

# **NISQUALLY COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

## **Meeting Notes**

**June 2, 2010**

### **Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge**

**Attendees:** Andrew Carey, Ryan Mello, Robert Bass, Pam Painter, Bill St. Jean, George Walter, Joe Kane, Nicole Hill, David Troutt, Justin Hall, Jean Schaffer, Kirk Hanson, Paula Swedeen, Diane Marcus-Jones, Evan Smith, Nick Bond, Ann Welz, Jack Thorne, Sarah Scott, Art Tasker, Mark Thibo, Steve Pruitt, Bryan Bowden

#### **Welcome, Introductions and Project Background**

Joe Kane welcomed everyone, facilitated introductions and provided background information about the emergence of the 'community forest' idea and how the Nisqually Land Trust (NLT) decided to pursue the feasibility of a community forest in the Nisqually Watershed. The idea would be to acquire a large tract of forest land (i.e., 20 to 30 thousand acres), most likely from a private timber company, and then set up a trust, non-profit organization, or municipal entity to manage the forest for multiple community benefits. Revenue generated from the sale of forest products and services would pay for the cost of forest management and operations. A planning grant has been awarded to the NLT from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program of the National Park Service.

#### **Review Agenda/RTCA Planning Assistance**

Bryan Bowden reviewed the agenda and provided an overview of the RTCA program (for more information go to: [www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)).

#### **Draft Project Timeline**

Bryan presented a draft project timeline for group review and discussion. The overall goal is to produce a business plan (with advice and counsel from the Advisory Committee) to explore the feasibility of establishing and operating a community forest in the Nisqually Watershed. Draft chapters of the business plan will be produced as the project moves through its various stages. These will include the following:

- Vision and Goals
- Forest Resources
- Products and Services
- Opportunities for Income
- Operation and Maintenance
- Organizational Structure

- Budget, Finance and Taxes

The draft project timeline also included a public outreach component that included the following:

- Meetings/consultation with the advisory committee
- Newsletters – total of three newsletters produced in an electronic (pdf) format
- Two public meetings (perhaps duplicated in two locations to encourage more participation)
- Create display materials and PowerPoint presentations for public meetings

An advisory committee member commented that we should seek endorsements for the plan from local units of government and partners when finished.

### **Roles and Responsibilities – Planning Team and Advisory Committee**

- The project will be managed by a small ‘*Planning Team*’ whose members are Joe Kane, Justin Hall, Kirk Hanson, and Bryan Bowden. The Planning Team consists of the worker bees that will do the work of the project (e.g., plan and facilitate meetings, writing, research, etc.).
- The role of the ‘*Advisory Committee*’ is to provide on-going advice, direction, and critique to the Planning Team about the project, draft documents and other products until the feasibility study is complete. The Planning Team will meet with the Advisory Committee on a regular basis for this purpose.

### **Discussion and Brainstorming – Vision & Goals**

Bryan led a brainstorming discussion to gather initial thoughts and ideas from the advisory committee about their vision and goals for the project. Following are the flip chart notes from that discussion:

VISION:

- Locally owned and managed
- Not-for-profit
- Managed for ‘suite’ of eco-services forest can provide (i.e., employment, timber products, habitat)
- Permanently protected (development rights)
- 20 years from now I will say I had no idea when we started about how much it turned out to be

- BIG DEAL
- People in community feel involved and integrated (personal ownership)
- Model for sustainable forest practices
- Forest provides diversity of jobs from timber harvesting to habitat management to tourism and recreation
- Diversification – insulated from economic cycles and disasters
- Self-sustaining enterprise
- Thriving business that is accepted/embraced by community
- Managed for resilience in face of climate change (invasive species, forest pests, etc)
- Sustained yield calculation (reliable stream of products)
- Marketplace incorporating products from variety of local markets
- Aesthetics and protection of watershed
- Balance (harmony) between goals of management and desires of local community
- Provide support for other groups in watershed
- Traditional Native American hunting and gathering
- Supports larger conservation goals of the watershed
- Portability
- Profits ‘returned’ to the community – principle of re-investment
- Public awareness of benefits and return they are receiving
- Assign value to eco-system services
- Caution about notion of being a ‘model’
- Create jobs/housing balance – jobs near where people live
- Some areas managed through natural selection (harvest) – (remove trees that would be naturally selected out)
- Community has a say about how forest is managed
- Consider ‘value added’ opportunities for forest products (e.g., local markets)

