

DUNGENESS RIVER CURRENT

Newsletter for the Dungeness River Audubon Center interpreting the natural history of the Olympic Peninsula in partnership with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, and Audubon Washington

Spring 2010

Celebrate the Merry Month of May It's Spring Fling Time



Remember the fun we had last year during Spring Fling? Who could forget the Bearded Biker contest and how hard Bob and Powell worked to save their beards. While Spring Fling participants hiked, biked, swam, and did several other activities, they raised more than \$22,000 for the River Center and Railroad Bridge Park. Pretty impressive for the first year!

This year we expect Spring Fling to be bigger, better and even more fun, and we invite you to join this 'feel good' fundraiser. Our goal is to raise \$30,000. Considering that last year we raised over \$20,000 with about 100 participants, just think what we can do if we double that!

Here's how Spring Fling works. During the month of May individuals and teams (families, organizations, and businesses) obtain sponsors and participate for a modest registration fee in one or more healthful activities. The possibilities are practically endless. They include but are not limited to the following activities and options:

- Walk, hike, bike, swim – any activity measured in distance;
- Read books, count birds, plant trees – activities measured in quantity;
- Gardening, dance, do yoga, work out with your Wii –activities measured in hours. And here are two more special options:
 - Support the River Center team on May 15 in the Board Walk;
 - Join the club to honor Annette Hanson. Without Annette, Railroad Bridge Park and the River Center might not exist. She has worked tirelessly to support education and to create and sustain Railroad Bridge Park and the River Center. Soon, Annette will retire and leave Sequim. To honor her vision, achievements, and dreams for the Center and Park, her friends and fans may contribute to a lasting gift, a major contribution to the River Center Endowment.

Individual and team prizes will be awarded in various categories, such as the most money raised and the most miles biked, swum, and walked. Over several weeks, participants do the activities cumulatively and at their own convenience. For example, walkers could log miles along the Olympic Discovery trail or walk or hike anywhere -- even on a treadmill at home or at their gym. An awards party will be held early in June, at the Dungeness River Audubon Center in Railroad Bridge Park.

Planning for the Dungeness Spring Fling is under way. Contact Julie Jackson (683-1355; juliejackson@wavecable.com) right away!

Blanket of Existence

Pebbles on the shore
each a seamless entity
river's padded core.

By: Sara Boucher
SHS Student

Read more inspirational poetry
by Chelsea Reichner's AP
Language and Composition
class on Page 5!



In the last newsletter I promised to write about the best equipment for bird photography. I will start reminding you that birds are a really difficult subject; they are small, rarely keep still, and fly away when you get close to them. This is the reason why professional bird photographers use lenses that could easily be mistaken for bazookas. I will make the wild assumption that you don't (at least not yet) want to drop a cool \$10,000 on that sort of gear.

I will also assume that you don't use film. It would be a terrible waste if you did, because it often takes dozens of exposures to get just one good bird image. Digital is tailor-made for this process, in which the delete button becomes your best friend.

Most of us already have a little point and shoot camera, those ever-shrinking miracles of micro-engineering that are actually capable of taking some excellent photos, but sadly not of birds. They are designed for shooting

people and landscapes, but not distant feathered dots. They can however be successfully attached to the eyepiece of a modern spotting scope, although that is pretty specialized stuff.

At the other end of the scale we have the Digital SLR (single lens reflex) with its battery of interchangeable lenses. If you think the cameras are expensive, wait until you check out the price of those telephoto lenses. DSLR's are the steepest part of the slippery financial slope of photography. They can produce wonderful results, but they represent a big commitment, and I would not recommend them as a first step.

Between the compact point-and-shoot at one end and the DSLR at the other, lies another category of camera which I really recommend as a starting point. This category is known as Super Zooms. They have the ability to magnify just as much as the huge professional lenses, but at a much lower cost. Each of the major camera companies is well represented in this category. If you are interested, and want to see some impartial reviews, I would recommend going to dpreview.com and typing 'super zoom' in the search box.

In the next issue I will give some general advice on photographing birds. Meanwhile if you happen to have any questions where you think I might be able to help, please feel free to email me stephen@admiraltyimages.com.

Stephen Cunliffe uses his photography to raise funds for local conservation, including the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Visit his website www.Admiraltyimages.com to learn more and see his work.

