for the latest acquisition in partnership with the tribe for Busy Wild Creek. This is especially exciting for NLT as it is their largest land deal yet. Over the course of 10 years, 4,000 acres have been acquired. However, in one deal, they were able to acquire 2,200 acres. They will be in the process of transferring ownership to the Community Forest as it will be managed by them. The Tribe will be working with the Community Forest to help manage the land. Streamflow Restoration Grant has helped pay for this acquisition.

Additionally, they are slightly over a week away from their big fundraising event, which will be a live auction. They are offering several items this year including pieces donated by Hanford McCloud such as cedar hats and hand carved paddle with the Nisqually Tribe inscribed. This will be a live online event that will take place throughout the week of June 6th. NLT has secured some great speakers for the event. Willy and Hanford will also be speaking with NLT. As NLT is always pushing for support, they personally invited everyone in the meeting to this event. More information can be found on the NLT website on how to get registered and sign up to attend the event.

Lastly, NLT has a brand new staff member that has joined their team. Ian Stoner is the new Land Steward and has gotten started right away. He has been a long time volunteer with Capital Land Trust. Although an Olympia native, Ian has traveled around the Western US when he did his schooling but has returned to the Pacific Northwest because he loves this area. He remembers his first stewardship opportunity in 3rd grade when he went to Ralph Monroe's place. NLT thanks Ralph for helping inspire him as it brought him back to join the team.

NREP – Sheila Wilson

There was a special shout out to Maya and Julia for working hard on the benthic programs. They worked with six different teachers, which actually represent 11 different events. They have also been working with North Thurston to create some great field experiences for their students. They are working with NREP and South Sound Green to learn about the salmon life cycle and work in the community garden. The No Child Left Inside program is alive again.

Ten spots have been filled for an upcoming horseback riding clinic. NREP had the opportunity to present for the Salmon Recovery Conference as well and it was a great event. They are also waiting to hear back about a few different grants and expecting to hear back very soon. Americorps applications have been completed and submitted. There are two more professional development retreats for teachers coming up. The Summer Institute is coming up at the end of June and the theme is "Waters That Connect Us". There will also be lessons for kids with oyster dissections and that will wrap up the school year.

Nisqually River Foundation – Justin Hall

Justin is working closely with Mike Noone for the Streamflow Grant. Direct Deposit is finally back after several calls with Quickbooks. There is a chance for significant drought

across Washington, particularly Southern Washington. Justin will pass along information to Joanne about having someone present on this drought forecast in Washington State. There is a place just off of I-5 that is a great location for an official viewpoint. It is uncertain who owns this piece of property. Part of the slope has been pulled back. Pierce County has been spoken to about turning this location into a viewpoint. Justin plans to talk to Lakeside about putting down asphalt and signage there. Additionally, there is an artist who builds enormous trolls made of recycled material as art installations. It was pitched to possibly connect with this artist to install a troll in the Nisqually Watershed.

Community Forest – Justin Hall

There have been meetings with the Tribe to have the Community Forest take over management for the tribal property that was recently acquired. They are working with the Tribe to put together an initial management plan for a Pierce County requirement. This will be worked in the next couple of weeks. Currently, they are waiting for the 140% snowpack to melt as they can only access from the South end.

Salmon Recovery Program – Christopher Ellings

As part of their effort to explore non-lethal means to discourage harbor seals from eating endangered steelhead salmon in the Nisqually Estuary, a technology called Targeted Acoustic Startle (TAS) has been successfully utilized. This has been made possible due to the long track record of monitoring and research of steelhead and how they survive through the Nisqually Delta. From this work, they found that harbor seals impair the ability of salmon to enter the Sound. They have been exploring new ways to prevent this and came upon this technology. It is especially great, as it does not impact the environment. There is currently a device in the estuary and it will be kept on or off at varying times to track how it affects salmon recovery. There will also be observers watching harbor seals. This technology could potentially help fish populations to realize their productivity and also benefit how many return as adults. This may be a short-term solution to help realize the gains they are making in freshwater. Glynnis was especially thanked for being able to embrace this recovery idea and supporting the Tribe's mission to pilot this project. There was a comment made about potentially reengaging tribal hunting of harbor seals to help with salmon recovery as a supplement to the TAS project. A question was asked about anyone observing the South Sound orcas when the anti-pinniped bleeps go off. They would have to be in the river for them to hear it. They see more in-river mortality of steelhead when the orcas are around because the seals are being pushed into rivers and bays. There is less mortality when they get into Puget Sound proper.

