

BP Heron Center Business Plan for Friends of Birch Bay State Park

September 18, 2012

Project Description:

The Friends of Birch Bay State Park propose to construct a 40' x 60' log building with a covered picnic area and an enclosed classroom space, known as the BP Heron Center within Birch Bay State Park. The Friends intend to operate, maintain and market the Heron Center for environmental education programs and other community events. When not in use by organized school groups and interpretive programs, the facilities would be available by reservation for rent. Any funds derived from the rental will be used to maintain and equip the facility or fund programs which benefit Birch Bay State Park.

The BP Heron Center will provide those attending classes, programs, picnics, reunions, etc. with a central indoor and/or sheltered meeting area and a place to get out of the weather and allow these activities to occur year-round in the midst of the beautiful Pacific Northwest surroundings. The log structure should fit in well with its surroundings and will include running water, plumbing and electricity. It will be appropriately furnished with picnic tables, tables, chairs, etc. The Center will be located between Birch Bay Drive and Terrell Creek, within 50 feet of the existing parking lots and rest room facilities thus significantly reducing the cost of the project.

To accomplish this, the Friends are asking WA State Parks for a long-term land use agreement for the space the Center will occupy so that Friends will be able to make the best use of their resources, volunteers and donations.

What Birch Bay State Park means to the community

Quotes from the Birch Bay Community Plan adopted by Whatcom County in September, 2004:

Recreation is the heart of Birch Bay's identity. Recreation related commerce continues to be the community's primary industry. The significance of Birch Bay's shoreline as a recreation resource cannot be overstated. It provides high quality passive and active recreation experiences for both residents and visitors. Because Birch Bay is a regional destination for day use and overnight visitors, it provides an opportunity for private sector recreation businesses to thrive.

Policy PR-1d: Work cooperatively with the City of Blaine, Whatcom County Parks, the State of Washington, and any other governmental agencies and nonprofit/private entities to provide and/or enhance recreation facilities and programs.

Policy PR-3c: Recognize the potential tourism related economic benefits and the educational value of cultural resource preservation and enhancement. Pursue funding sources to realize these benefits.

The permanent population of the Birch Bay UGA has grown by 77% over the last 20 years and is expected to continue to grow though probably not at that high rate. The Center is very likely to be a popular amenity for residents and visitors alike judging by the large usage of a similar amenity at a county park on Semiahmoo Spit located about 10 miles north.

Mission and Purpose of Friends of Birch Bay State Park (FOBBSP)

As adopted October 15, 2001

Mission Statement: The FOBBSP shall assist Birch Bay State Park in its mission to inspire visitors and residents with an appreciation for the natural and cultural heritage of Birch Bay and to benefit, support and promote Birch Bay State Park as a most precious recreational and educational asset of the Birch Bay community.

Purpose: FOBBSP shall:

1. Receive and disseminate gifts, grants, funds, property and in-kind donations for the benefit of Birch Bay State Park.
2. Enroll volunteer support for participation in activities and projects at Birch Bay State Park including, though not limited to the following:
 - a. Park maintenance, including buildings, structures, trails, grounds and water resources.
 - b. Interpretive education including signs, seminars, workshops, guided walks and programs.
 - c. Special events such as clean-ups, community gatherings, programs and performances including fund raising activities.

All such purposes, goals and objectives shall be in accordance with the regulations, objectives, policies, procedures and plans of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (herein after referred to as State Parks), especially as stated in the *Cooperative Association Agreement* between State Parks and FOBBSP.

From the Whatcom County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, 2008.

2.8 Goals and Objectives – Special Purpose facilities

Help coordinate and assist other public and private agencies...on enterprise operations for interpretive centers...

From the Whatcom County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, 2008 found on page E-13 in Appendix E: Finances

Self-help land leases

There are instances where an activity is so specialized in appeal or of a service area so broad in scope that it cannot be equitably financed using general public funds. Specialized user groups should be provided options for developing or maintaining facilities in ways that account for equitable public cost reimbursements. Examples include the use of land leases where the county may lease land at low or no cost where a user group or club assumes responsibility for the development, operation, and maintenance of the facility. The club could provide volunteer help or use club finances to develop, operate and maintain the facility as a means of meeting user benefit/cost objectives.

