

## **State DNR to hold public meeting about proposed Nisqually Aquatic Reserve**

### **Local News**

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : May 6, 2009 at 11:56 am

OLYMPIA &mdash;The Public is invited by Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Nisqually Reach Nature Center&mdash;the site proponent for the proposed Nisqually Aquatic Reserve&mdash;to two open house-style public meetings, Tuesday, May 12 and Friday, May 15. DNR and the Nature Center will provide information and gather ideas from the community regarding the proposal. This open house provides an opportunity for greater public input into the sustainable management of state-owned aquatic lands. First meeting May 12

Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Where: Lacey Community Center, 6729 Pacific Avenue, SE, Lacey WA Second meeting May 15

Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Date Friday, May 15

Where: Anderson Island Community Club, 11319 Yoman Rd, Anderson Island

At the meetings, a brief presentation will discuss DNR&rsquo;s Aquatic Reserve Program and the proposal for the state-owned aquatic lands off of the Nisqually reach and around Anderson Island. Following the presentation, the public will have the opportunity to have their concerns heard, offer ideas about the location of the proposed reserve, provide local information about the wildlife habitats and activities that occur in the area, and share their ideas about DNR management of the proposed reserve. Why would this area become a reserve?

Through management of state-owned aquatic lands, DNR encourages a large number of uses like navigation and other water-dependent uses, public access, utility easements and outfalls, marinas, net pens for fin fish culture, or energy projects, to name just a few. By making an area an aquatic reserve, we work with the community to develop a site-specific management plan that specifies the uses within the reserve, and also may limit the activities that can take place on that site. Without a reserve designation and a plan in place to guide management decisions, DNR would consider a number of uses of the aquatic lands. In 2008, the Nisqually Reach Nature Center submitted a proposal to DNR describing why the state-owned tidelands and bedlands adjacent to the Nisqually Natural Wildlife Refuge and around Anderson Island, should be considered for an aquatic reserve. They pointed out that the shorelines and deep waters here are an important area for the following native species: sea anemones, soft corals, sponges and other encrusting organisms; decorator crabs, rock crabs, spot shrimp, spiny dogfish, rock fish, and salmon. The proposal covers approximately 12,000 acres. This proposal is supported by the USFWS Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Nisqually River Council, and Anderson Island Park and Recreation District. Aquatic reserves don&rsquo;t affect fishing, boating. Recreational and commercial fishing is managed by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Washington&rsquo;s Treaty Tribes and would not be affected by management of the reserve. Aquatic reserve management does not restrict access to fishing, crabbing or boating, nor does it set harvest restrictions. A reserve only would include DNR-managed state aquatic lands. A reserve does not include privately owned or tribal lands, bluffs, or beaches. DNR-Steward of state aquatic lands

As steward of the 2.6 million acres of state aquatic lands, DNR manages the bedlands under Puget Sound and the coast, many of Washington's beaches, and natural lakes and navigable rivers. DNR manages these lands not only to facilitate navigation, commerce, and public access, but also to ensure protection of aquatic habitat. State-owned aquatic lands include:

- About 68,100 acres of state-owned tidelands, or 106 square miles

- 90,000 acres of harbor areas

- All submerged marine lands below extreme low tide—that's 3,430 square miles of bedlands under navigable waters, as well as freshwater shorelands and bedlands

Peter Goldmark, who administers the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, is Washington's 13th Commissioner of Public Lands since statehood in 1889 and the first commissioner from Eastern Washington.