



The woodpecker climbs again: Representatives of the volunteer Capital Campaign Committee raising funds for the proposed Dungeness River Audubon Center expansion include, from left, Darcy McNamara, chair Annette Hanson, center director Powell Jones, Kendra Donelson, Wanda Schneider and Tuttie Peetz. Here they stand in front of the “Inspire Wonder Capital Campaign” banner — now at about 90 percent (as marked by the woodpecker) of the approximate \$3.6 million goal after recently receiving word of a \$1.5 grant through a State Capital Budget appropriation. Submitted photo

Dungeness River Audubon Center gets \$1.5M state capital budget grant

By Michael Dashiell

Wednesday, June 12, 2019 11:23am | [NEWS](#)

‘Close the Gap’

What: Fundraising for Dungeness River Audubon Center

More info/how to donate: www.dungenessrivercenter.org

Special event: Charity Golf Tournament (four-person scramble), June 15, The Cedars at Dungeness; \$100 per player; call 360-582-4900 to sign up

Contact: Capital Campaign Chair Annette Hanson at 360-670-6774

State funds helped get the Sequim facility built and, appropriately, it's more state funding that is helping pay for a large portion of its expansion.

The Dungeness River Audubon Center got a \$1.5 million grant through a State Capital Budget appropriation last week, pushing the total fundraising for a planned major expansion to 90 percent of its approximate \$3.6 million price tag.

The planned expansion includes a new access road and parking lot, addition of a wing and remodel of the building located in the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's Railroad Bridge Park adjacent to the Dungeness River.

Funds raised will expand the current building to add a classroom, 150-seat community multipurpose room, commercial kitchen, restrooms, office space, gift shop and concession stand, while remodeling the existing building will provide enhanced and larger exhibit space, children's discovery corner, library and bird-viewing area, fundraisers say.

The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Council has purchased 4.5 acres of land just east of the Audubon Center and has made commitments to build the new road, parking lot and site improvements.

Recent grant funding also was awarded \$300,000 in April by the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust and the First Federal Community Foundation.

Capital Campaign Chair Annette Hanson said the Washington legislature's capital budget appropriation is "validation of the importance of this project to our region."

She credited State Representatives Steve Tharinger and Mike Chapman and Senator Kevin Van De Wege for garnering support among other legislators.

“We are forever grateful for their leadership and representation, especially by Tharinger, Chair of the House Capital Budget Committee,” Hanson said. “Audubon Washington staff also provided great support and advice. I’m also thankful for the hard work by the campaign committee, staff, and partners.”

W. Ron Allen, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Chair and CEO, said, “Our Tribe is very excited about this expansion of the Dungeness River Audubon Center. We have always felt that public education, including our cultural values of protecting and preserving the Dungeness River and the habitat it supports for the salmon, birds, and wildlife, is a critical part of building a deep appreciation of the connectivity of all life. The exhibit and classroom will be a new asset for our community.”

Origins, project details, next steps

Incorporated in 1994, the River Center has become a resource for educational activities designed to connect people with nature. Three partner organizations — the Dungeness River Audubon Center, the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe and the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society — run the center.

The current 1,600-square-foot building is too small for the center’s educational programs and exhibits, center representatives say. Exhibits must often be moved to accommodate activities and classes are frequently standing-room only with no dedicated space for community meetings. The main room is often used simultaneously by visitors, community meeting participants and classes.

“Expanding the Center will enhance our programming by increasing the facility’s capacity for visitors to learn about and connect with nature, attend meetings or relax without any conflicts for space,” center director Powell

Jones said. “As an organization we are excited to explore and develop more programming not only for our local community but also for visitors to our area.”

The project kicked off publicly on June 22 with a celebration at the proposed new entrance to Railroad Bridge Park.

According to Capital Campaign organizers, construction of a new entry road and parking lot off Hendrickson Road will begin this summer, while work on detailed architectural plans for building’s new wing and remodel of the existing building is already underway.

Construction of the wing will begin as soon as the funding goal is complete, they said.

The project also includes a parking lot and improved access to the Olympic Discovery Trail.

Fundraising

Expansion advocates and center staff have now begun a “Close the Gap” initiative to raise remaining funds through a combination of grants, fundraising events and contributions from individual and businesses.

The first “Close the Gap” event is the Dungeness River Audubon Center Charity Golf Tournament set for Saturday, June 15, at The Cedars at Dungeness, 1965 Woodcock Road. Format is a four-person scramble. Cost is \$100 per player; the fee includes prizes and lunch, with all proceeds going to the center’s capital campaign.

To sign up, contact The Cedars at Dungeness Pro Shop at 360-582-4900.

To contribute and learn more about the campaign, including a video, visit www.dungenessrivercenter.org.

“Close the Gap” campaign volunteers are looking for groups interested in hearing more about the project. For more information or to volunteer, contact Hanson at 360-670-6774.



© 2019, Sequim Gazette and Sound Publishing, Inc.

[Subscribe](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Print Editions](#) | [About Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#)



We're glad that journalism matters to you!

Get unlimited digital access for just 99¢.

REGISTER 

Already have an account? [Click here](#) to log in.