

NISQUALLY COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Nisqually Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

Attendees:

Bryan Bowden, Mount Rainier National Park

Paula Swedeen – Pacific Forest Trust

Chris Eades – Hancock Forest Management

Judy Scavone – Mount Tahoma Trails Association

Pam Painter – Mount Rainier Visitors Association

Sarah Scott – Upper Nisqually Community Forum

Diane Marcus Jones – Pierce County Planning and Land Services

Nicole Hill – Nisqually Land Trust

Ashley Van Essen – Nisqually River Council

Jean Shaffer – Nisqually River Council, Forester

Deborah Crosetto – Citizen Advisory Committee

Paul Crosetto – Environmental Advisory Committee, Citizen Advisory Committee

Steve Pruitt – West Rainier Economic Initiative

Kirk Hanson – Northwest Natural Resource Group

Justin Hall – Nisqually River Foundation/Nisqually River Council

Nick Bond – Town of Eatonville

George Walter – Nisqually Tribe

Joe Kane – Nisqually Land Trust

Charly Kearns – Nisqually Land Trust

Evan Smith – The Conservation Fund

Welcome/Introductions/Review Agenda

Joe Kane welcomed everyone and facilitated introductions. Bryan Bowden reviewed the agenda.

Presentation/Discussion – Revised Draft Vision and Goals Statement

Joe Kane distributed a copy of the most recent ‘Draft Vision Statement’ and explained it was revised by the planning team based on the discussion of the first draft that was presented at the September 21st meeting. The text was revised to delete the reference to ‘ownership’ of the forest ‘by the people’ to text that envisions ‘forest management for the benefit of the people of the Nisqually Watershed’. In addition the phrase “...to provide a range of community benefits, including jobs, recreation, education, clean and plentiful water, and protected wildlife habitat” was deleted because it was considered to be redundant to the notion of managing the forest for “...ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable...” purposes.

The draft vision statement currently reads as follows:

The Nisqually Community Forest is an ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable forest managed for the benefit of the people of the Nisqually Watershed.

Goal statements will be drafted and presented at a future meeting. These statements will incorporate the items deleted from the September version (i.e., jobs, recreation, education, clean and plentiful water, and protected wildlife habitat).

Presentation/Discussion - Draft Forest Resources Characterization

Bryan Bowden distributed a copy of the draft 'Forest Resources Characterization' document that was drafted by Kirk Hanson and him. He said the document was written with the whole watershed in mind, but that large tracts of forest land are mostly located in the upper Nisqually. In general, the draft was well received but advisory committee members requested the following edits:

- Add information about soil types to the geology section
- Edit the geology section to more accurately describe the leading edge of the Vashon ice sheet and the formation of the Ohop valley
- Provide a definition of the Upper Nisqually – possibly east of Ohop Creek on the north side of the Nisqually and east of Powell Creek on the south side
- Provide watershed acreage figures for various categories (i.e., total acreage in Upper Nisqually, acreage in forestry, etc.)
- Need to edit the language characterizing large private timber company management of forest holdings as plantation forests to produce one product.
- Bats are not birds
- Add information about rare habitat types to the section on rare, threatened, and endangered wildlife
- In the scenery section, change ocean vistas to Puget Sound vistas
- Add a section characterizing cultural/historical resources (i.e., recreation, tourism, pre-historic and historic human use, hydro-power, etc)

Presentation/Discussion - Draft Forest Products and Services

Bryan Bowden distributed a copy of the draft 'Forest Products and Services' document that was drafted by Kirk Hanson and him. He said the main principle behind establishment of a community forest is its ability to sustain and pay for itself. This document is an attempt to generally describe the types of marketable products and services that could be derived from a forest in the Upper Nisqually watershed. In general, the draft was well received but advisory committee members requested the following edits:

- Add a 'specialty grade' for custom orders
- Edit language describing 'Export Grade' Douglas Fir in its reference to "plantation type forests" targeting overseas markets, and being bad for local mills and local economies (new language to be provided by Chris Eades)

- Add the cultural value of cedar to the description of Western Red Cedar
- Lump ‘white woods’ into one category including true firs and hemlock
- Edit language in ‘Saw Mill Cooperative’ to focus on high-end, finish products such as molding and trim. Even with niche markets, local saw mills will never be able to compete with large saw mills in milling dimensional lumber.
- Compare the saw mill cooperative idea to the apple growing cooperative in the Okanogan region
- Add ‘Christmas Trees’ and ‘Cultural Uses’ (i.e., cedar bark and bentwood boxes) to the Other Forest Products section
- Ecosystem Services:
 - Carbon credits and water quality credits CAN be stacked. Cannot bank wetland mitigation funding along with carbon credits or water quality credits.
 - Add Educational Opportunities – interpretive service/materials
 - Add Recreation services – hunting, hiking, fishing, etc

Discussion/Brainstorming - Land Attributes

Bryan led a brainstorming discussion on the subject of ‘land attributes’ to get people thinking about the specific characteristics we should be looking for when we go ‘shopping’ for land to include in the community forest. These characteristics will vary depending on the desired attribute we are looking for (similar to a family buying a new house or car). Following are flip chart notes from this brainstorming:

What are some different forest products that would suit different needs/markets?

- Douglas fir, grand fir, hemlock
- Red cedar, madrona
- Floral products
- Carbon sequestration market
- Water quality market
- Viewshed
- Recreation
- Eco-tourism

Douglas fir, Grand fir, Hemlock attributes:

- Forest health and stand condition – root rot?
- Mid/lower elevation forest
- Healthy, native seed stock
- Good soil tilth (low soil compaction, soil openness)
- Availability for acquisition
- Successional stage of stand – recently logged? reforestation and restoration potential
- Upfront costs and investments – needs and costs
- Largest contiguous tracts of land with infrastructure, good site class/index
- Accessibility
- Away from public view

Red Cedar, Madrona attributes:

- Lowlands, wet
- Lower price
- Presence of cedar worms
- Soil profile – susceptible to drought?
- Forest health, stand condition, soil tilth, successional stage, upfront costs

Viewshed Protection attributes:

- Views, quiet, non-motorized use.
- Adjacent to roads – main road corridor to Mount Rainier National Park
- Off-road destinations
- Prioritized views – based on risk of conversion
- Since forest will not likely be targeted to one single function, must coordinate various uses, so as not to diminish the other's value – plan harvests in locations that will minimize damage to forest's scenic value.
- Close in (presence of trees) and distant views
- Level of threat – what protection is afforded from existing regulations and land use

Recreation

- Family friendly, ADA accessible in front-country
- Access points
- Demonstration/education opportunities
- ¼ - ½ mile accessible trail with interpretation to lay out purpose and values of community forest.
- Promote “green recreation”
- Large, non-motorized access
- Ability to manage (vandalism, dumping, illegal harvest, etc.)
- Should complement other regional recreational opportunities – Nat'l Park, MTTA, mountain biking, etc.
- Coordination/integration between organizations

Next Steps

- Joe to research other community forest models and present at January meeting
- Close-in on forest products – assign values
- Start in on organizational structure – describe management entity
- Budget, taxes, business plan
- Next meeting in early January – to be determined by doodle poll