Executive Director’s Notes—Powell Jones

“A River Runs Through It”

During a December 2014 flood, when the flow in the river reached an impressive 5900 cubic feet per second (cfs), the look of the Dungeness River and Railroad Bridge Park drastically changed. New channels were cut, hundreds of cubic yards of gravel shifted, and mature trees were torn away and washed downstream. When the waters receded, a new landscape remained, filled with a braided stream, a massive layered log jam, and a rejuvenated flood channel just beyond the west side of the main truss section of the bridge.

If salmon and the Pacific Northwest culture associated with them are important to us, then rivers should be free to go where they want. The restoration of the Elwha River is a perfect example of how creating and promoting healthy habitat by freeing a river is the best thing we can do for salmon. Healthy rivers are complex with large woody debris creating and promoting essential habitat such as hiding spots, multiple channels, and assorted gravel beds of the right sized rocks for redds (salmon nests).

(Continued on page 6)
**Dungeness River Audubon Center**

**Our Mission**

To inspire understanding, enjoyment, and stewardship of the Olympic Peninsula's unique natural and cultural resources, with emphasis on birds, rivers, fish, and people.

**Visit our updated website!**

www.dungenessrivercenter.org

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**2015 Rally Meeting March 16—Julie Jackson**

We're looking for fresh ideas for the 2015 River Center Rally, our 'feel good' fundraiser that promotes well-being and outdoor activities and enjoyment. Since 2009 The Rally (formerly called Dungeness Spring Fling) has raised over $125,000 for River Center education programs. Come share your ideas for this important fundraiser at an informal brainstorming session at 1:30 p.m., Monday, March 16, at the River Center. Contact Julie Jackson at (360) 683-1355 or juliejackson@wavecable.com.

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**Bridgehenge Event March 20—Gretha Davis**

On March 20 BRIDGEHENGE, when the sun sets directly through Railroad Bridge's 100-year-old trestle and trusses, marks the Spring Equinox. Just like Stonehenge in England, our Bridge marks the changes in seasons. We'll gather at 7 p.m. in RR Bridge Park's amphitheater, the “River Stage.” Wear layers and bring your cameras and flashlights. Join us to welcome spring and celebrate a special moment in the Bridge's illustrious 100th birthday year at Railroad Bridge Park, 2151 W. Hendrickson Road! Call 360-681-4076 or check out our new website at www.dungenessrivercenter.org.
Field and Classroom Experiences Build Student Confidence and Excitement—Tom Butler, Education Coordinator

A group of high-school students visits the River Center on Tuesday afternoons to learn about rivers, nature in general, and whatever the Center Staff happens to cook up for the day. This week they mapped locations and cleaned out the many old birdhouses on the bridge structure and in the acre or two around the River Center. You could tell it was the first time some had handled a screwdriver. Some of the houses are a challenge to reach. It was safe but exciting, and they were more than a little proud of themselves. The strange contents of the boxes, such as unusual nests, skeletons of failed nestlings, swallow and chickadee eggs, and one perfectly mummified nuthatch with a single odd crimson feather led to many questions and good discussions. It was a beautifully educational afternoon in many ways—experienced in our outdoor, living classroom—the Park.

As many of us know first-hand, the mysteries of the natural world teach many lessons, only some of which are directly related to the specific article planned by the teacher.

“It was safe but exciting, and they were more than a little proud of themselves!”
—Tom Butler

Fourth graders vibrate with excitement. —Staff photo

Binocular Raffle Drawing Saturday, April 11

Nice and small, with excellent optics. Nearly $400 retail, but for only $5 you can acquire a guaranteed possibility. Stop by the River Center to buy a chance. Magnification: 10x; Objective Lens Diameter: 28mm; Field of View: 267’ / 1000 yd; Eye Relief: 19mm; Close focus: 7.5”; Weight: 12.0 oz; Dimension: 4.7” x 4/5;” Waterproof, Fogproof.
**Calendar of Events...** [www.dungenessrivercenter.org](http://www.dungenessrivercenter.org)

**Weekly**

**Wednesday Morning Bird Walks**
Every Wednesday at 8:30 a.m., free.
Meet at the River Center and join us for a 2-hour bird walk to see and hear birds of Railroad Bridge Park.

**Dungeness Adventure Club**
Every Thursday, 10 a.m.-Noon, Cost $5 suggested donation.
The Dungeness Adventure Club is for children under 6 and their caregivers. Stop by Railroad Bridge Park and find new ways to get your child involved in nature with games, songs, and fun stories. Don't forget an extra set of clothing and a snack.

**MEETINGS**
Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society: 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the River Center.

**Work Parties**
Dates and Time: 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 9-12 a.m.
Please help keep RR Bridge Park looking bright and beautiful! Bring your work gloves to assist.

**Cuba with Stephen Cunliffe**
**March 13** from 7-8:30 p.m. Cost $7.
Cunliffe will take you on a memorable trip through beautiful and mysterious Cuba with this wonderful slideshow presentation.