They are also trying to get a pilot stormwater treatment unit installed in Highway 7 in Ohop Valley. The unit is a small 8x12 containment unit that would funnel stormwater coming off this highway. Water would filter through compost media then through a finishing layer, which would remove phosphorus. The filtered water would then be returned back to the environment. Highway 7 is a good place to pilot this technology. This project is paving a way to explore new technology and opens the opportunity to develop a good partnership with the Department of Transportation and the Department of Ecology.

A discussion sparked from this update about the impacts of tires on salmon. Tires have a chemical additive that break down ozone and particularly affects Coho Salmon. There is a presentation available that is very informative on this issue but it was not mentioned where to find it. It was agreed that a meeting should be set up about the monitoring protocols for water quality related to this issue. Ed Kenney and others were thanked for his monitoring of this issue as well.

3. Yelm Community Garden (Recorded)

Nora White, Thurston Conservation District

This project originated on the Thurston Conservation District end because of an urban agriculture conservation initiative grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts in March 2020. In partnership with Bounty for Families, the work with the Yelm Community Garden solidified over the course of a year. They looked at sites to get started on this project and was made entirely possible because of several partnerships. The community garden is located in Yelm City Park on the eastside of the park. The City of Yelm has shown their support by offering this site as well as their irrigation to help make the garden possible. They have also made ADA accessible pathways that have been drawn into their plan. GRuB helped build the garden beds and entranceways for the garden. They have worked closely with Yelm High School on education programming. Visitors have the opportunity to watch the garden grow and can take home seeds from the seed library to plant their own garden at home. Several volunteers and families came together to help build this garden starting in January. High school students came out to help with the pathways and planting. They also partnered with the Nisqually Tribe Community Garden who donated \$12,000 to help make accessible pathways to the garden. Since planting, there have been lots of vegetables growing and thriving in the garden.

Heidi Smith, Bounty for Families

A garden shed was constructed to house tools and store materials for community events. Bounty for Families (BFF) has several programs that work with families and children. The Power of Produce (PoP) Kids Club program introduces kids at a critical age to basic nutrition and exposes them to new fruits and vegetables. This program allows kids to get a chance to interact with farmers and learn about where their food comes from. Additionally, there are several studies that have found that between the ages 5 and 12 is when children make their critical food preferences. Introducing food and vegetables between ages 5 and 12 helps set them up for their taste preferences for life. When finances are tight, organic produce is not a priority for families and this program helps them make this introduction to their kids. The PoP program works closely with community partners like GRuB and Yelm FFA Club. Yelm FFA Club is a critical partner as they come out 4-5 times during the market season to engage kids in the PoP program.

There was a question about how the Yelm Community Garden is connected to BFF. The garden will be used for classes and programs like the ones mentioned above. For example, next month, they are planning to create a cooking class where students have the opportunity to learn about what foods they can make with the things they can find in the garden.

Photos showing the progress of the garden starting with the empty space before anything was planted, their vision, and what it looks like currently were shared. They particularly thanked Brian Hess who has been a great supporter of this project and its programs.

There was a question about who contributed the soil for the garden beds. The soil was donated and nitrogen was added to ensure it was healthy. The original plan was to build 12 garden beds but because of increased lumber cost, they had to reduce the number to 10. NRC was thanked for allowing them to share about this exciting program. If anyone has questions or wants to connect with Thurston Conservation District, they can reach out directly to Nora White at nwhite@thurstoncd.com or (360) 999-3727.

4. North Thurston Public Schools Field STEM Initiative (Recorded)

Jana Brock, North Thurston Public Schools

Science instructional coaches for North Thurston Public Schools (NTPS) worked towards every student in the district having field science experience. Jana is an elementary science teacher and her job is to support staff including special education faculty with STEM instruction. All students participate in pre-trip and post-trip lessons and write about their experiences in their student journals. These experiences vary for each grade level and adjusted for different learning abilities.

Preschool teachers use the materials in the classroom around STEM concepts and vocabulary review from the Lacey STEM Fair. Their special education program, called SCALS, targets students on the autism spectrum with individual learning needs. This STEM field study takes place at the BFJNNWR, as it is ADA accessible, has ample parking for busses, and enough space to run different rotations simultaneously. Lower elementary programs (pre-K, Life Skills/SCALS [autistic program], K-1st, and 2nd grade) involve observations of plants and animals, scientific illustrations, and scavenger hunts. Upper elementary programs are a little more advanced in their activities. The 3rd grade program look at adaptations – different traits that help organisms survive.

