

**Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council
Face-to-Face Meeting, Fife, WA
January 8-10, 2013**

MINUTES

NOTE: Highlighted items require action from the WATCAC.

NOTE: Highlighted items require action from the NRCS.

Agenda - January 8

- Welcome - Tribal Elder and Roylene
 - Farm bill update
 - Natural Resource Conservation Service Tribal Program Strategy
- Natural Resource Conservation Service projects – Tribal Participants
 - West side - Samish Tribe
 - East side - Yakama Nation
- Presentation of Tribal Resource Assessment Final Draft – Peter Bautista

Participants – January 8

- Coeur D’Alene – John Abraham
- Lower Elwha Klallam – Kathleen Hathaway
- Makah – Stephanie Martin
- Puyallup – Sylvia Miller, Connie McCloud
- Quileute – Garrett Rasmussen, Nicole Rasmussen, Katie Krueger
- Quinault – Mike Stamon
- Samish – Dave Blackinton, Christine Woodward
- Snoqualmie – Cindy Spiry
- Yakama – Jack Riggan, Jonalee Squeochs
- NRCS – Roylene Rides at the Door, Peter Bautista, Bonda Habets, Rebecca Stuart, Robin Slate, Doug Allen, Rick Noble, Ed Teel, Monica Hoover, John Kendig, Will Keller, Paul Rogers, Tony Sunseri, Nick Vera, Karla Ware, Scott Cook, Kathy Kilcoyne, Jim Poffel
- USFS – Reta Laford, Donna Nemeth
- RMA – Cara McCarthy

Agenda - January 9

- Local working groups/Tribal working groups
 - Tribal Conservation District introduction – Jackie Richter
 - Local Working Groups introduction; working with NRCS and Tribes – Larry Davis, Whatcom Conservation District Supervisor, District Conservationists, NRCS Field Offices
- Practices and standards review status - Bonda and Area Conservationists
- Aquaculture – John Kendig
- Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Partnership update – Rick, Roylene
- Agencies panel - who we are and how we work with Tribes
 - USDA agencies
 - Reta Laford - Forest Supervisor, Olympic forest
 - Jennifer Eberlien - Forest Supervisor, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie Forest
 - Paul Johnson – Outreach Coordinator, Rural Development
 - Bureau of Land Management - Jerome Perez
- Bureau of Indian Affairs /Natural Resource Conservation Service Memorandum of Understanding – Peter and Roylene

Participants – January 9

Coeur D’Alene – John Abraham
Lower Elwha Klallam – Kathleen Hathaway
Makah – Stephanie Martin
Muckleshoot – Nancy Rapin
Puyallup – Char Naylor
Quileute – Garrett Rasmussen, Nicole Rasmussen, Katie Krueger
Quinault – Mike Stamon
Samish – Dave Blackinton, Christine Woodward
Snoqualmie – Cindy Spiry
Suquamish – Paul Williams
Tulalip – Terry Williams
Yakama – Jack Riggin
NRCS – Roylene Rides at the Door, Peter Bautista, Bonda Habets, Rebecca Stuart, Robin Slate, Sherre Copeland, Doug Allen, Rick Noble, Ed Teel, Monica Hoover, John Kendig, Will Keller, Paul Rogers, Tony Sunseri, Nick Vera, Karla Ware, Scott Cook, Kathy Kilcoyne, Jim Poffel
USFS – Jen Eberlien
RMA – Cara McCarty
BLM – Jerome Perez
NW Team Local Work Group – Larry Davis

Agenda - January 10

Ideas for moving the Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council forward – all
Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council work for the coming year – Roylene
Easement programs – Monica Hoover
Safe Harbor – Roylene

Participants – January 10

Coeur D’Alene – John Abraham
Lower Elwha Klallam – Kathleen Hathaway
Makah – Stephanie Martin
Puyallup – Sylvia Miller, Connie McCloud
Quileute – Garrett Rasmussen, Nicole Rasmussen, Katie Krueger
Quinault – Mike Stamon
Samish – Dave Blackinton, Christine Woodward
Snoqualmie – Cindy Spiry
Tulalip – Daryl Williams
Yakama – Jack Riggin
NRCS – Roylene Rides at the Door, Peter Bautista, Bonda Habets, Rebecca Stuart, Robin Slate, Doug Allen, Rick Noble, Ed Teel, Monica Hoover, John Kendig, Will Keller, Paul Rogers, Tony Sunseri, Nick Vera, Karla Ware, Scott Cook, Kathy Kilcoyne, Jim Poffel
USFS – Reta Laford, Donna Nemeth
RMA – Cara McCarty

