

Press Release

May 31, 2008

Washington State Senator Marilyn Rasmussen was surprised at her own re-election kick-off campaign at the Ohop Grange on Saturday, May 31st. Rasmussen had planned a low key affair with long time supporters and friends. She didn't plan to receive an award from the Nisqually River Council for her work in the Nisqually Watershed. But that's what happened, thanks to secret plans between the Nisqually River Council and Rasmussen supporter, Kathy Mettler, of Eatonville. Co-recipient of the award was Pierce County Councilman Roger Bush.

The Nisqually River Council is nationally acclaimed watershed council that is promoting decision-making practices that bring all stakeholders to the table. The Council and its partner, the Nisqually Land Trust, have been instrumental in creating the new State Park where the Mashel River meets the Nisqually. Marilyn Rasmussen, a Democratic State Legislator, promoted the acquisition of land for the park, along with Republican Roger Bush. Rasmussen has continued to champion the project, putting money in the state budget to keep the project on line for a 2013 opening.

Rasmussen also led the state effort to fund another project in the Nisqually Watershed, the Ashford Performing Arts Center and Mountaineering Museum. The Center has been a longtime dream of a community that relies on traffic to Mount Rainier, but suffers economically during the "off season" - and when a natural catastrophe closes the national park, as it did in November of 2006. Rasmussen secured state funds for the planning of "Phase Two" (the construction of the Center itself), as Bush (now on the Pierce County Council) was securing funding for "Phase One" - the construction of a Pierce County Park that will house the Center.

The "Nisqually River Council Sustainability Award for Governance" was presented by 2007 River Council Chair, Steve Pruitt, as if it were a resolution (filled with "Whereas" and "Therefore" language). According to Pruitt, "Both of the projects, the State Park and the Performing Arts Center, are significant to the Nisqually Watershed for its continued economic, environmental, and community health. And, because of the collaboration of Bush and Rasmussen, these efforts are changing the way we govern ourselves - for the better!"