The 4th and 5th grade program are the newest programs. NREP played a significant role as they helped develop these programs and facilitate them. They will be working closely with students to increase interest and awareness of STEM careers. This is done through STEM Field Studies to help deepen their understanding and social-emotional connections. All STEM Field Study experiences include materials like pre-trip and post-trip lessons, tips and tricks page, and field guide. They are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core State Standards, Social Studies, and Social-Emotional Standards. Fourth grade students participate in several activities including looking at the salmon life cycle through a dissection, benthic bingo, stories about the cultural center, and learn about plant-based medicine. Fifth grade students explore the watershed through their STEM Field Study. This program is built on prior knowledge where students learn and see how human, animals, water, and ecosystems are all connected. Some students will participate in additional water quality testing and attend the Student GREEN Congress. There are also several connections made to middle and high school to help them make career connections to STEM

fields. NTPS wants to make a difference to ensure all students are exposed to STEM opportunities. Jana provided a [link](#) to a document with more information.

There was a question about their program having any connections to the Wa He Lut community. They do provide professional development opportunities for them if they are interested. However, they have not been able to connect with anyone to attend these STEM field studies. NRF will be working on replicating the model that Jana shared to make those connections to the Wa He Lut tribe in the future.

5. Nisqually State Park Update (Recorded)

Brian Yearout, Washington State Parks

Todd Tatum, Washington State Parks

Todd recognized staff members that play a role in this large project at Nisqually State Park. The project is still in progress as they are at a 30% design currently. This means they are relatively early in the process of getting the detailed design specifications done.

To give meeting attendees some background on the project, the planning history was discussed. Along the Nisqually River and just outside the town of Eatonville, Nisqually State Park lies within Ohop Creek, Nisqually River, and Mashel River. A map was displayed to show where the boundaries of the park lie and included neighboring lands owned and managed by Tacoma Power, Weyerhaeuser, UW Pack Forest, Nisqually Tribe, and Nisqually Land Trust. The key for envisioning their work on this project is acknowledgement of the importance of the land with respect to salmon habitat and tribal history.

Collaboration between Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) and the Nisqually Tribe go back a long time. They worked really hard on the master planning and established their first MOU in 2014, which provided the structure for planning. The first trailhead facility in the park entrance was also a collaborative effort. Most recently, the Governor put money towards a predesign and then more towards the designer permit. This kicked off the planning and working relationship with the Nisqually Tribe. Before moving forward with construction, they needed to figure out how they would work together and how they would structure their decision-making. This led to an MOU in 2020, which provided the structure for work planning, decision-making framework, and reiterates the commitment to the co-management framework with the park.

There are multiple phases to how they are envisioning the construction pieces of the park. Supplemental funds were requested to cover a maintenance structure to store tools and materials to help maintain the park. Phase 1 covers the design and permitting of all project elements. Phase 2 covers the park entry near the roundabout, staff residence, and an administration building. Additionally, this covers basic amenities to the park such as water and power service. Phase 3 includes an RV dump station, a welcome station, campgrounds with some cabins for a more modern camping experience, the Mashel River overlook, and the remainder of the maintenance building. Phases 4 to 6 include day use improvements. The master plan had a village center concept for the day use area including interpretation, concessionaires, and other day use facilities.

As they were going through the planning process, they knew that protecting and restoring the property was going to be a priority in order to improve the landscape. They also knew early on that blocking off an area was not going to stop the public from accessing the area and it would also be counterproductive for education. However, they felt it was critical to tailor the visitor experience to allow for restoration and interpretation. They envision installation of fencing, well-defined trails, and boardwalks to provide a more natural experience for visitors. This would also allow attractive areas for viewing such as salmon habitat or spawning.

