

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dungeness River Audubon Center unveils major expansion plans

Sequim, Washington. Partners of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's Dungeness River Audubon Center at Railroad Bridge Park unveiled plans to expand and remodel the existing interpretive building and announced the launch of the Inspire Wonder Capital Campaign at a celebration on June 22nd at the Center.

The expansion project features a soaring atrium that leads to a multi-functional classroom, a community meeting room, more exhibit space, a bird viewing area, concession stand, and commercial kitchen. A new park entrance off Hendrickson Road, a parking lot, and improved access to the Olympic Discovery Trail are also planned.

Powell Jones, Director of the Center, said the capital campaign is named 'Inspire Wonder' because "that's what we do every day – inspire wonder in kids and adults though the wonder of nature. The title just came naturally."

W. Ron Allen, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Council Chairman, announced campaign plans at the celebration where he and capital campaign chair Annette Hanson unveiled a new project sign near the entrance to the planned road and parking lot. The Tribe, the owner of the Park and the River Center building since 2001, is contributing more than 25% of the total project cost with the purchase of an additional 4.5 acres adjacent to the park and construction of the soon-to-be entrance road and additional parking east of the Center, estimated to cost \$714,000 including the land and site improvements. Allen said the Tribe, which has also helped support the Center since it opened, was appreciative of the amazing vision of the partners and their hard work, coordinating multiple viewpoints to keep this vision alive. He noted that "Once this whole roadway comes in, we'll educate the public from the time they drive in, all the way to going into the Center and walking around the park."

Center partners include the Dungeness River Audubon Center (DRAC), the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS), and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. Together they have raised 40 percent of the estimated \$2.9 million needed for the expansion since they committed to the project last year. They are now turning to organizations and community members around the region to help raise the remaining \$1.7 million, in addition to continued grant writing. Allen was confident saying, "we will get it done with the help of our friends who appreciate this kind of project."

The expansion is much needed. The 1,600 square foot building is too small for its exhibits and educational resources – which include over 500 bird and animal specimens. Chairs, tables and exhibits often must be

moved to accommodate activities. Classes are frequently standing room only and there is no dedicated space for community meetings. The expansion will add about 5,000 square feet. Allen said, “the fact that it’s out of room shows the enthusiasm and value of it. The events that go on here show people care about this river, they care about the estuary, and they care about the park.”

Gateway to the world of the Dungeness River

Architect Tormod Hellwig, well known for his warm, natural, sustainable designs, has drafted the concept plans for the expansion. He envisions the building as “the gateway to the world of the Dungeness River.” His plan follows the timbered look of the historic railroad bridge that is the centerpiece of the park.

New entry road and parking lot are first step

The first step in the transformation of the Center will be a new entrance road and parking lot in the grassy field east of the Center, with work expected to begin later this summer. This will address issues with the current lot and road, which are in the Dungeness River floodplain. It will also provide direct access to the Olympic Discovery Trail.

The timeframe for the next steps depends on fundraising efforts. Funding has so far come from the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, grants, and the boards of the three partners. Capital campaign chair Annette Hanson said, “Successful fundraising to date and the support of partners Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe and Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society have encouraged the Center to go public with the campaign. I look forward to sharing our vision for the expansion with the community and local and regional organizations.”

Bob Phreaner, President of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, said the Society “is excited about the opportunity to expand the Dungeness River Audubon Center for the education of our community in the wonders of nature.”

For more information about the campaign, contact Annette Hanson at 360-670-6774 or visit www.dungenessrivercenter.org.

The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe’s Dungeness River Audubon Center at Railroad Bridge Park is a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization consisting of three partners: The Dungeness River Audubon Center, the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, and the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe. The 70-acre nature park, interpretive center, and historic railroad bridge are owned by the Tribe. The park and Center are supported and maintained with significant support from the Tribe, the partner organizations, individual donors, and volunteers. The Center is located at 2151 West Hendrickson Road Sequim, Washington (360-681-4076; rcoffice@olympus.net). Learn more at www.dungenessrivercenter.org;

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