January 8

Welcome – Sylvia Miller, Puyallup Tribe Chairwoman, and Roylene Rides at the Door, State Conservationist

Sylvia welcomed the group on behalf of the Puyallup Tribe. Roylene welcomed the group as well, and explained that NRCS planning staff from NRCS's West Area were attending to build further on our tribal relations.

Roylene noted limited progress on the Farm Bill. She explained that Robin and Rebecca need to begin working with their tribes on the FY14 Tribal EQIP, but that the agency needs to review the current applications and rankings to identify any problem areas that need addressed in FY14. She added that the agency obligated \$1,269,916 in tribal contracts in FY12.

NRCS project “Invasive Species Removal on Weaverling Spit” – Christine Woodward, Samish Tribe

Christine described a resource problem that involved invasive species, including English ivy, an archaeological site, and native tree management. The Samish Tribe worked several avenues to address these problems, including NRCS funding to remove invasive trees from the site. (Presentation is on the WATCAC web site.)

NRCS project “Forestry Health and Huckleberry Restoration” – Jack Riggin, Yakama Nation

Jack described the forest management history on Yakama lands, and summarized the Yakama Nation's history of working with NRCS. The tribe has participated in NRCS's Wetland Reserve Program, floodplain restoration, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Jack highlighted four EQIP projects (2010, 2011, 2012), which addressed timber stand improvements, forest health, and huckleberry restoration. He also discussed their activities on [grazing lands and their State Conservation Innovative Grant \(CIG\) project on Reforestation](#) (Presentation is on the WATCAC web site.)

Tribal Resource Assessment Final Draft – Peter Bautista, Asst. State Conservationist – Operations

Peter provided copies of the final draft of the Tribal Resource Assessment (TRA), and asked for **final comments to be provided by one week before the February WATCAC meeting**. He explained that the information in this stand-alone version will be in the State Resource Assessment as well. The TRA is a living document that will be updated every five years; this edition, when finalized will be used through FY15.

January 9

Tribal Conservation District and Local Working Groups: working with NRCS and Tribes – Jackie Richter (Colville Reservation Conservation District (CRCD)), and Larry Davis, Whatcom Conservation District Supervisor

Jackie provided an overview of the CRCD, and her experience with the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD). She described some advantages of working with WACD, and the Local Work Groups (LWGs).

Larry told the group about some of the projects and issues his LWG has worked on. He expressed a desire to work with the tribes, and asked for contact information so the tribes in his LWG area could be invited to the LWG meetings.

Both Jackie and Larry emphasized common ground, and opportunities to work together. This strategy is a good way to address tribal concerns on non-tribal lands.

NRCS 101 – Rick Noble, West Area Conservationist, and John Kendig, West Area Resource Conservationist

Rick and John led discussion about who the NRCS is, who we serve, and how we get conservation on the ground. They described the agency in general, and detailed how it is structured in Washington State. The

discussion included working with Conservation Districts and LWGs, the process to develop conservation plans, and opportunities for cost-share contracting. (Presentation is on the WATCAC web site.)

Practices and standards review status – Bonda Habets, State Resource Conservationist

Bonda explained that there have been some delays with the 590 Nutrient Management Conservation Practice, which is currently in revision. She expects to post it by June after the Phosphorus Index risk assessment is completed.

She also discussed the Filter Strip Conservation Practice Standard, which was updated through a National Lead Discipline, Technical Review Committee, State Technical Discipline review, and then placed on the Federal Register. She demonstrated an NRCS Conservation Practice update with the Filter Strip Conservation practice standard example: comments will be reviewed and addressed; a final Conservation Practice Standard will then be posted to the NRCS National Conservation Practice database. Each State has a year to update their State's standard with the new version from National.

Aquaculture – John Kendig, West Area Resource Conservationist

John provided background on the aquaculture or shellfish program. He noted that such programs in Rhode Island and Massachusetts address different situations than what we have in Washington, so WA-NRCS is building its program from scratch.

