Board members of the Dungeness River Audubon Center, the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, and the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Council met at the Tribe’s Red Cedar Hall in Blyn on January 5, 2017, for a signing ceremony to commit to an addition to the existing River Center building in Sequim. The building renovation will add 5000 s.f. of education, office, and meeting space. A new east entrance is planned and will be located on 4.5 acres of land the Tribe recently purchased to accommodate the expansion and additional parking. More information about our plans will appear in the next River Current newsletter. We look forward to the exciting and challenging future of our Center and Park. We have envisioned this for many years!

Executive Director Message...
“Students receive a better understanding and greater connections to the natural world.”—Powell Jones

There is no doubt in my mind that the River Center’s environmental education programs are great! Students of all ages receive a better understanding of and greater connections to the natural world. Our classes provide a change from peoples’ normal routines and, sometimes, that just means escaping the confines of a classroom or office. However, a few of our programs are transformative. These programs do more than change how students look at a plant, animal, or the river; they change the way that we look and react to the world.

Teachers and administrators have long told us that our 5th grade program helps their students achieve better science test scores, both in the classroom and on the state level. Testing is an adequate measurement of a student’s ability to...
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 website!
www.dungenessrivercenter.org

Trestle Engineering Firm Wins Award
—Betty Oppenheimer

The engineering firm, Otak, Inc., who designed the Railroad Bridge replacement trestle, nominated the project for the American Council of Engineering Companies of Washington’s 2017 Engineering Excellence Awards. At the January gala, the Otak team and the project were recognized with a Bronze Award.

The award was based on criteria such as uniqueness, originality, technical achievement, and economic and social value.

The program for the award ceremony stated “It isn’t often that our engineering profession delivers infrastructure projects that actually enhance and create salmon habitat by allowing the restoration of natural processes. This was the case for the new 750-foot long river-worthy and salmon-friendly pedestrian bridge that recently opened.”

Pat McCullough, of ESA, Inc. and Doug Sarkkinen, of Otak, Inc. attended the ceremony and accepted the award.

Technically-speaking, the project was described this way:

“The selected bridge type included four main spans of 185-feet each, which were prefabricated steel trusses with a concrete deck and a 30-foot wide section in the center that was used for an overlook area. The bridge piers had a buried pile cap with driven piles down to bedrock and a single concrete column supporting a..."
From the President...

“With Love”
—Julie Jackson

Valentine’s Day marked the 13th anniversary of our move to Sequim. Now, my husband Dave and I plan to move to Morgan Hill, California, this spring to be nearer our daughters. Although the move will end my tenure as president, it will not sever our ties or commitment to the River Center, its mission, and the Legacy Circle.

It was love at first sight when Dave and I discovered the River Center in November 2003, while visiting here from Virginia. Soon after we arrived in February 2004, we joined both the River Center Foundation (which was later renamed Dungeness River Audubon Center) and the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS). Those connections made it easy to make new friends and learn about the local birds, plants, and the area. We had a great time on Wednesday morning bird walks; taking classes from the Center; and participating in River Center and OPAS events and activities, such as field trips, bird counts, and the River Festival.

For the past 10 years, I have also enjoyed the privilege of serving on the River Center Board. The vibrant partnership among the Center, OPAS, and the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, is the engine that powers the Center, in my view, while the Board steers the course and keeps things on track. The Board, staff, and partners work together to shape the growth and progress of this marvelous organization.

As you’ll see from the Board member list on page 2, the Board includes three appointed representatives each from OPAS and from the Tribe. The River Center members elect the other 10 or so Board members. The Executive Director is a nonvoting, ex officio member of the Board.

The Nominating Committee is currently identifying and vetting potential members,

(Continued on page 6)
**Calendar of Events...**

**RR Bridge Park Work Parties**
Call the Center Office for dates and times, 681-4076.

**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.

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

**Looking for Nature-Related Books, Toys, and T-shirts?**
Visit the River Center Gift Shop
Proceeds support our educational programs!

