

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Targeted Watersheds Grant

Nisqually River, WA



The Nisqually watershed with Mt. Rainier in the background.

Photo by David Hymel



Forestry field course at Northwest Trek, a Forest Stewardship Council certified forest.



The Nisqually River delta.

Photo by Dan Kowalski

Nisqually River Foundation

The Watershed

The Nisqually River encompasses 720 square miles from its origins on Mount Rainier to its outlet in Puget Sound. This watershed is the only watershed in the country with its headwaters in a national park and its mouth in a national wildlife refuge. In between, the watershed contains national, state and commercial forests, three hydropower dams, agriculture, recreation, and a major military base and is home to the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Several endangered species, including the marbled murrelet, spotted owl, bull trout and fall Chinook salmon, populate the landscape.

Issues

One of the largest challenges facing the Nisqually River watershed is the conversion of forestry and agricultural land to development. Half of the watershed is privately-owned and consists of small family-owned forests and farms. During the last three decades forestland has been lost to development, in part, because of market instability, changing regulations, and skyrocketing real estate values. Recent surveys indicate that the average age of small forest landowners is 57-67 years old, implying that a large percentage of this land will change hands in the near future. This scenario will likely lead to increased fragmentation and conversion of land for development. With the loss of forest land, ecological benefits are also lost, including fish and wildlife habitat and clean air and water. Small forests are also economically important, with nearly 30 percent of the timber harvested annually in Washington State coming from non-industrial forestlands.

Projects

- **Nisqually Sustainable:** The Nisqually River Foundation is working to create a locally based sustainable products program under the Nisqually Sustainable label. Nisqually-based businesses can qualify to participate in the program through three different methods: Participation in third party certification, if it exists for their industry; participation in the Envirostars program, if available in their county; and through a voluntary pledge program.



Nisqually River Watershed

Project Partners:

- Nisqually River Council
- Northwest Natural Resource Group
- Stewardship Partners
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Nisqually Land Trust

Leveraged Resources:

EPA Grant: \$883,457

Match in non-federal funds and
in kind services: \$645,963

For More Information Contact:

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- **Forest Stewardship Council**

Certification: The Nisqually River Foundation and their partners will work to promote and support sustainable land use in the watershed, develop markets for local, sustainably produced goods, and conduct outreach to rural landowners and consumers. The Northwest Natural Resources Group will implement a program to certify forest landowners under the Forest Stewardship Council program and market their certified forest products to local consumers.

- **Salmon Safe:** Stewardship Partners will implement a Salmon Safe program to certify agricultural producers and market their certified farm products. Salmon Safe promotes riparian and wetland protection, prevention of soil erosion, minimization of chemicals through the use of natural pest control and fertilizer management and on-farm biodiversity.

- **Low Impact Development (LID)**

Handbook: The Nisqually River Council will develop an LID handbook and conduct outreach to the public and to local officials.



EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/twg>

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