Visit us at www.DungenessRiverCenter.org

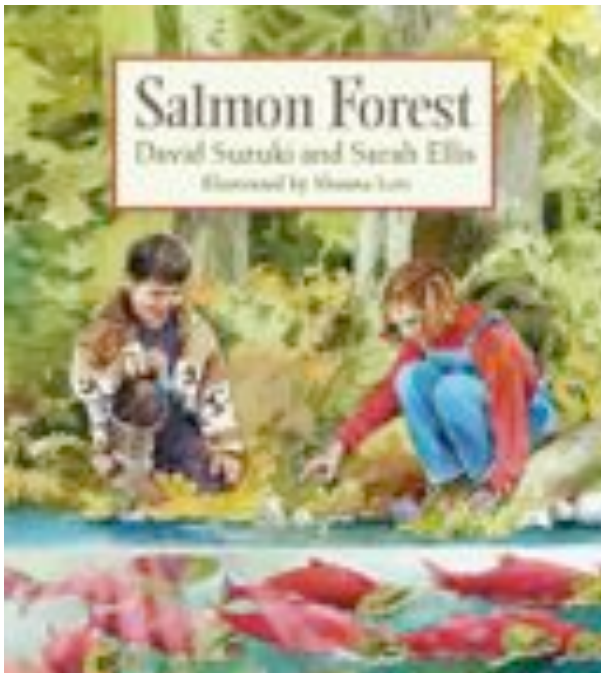
This year, thanks to Puget Sound Anglers and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the River Center has been chosen as a “Salmon in the Classroom” site. Salmon in the Classroom is a program in which schools and other public facilities raise salmon from eggs to fry, and then release them in the nearest river or stream when they reach suitable size. Don Hatler of PSA has been particularly helpful setting up this project, picking up the aquarium and chiller from Olympia and providing lots of moral support. PSA also paid for all the necessary materials, such as filters and pumps.

On February 1, 2010, we received several hundred Coho salmon eggs from the Hurd Creek hatchery, located on the Dungeness River north of Sequim. The first eggs began hatching on Feb 19 and all hatched by Mar 1. Their survival has been unbelievable – only three eggs and one alevin died so far.

It has been particularly interesting to watch the behavior of freshly-hatched alevins with their yolk sac still attached to their abdomens. They form writhing wads of tiny fish on the bottom of the aquarium, pushing their heads together kind of like a giant scrum of ostriches sticking their heads in the sand. This is a stage in the salmon life cycle that very few of us ever get to see, since it normally occurs in late winter in the deepest parts of the river under rocks and logs. These fish have survival in mind, because they are extremely vulnerable to predation at this stage. One big bull trout could suck up ten or twenty salmon alevins in one big slurp.

Come visit our salmon as they grow this spring. Many of the fry will be released by 6th graders during their field trips to RR Bridge Park this June, but we may also have special release days during summer as the fish increase in size. Keep in

Shopping at the Dungeness River Audubon Center



Want to know more about Salmon?

“Discovering Salmon” presents fun and stimulating activities featuring these incredible fish and their struggle for survival. Activities, stickers and games included. \$5.95

“Come Back, Salmon” chronicles how a group of dedicated kids adopted Pigeon Creek (Everett, WA) and brought it back to life – the salmon have returned! \$7.95

“Salmon Forest” - Take a walk in the woods with Kate and her dad as they explore the salmon life cycle. You’ll find out why the Pacific rain forest is called the salmon forest while learning about life cycles. Illustrated. \$9.95

“A Salmon for Simon” – Simon has always longed to catch a salmon. When an eagle accidentally drops one into a tidal pool, Simon is torn between sympathy for the fish and the desire to catch something of his own. Illustrated. \$6.95

Songbird Nest boxes are available right now at the center for \$10. It’s not too late to put them up!

Did You Know? Proceeds from all purchases at the Dungeness River Audubon Center gift shop help support our programs and staff.

Connecting Students To Nature Through Writing

This is the first installment of reflections written by Sequim High School students in Chelsea Reichner's Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition class.

In preparation for national poetry month (April), Ms. Reichner asked her students to reflect on their sense of place on the Olympic Peninsula. What makes these poems special is that all these students are seniors, gearing up to explore the larger world.

