

# **NISQUALLY COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 12, 2012

12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Nisqually Wildlife Refuge Education Building

## **Attendees:**

Bryan Bowden – Mount Rainier National Park  
Nicole Hill – Nisqually Land Trust  
Jean Shaffer – Nisqually River Council, Forester  
Justin Hall – Nisqually River Foundation/Nisqually River Council  
Joe Kane – Nisqually Land Trust  
Charly Kearns – Nisqually Land Trust  
Owen Fairbank – Jefferson Land Trust  
Sarah Scott – Ashford, UNCF  
Pam Painter – MRVA  
Diane Marcus Jones – Pierce Co.  
Ryan Mello – Pierce Conservation District  
Cris Peck – NLT  
Paula Swedeen - Pacific Forest Trust

## **Welcome/Introductions/Review Agenda**

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

## **Presentation and Discussion: Nisqually Community Forest Conceptual Management/Ownership Alternatives and Preferred Alternative**

Discussion of the pros and cons of various models.

Nisqually Land Trust – Set up an independent 509 foundation, not necessarily a subsidiary. One con that was brought up is the lack of access to tax exempt bonds that municipal organizations would have. This could possibly be worked around if there were municipal partners, such as Pierce Co.

DNR - Jack Thorne email comments (paraphrased): “DNR ownership would create a political connection between the state and the community forest. There would be issues of stakeholder trust, and any real input from community members.” Ryan made the comment that the Community Forest Trust would be a useful tool for less organized communities, but perhaps not the Nisqually. Additionally, Paula mentioned that a DNR owned forest would unlikely be eligible for a carbon project.

New Non-Profit – Pros and cons similar to the NLT scenario. One additional Pro is that a new non-profit would take on its own liability, and the NLT would be protected from the inherent risk of this new venture. Jack Thorne thought the Pros and Cons were biased, he says that he knew what the preferred options would be before he got to them. Some additional downsides to a new

and independent non-profit are: startup/networking/credibility issues, drain on competitive funding/donors.

Town of Eatonville/Pierce County – The municipal ownership model was based on an Eatonville ownership/management scheme. It was mentioned that Pierce County should be included in this section as well. Under the municipal model, several different financing tools were evaluated, including New Market Tax Credits, Revenue Bonds, and General Obligation Bonds. Issues with municipal ownership include the potential for the Community Forest to be seen as a town/county asset, and for timber harvests to be used as a filler for annual budgets. Additionally, the issue of bonding capacity/authority was raised. The Town of Eatonville doesn't likely have a high bonding authority, and for bonding higher than a town's limits, the decision has to pass a general vote by 60%. On the other hand, it was mentioned that Pierce County has a very high bonding authority. Diane mentioned that she would like to see the Pierce County set up a Forestry roundtable council, like the Ag roundtables. One question raised – if County owned, would the Community Forest be limited to the Nisqually, or would other parts of the County be eligible.

Municipal Community Forest District – This is the other option explored by the planning committee. A Community Forest District would be set up similar to a fire district or school district. There would be a tax base, who would vote on levies to fund the forest.

Private Land Ownership COOP – aggregation of private landowners where landowners own/operate their own tree farms, but agree on management plans. Profits/losses go to individual landowner. Little community oversight/economic benefit.

TIMO – In this scenario, the Community Forest would be managed as an investment, but could still maximize the social and environmental benefits of a working forest. The TIMO could be for-profit or non-profit. If 509, return profits to parent 501.C.3, if for-profit, return profits to investors. Could be set up similar to Community Solar.

Preferred Alternative – Recommendation is either to establish a new non-profit or create a subsidiary of NLT. Distant third choice is to establish a municipal forest district.

### **Next Steps – Public Meetings: Bryan Bowden**

Discussion about upcoming public meetings. These meetings are currently planned for late October or early November. They will consist of a short PowerPoint presentation, followed by Q&A. Next, there will be an open house, where visitors can walk around to different stations, hosted by Advisory Committee members, to explore more in depth the project, and to give feedback. Stations include: 1) Vision and Goals, 2) Products/Services, 3) Forest Resources, 4) Ownership/Management/Financing, 5) Next Steps

The number of meetings was discussed. Originally, there were only two planned (Upper and Lower Nisqually), but there were comments made that there should be more. Tentative meeting locations include: Ashford, Eatonville, Olympia, and Tacoma.

### **Adjourn**