

## **Nisqually sx<sup>w</sup>da?dəb**

### **Community Garden Conversation**

#### **Nisqually Youth Center Gym**

#### **What Story Might Our Grandchildren will Tell about the Garden?**

**April 4, 2011**

*"What is the sense of purpose that brought you to this place today?"*

Zelma opened the conversation with a blessing. Joyce started our conversation with her story of the garden that went back to her ancestors and elders. People added to the story of how they were a healthy people for thousands of years in comparison to the obesity, diabetes, heart disease that the people have now. The story recognized the sacrifices ancestors made; recalled how the elders had gardens and how they cared for each other, the tribe, the land and other beings. People told how elders passed on knowledge of plants, medicine, healthy ways of living, eating, growing, preparing and gathering and hunting food, and relationships to the earth. The story acknowledged Nisqually people as salmon people and how elders saw the way they grew and gathered food in relationship to the salmon and the consideration of the whole ecological system.

The story went on to remember past helpers who made the idea of the community garden become a reality and how that reality got covered with asphalt. They spoke of new helpers who arrived and the garden got started again and was full of bounty and lots of activity in a short time. Thoughtful, careful, hardworking people who aren't wasteful and do a good job consulting with the culture committee for decisions were mentioned. The garden includes traditional and indigenous plants and is consistent with the values that the Nisqually people hold about their relationship to the earth and spirit. People added their personal stories of health, lack of health or how their eating changed as a result of the garden. People can still recall a time when you could leave your house and not need to pack a lunch because of the abundance of edible foods throughout the landscape.

The garden story includes people thinking about the value of traditional medicine and foods as well as the pleasure of eating a sweet watermelon that was grown with no chemicals. The garden upholds the principal of sharing and contributing to community and the importance of including youth and elders in community activities.

## Conversation Notes



### Sacred connections; seasonality

#### How this Garden Could Support Important Relationships:

How could the community garden nourish the relationships that are important to me?

Relationship to nutritious food, physical health, Strengthen communities, relationship with traditional medicine and medicines and foods for health, Spending positive time with family members at the garden, More awareness of what is fresh and local, organic, Build community – get to know more people from the community, Eating more veggies and less meat, More engagement with youth, Physical and spiritual relationships, With other people in the community, Trying new things, With the earth, seasons, animals, eating with the seasons, living in relationship with other living beings, Sacred connections, Rehabilitation, trustees, community service, Source of healing, getting back to traditional foods, Revitalizing some types of food (such as nettles), being more aware of eating, where food comes from, how we care for ourselves in relation to the earth. Relationships with other cultural classes, schools, tradition, traditional foods and food preparation, learning from our elders, relationship to ancestors, future generations,

#### New Possibilities Because of a Community Garden

What new possibilities exist now that we have a community garden? For example, what changes in family or group traditions could we notice?

Continuing the good work, sharing knowledge to ensure community sustainability which needs many wheels and the garden is but one hub of one wheel, the garden can satisfy many needs, develop steam stewards-salmon, four legged and winged creatures-the garden is our song for them, healthier community, honor tradition, honor good food, share good food, be a way of connecting physically and spiritually, having respect for where food comes from, being a part of

something, contributing, being important to the success of individuals, satisfies a needs to belong, energy is used for a useful purpose-this builds community

How could a community garden be important to the health and culture of the Nisqually people?

Bee keeping, green house classes, composting, native plants-river beds, house plants, sponsor raised beds for homes, home gardening workshops and starts and seeds, families cooking with families and sharing recipes/ways, recipe swapping, publish a cookbook, outreach and education center for tribal and nontribal communities, combine harvest time with cooking classes to learn how to prepare foods and traditional foods, have a classroom from Head Start or Wah He Lut come out weekly in May and early June and again when school starts in the fall so they can participate in planting and harvesting and get a sense of continuity and with growing something, coordinate food production with cooking at Elder’s Center and make weekly food deliveries that can be incorporated into elder’s meals, dinners based on traditional foods, medicine making parties and bulletin board, apple juice making, salve/lotion/remedy creation, potlucks with recipe swaps, afterschool program that includes cooking classes, for children and youth, how to make Indian Ice Cream, canning classes, plant identification classes with a treasure hunt, monthly potluck with food from the garden, assistants-vegetable production/processing/medicine making/traditional plants/traditional medicine making, enterprise/facilities/decorations, afterschool extra credit activities, plant coffee beans

What is something you would like your grandchildren to be saying to their children about the community garden?

The day ended with what we imagined our grandchildren might be saying about the garden and the themes resonated with the morning story: elder wisdom, ancestor sacrifice, nourishment, sustainability, a few laughs, relationship with the earth, what is sacred, gratitude, sprit, physical health, medicine, family tradition.

**Ideas for the Strategic Plan of the Garden**

**Goal or Dream: The Community Garden will build community by supporting the physical and spiritual health of the people, land and animals.**

Outcome (Design)	Supporting Activities (Deliver)	Indicators of success (Discover how)
1. Increase in community value and celebration of the garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community relationship building events</li> <li>• Family fun (e.g. zucchini races)</li> <li>• Seasonal food potlucks</li> <li>• Recipe swapping</li> </ul>	More people will have a relationship with the garden

<p>2. People will increase their knowledge on health, nutrition, and traditional foods, plants, medicines and culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The garden would support these activities and also provide educational opportunities for:</li> <li>• Food production, preserving and preparation</li> <li>• Create a root cellar</li> <li>• Using the whole plant and animal for nourishment and health</li> <li>• Plant propagation</li> <li>• Creating home gardens</li> <li>• Recipe book production to include traditional healing methods</li> <li>• Composting, recycling</li> <li>• Plant identification to include learning the traditional names of plants</li> <li>• Garden orientations, (tours)</li> <li>• Cooking classes and potlucks</li> </ul>	<p>People start growing, eating, preparing and storing food and traditional medicines as part of their family culture</p> <p>People become conscious of sustaining the health of the land, animals, native plants</p> <p>People begin using traditional ways of healthy eating and living and language pass this on to the children</p>
<p>3. Increase in community enterprise and sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on current businesses and develop other enterprise ideas such as curriculum for Native American Master Gardeners, casino purchases from the garden, etc</li> </ul>	<p>Business and environmental sustainability can become part of the garden plan</p>
<p>4. Increase sharing of the garden bounty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities that would help more people be aware of the garden</li> <li>• Food stand</li> <li>• Long term goal of distributing food to 1000 people</li> </ul>	<p>Community contributing and getting food from the garden (Elders get to eat the watermelon)</p>

### Ideas for Sustaining the Garden and Related Activities

What might represent sun, rain, soil that would sustain these activities?

- Develop the volunteer ideas such as a co-op garden where people receive a subscription in exchange for volunteering time
- Enterprise development
- Making sure events use prepared foods from the garden instead of buying ready made food
- Work with the nutritionist and other tribal programs

- Communicate and continue to invite people to be involved in the garden planning process
- Recycling and composting becomes a community value
- Tie activities to elders
- Tie activities to youth