

# Case for Support

## *Growing the Dungeness River Audubon Center*



**In its first 16 years, the Dungeness River Audubon Center at Railroad Bridge Park in Sequim, Washington, has successfully enhanced appreciation of our local natural and cultural resources. But now the modest building and inadequate parking are limiting us from doing all we can. Our goal is to expand and remodel the Center to meet current and future community needs.**

### **Successes...**

When built in 2001, the Center was the first Audubon Center in Washington State and the first, nationwide, to be located next to a salmon-spawning river. It has fulfilled this early promise, becoming known for achieving its mission *to inspire understanding, enjoyment, and stewardship of the Olympic Peninsula's unique natural and cultural resources*. The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society work in concert with the Center and have formed a strong and robust partnership.

In 2017 the Center served 22,938 visitors and organized 616 educational programs, exhibits, field trips, meetings, and events. The Center engaged 4,170 children in hands-on science, conducted weekly bird walks for 920 participants, and recorded 150,000 Dungeness River crossings on the historic railroad bridge. Visitors also enjoyed these resources:

- Science exhibits that include an extensive collection of museum-quality mounted native birds
- A living classroom on the banks of the Dungeness River for students in nearby school districts, and for all who visit
- A link to the past through the historic, century-old Railroad Bridge
- A gateway to walking and cycling on the Olympic Discovery Trail
- A neutral meeting venue for community groups, especially those working in resource management

Director Powell Jones recently came upon an example of just how important the Dungeness River Audubon Center has become. He described it as:

"I was doing the pre-visit to a 5th grade class... As I was leaving the school, I came upon the evidence of transformation we have been looking for. A poster showed students working with us in the Dungeness River. Our program was highlighted as a key example for *'Learning Through A Sense of Place'* with a vision to *'create and enable the culture, competence, and conditions to ensure each student is prepared for meaningful work and engaged citizenship in our diverse and rapidly changing world.'*

“It is a great honor that the River Center is seen by school districts as inspiration of social change utilizing meaningful experiences for students. I am so proud and, as a supporter, you should be too, that our communities believe Environmental Education programs go beyond helping to improve test scores—they help transform individuals into more thoughtful and productive citizens.”

—Powell Jones, Director

### **Today’s Limitations...**

At present, all classes, programs, and meetings must compete for the use of the building’s single room that also houses science exhibits and teaching materials. Staff must make the best of a narrow, cramped office. Storage is in short supply for chairs and tables and for programming and educational materials. The nearest parking lot is small and the access road is in danger of washing away from river flooding.

### **For the Future...**

We envision an enlarged, redesigned and beautiful Center, allowing staff and volunteers to engage many more people. It will feature:

- A welcoming entry with separate areas for interpretive exhibits and meeting spaces
- A full-featured multipurpose meeting room available for the Center’s use and expanded community rentals
- Enhanced displays and a new wildlife viewing area to better connect people with nature
- Improved access to the Center, the Dungeness River, and the Olympic Discovery Trail by means of a new entry road and more parking located outside the floodplain
- Natural and Tribal design elements reflecting the spirit of the land and native cultures, giving our mission visual expression

### **We are on our way...**

- ✓ We have an exciting building concept designed by local architect Tormod Hellwig.
- ✓ We have donations and commitments nearing 40 percent of the estimated project costs.
- ✓ We have a fundraising goal of \$2.9 million.
- ✓ We will begin the first phase of the project in 2018.

Through this project we will help even more people deepen their appreciation of the unique natural and cultural resources of the Olympic Peninsula.

### **Help make this vision a reality**

To learn more, make a contribution, or get involved; please visit [www.dungenessrivercenter.org](http://www.dungenessrivercenter.org), or contact Director Powell Jones at 360-681-4076 or Capital Campaign Chair Annette Hanson at 360-670-6774.