



Newsletter Nisqually Community Forest



Issue 1 of 3

Summer 2011

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Introduction and Background

The Nisqually Land Trust is initiating a project to produce a conceptual business model for a “Nisqually Community Forest” in the Upper Nisqually Watershed. The community forest would be owned by a trust, municipal entity, or nonprofit organization and managed to provide multiple and sustainable benefits, including forest products, employment, recreation, education, and conservation. The forest would likely encompass 20,000 to 30,000 acres.

The primary purpose of the project is to work through a process in which potential partners and stakeholders begin to define the forest. This will include the project mission, goals, and values; how best to determine what lands it should encompass; how to create a management authority; how to secure financing; and how to proceed to designing the forest and acquiring the land.

A potential core holding of the envisioned forest is already in place, in the form of the Nisqually Land Trust’s Mount Rainier Gateway Initiative, located near Ashford and the main entrance to Mount Rainier National Park. The Initiative currently includes two thousand acres of permanently protected forest and is likely to grow by another six hundred to one thousand acres by 2012.

The Initiative has enjoyed widespread support from local stakeholders, private timberland owners, and county, state, tribal, and federal partners, who together have helped raise \$10.6 million for habitat acquisition over the past four years. This network represents a natural foundation upon which to build a community forest and suggests it is an idea whose time has come in the Nisqually Watershed.

The Nisqually Land Trust

The Nisqually Land Trust was established in 1989 to acquire and manage critical lands to permanently protect the water, wildlife, natural areas, and scenic vistas of the Nisqually River watershed. To date the Land Trust has conserved and restored over 3,500 acres in the watershed.



Bringing Resources Together

To help facilitate development of the Plan, the Nisqually Land Trust applied for planning assistance from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service. The grant was approved and a citizen advisory committee was formed to help guide the planning process.

The first Advisory Committee meeting was held on June 2nd to begin the project. This newsletter describes the project timeline and benchmarks.

For further information contact Joe Kane, Executive Director, Nisqually Land Trust, at (360) 489-3400.

Our Process

The Nisqually Land Trust is just beginning the planning process. The ultimate goal is to develop a conceptual business model that determines the feasibility for a Community Forest and that reflects a community-wide vision for its management and implementation. The project has three stages as described below:

Stage 1 - Information Gathering and Analysis (fall 2011/winter 2012)

The first stage consists of developing, researching, analyzing, and processing information needed to complete the feasibility study. This will be performed for each of the following subjects: 1) Forest Resources; 2) Forest Products and Services; 3) Opportunities for Income; 4) Operations and Maintenance; 5) Organizational Structure; and 6) Budget, Financing, and Taxes. This stage will also include development of a Community Forest Vision and Goals statement in consultation with the advisory committee.

Stage 2 - Public Open House (spring 2012)

All of the information gathered in Stage I will be on display at a public 'open house' style meeting. The purpose of the Open House is to provide a public opportunity to informally review the information gathered to date and to discuss it one-on-one with members of the planning team and advisory committee.

Stage 3 - Draft and Final Plan Preparation (summer/fall 2012)

The final stage of the process will be the preparation of a draft document, circulation for formal public review and comment, and final plan production.

Public Involvement

A significant goal of this project is broad public involvement and everyone interested is encouraged to participate. Multiple opportunities will be provided for people to learn about the status of the project and/or provide input. The various elements of the public involvement component are:

Advisory Committee. An advisory committee of interested citizens and agencies has been formed to provide advice and to help with the project. The advisory committee serves as a link between the community and the Nisqually Land Trust. The members of the advisory committee are listed on the front of this newsletter.

Newsletter. This is the first of three newsletters. If you wish to be included on the mailing list please contact Joe Kane, (360) 489-3400 or jkane@nisquallylandtrust.org

Public Meetings. Two public meetings will be held to provide residents of the region an opportunity to learn about and give their feedback on the project. These will include the following:

Spring 2012. A public 'open house' will be held at a half-way point in the project (before a draft document is written) to display information gathered in Stage 1 and provide an opportunity for informal public review and comment of that information.

Fall 2012. The draft plan will be released for formal public review and comment. A public meeting will be held to discuss the draft plan and announce its availability for a 30-day public review/comment period. A powerpoint slide show will be provided at this meeting that summarizes the contents of the draft plan.

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