**“Owls, Masters of the Night”**
March 4, Saturday
Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the River Center
Cost: $10 per person
Please join us, as River Center Director Powell Jones leads this special presentation focused on owls. Owls have always been birds of great interest for their wise look and ability to rule the dark. This is a family friendly class, designed for beginners and enthusiasts who wish to learn more about these amazing creatures of the night. Presentation covers basic owl identification, sounds, adaptations, hunting techniques, stories, and much more.
Pre-register for this class by calling 360-681-4076 or emailing rceducation@olympus.net.

**Plant Walk & Workshop with Michael “Skeeter” Pilarski**
March 5, Sunday
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the River Center
Price: $30 – Bring a brown bag lunch. Come prepared for the weather.
To reserve a space contact Michael Pilarski: friendsofthetrees@yahoo.com or 360-643-9178.

**Explorers Club - Next Trip!**
**Hurricane Ridge**
March 10—Friday
Time & Where: 10 a.m. at ONP Visitors Center
Cost: $20 per person—covers park entrance but not snowshoe rental (pre-registration requested).

(Continued on page 5)
For the next Explorers Club outing, we will take a trip up to the iconic Hurricane Ridge! We will be renting some snowshoes and hitting the trail! This is a great opportunity to take in some spectacular views while learning more about the Olympic Mountains, how they formed, and how they continue to be shaped. All experience levels welcome!

Contact Jenna Ziogas to register or for more information, 360-681-4076 or rceducation@olympus.net

If you are looking to get out and explore, learn, and enjoy more of the amazing Olympic Peninsula while connecting with like minded people, then the Explorers Club is for you!

‘Backyard Birding’ Classes
2016-2017, All 10 a.m. to Noon
The series of classes, hosted by members of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, is intended for residents of this area who are interested in knowing more about birds seen locally each season of the year and learning how to develop good habitats for wild birds.

“Backyard Birding” can be taken either as individual classes or in a series. The cost of each session is $5 and is free for anyone under 18.

After the completion of five sessions, participants will be offered free membership in OPAS for one year.

“Spring Gardening for Birds”
March 11, Saturday
#6 in the series of 10 classes in ‘Backyard Birding’

Joe Holtrop, Executive Director of the Clallam Conservation District, will present important aspects of a bird friendly yard, including food, water, and shelter, with emphasis on the use of plants native to this area. There will be an optional field trip (a two-mile hike at the Dungeness Recreation Area) to see native plants and where they are growing, following the class.

Spring Tea
March 21
1-3 p.m.
(See page 3 for details)

San Juan Islands Cruise— In conjunction with BirdFest April 4 –6, Tuesday through Thursday
Price: $950 per person double occupancy, $1100 single occupancy
Launch from: By the north boat ramp at John Wayne Marina
Register separately at: www.pugetsoundexpress.com/whale-watching-and-wildlife-tours/audubon

Join us for a three-day, two-night nature cruise to the spectacular San Juan Archipelago on the MV Glacier Spirit with naturalist Bob Boekelheide. Whales, porpoises, seals, and many sea birds await us. We depart from John Wayne Marina in Sequim at 9 a.m. on Tuesday morning, April 4. Please arrive by 8:30 a.m.

We’ll stay two nights at historic Roche Harbor Resort, visit Sucia Island (a WA State Marine Park), and cruise through Deception Pass on our way home. Cruise package includes all lodging, transportation, and breakfasts and lunches. Don’t miss it!

2017 Olympic BirdFest
April 7-9
(See poster and details on page 9)
Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction & raffle, gala banquet, and more.

“Bird Migration: Why, Where, When and How Birds Migrate”
April 15, Saturday
7th in a series of 10 classes in ‘Backyard Birding’

Ken Leuthold will lead an exploration of the astonishing world of long-distance flying, without any stopovers to rest or refuel! Imagine an 8-day, 7000 mile, non-stop flight every autumn to New Zealand for the Alaska Bar-tailed Godwits, compared to the three-and-a-half day record of an unmanned solar-powered aircraft!

Even though the Godwits may not stop over in Sequim, we will be seeing hummingbirds and swallows returning from their winters in the south.

Most of the swans that have spent their winter with us have left for the north.