Spring

An awakening...new life born from winter's bitter grip
Nature's music rings out in notes of joy
Creatures emerge to bask in the grace of the light's warmth
Grayness melts, F

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into living pastel wonders

The pleasing thrum of life begins again

By: Turi Anderson and Caitlin Pallai

I'm going to college, I said.
I'm out of here, I'm leaving, I said.
The wind whistled round the peaks of Hurricane Ridge

I'm supposed to go to college, I said
I'll be around people like me, I said.
The flowers bloomed along the softball fields

I'm going to travel, I said
I'm going to change the world, I said
The seaweed drifted past on the bay's current

I'm going to learn, I said.
I'm going to study great, mysterious things, I said
The rain turned the soccer field to mud

I'm changing, I said.
I'm not connected to anyone or anything, I said
The sailboat bobbed in the marina

I said a lot of things,
Of which I meant a lot more than I let on,
But I've left a lot more behind than what I thought I'd take

There's a little bit of past left in the dirt roads
A little bit of heart in the depths of the bay
A little bit of soul hidden in the stained glass
A little bit of thought on top of Mount Townsend
A little bit of dream stashed among the rocks
A little bit of frustration buried in the lavender

I've always liked to believe in self-control;
That we can dictate who we become
But lately wherever I go all I can see in myself is my home;
The barns of Sequim, the lonely stretches of highway 112,
the streets of Port Townsend, the meandering plains of
Eastern Washington,
the old bunkers, the new tourists, the little creeks, the
towering mountains

And then, I remember my little family,
I remember the fishing trip the boat almost sank,
I remember the Christmas trees,
I remember watching old movies,
I remember sailing with my sisters,
I remember clam-digging, crabbing, and geoducking

I remember life in the Pacific Northwest.

By: Emily M Madsen

Dungeness River Audubon Center Special News

Legacy Gifts

Your legacy gift can have a lasting impact on the well-being of the Dungeness River Audubon Center and Railroad Bridge Park. Although monetary gifts to the River Center Endowment are always welcome, several other gifting options are available including

- Designating the River Center as a beneficiary.
- Adding a codicil to an existing will.
- Contributions of assets, such as stocks and bonds, motor vehicles, boats, and homes.
- IRA Rollover.

If you would like to explore the IRA Rollover or other gifting opportunities for the Dungeness River Audubon Center, please contact Bob Boekelheide, Director, at (360) 681-4076.

Special Events

Summer Nature Camps

Date: Session 1: Jul 12 to 15; Session 2: Aug 2 to 5; Session 3: Aug 23 to 26

Times: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily

Incredible fun for children entering 3rd through 5th grades, or ages 8 to 11! River Center staff leads children through adventures, games, and craft projects, using the river, bridge, and our wonderful RR Bridge Park. Sign up early – space limited to 20 children per camp.

Ecology of the Dungeness River

Dates: Thu. Mornings, Jul 22 – Aug 26, Cost: \$40 for River Center Partners, \$60 for others

The Dungeness River plunges over 7000 feet in less than 35 miles, one of the steepest rivers in North America. This six-week class investigates the geology, plant and animal communities, and how humans have changed the river during the past 150 years. Class includes five field trips to locations on the river, from the estuary to the mountains.

Dungeness River Festival

Date: Fri., Sep. 24 to Sep. 26

Help us celebrate the watershed that keeps the Sequim-Dungeness Valley alive. Lots of activities for kids and adults, music, art, food, and much more. We need help with this big event, so please contact the River Center if you're available.



Olympic Birdfest 2010 April 9-11, 2010 in Sequim, WA

A bird watching vacation for beginners to experts, from leisurely strolls to active hikes. Bird for a few hours, or all day ... from the dawn chorus to the evening owl prowl.

Enjoy the show from guided birding trips, boat tours, silent auction, salmon banquet, and more.

Also this year! Stay on for a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands. Register at www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org

BirdFest program information and registration can be found at www.olympicbirdfest.org



Schedule of Events

OPAS Field Trips: May 1 and May 22 Check the OPAS Website @ www.olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org for more details.

Bird Walks

Date: Every Wed. morning; Time: 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Meet at the River Center for a lovely walk to see and hear the birds of the Dungeness riparian forest. Information from walks helps us understand the annual cycle of birds in RR Bridge Park.

Dungeness River Management Team

Date: Second Wed. of every month, 2 to 5 p.m.

Experts and informed public that oversee the management of the Dungeness River meet monthly at the River Center.

Last Thursday Work Party

Date: Last Thurs. of the month, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The volunteers of Railroad Bridge Park and the River Center need help to maintain the beauty of the Park and River Center. Please join us to keep our park and facility in tip-top shape.

Natural Science Study Group

Dates: Second Mon. of the month, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

This adult discussion group focuses on the most interesting aspects of the natural world that affect the north Olympic Peninsula. Discussion topics vary with group interests.

OPAS Monthly Meeting

Date: Wed., Apr. 21; Time: 7 p.m.

Nina Carter, former Executive Director of Audubon Washington, speaks about the impacts on birds by the Washington Growth Management Act.

