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

Summer 2011

President’s Letter

As I sit down to write this, the Dungeness River is running turbid and high from rain and snow melt, and turkey vultures are circling above my neighborhood. It is spring and we have had a wonderful year at the River Center. Bob, Powell, Valerie, Linda, Raven, and dedicated volunteers have earned our accolades by delivering quality programs and welcoming visitors. I am delighted by how many people have a positive story after visiting the Railroad Bridge Park and River Center. In addition to our usual high quality school and adult field studies, we made progress on upgrading our database, funding a long-term solution for the west end of the trestle, providing financial oversight of our investments and hopefully expanding our park boundaries.

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of the River Center building and program staff. Our Board is trying to define what we would like to accomplish in the next ten years. Write, phone, email us we know what aspects of the Center and its programs are most important to you, and what you would like to see developed further.

I recently read an article explaining the most important attribute for success is grit (the ability to persevere for a long-term goal). I admire the grit of our pioneering members in bringing the River Center to its current position. Now we need to display grit as we attempt to maintain operations despite funding shortfalls. We will be more reliant on our members’ donations this year. Please consider why the River Center is important to you, and let us know when you send in a contribution. It will inform our planning and make you joyful that you are part of this surprising place. Finally, there is much discussion about the need for political will to make positive changes for the environment, but it occurs to me that political will starts with personal will. Let’s allow ourselves to be inspired and motivated enough to be good stewards and role models. Thank you for being part of the River Center community.

Help Needed!

With all the wonderful growth we have had here at the River Center we need your help! The River Center is in need of more weekend greeters, festival volunteers, and special project people. You don’t need to be a bird expert to be a volunteer at the River Center; all you need is a cheerful attitude and a willingness to help find answers to questions about plants, animals, or the Sequim area. You can even bring a friend and make it more fun than it already is! For more information please contact us at 360-681-4076 or rctech@olympus.net
Dungeness River Audubon Center

2010 A Year In Review

2010 Milestones at a Glance
◆ Staff & volunteers participate in 654 events that attract over 18,000 attendees.
◆ River‘Salmon in the Classroom’ site.
◆ Outdoor field trips and in-school presentations reach nearly 4,000 students.
◆ More than 6,300 visitors sign guest book (59% from out of town).
◆ Railroad Bridge crossings increase to over 126,000.
◆ Fifty-six bird walks in the Park attract 871 attendees.
◆ Spring Fling Board Walk raises over $4,500 in honor of Board Member Annette Hanson.
◆ River Center participates in 17 community festivals, shows, & events.
◆ Endowment grows to over 1.3 million.

Changes and Growth

Last year, Annette Hanson, one of the visionaries who founded the Railroad Bridge Park and the River Center, retired, after 34 years of community service. The River Center and its partners, dedicated the 2010 Spring Fling ‘Board Walk’ in her honor on May 15, and hosted a reception for her on May 21, at the annual meeting. The River Center Board also unanimously elected her Board Member Emeritus.

Annette and her husband Mark shared a hope that the Sequim Natural History Museum they started in 1984 at Sequim High School would grow into a lasting legacy for the community. In 1993 the museum lost its space and closed. As the dream of building an interpretative center grew, the Rain Shadow Foundation was formed and the search for funding and a site began. Annette played a major role in establishing partnerships with the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe and Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society. Her role continued in establishing and operating Railroad Bridge Park and the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

Salmon in the Center

Thanks to Puget Sound Anglers, member Don Hatler, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the River Center became a ‘Salmon in the Classroom’ site in 2010. In this program, schools and other public facilities raise salmon from eggs to fry, and release them in the nearest river or stream when they reach suitable size. On February 1, the River Center received several hundred Coho salmon eggs from the Hurd Creek hatchery located on the Dungeness River north of Sequim. By March 1, all eggs had hatched. Sixth graders excitedly released the fry during their field trips to Railroad Bridge Park in June.
River Monitoring

During the 2009-2010 school year, the River Center provided river-monitoring field trips for 25 fifth-grade classes from schools in Port Townsend, Sequim, and Port Angeles. A total of 571 students and 117 adults attended these field trips. The students became involved in a real scientific question: “Is the Dungeness River a healthy river for salmon?” The River Center also provided field trips for 205 sixth-graders and 199 eighth-graders from Sequim. The sixth graders are involved in Park Stewardship field trips and the eighth graders participate in Watershed Weeks, learning about the river and bay. Fieldtrips this year were largely funded by a B-WET grant from NOAA, along with generous donations from the supporters of the River Center.