Accolades for the Adventure Club for preschoolers —Lyn Muench
I recently met a stay-at-home mother with a 2-year-old son and a 3-year-old daughter. The mother is relatively new to the area, so I asked her if she knew about the Center and Park. “Oh yes,” she said, “we often go to the Adventure Club. The kids come home dirty and tired – it is perfect!”
From the President...With Love
...continued from page 3

as Board member elections will be held at the annual general meeting and potluck in June. Elected members serve for three years and may be re-elected for a second term. If you might be interested in serving or would like to recommend a potential candidate, contact Annette Nesse, at anesse@jamestowntribe.org or (360) 681-4620.

Last year, we were sorry to see Tribal representative Hansi Hals, who had contributed so much and so ably served as Board president for two terms, leave the Board.

New members strengthen the Board by bringing new skills, talents, and perspectives, and Hansi wisely chose her colleague Neil Harrington as her successor. Neil is passionate about outdoor education and the value of getting all children outside and sees his role on the River Center Board as supporting this. Neil lives in Port Townsend with his wife, Renee, and two school aged children and enjoys exploring the outdoors with them. He has been an Environmental Biologist for the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe since 2012, focusing on the interaction between nutrients and harmful algal blooms, as well as conducting outreach and education for school groups. He has over 15 years of experience working on water quality, habitat, shellfish, and salmon restoration projects on the North Olympic Peninsula. He earned a Master of Science in Biological Oceanography from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Sue Chickman, a greatly valued elected member of the Board, will step down in June. Sue’s many contributions include her roles in fundraising, overseeing the development of operating policies and procedures for the Center, and taking outstanding photographs of River Center activities and events.

The Board and staff are grateful that Hansi and Sue, like other former Board members, will continue to support the Center and Park in a variety of ways. I hope to do the same after our move, including participating in the River Center Rally in May from California. Dave will also continue to support the Center as the volunteer manager of the membership database. Being part of the River Center ‘family’ has been one of our most rewarding experiences. Thank you for being part of our family, too!

—Julie Jackson, President

Trestle Engineering Firm Wins Award... continued from page 2

A robust pier design insured stability after deep scouring below the pile caps, including lateral water pressures on debris build-up. To make the bridge river worthy, the piers had to withstand river avulsions anywhere along the span. Because the stoutness of the piers limited ductility for seismic performance, the substructure was supported on seismic isolation bearings on top of the pier caps. Restrainers were incorporated into the design to limit maximum seismic displacements."

Whew!

The Tribe received a lovely plaque and a pictorial project summary display to mark this honor.
Our program was highlighted as a key example for “Learning Through a Sense of Place…”

—Powell Jones, Executive Director

Recall information, but it doesn’t necessarily measure the change in their behavior. We do have evidence from the letters and notes we receive from our participants. “Best Field Trip Ever” and “You guys showed me that science is cool…I would like to do more” are a couple of my favorites. Notes, however, could just be a measure of students’ politeness and appreciation but, once again, not transformative.

Our 5th grade Health of the Dungeness River program is one of those transformative classes. I have watched many students become captivated by the idea that the stories of a river can be told by turning over a rock and by being attentive to our surroundings.

We see students embracing science by identifying with the natural world through explorations and observation. Our challenge is to genuinely document the effect of their learning experience on student behavior.

Recently, I was doing the pre-visit to a 5th grade class that was preparing to visit our park for a river health study. The teacher, whom we have worked with for 12 years, informed me that this would be her last trip before retirement, which made me wonder whether the next teacher would have the same interest in participating. As I was leaving the school, I came upon the evidence of transformation we have been looking for.

A poster on one wall, showed students working with us in the Dungeness River (see photo above). Although the photograph would have been enough to make me proud, it was the words on the poster that showed our program is transformative. 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 looked upon 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, Executive Director
The mission of Dungeness River Audubon Center is:
To inspire understanding, enjoyment and stewardship of the Olympic Peninsula’s unique natural and cultural resources, with emphasis on birds, rivers, fish, and people.

One of the ways we work toward our mission is through our school programs. We have developed curricula for elementary and middle schools that focus on the wildlife of the Dungeness watershed and how humans affect local watersheds over time. Here is a quick look at what each of our programs covers….

1st Grade—Three lessons: the first one focuses on “What makes a bird a bird,” the second lesson covers “Life cycle of a salmon,” and the final lesson is “Intro to habitat,” looking specifically at the life supported by an evergreen tree.