Currently, they are in phase 2 and at 30% design. The administrative building is one of the elements of the current phase. There will be a trailhead and will be a place where people can congregate before they head to the main attractions of the park. The building allows for meetings and an area where visitors can be greeted and oriented in person. The architectural design invokes a river flowing so people will move from the parking lot, encounter kiosks, and have time to congregate before doing group tours or accessing the trail down to the Nisqually River. For managed access, they will also be installing an electric slide gate. For those who have ADA needs, there will be ADA accessible pathways for those with special needs or disabilities to experience the river as well. The design of the new administrative building and the trails were presented in detail such as potential designs for the gate, the entrance design to the trail, and the location of the trail. There will be several interpretive opportunities along the trail and the overlooks are cantilevered to allow visitors to view the water without degrading the embankments. They envision programming taking place in the overlooks. Additionally, they will be building in bioretention for stormwater treatment by capturing runoff before it enters the watershed. The entry redesign is a pretty important component of this phase as their end goal is to have artwork and continue the roundabout all the way through the park.

Phase 2 was their agency's single largest line item request in their history and it was fully funded in this last legislative session, which says a lot about the Governor's support of this project. Phase 3 focuses mostly on camping and is approximately a \$21 million ask. There was \$383,000 funded in this last legislative session for the pre-design of the village center and day use area. There is a lot of potential here to connect to their community by having a space to have larger community events.

There is also a lot of restoration work happening in the park such as weed control. They want the environment to get on the right path to recovery. The old Eatonville dumpsite is an issue that has been a concern for the park for many years. Restoration work allows for higher confidence in the project that it will continue to be sustained for many years.

There was a time for questions and comments. Lisa was called upon to share a few words. She talked about the tremendous amount of work that so many individuals have accomplished as well as the collaboration between state parks management and tribal land management. There is a lot of hard work and commitment to the vision they all share for this site. This site is incredibly unique for the tribe because of its history such as the historic village and the site of the Mashel Massacre. There was much enthusiasm and excitement for

the park because of the combined effort among several agencies and individuals to make it happen and see how far it has come since they initially discussed plans.

There was a comment about how it seems that with the ownership map that was presented that perhaps they should think about setting up some property owner coordination meetings. As each individual is planning and managing the natural resources on our properties, it is important they are being intentional about how those feed into one other. There is great interest in the surrounding community about what is going on with this new influx of funding. There was a question asking about any plans to brief the public about the park. There is not anything on the schedule as of now. However, the predesign for the day-use facilities will involve public feedback. They are hoping to put something on the schedule within the next year.

There was a question about the flow of the river as the major historic data comes from the USGS site from McKenna, which is way downstream. It was asked if it was possible to do any flow monitoring in the park. This would not be out of the realm of possibility. It would be useful for interpretation and understanding. In terms of flow, there are gauges in the Mashel and in the Ohop. The McKenna gauge serves as the main stem for both. As restoration projects are developed for the lower Mashel, there will be a significant monitoring component associated with that. This will include aerial photography. Additionally, anything that gets placed in and near the flood plain should be things that we recognize will one day end up in the river so those materials will be safe for the environment.

There was a comment in the chat from Ed Kenney:

It's useful to know that there used to be two bridges across the Nisqually River, one at the confluence of the Mashel and the other near the confluence with Powell Creek. These two bridges provided wonderful access for boaters but they also provided too much access for thoughtless campers and partiers.

These exact issues have been discussed to find a balance between managing access to provide opportunities to see and experience the Nisqually River but not enough access to make sure people are not loving it to death. The master plan had a discussion of having high bridges there that would not impede the flow of the river. As they work through the timeline of the park design, they want to have more constructive conversations about these issues to ensure they are not picking up the mess a decade from now.

The salmon recovery program is looking at the Mashel bridge and the one across the Nisqually and the potential impediments to salmon in the river. Additionally, there is agreement from State Parks and Pack Forest to put together a restoration plan for the lower Mashel reach including the existing bridge in the lower Mashel.

6. For the Good of the Order

Daniel updated NRC about some updates with NRNC. There is an upcoming fundraiser event that will take place in-person on August 28th – it is their annual gala. Additionally, NRNC

will be getting updates from WDFW about beach access. It appears they will be able to keep two pilings, which will allow their aquarium to continue running.

David Troutt mentioned that a group looking to find candidates for the Port of Olympia commissioner, who has a strong environmental background, has approached him. If anyone is interested in running, there is an opportunity. This group will support interested parties with campaigning and other needs. It was clarified that Nisqually River Council does not advocate for any particular elected official but each individual is able to do so. It was noted in the chat that Jesse Simmons is an environmental advocate who is running for this position.

There was a link in the chat for more information about the upcoming live auction event for Nisqually Land Trust.

7. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:48am.

*Next meeting: Friday, June 18, 2021
Online*