Birding by Ear – Learn to identify birds by songs and calls

Date: Four Thu. mornings, Apr. 22 to May 13; Time: 9 - 11 a.m., many earlier trips to hear the dawn chorus. Cost: \$40 for River Center partners, \$60 for non-members

Listen to the birds! Knowing the sounds of birds opens up a new world of bird identification. This is a great chance to tune your observational skills. Includes trips to local habitats.

Spring Fling for the Dungeness River Audubon Center –

Through the glorious the month of May

Help keep the River Center and RR Bridge Park happy and healthy! This annual event raises funds for the programs of the River Center and to maintain our beautiful park. Join us by walking for wildlife, swimming for salmon, or biking for birds during the fundraising dates, then come to the Frolic on Jun 5 to celebrate our success. See our website

www.DungenessRiverCenter.org for more details.

Spring Birds of Railroad Bridge Park and Beyond

Date: Sat., May 1; Time: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Time to warm up for our Spring Bird Count. Meet Bob Boekelheide at Railroad Bridge Park to hear breeding songbirds, then travel to Dungeness Landing Park at 11:30 a.m. to view shorebirds, gulls, and waterfowl.

Nature Photography for Young People (Ages 11 – 15)

Date: Four Sun. afternoons, May 2 to 23; Time 1 to 3 p.m.

Cost: \$30 per child

Powell Jones, Education Coordinator at the River Center, will teach students about photography, equipment, composition, lighting and much more when taking pictures of the natural environment. The last class will end with a small art show for students and parents.

Introduction to Birds and Birding

Date: Six Tue. evenings, May 4 to Jun. 8; Time: 7 to 9 p.m.

Cost: River Center Partners: \$40; non-members \$60.

Dave Jackson, OPAS bird expert, provides this class for beginning birders and new residents who wish to learn about local birds. These classes include field trips to special birding locations, bird identification, optics, bird books, and lots of other great tips.

International Migratory Bird Day/Clallam County Birdathon

Date: Sat., May 8; Time: Midnight to midnight

How many birds can we count in Clallam Co. in one 24-hour period? You can help by covering a special route, joining another group, or by just counting your neighborhood or backyard. Please contact the River Center to sign up for the count.

OPAS Monthly Meeting

Date: Wed., May 19; Time: 7 p.m.

Join Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society for their monthly meeting with information about local birds and how to see them. Speaker Chris Peterson describes the past, present, and future of the NPR hit radio program "Bird Note," and how it helps birdwatchers.

Late Spring Migrant Birds of the Olympic Peninsula

Date: Four Thursdays, May 27 to Jun. 24

Time: 9 – 11:30 a.m. (some sessions will occur earlier)

Cost: \$30 for River Center Partners, \$40 for non-members.

May and June bring Neotropical migrants, songbirds that spend winters from Mexico to South America. These are the jewels of our forest – tanagers, warblers, vireos, and flycatchers – and they're only here from May until August.

Dungeness River Audubon Center Annual Meeting

Date: Fri., May 21; Time: potluck dinner 6:00 p.m.; general meeting 7 p.m.

Join the group that started it all at RR Bridge Park for our annual meeting and potluck dinner (bring your place settings). We will discuss our successes at RR Bridge Park, plus look with eagerness to the future.

Spring Fling Frolic -- Sat., Jun. 5, Time: 3 to 5 p.m.

The climatic conclusion to the **Spring Fling**, including presentation of awards for individuals and teams.

Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society Monthly Meeting

Date: Wed., Jun. 16; Time: Potluck dinner 6 p.m., meeting 7 p.m.

Bring your place settings for the annual Audubon potluck dinner. Speaker Curtis Davis talks about how satellite images are used to track habitats used by coastal birds.

DUNGENESS RIVER CURRENT

Dungeness River Audubon Center
PO Box 2450
Sequim WA 98382



Wanted: Dungeness River Audubon Center Memberships Renewals/Endowment Donations

Choose your category (es): Renewal New member Endowment

Any amount above your dues is a contribution to our operating cost fund raising efforts.

Please contact our office regarding contributions to the River Center and Railroad Bridge Park Endowment Fund.

- Benefactor (\$1000)
- Patron/Corporate (\$500)
- Supporting/Business (\$250)
- Sustaining (\$100)
- Friend (\$50)
- Family (\$30)
- Individual (\$20)
- Senior/Student (\$15)

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

RCF mailing address:

Dungeness River Audubon Center
P.O. Box 2450, Sequim, Wash. 98382
Phone (360) 682-4376 Fax (360) 681-8060
E-mail address: rivercenter@ohmpwa.org

- Please Check this box if you are interesting in receiving information about volunteer opportunities for the Dungeness River Audubon Center

The friendship of those we serve is the foundation of our progress.