2nd Grade—Each class is presented four groups of birds (ducks, woodpeckers, raptors, and hummingbirds.) Small groups of students rotate between stations with each group of birds looking at the unique characteristics and adaptations they possess.

3rd Grade—Two lessons: exploring local mammals, their habitat, what they eat, and the tools that they use. We have stations with skulls, furs, specimens, and activities to illustrate these basic concepts in an interactive and lively manner.

5th Grade—This program is in two parts: including one classroom visit and one day that the students come out to Railroad Bridge Park. The students take part in a full field investigation and seek to answer the question, “Is the Dungeness River at Railroad Bridge Park a healthy river for salmon?” The classroom visit is intended to prep the students and provide background information on Pacific Salmon, potential water pollutants, and how we can test for pollution in the river. At Railroad Bridge Park, the students collect data through a series of tests in order to form a conclusion on the health of the habitat.

6th Grade—Students come back to the Center for a program that focuses on connecting them to their watershed. Students visit three stations that cover the following topics:

1) Stewardship (removing invasive plants, building trails, etc.),
2) Salmon (life cycle, challenges salmon face), and
3) Motion (animals and adaptations specific to their lifestyles, river dynamics and how a river changes and moves over time).

This program is unique in the fact that high school students run each station after they receive training on how to successfully run each activity.

8th Grade—For the 8th grade program, staff members go to the middle school to carry out a field science investigation on school grounds. Through the program, students gain a better understanding of field science basics when given an environmental scenario involving a specific plant species and then measuring the abundance of this species using transects and plots.

Most of these programs would not be possible without our wonderful volunteers! To find out about opportunities to get involved, contact Jenna Ziogas (Education Coordinator & Volunteer Coordinator) at rceducation@olympus.net or call 360-681-4076.
Fall Fundraiser Operational Support is Growing
—Sue Chickman & Powell Jones

Did you know?—The average monthly cost for operations of the Center and Railroad Bridge Park including educational programming for all ages, events, park services, school transportation, administration, and maintenance is $25,000!

Funding to fulfill our mission comes from a wide diversity of sources including private foundations, grants, program income, formal fundraisers, Legacy Fund, and most importantly from donors like you that believe in and support our mission.

Thanks to River Center and partner supporters, our annual fall appeal surpassed its fundraising goal of $40,000. Your help in achieving and surpassing our goal means a great deal to us.

About 25% of the donations will come by way of repeating monthly and quarterly payments. A recurring revenue stream helps assure we have many educational programs throughout the year.

Through mid February, the River Center received 196 Fall Fundraiser donations and pledges for a total of $4,786. There is still time to add your gift to the campaign if you haven’t already sent one in. Help get us over the $50,000 mark! You can contribute through the website www.dungenessrivercenter.org, or send your payment to the Dungeness River Audubon Center, P.O. Box 2450, Sequim, WA 98382. Our gratitude is boundless!

Sign Up for Olympic BirdFest 2017

Olympic BirdFest, April 7-9—Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction and raffle, gala banquet, and more.

Our featured speaker is noted nature photographer Bonnie Block. Join our festival pre-trip: a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 4-6, 2017. Register separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.


BirdFest is jointly sponsored by the partners of the Dungeness River Audubon Center with support from the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau and the City of Sequim—to benefit the Center.

Volunteer Appreciation Event
May 2
Mark Your Calendar!
MEMBERSHIP FORM: Dungeness River Audubon Center and Railroad Bridge Park

Name____________________________________________________________________Date_____________________

Mailing Address______________________________________________  City ___________________________________

State______ Zip___________ Phone_____________________________  Cell ___________________________________

Email address ________________________________________   Signature _______________________________

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

- $35 Annual Membership
- $500 Life-time Membership
- $_____ Legacy Fund
- $_____ Building Fund

☐ Here's my additional gift to support the Center and Park $ ________, Legacy Fund $________ and/or Building Fund $________.

☐ The River Current quarterly newsletter is delivered via E-mail (as a pdf). To receive a paper copy by U.S. Mail, please check this box and add $10 to cover printing and postage.

☐ 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. Number ___________________________ Expiration Date __________ 3 Digit Security Code ___________

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

Please send completed form and 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.

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