Spring Fling

Dungeness Spring Fling is a ‘feel good’ fundraiser during the month of May that also promotes fitness and well-being. Participants in 2010, ranging in age from 13 to 98, raised more than $21,000 for the River Center. They also logged thousands of miles and hundreds of hours, while doing a favorite activity, such as biking, hiking, gardening, or birding. On May 15, ‘Board Walkers’ from the River Center, OPAS, and the Tribe did a 17-mile relay and raised over $4,500 in honor of Annette Hanson.

Art in the Park

Many first-time visitors attended the art exhibit and demonstrations, August 13-17, in the River Center and Railroad Bridge Park. The multi-media exhibit celebrated connections between art and nature and featured 23 local artists. This second annual event included art activities for kids and evening hunts for bats and moths.

River Festival

The annual Dungeness River Festival celebrates the richness and resources of the Dungeness watershed. During the September 24-26 Festival, nearly 3,000 visitors filled the park. On Friday, all of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders in the Sequim school district plus home-school students from the area came to the Festival, and many returned on the weekend with their families. Kids and adults enjoyed the exhibits, presentations, Driftwood Art Show, walks, music and food.

Docents and Volunteers

Nearly 100 dedicated volunteers help operate part of the River Center, its programs, and Railroad Bridge Park. Their efforts complement the River Center's outstanding staff and extend the Center's reach well beyond the boundaries of the Park. Weekend volunteer naturalists welcome the visitors. Work-party volunteers do what's needed to keep Railroad Bridge Park and River Center grounds in good shape. Outreach volunteers are the Center's community ambassadors at festivals, outdoor markets, and special events.

River Center education volunteers teach and/or help with science-education programs in the Park and in public and private school classes. And, during special events such as, Spring Fling, Art in the Park, River Festival and Nature Mart, the volunteers fill in where needed. In other words, volunteers are an integral part the River Center and Railroad Bridge Park.

Important! Verifying Your Membership Data

The Dungeness River Audubon Center and Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society are developing a new database system to help each organization improve its capability to communicate with members. We are updating the data and fixing as many errors as possible before the new system becomes operational. You now have the opportunity to verify your personal profile, which we will send to you via email. We encourage you participate, and we'll try to fix any errors you report promptly. Questions? Please contact Julie Jackson at 360-683-1355 or juliejackson@wavecable.com
High School Biology Students Gain Teaching Experience
Pictures and Article By: Sue Chickman

In May, over 200 sixth-grade students were delighted by an awesome outdoor learning experience of the Dungeness River ecology. At the same time, more than 20 high school biology students honed their skills teaching watershed stewardship to the youngsters. Skilled River Center volunteers and staff, who developed the natural science educational program, supported all the students.

One of six learning stations set up throughout Railroad Bridge Park began inside the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Topic: everything salmon — the types of species, their life cycle, and which ones are found in the Dungeness River. Salmon eggs were hatched and reared this past spring in a huge aquarium inside the Center, but it was now time for the students to release the young fry into the river. The fish will journey to the ocean and return to the same river in a few years to spawn their own eggs.

Another station was on the banks of the fast-flowing river where the young naturalists measured temperatures, dissolved oxygen, pH, and cubic feet per second (CFS), which is determined by calculating river width x depth x speed.

Classmates then put on waders and set foot into one of the river’s beautiful side-channels where the high school leaders helped collect live specimens of insect larvae — the yummy food for young salmon as well as for American Dippers, woodpeckers, and other bird species. At the picnic shelter, they identified and made drawings of the macro invertebrates they collected, and then released them back into the river.

No outdoor learning experience would be complete without a walk through the riparian forest to identify native species of trees, shrubs, herbs, and flowers found in the park. Botanist-volunteer Kathy Bush offered identification tips and tricks along the Olympic Discovery Trail, which travels right through the heart of Railroad Bridge Park.

The lessons weren’t over yet, however. Stewardship was another very essential element to understand and — more importantly — experience, so off the mini-foresters went to remove the invading, non-native plants that occupy the river banks and compete for the limited space that keeps the river ecosystem healthy. And, finally, new stewards were given an opportunity to use their imaginations to come up with a new park attraction that would influence human behavior in a positive way and persuade more people to visit and enjoy the park.

Outdoor learning experiences help the young develop healthy hearts and minds with a strong foundation of understanding for stewardship of the natural environment. The program also provides a training ground for high school biology students to put their knowledge to work. Donor-supported programs such as these are the cornerstone of the River Center’s mission.
Ecology of the Dungeness River Class

This summer, the River Center once again presents our popular class, "Ecology of the Dungeness River." This is a six-week class designed to survey the geology, botany, and zoology of the Dungeness. The class takes a big-picture look at the river, from the mouth to the mountains, looking at changes in the river, both natural and man-made.