**Classes/Events**
The remainder of the series for Spring includes:

- **March 7** “Spring Gardening for Birds” by Enid and Bob Phreaner
- **April 18** “Bird Migration” by Bill Parker and Terry Martin
- **May 16** “Enjoying Spring Sounds” by Dow Lambert and Ken Wiersema
- **June 6** “Out of the Nest” by Ken Wiersema

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**First Day of Spring Tea**
Celebrate the Return of Spring while supporting Railroad Bridge Park
**Friday, March 20.**
1:00-3:00 p.m.
At the home of Dave and Julie Jackson
Indulge in an array of sweet and savory delicacies and enjoy spectacular views in the company of friends.

**By Donation.** $25 suggested minimum.
Seating is limited. Reservations deadline: March 17
For reservations contact Julie Jackson (360) 683-1355 or juliejackson@wavecable.com

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Amazon.com Smiles
— Vanessa Fuller
If you shop at Amazon.com, did you know that you can select a local non-profit, via Amazon Smile, and they will donate a percentage of your purchase (.05%) to your selection. You can choose the Dungeness River Audubon Center. So now, every time you shop while on Amazon Smile, the Center receives some of the proceeds! Go to http://smile.amazon.com.

Calendar of Classes/Events

All Aboard for Railroad History 101
Six Tuesdays—March 24 to April 28 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. by Steve Hauff
Cost is $40 for Historical Society and River Center members, and $50 for others.

Why do the world’s railroads have different widths between rails? What is a gandy dancer? How did Shay and Climax locomotives contribute to the rail legacy of Clallam County? Why was the Spruce Railroad a marvel of engineering and fast work, but never used for its intended purpose?

Retired Clallam County engineer and active railroad buff Steve Hauff will answer these questions and many others about railroads in the six-session class, Railroad History 101 on Tuesday afternoons from March 24-April 28. In the March 24, March 31, and April 7 sessions, Hauff will cover world and U. S. rail history, railroad technology, nomenclature, and folklore.

The April 14 session will focus on the 30-some railroads of Clallam County, and April 21 will cover the Spruce Railroad and riding the rails today. The final April 28 session will allow time for catch up, wrap up, and review.

The classes will be at the Dungeness River Audubon Center. To register, call the River Center at (360) 681-4076 or email Tom Butler at rceducation@olympus.net.


Bird by Ear
Eight Thursday mornings between March 19 and June 25 by Dave Jackson. Cost for members $60, non-members $80.

If you can hear the difference between Jimi Hendrix and Lawrence Welk, you can learn to bird by ear. Just like binoculars, it greatly expands your awareness of what is going on, and those dang leaves don’t get in the way, either. This fascinating course will start slowly with the locals so when the spring migrants get here, you’ll be ready. Call the Center to register, (360) 681-4076. For details call Dave Jackson, (360) 683-1355.

Olympic Driftwood Sculptors 7th Annual Show & Sale March 28-29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

There will be a large exhibit at the Dungeness River Audubon Center of finished sculptures, beautiful handcrafted driftwood items for sale, demonstrations of how to work the wood, and lots of fun.

Introduction to Birds and Birding Tuesday evenings March 31 to May 5 from 7-9 p.m. by Dave Jackson.
Cost for members $50, non-members $70.

This fun and interesting class will cover the basics of bird identification, birding

Townsend’s warbler—Submitted photo

All proceeds support River Center educational programs.
On Feb. 6, 2015, the Dungeness River had another flood that was 2/3 of the size of the flood in December. The (3900 cfs) peak flow turned out to be more than enough to finish the job started 6 weeks earlier. The river removed large amounts of material in the newly rejuvenated west side channel and it became the main course of the Dungeness River. In a 100-yard stretch, well over a dozen alders, cedars, and cottonwoods toppled from the banks both up and downstream of the bridge. The river’s powerful eroding forces took their toll on our landmark, western approach trestle and 8 pilings where undermined, with 6 being completely swept away. Just like that, one of the hallmark pieces of the Olympic Discovery Trail was disabled for the foreseeable future.

So does this leave a broken bridge and unusable trail within spectacular salmon habitat? The definitive and long-term answer is no, but at this point the timing of repairs is unknown; it will be done as soon as possible. Repairing the trestle and re-opening the trail are essential to the community and to Railroad Bridge Park. Currently the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, owners of the Railroad Bridge Park, is researching and assessing all funding options for the two major repair components—design and construction. Repair designs vary widely with funding sources often driving the design. An ideal design will interact with the natural movements of the river and not try to force a river or land managers to react. In the end, learning to interact with rivers in ways that encourage diversity and, most importantly, freedom is a must.

Through all this, the support from the public has been nothing short of amazing. Thanks to the community, the Peninsula Trails Coalition, Clallam County, and our partners the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe and Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society for jumping in to help. We are just beginning to figure out the solution to this situation, so please keep in touch because we may need your help. If you would like to donate, please visit our website and click “Support,” call (360) 681-4076, or email rivercenter@olympus.net.