The agency met with Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission staff, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Ecology, and Health, and industry and grower groups. They also toured shellfish farms. From these efforts, the agency clarified resource concerns and identified conservation practices to treat those concerns. After further exploration, several potential species were identified as potential candidates for the aquaculture program. It was decided to target the oyster drill with FY13 program funds.

The FY13 aquaculture program will have \$75,000, and target approximately 50 acres on the West side. Applicants can sign up for the program through February 15, 2013.

This is the first year of the program and the agency needs tribal input as it moves forward with it. What species or resource concerns should be targeted? What areas? What else should it include? We need feedback within a month in order to get it through the system (National Office) to have it ready by October. (Presentation is on the WATCAC web site.)

Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Partnership update – Rick Noble, West Area Conservationist, and Roylene

Rick and Roylene explained how the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Partnership program will be structured. With the help of local partners and tribes, the agency will identify high priority projects that benefit salmon recovery. High priority projects will address fish passage, and water quality and habitat improvement in salmon-bearing areas in the Puget Sound region.

Applicants can receive funding to implement such conservation practices as planting woody buffers, replacing culverts to remove fish barriers, and decommissioning or replacing manure storage systems along salmon-bearing streams.

Agencies panel - who we are and how we work with Tribes

Representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, Rural Development, and the Bureau of Land Management introduced themselves to the group. Reta Laford and Jennifer Eberlien, Forest Supervisors for the Olympic National Forest and the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest respectively, gave a team presentation. Both women are fairly new in their positions, and looking forward to working with the tribes.

Paul Johnson, Outreach Coordinator for Rural Development, and Cara McCarthy provided an overview of their agency's opportunities for tribes. Cara discussed crops insured in WA.

Jerome Perez is the new Regional Director for the Bureau of Land Management. He expressed interest in the tribes' resource and management concerns, and in working with the tribes to address their concerns.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)/Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) –Roylene

The BIA, NRCS, and Farm Services Agency (FSA) have signed a new MOU for planning and implementing USDA programs on tribal lands. The MOU, which outlines each agency's responsibilities, was signed last fall, and is good for five years. Roylene wanted the group to be aware of it.

January 10

Easement programs – Monica Hoover, West Area Program Liaison

Monica discussed several NRCS easement programs (Presentation is on the WATCAC web site.). She works primarily with the Farm and Ranchland Preservation Program (FRPP), but the other programs include the Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), and Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP). The HFRP provides easements or agreements for species protection on forests, but is not available in Washington. Monica noted that conservation plan requirements vary by program. The easement programs in Washington include:

FRPP – 110 easements, mostly held by the FRPP partner entity

GRP – 8 easements, held by NRCS

WRP – 150 easements, held by NRCS

Safe Harbor – Roylene

Roylene explained safe harbor agreements, which are voluntary arrangements between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-Fisheries (NOAA), and non-Federal landowners. The agreements support voluntary management for threatened and endangered (T&E) species on non-Federal property while assuring landowners that they won't risk future regulatory restrictions by creating or maintaining habitat for these species on their land. USDA is working with the USFWS to provide ways for landowners to restore and protect habitat for specific T&E species.

Tribal participants asked for more information including what the agreements provide for, what is the benefit to the landowner, Minnesota's agreement, which was not developed with tribal input, the sage grouse agreement, and species lists. This topic will be revisited at the February or March WATCAC teleconference.

Ideas for moving the Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council forward & WATCAC work for the coming year – Roylene and WATCAC

Roylene led a lively group discussion to focus the WATCAC's activities. Key decisions include keeping the current monthly meeting schedule (second Tuesdays), but focusing the meetings, and trying to keep them to two hours; maintain current function/structure, which is preferred to more formal, organized group; and move on from foundational topics. The following lists include action items for NRCS.

Making the Advisory Council better

- Send Wisconsin's tribal advisory's module again as an example of what the council could be.
- Discuss the resolution process as a way for the WATCAC's decisions to make an impact and move forward. The council does not want a designated spokesperson at this point.
- Email notices need to be more basic and recognizable, scale back designs.
- Let email notices reflect all recipients they were sent to and include the web link on every email.
- NRCS/Roylene can forward all pertinent emails from other agencies and outside entities that may be a benefit to the tribes.
- The days and times of current meeting are ok with the group. Shorten the meeting length to less than two hours. Cover fewer topics, it's overwhelming at times.