The class runs over six weeks on Thursday mornings, starting at 9 a.m., from July 14 to August 25. We start at River’s End, learning about changes in the river’s estuary over the last 150 years and how pocket estuaries benefit coastal organisms, particularly young salmon. We learn about proposals to restore the flood plain and provide habitat for spawning salmon. We visit the Dungeness Hatchery, learning another part of the salmon restoration puzzle. Our last two trips climb into the Olympic Mountains, where the cold snow-fed river passes through steep forests.

Everyone in the Sequim-Dungeness Valley should know and appreciate the Dungeness River. Please register for the class now by calling or stopping by the River Center. For More Information Call 360-681-4076.

Almost New Website!

Have you checked out our website recently? Okay it isn’t brand new but there are a lot of changes. Thanks to Don Wallace the site has a new look, wider borders, and is constantly being improved. There are some great additions including a new section titled; Birds of Railroad Bridge Park and the Dungeness. There is a lot of new photography and material to help learn more about our area. Of course all the great features like our schedule and Wednesday morning bird walk data is still available and up to date. Come visit us at: www.DungenessRiverCenter.org

We are on Facebook!

Find us on Facebook and “like” us to get updates on what we are up to. We will be posting events, Railroad Bridge Park updates, interesting links, and more.

ODT BIKE ADVENTURE
DUNGENESS RIVER AUDUBON CENTER
At Railroad Bridge Park

Students ages 11-14, will ride the ODT from Railroad Bridge Park over two days with stops to learn about bike safety, maintenance, and of course the natural history of the Olympic Peninsula. For more information call Powell 360-681-4076 or e-mail rctech@olympus.net. Also Check our website at: www.DungenessRiverCenter.org
Thanks Fred and Shirley Hudson for your Donation!

“We donated the funds from the sale of our ‘Good ole Rig’ to the River Center and Olympic Audubon Society. They are really effective in helping kids and the community relate to nature. We know and trust the dedicated staff and volunteers and fully support their very important work.”

Fred and Shirley Hudson

Contact the River Center to learn about donating your vehicle.
(360)-681-4076

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Lavender Festival Photo Frolic

Grab your camera and capture your finest lavender images ever. The Dungeness River Audubon Center is sponsoring photo workshops right in the field at Purple Haze Farm each day during the Lavender Festival, July 15 to 17. You’ll get lots of hot image-making tips from some of the finest photographers in the area. Only seven people will attend each one-hour session (you can sign up for more than one!). There will be three sessions each day. Cost: $20 session. All proceeds benefit the Audubon Center. Pre-register at the Audubon Center or call 360-681-4076. Meet at the Audubon Center booth at Purple Haze Farm. 3 Classes every day at 10am, 1pm, and 3pm. Check our website for more info on teachers and their topics!

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Camp Goals:
- Have Lots of Fun
- Learn about the River and Forest of the Dungeness Valley
- Make new Friends
- Send kids home wet, dirty, smiling, and asking for more everyday!

Summer Science Camps Dates:
- Time: 9-3 Daily Session I: August 8-11
- Session II: August 22-25

Summer Camp
Dungeness River Audubon Center
At Railroad Bridge Park

Students ages 8 to 11, this is your chance for fun outdoor activities on the banks of the Dungeness River. Each day has an exciting theme to teach kids about the environment while having fun and getting dirty! The themes include creepy crawlers, birds, river animals, camouflage, and bike adventure all tailored for children’s enjoyment. To register or for more info call (360) 681-4076 or check our website at: www.DungenessRiverCenter.org
Friday July 15, 2011 beginning at 6:00 p.m.

1. Dinner/Story Telling – 6:00 pm - $45.00 adult, $25.00 child*
2. Totem Tour/Dinner/Story Telling – 4:00 pm - $60.00 adult, $30.00 child
3. Totem Tour only – 4:00 pm - $20.00 adult, $10.00 child
   * child = ages 10 and under

Please call the Tribal office at (360) 681-4600, or email Anika Kessler, akessler@jamestowntribe.org, to order tickets.