This is an evolving story and we would love to keep you up to date! Visit our revamped website: www.dungenessrivercenter.org anytime for events and great local information. “Like us” on Facebook to get multiple updates on the Railroad Bridge Park, River Center, and Dungeness River throughout the week. Subscribe to our free monthly E-newsletter by emailing rceducation@olympus.net.

—Powell Jones

Sales of LOOK UP! To benefit center programs—Woody Wheeler and Annette Hanson

Longtime friend and author Woody Wheeler has offered to donate 40% of the sales of his book to the Dungeness River Audubon Center. You don’t have to travel around the world or spend a ton of money to enjoy the wonders of nature. The paperback book sells for $17.95 plus tax. Woody is a nature educator and tour guide for Conservation Catalyst, a business he started eight years ago to inspire people to appreciate birds and natural history. He also guides for Naturalist Journeys, an international birding and natural history tour company. Look Up! is a series of well-researched nature essays that will inspire readers to experience the outdoors in an affordable, accessible, and joyful way. Get your copy soon!
Welcome Paige to the River Center—Powell Jones

Paige Belfry backpacking in ID with her rubber boa around her neck.
—Staff photo

We are excited to introduce Paige Belfry as our newest employee at the River Center. Paige’s role will be as the Visitor Services Specialist at the River Center, where she will assist visitors and docents on the weekends. Paige will also be helping with other educational programs and projects around the Park.

Born and raised in Tacoma, WA, Paige found her way to Port Angeles two years ago with her husband. Her interest in ornithology blossomed in college where she had a class that provided her with direct experiences with birds that introduced her to how incredible the fine details of birds and their behavior are.

Before being hired as the Visitor Services Representative, Paige was involved with many activities at the River Center including: bird walks, in-class visits to elementary schools, assisting in summer camps, helping teach the sixth grade program, Christmas Bird Count, and Project Feeder Watch. Like many park users, she was drawn to the River Center and Railroad Bridge Park as a nearby sanctuary to find peace.

Come and meet Paige, learn more about her fascinating background, and experience her passion for all things birds by asking her about “Christmas Eve emergency chicken surgery!”

A Message from the River Center Board

Each year, we draw some part of our budget from the Endowment Fund. It has been an essential source of funding that helps to successfully execute the Center’s mission of natural resource education, events, programs, and Park management.

We are so grateful to the very generous anonymous donor who, in 2008, made a $1,000,000 legacy contribution to the Dungeness River Audubon Center’s Endowment Fund. Our sincere appreciation and thanks also go out to the many other generous donors who have contributed to this Fund. Having this valuable fund moves us toward attaining our long-term vision of sustainability of the Center and Railroad Bridge Park.

Please read and save the enclosed Endowment Brochure. It explains one way you can help the River Center be successful, today and in the future.

Financial Planning Seminar at the River Center
Ten Things to Do While Planning Your Legacy
Thursday, April 30, 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Cost: FREE

In this 10th financial planning seminar, Phil Castell will cover:
FFF (You have to attend to find out what this means)—and Charitable Gifting.

Phil Castell is a licensed insurance agent in WA. He assists with navigating the health insurance marketplace, from individual plans -- including the Affordable Care Act -- to all aspects of Medicare. Owner/Operator of Castell Insurance in Sequim, his business offers auto, home, health, and investment services. He serves on the “Life and Disability Agent/Broker Advisory Committee,” an appointment made by Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler. Seating is Limited. To register, contact (360) 681-4076 or rceduction@olympus.net.
MEMBERSHIP FORM: DUNGENESS RIVER AUDUBON CENTER AND RAILROAD BRIDGE PARK

River Center memberships expire each year on May 1.

Name_________________________________________ Date_____________________

Mailing Address__________________________________________________________

City ________________________________________________________________

State______ Zip___________ Phone_____________________________  Cell ___________________________________

Email address _______________________________________________   Signature _______________________________

Please circle your membership dues category below. Is this a new membership ____or a renewal____?

$25 Individual  $35 Household  $50 Friend  $100 Sustaining

$250 Supporting  $500 Patron  $1000 Benefactor  Other $______________

☐ Here’s my additional gift to support the Center and Park $_________ and/or the Endowment $_________

☐ My check for $____________ made out to Dungeness River Audubon Center (or DRAC) is enclosed.

☐ I prefer to charge my membership/donation to:  ____ MasterCard  ____ VISA  Amount $______________

Acct# _____________________________ Exp. Date __________  3 Digit Security Code __________

☐ Our quarterly newsletter, the River Current, is delivered via email (as a pdf) whenever possible. To receive a hard copy by mail, please check this box.

☐ I would like information about volunteer opportunities for the Center and Railroad Bridge Park.

Please send your completed form with payment to:
Dungeness River Audubon Center, P.O. Box 2450, Sequim, WA 98382

THANK YOU!! Your contributions to the Dungeness River Audubon Center are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

Rev. 04-14-2014