- FSC Certified (3<sup>rd</sup> party certification)
- Youth training opportunities
- Partner in local conservation education
- Forest is a classroom for our children and participates in adjacent programs and functions
- Safe respectful public access and recreation opportunities

#### GOALS:

- Offer competitive investment opportunity (investments give return in value to local community) – local stock offering
- Contribute to economic, social and environmental sustainability of watershed
- Contiguous land bases – set acres goal informed by business model
- Feasibility study considering multiple alternatives – see what people would support
- Community forest is a community institution people can invest in
- People feel their voices and opinions were heard and considered
- Measurable/Accountability
- Convergence – work towards each goal at appropriate pace
- What do we want to do and how will we know when we get there
- Keep number of goals reasonable
- What are the economic goals? How do you maintain a civil society? What are the environmental goals? Etc.
- Retain working forested landscapes
- Financial sustainability, both short and long term (e.g., forest pays for its maintenance costs in xxx years)
- Create a brand for forest products
- May have to initially prioritize some goals over others
- Prioritize and educate so everyone sees the road map
- Short term sacrifice for long term goals

- Offer different levels of investment
- Maintain diverse investment portfolio
- Solid public use and recreation plans
- Good financial planning – set up to minimize risk
- Increase value of eco-system services & environmental values over time
- Define ‘community’. What is difference between community forest and public forest? Whom served and who can participate?
- Honor heritage – traditional cedar products
- Realistic – not every acre suitable for every purpose
- Look at Upper Puyallup and Upper Nisqually plans for ideas

### **Geographic Area of Consideration**

Joe Kane showed a map of the Upper Nisqually watershed that was prepared by Jennifer Cutler (GIS Program Manager, Nisqually Tribe Department of Natural Resources). Joe said his initial thinking is to target an area of approximately 20 to 30 thousand acres in the Upper Mashel watershed east of the Town of Eatonville. Advisory committee members recommended the base map be modified to show current forest ownership of large landowners (e.g., Hancock, Manke, Weyerhaeuser and Pack Forest)

Bryan then asked advisory committee members for their initial thoughts about the possible size and location of the proposed community forest. The advisory committee strongly recommended holding off any discussions about the size and location of the proposed forest until the project is much further along and has evaluated various opportunities and constraints. There was consensus that the community forest should be located entirely within the Nisqually watershed. In addition the advisory committee suggested the possibility that the community forest could consist of three large, but separate, tracts in the Upper Mashel, Mineral Lake, and Weyerhaeuser areas.

### **Public Outreach**

Bryan referenced the draft project timeline (discussed earlier) and discussed the public outreach components in more detail.

*Press Release:* The planning team will prepare and distribute a press release announcing the project and distribute it to major news outlets in the area.

*Newsletters:* Three newsletters will be produced in an electronic (pdf) format. There is no budget for printing and postage. These newsletters will be developed at the following times in the project:

- At the beginning to inform the public about the project, who is involved, and how they can stay informed and/or provide input to the process;
- At the mid-way point when all substantial information has been gathered and discussed, but prior to writing the draft feasibility study. This newsletter will precede the first public meeting (see below);
- When the draft feasibility study is released for public review and comment. This newsletter will precede the second public meeting (see below)

Advisory committee members will be encouraged to forward the newsletters along to their own mailing lists and/or other people they think would be interested in the project. Most advisory committee members felt this was a good way to distribute news of the project.

*Public Meetings:* Two public meetings will be held at the following times in the project:

- At the mid-way point to inform the public about all the information that has been gathered and discussed. This will be an open house style meeting and will include stations organized around the following topics: vision and goals; forest resources; products and services; opportunities for income; operation and maintenance; organizational structure; and budget, finance, and taxes.
- Near the end when the draft feasibility study is ready for public review and comment. This will be a presentation style meeting in which the planning team will present a power point presentation outlining the major content of the draft feasibility study. This meeting will officially kick-off the 30-day public review and comment period.

*Project Website:* A website will be developed as part of the project sometime in September or October when an AmeriCorps staff person begins work for the Nisqually Land Trust.

### **Future Advisory Committee Meetings**

Advisory committee members concurred that the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge is a good location for future meetings due to its proximity to the freeway. Many would prefer an earlier start time, especially those coming from Seattle and/or Portland. Bryan said the planning team will schedule the next meeting from 12:30 to 2:30 to see how that works. Bryan will also look into the potential of offering a toll free call-in number for people who can't attend future meetings in person.

The date for the next meeting has not yet been scheduled. It will be scheduled after the planning team completes its work assignments (i.e. press release, newsletter, base map, and draft vision & goals statement).