**Dinner and Story Telling** - Experience some of the best of Northwest Tribal culture and food hosted by the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe at the Tribe's Community Center on Sequim Bay. The Tribe's carving shed, “House of Myths”, where the totem poles for the Tribal campus and Seven Cedars Casino are created, will be open between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Tribal carvers will be on hand to answer questions and demonstrate carving techniques. Dale Faulstich, Master Carver and co-author of “Totem Poles of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe” will be available to sign copies of his book, which will be on sale Friday evening for $15.00 per copy. The Tribe's Northwest Native Expressions art gallery and gift shop, which carries souvenirs as well as original Native American cultural art work, will also be open for your shopping pleasure. Take some time and shop for souvenirs and original Native American art.

At 6:00 p.m. a traditional salmon dinner will be served outdoors on the shores of beautiful Sequim Bay. The salmon will be cooked on cedar stakes over an open fire and served with local vegetables, traditional bread, a berry dessert and non-alcoholic beverages. At 6:45 p.m., renowned Jamestown S'Klallam storyteller, Elaine Grinnell, will begin to tell stories as well as display and describe native crafts and tools.

Profits from the dinner will be donated to the operations budget of the Dungeness River Audubon Center. This center is a partnership with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, Audubon Washington, and the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Learn more about the Dungeness River Audubon Center at www.dungenessrivercenter.org.

**Totem Tour** – Receive a guided walking tour of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe’s renowned totem poles. Get an “up close” view of the poles while learning about the historical figures and legends that inspired their designs. Not only will you learn about the “Founding Fathers” of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, you'll also discover why the S'Klallam are called the “Strong People”, and why the wolf is so well respected. In addition, the numerous stories and folk tales illustrated on these carved columns will be revealed to you.

**Advance reservations are required** – 25 participants per tour.

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Want to see what you are missing? Check out the last River Current Online: www.DungenessRiverCenter.org

By putting our newsletter online and e-mailing it to as many members as possible we can save paper, trees, and postage too...we can spend the savings on programs instead of printing and mailing. Please help us go green by sending Powell Jones your e-mail address at rctech@olympus.net
Special Events

Summer Nature Camps:
ODT Bike Adventure
Session I: Jul 5th and 6th; Session II: July 19th and 20th
Students ages 11-14, will ride the ODT from Railroad Bridge Park over two days with stops to learn about bike safety, maintenance, and of course the natural history of the Olympic Peninsula. Call Powell 360-681-4076 or e-mail him at rtech@olympus.net for details.

Session III: Aug 8-11; Session IV: Aug. 22-25: Daily, 9 to 3
Students ages 8 to 11, this is your chance for fun outdoor activities on the banks of the Dungeness River. Every day brings a new exciting theme for children’s enjoyment. Fee: $140 per child, includes t-shirt. Contact the River Center for info and to sign up.

Ecology of the Dungeness River
Dates: Thu. Mornings, Jul 14 – Aug 25, 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.

San Juan Islands 3-Day Cruise: Oct. 3-5.
Join Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society for a three-day cruise and birding adventure through the San Juan Archipelago. We depart from Sequim Bay aboard the 65-foot M/V Glacier Spirit, stay two nights at Roche Harbor Resort on San Juan Island, visit Sucia Island State Park for picnic lunch, and cruise back home by way of spectacular Deception Pass. Lots of birds and marine mammals. Watch for further details at www.olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org. For information, contact 360-681-4076, or e-mail: rcoffice@olympus.net
Schedule of Events

www.DungenessRiverCenter.org
Contact the River Center at 360-681-4076 or email rivercenter@olympus.net for more information, or to register for sessions. Pre-registration is encouraged, especially for classes.
The Dungeness River Audubon Center is located at Railroad Park, 2151 West Hendrickson Road, PO Box 2450, Sequim, WA. The River Center is a partnership with the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, and Audubon Washington.

Hours: Tues. to Sat., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sun 12 to 4 p.m. Closed Mondays

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 Parties, - Jun 30, July 28, Aug. 18, and Sep. 22 (River Festival Prep); 1 to 4 p.m.
Three short hours each month to keep RR Bridge Park looking bright and beautiful! Bring your work gloves to assist with gardening, cleaning, trail maintenance and other chores that make our park shine. Sep. 22 we setup for the Dungeness River Festival.

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Students ages 8 to 11, is your chance for fun outdoor activities on the banks of the Dungeness River. Every day brings a new exciting theme for children’s enjoyment. Fee: $140 per child, includes t-shirt. Contact the River Center for info and to sign up.

OPAS Field Trip to NEAH BAY, Date: Sat., Jul. 7; Meeting Time: 9 a.m. at Washburn’s Store, Neah Bay.
Look for birds at the northwest tip of WA State! The trip focuses on seabirds at Cape Flattery and Neah Bay, plus returning shorebirds. Information: Bob Iddins (360-681-2840).

