

Nisqually Reach Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee
October 23, 2012, 6:30-8:30 pm
Nisqually Reach Nature Center

Introductions

Daniel Hull, Executive Director of the Nisqually Reach Nature Center (NRNC), asked each of the 17 attendees to introduce themselves and briefly describe their interest in the Aquatic Reserve. Participants included residents of Beach Crest, Nisqually Valley and neighborhoods near the Nature Center in addition to NRNC volunteers. Maddie Foutch, of People For Puget Sound/Washington Environmental Council, was not able to attend.

Background and Overview of the Project

Daniel presented a slide show and talk giving a brief overview of the 15,000-acre Nisqually Reach Aquatic Reserve history, scope, and purpose. The Aquatic Reserve is a 90-year conservation area, with the principal goal of protecting nearshore habitat owned by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The designation of the Nisqually Reach Aquatic Reserve provides the opportunity for community members to do public outreach and education as well as research through participation in citizen science projects.

The Citizen Stewardship Committee is an integral part of the management plan for the Aquatic Reserve. Community volunteers can assist in many research and monitoring projects throughout the Aquatic Reserve, such as:

- fish seining and other projects to determine what species utilize the nearshore habitats;
- off-season data collection when scientists are not out in the field;
- ground-truthing by volunteer divers, that is, taking sediment cores to corroborate data from bathymetric sonar studies;
- invertebrate monitoring studies following pocket estuary restoration;
- tidal marsh monitoring;
- collection of boating and other recreational use data;
- bird monitoring in conjunction with the Important Bird Area designation by the National Audubon society.

The Committee also has many opportunities to conduct outreach and education, which are detailed in the management plan, such as developing educational materials, exploring the possibilities for boat and kayak-based educational outings in the Aquatic Reserve, and developing displays at parks and public access points.

As a complement to the DNR Implementation Committee, the Stewardship Committee will review DNR policies and actions and provide input and feedback

The Committee Process

Two-year funding to support the committee process is being provided by the Environmental Protection Agency, in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Committee will be partnering with the Washington Environmental Council to carry out its mission.

The first step is to develop a charter (a draft charter appears on the NRNC website), which will set forth the Committee's purpose, leadership, membership responsibilities, organization and logistics.

Committee members will elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary for 1-year terms. This will be done at the next meeting on November 13.

The Committee will prioritize three focus areas and develop a two-year workplan, which will include an education and outreach plan, a citizen science plan, and a technical work plan to look at regulations, illegal activities, etc. The Committee will hold two trainings on citizen science.

Committee members also will need to help build the group, by asking friends and neighbors to join.

After two years, the Committee can decide if and how to procure additional funding for its activities.

The NRNC website has the Aquatic Reserve Management Plan and other information about the Stewardship Committee, including the meeting minutes.

Attendance:

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| Daniel Hull | |
| Garcia | Stephanie |
| Garcia | Jim |
| Nelson | Mary |
| Collins | Bill |
| Collins | Kate |
| Gonzalez | Hernan |
| Gonzalez | Sean |
| Meeds | Randin |
| Skinner | Ross |
| Shavalier | Yvonne |
| Winter | Jacqueline |
| Murphy | Judy |
| Krenz | Daniel |
| Mills | Anne |
| Botka | Dana |
| Nelson | David |
| Vadas, Jr. | Bob |

Next meeting: Tuesday, November 13, 6:30 p.m. at NRNC.