- A clear definition of process to be on WATCAC needs to be presented and sent out to all participants. Be sure to include what NRCS needs from individual Tribal councils.
- Annual Report on WATCAC and accomplishments should be given to each perspective Tribe's council or chairman or present this at ATNI. Mike suggested that we video tape it and put it on the Website.
- Annual WACD -WADE-NACD dates need to be posted on web site and sent to Tribes. WADE is usually the second week in June (**which coincides with WATCAC face-to-face**) – involve WATCAC.
- Work with WACD Board of Directors to introduce tribes and LWGs. DCs will work on getting invitations to LWG meetings to the tribes. Rebecca and Robin will work with WACD's Executive Board.

Next face-to-face and monthly meetings

- Presentations based around land use designations, i.e. "show and tell" on what's being done on the different landuses, easements, roads or issues.
- Share success stories or challenges from other Tribes on programs used.
- Further Discussion on TSP's what they are and their value (have a current TSP available in person or by phone)
- Show and tell on individual Tribes, i.e. their history and who they are and what resources they use.
- Demonstration on available programs for Tribes with little land base and big U&A. Katie would like to understand how to make them work for her tribe.
- Discuss how group can contribute to farm bill rather than just getting Farm Bill updates.
- Mike would like to see "progress reports" on tribal interactions with their local CDs, and on tribal activities/involvement on non-tribal lands.
- Send invite to individual CDs' managers in regards to WATCAC and what we can offer
- Post on the website and email out to WATCAC and Tribes dates of local work groups
- Would like to see Tribal presentation on CIG's
- Mike would like to discuss challenges Tribes have using NRCS and their programs
- Educate NRCS on U&A/Ceded lands 101 – aboriginal rights, U&A, open & unclaimed
- Tribal Lands Definition (**See Attachment as a starting point/Reference**) - Ownership, Fee, Trust Allotment. Roylene.
- Treaty Rights 101 for staff and group, i.e. aboriginal rights, major court cases that impact how we work together.
- Indigenous Stewardship i.e. Tulalip – Umatilla (Roylene)
- Create a process to identify and address concerns about practices in certain areas.
- Share the indigenous NRCS guide on website and with individual tribes
- Request Kat Anderson "Tending the Wild" for traditional plants talk at next face to face.
- Marty Chaney, Olympia office agronomist - native plants discussion
- Build relationships among tribal nurseries and the NRCS Plant Materials Center; presentation? Combine with Tribal Nurseries and National Park services cultivating? (Bonda)
- Map on current NRCS projects
- Map showing lands NRCS can work on.
- SSHAP(Salmon Steel head Habitat Assessment program) Bruce Jones and NW Indian Fisheries Commission (perhaps info or presentation needed)
- Local work groups need to be defined dates set and information sent to this group and they asked that all DCs be brought in and asked to reach out to the Tribes in their areas.
- Presentation on key practices that this group identifies as priorities
- Treaty Rights at Risk Paper – make regular agenda item (30 minutes or less)
- TRA comments have a 1 month deadline, hoping for March 1st to be finalized
- Make sure planners know about WATCAC meetings.

Other

- We need to identify key practices for the resource concerns.
- Related to practice standards, we need help with monitoring practices. Rebecca and Robin will go through standards that are up for review and target those that may be of particular concern to the tribes for their comments.

Acronyms:

EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FRPP	Farm & Ranch Protection Program
GRP	Grasslands Reserve Program
LWG	Local Work Groups
NACD	National Association of Conservation Districts
TRA	Tribal Resource Assessment
TWG	Tribal Work Group
WACD	Washington Association of Conservation Districts
WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
WRP	Wetland Reserve Program

DON'T FORGET YOUR WATCAC RESOLUTIONS !!!!

TRIBES WITH WATCAC RESOLUTIONS:

Coeur D'Alene	Samish	Squaxin Island
Colville	Shoalwater Bay	Stillaguamish
Kalispel	Snoqualmie	Suquamish
Makah	Spokane	Yakama
Quinault		