Protection island Puffin Dinner Cruises - Lavender Festival Puffin Cruises: Fri. & Sat., Jul. 15 and 16; Time: 7 to 9 p.m.; Cost: $65 per person
Enjoy birding and dinner aboard the Glacier Spirit as we circumnavigate Protection Island, home to Tufted Puffins, Rhinoceros Auklets, Glaucous-winged Gulls, and other seabirds. This always-enjoyable trip leaves from John Wayne Marina in Sequim Bay. Call the River Center at 681-4076 to reserve your spot.

Totem Tour, And Salmon and Stories by the Bay – Lavender Festival Northwest Native Dinner July 15th
Experience Northwest Indian stories, food, and culture at the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe’s beautiful community center overlooking Sequim Bay. Visit the Tribe’s totem pole carving shed and hear Elaine Grinnell’s timeless stories about animals and the S’Klallam people. Salmon dinner prepared the traditional way to highlight the evening. Call the Tribal office at (360) 681-4600, or email Anika Kessler, a kessler@jamestowntribe.org, to order tickets.
See detailed description of this event in this newsletter

Lavender Festival Bird Walk, Sat., Jul. 16; Time: 8:30 a.m.
If you’re tired of crowded lavender fields, come on a relaxing bird walk through the riparian forest by the Dungeness River. Bring your binoculars and bird books to see what feathered beauties we can find. One mile, two hours.

Ecology of the Dungeness River, Six Thursday mornings, Jul. 14 to Aug. 25, 9 a.m. to noon.
First session at River Center, other sessions in the field. Cost: $50 for River Center Partners, $75 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.


Art in the Park and Art Show, Jul 29 to Aug 2. The forests, river, and historic bridge of Railroad Bridge Park inspire local artists to create great works and display them. Come enjoy the show.

Shorebirds and Gulls of the Olympic Peninsula Class Fri & Sat, Sep. 26 and 27. Fri. evening presentation, 6:30-8:30; Sat. Field Trip, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Cost: $25 for River Center partners, $40 for non-partners.
New varieties of shorebirds and gulls migrate through our area in late summer. Learn the identification and natural history of these beautiful birds. Includes field trip to Dungeness Bay. Limit: 16 people. Please pre-register.

Natural Science Study Group, Sep. 12, 10 a.m. to noon.
This adult discussion group focuses on the natural world of the north Olympic Peninsula, including climate, weather, rivers, geology, botany, and wildlife. Discussion topics vary with group interests. Come gain some knowledge.

OPAS Monthly Meeting Wed. Sep. 21; 6 p.m. potluck dinner, 7 p.m. meeting
Join the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society at their monthly meeting, starting with a delicious potluck. Speaker TBA.

Introduction to Birds and Birding: A Class for Beginners. Six Tue. Evenings, Sep. 20 to Oct. 25; 7 to 9 p.m. Cost: $40 River Center partners, $60 non-partners
Want to find out about birds, but afraid to ask? This six-week class for beginning birders provides basic lessons about the types of birds in our area, bird identification, field guides, and birding optics. Includes two field trips to local birding areas. Limit: 16 people. Please pre-register at the River Center.

Dungeness River Festival, Sep. 23-24. Help celebrate the watershed that keeps the Sequim-Dungeness Valley alive. There will be activities for kids and adults, music, art, food, and much more. We need help organizing this big event, so please contact the River Center if you can help.
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 (ies): □ Renewal □ New Member □ Endowment

Any amount above your dues is a contribution to our operating cost.
Please contact our office regarding contributions to the River Center and Railroad Bridge Park Endowment Fund

☐ Individual ($25) ☐ Family/Dual ($35) ☐ Friend ($50)
☐ Sustaining ($100) ☐ Supporting/Business ($200) ☐ Patron/Corporate ($500)
☐ Benefactor ($1000) ☐ Additional Donation$

Contact Information:
Dungeness River Audubon Center
P.O. Box 2450 Sequim WA 98382
Phone (360) 681-4076 Fax (360) 681-8060
Web Site: www.DungenessRiverCenter.org

Name _____________________________
Address __________________________ 
City ____________ ST _______ Zip ________
Phone ____________________________
E-mail ____________________________

☐ Check if you would like to receive the River Current
  newsletter online instead of in print.

☐ Check if you are interested in receiving information about
  Volunteer Opportunities for the Dungeness River Audubon Center

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