Construction Cost Estimate

Design and Permitting	\$6,000
Construction - slab, utilities rough in, weather tight shell	140,000
Solar Panel equipment	18,000
Interior Equipment	13,000
Interior finish work	25,000
Interior furnishings	12,000
AV Equipment	12,000
Landscaping	<u>10,000</u>
Total	\$236,000

Funds Spent to September 2012

WWU – Business Plan	\$2,400
Taron Design – Engineered Drawings in July 2006	972
Engineer’s Stamp	3,500
Artist’s Rendition	700
PDS – SEPA, variance & permit in Jan. 2010	<u>4,350</u>
Total	\$11,922

Account Balances as of September 12, 2012

BP Heron Center checking	\$141,700.91
FOBBSP checking	\$ 13,205.59

Construction Time Line

Design & Engineering	July 2007
Permitting, finish	Spring 2013
Log building construction in yard	Summer 2013
On site prep, rough in, erect building	Fall 2013
Dedication & Ribbon Cutting	April 2013
Interior completion	Winter & Spring 2013

Annual Maintenance and Operation Costs

Annual Expenses	
Utilities (water, sewer, electrical)	\$2,400
Janitorial	\$1,000
Maintenance	\$1,000
Supplies	\$500
Advertising and Marketing	\$1,000
Total Expenses	\$5,900

Estimated Revenues

Rental Rates	
Monday-Thursday- 8 a.m. to 10 p.m	\$200
Monday-Thursday 5 hours or less	\$100
Friday, Sat. or Sunday- 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.	\$300

Revenues would likely cover the cost of maintenance and operation. If the facility is rented an average of one time per week, year round, at an average rate of \$200, it would generate \$10,400 per year. (52 weeks X \$200= \$10,400) If it was rented one day every weekend during the summer, it would generate \$7,200. (24 weeks x \$300= \$7,200)

Project Supporters

The Friends of Birch Bay State Park have dreamed this dream and been working on this project since 2002. As of September 2012 there are 10 members of the Friends group.

The BP Cherry Point Refinery has been supporting the summer interpretive programs since 2002. BP is the major contributor to the Heron Center by donating a total of \$105,000 between 7/7/2005 and 12/9/2008 and thus it carries their name. Several of their employees and a retired employee are Friends of Birch Bay State Park.

Intalco Alcoa Aluminum Smelter, Ferndale has donated \$25,000.

Western Washington University professor Wendy Walker wrote a letter of support dated February 16, 2004 on behalf of her Huxley College of the Environment Environmental Education majors who conduct an outdoor school teaching ecological studies to approximately 180 Blaine Elementary School fifth grade students annually in April and May.

Birch Bay Steering Committee chair Kathy Berg (developers of the *Birch Bay Community Plan* in a well-attended public process over 4 years with Whatcom County) sent a letter of support dated May 3, 2005. See www.birchbayinfo.org

Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce president Genee Haws Kay sent a letter of support dated June 1, 2005.

Jim Maushak, president of True Log Homes has donated a considerable amount of his time so far and the preliminary plans to this project.

Jim Sasken of Mills Electric Co. has pledged to take care of the electrical needs.

Numerous community members have volunteered their time and talent to make this dream a reality when the time for their help comes, allowing them to "buy in" to their local state park including:

Kathy Berg, BP Heron Center Coordinator,
Gene Quinn, licensed contractor, Construction Superintendent,
Heather Jackson, in charge of public ceremony and public art,
Amy Quinn, assistant to the Center coordinator and keeper of the check book,
Bob Aiken, electrical installation with supervision.

The Washington State Parks Commissioners recognized Birch Bay State Park's Ted Morris, Staff and Volunteers with a Centennial 2013 Award for this project in November 2007.

Respectfully submitted,
-Kathy Berg
360-371-0171
kathyberg@comcast.net