

**Pacific Northwest Salmon Center
Community Input Meeting
April 5, 2006**

A. Wetlands Restoration

1. Is restoring the wetland areas necessary? If it doesn't enhance salmon, why do it?
2. A lot of that land is considered wetlands already. Agricultural part of the year, wetlands the rest. Leave it as a farm.
3. Why remove the dikes? Too much money, waste of time.
4. I love the idea of breaching the dikes.
5. Why not simply cut the dikes in a few places and bridge the opening?
6. Unless the 45 acres being returned to wetland enhances salmon, why do it?
7. The thrust of this project is salmon. Restoring the wetlands for the salmon is a waste of time and money.
8. Is restoring the wetlands actually linked to the salmon research?
9. Replacing the wetlands will not enhance salmon.
10. If you are going to return the 45 acres to wetlands, then get rid of all of the dikes.
11. Enhance the existing wetlands but do not restore the old wetlands.
12. Doesn't matter if you restore the wetlands, Hood Canal is dying and the salmon won't return.
13. Restoring the wetlands would be a benefit.
14. Opportunities to restore wetlands don't come around often, take advantage now.
15. There is plenty of room for the Salmon Center and for restoring the wetlands - good idea.
16. Use restoring the wetlands as an educational opportunity.
17. The area proposed for restoration is already wetlands. How do you know the new wetlands will be more beneficial than the existing?
18. If the education component includes wetlands, then we need to create a variety of wetlands to study.
19. If salmon research says salmon need wetlands, then we need wetlands to study.
20. Use the restoration of wetlands to introduce kayak trails into the site.
21. From what I have read, restoring the wetlands enhances the salmon population. To see more wetlands would be beautiful. It is a benefit to restore them and would not hurt the trails at all.
22. We have decimated wetlands across the country and it would be criminal to ignore an opportunity to restore almost 23% of the Union river wetland.
23. Use the stormwater ponds to also study the effect of runoff on wetlands.
24. The existing wetlands may not be the same as the new ones will be, but they still filter water and remove nitrogen.
25. You will be handling runoff from Route 3 next to wetlands. I would love to see that as a model for other communities.

B. Trails

1. The trails and the salmon center are separate items. Develop the center but leave the trails alone.
2. The two projects are independent but the trails are an integral part of the project and they will not go away. The trails will be enhanced.
3. Trails should connect with the Davis Farm and take advantage of the educational opportunities of a working heritage farm.
4. Bridge the Union River and connect trails with Belfair Park.
5. Link trails to nearby parks and recreation sites.
6. I would like to see a trail from Theler to the Salmon Center and link Belfair State Park and also Allyn. Expand it to be a two-lane bike trail
7. Trails are important - tourism is not.

C. Facility - Buildings

1. Create a first class facility with a Northwest character.
2. 20 acres is too big for the Salmon Center building - 10 acres is big enough.
3. Use the building for university programs and as an educational center for the public.
4. Dormitories for visiting students and specialists are okay - no hotel!

5. Keep the buildings you have and use them. They fit the rural character of the site.
6. Keep the barn. Change the inside all you want, but keep the outside.
7. Build the facility with excellent design, low-cost, and sustainable buildings.
8. Maintain the existing architectural character.
9. Buildings should minimize impact on critical areas.
10. Consider structures which reflect the character of the site. Consider Auburn University's rural studio. The buildings could showcase pragmatic, sustainable design - use common materials.
11. We already have Theler Community Center - don't create another one to compete with it.
12. Keep building scale appropriate in character to the community.
13. I thought the original plan was too grand and not rural in scale.

D. Facility - Program Elements / Activities / Site Features

1. No hotel.
2. Raise money by providing some sort of facility that people can rent - cabins, the barns, etc.
3. Provide kayak trails.
4. An area for a few picnic tables would be great. Perhaps set next to a large, grassed, open space - but don't place them in the open where the public would have to look at empty tables all the time.
5. The amphitheatre idea is great if done right. Don't do it on the cheap! *Note: a hand count indicated the majority of attendees were against the idea of an amphitheatre.*
6. Would love to see opportunities for music and theatre such as "Music on the Estuary", etc.
7. Increase community activities.
8. Include a Native American component such as recreating the encampment at the end of the East trail.
9. Provide lots of things for kids to do.
10. Demonstration gardens.
11. Pea-patch gardens for those who don't have a place at home.
12. I love the stormwater idea.
13. Provide a small campground for Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts.
14. Don't put anything on the site that will compete with the community - Theler, restaurants, shops, etc.

E. Education

1. Use the facility for university research as an educational center for the general public, and local schools. We would be proud to have a world class place.
2. What are the educational programs at Theler and how are we going to make sure they don't conflict?
3. History should be a key component.
4. Include agricultural history of the region (agricultural heritage).
5. Provide programs to educate people about farming in the area - pea-patch gardens, demonstration gardens.
6. Use the entire site as an educational tool - not just about salmon.
7. Salmon Center, Theler, and local schools must work together - share programs.
8. Scope is too narrow. Not just Salmon, need to study the entire Hood Canal ecosystem.
9. Create a world-class educational and research facility.
10. Education should include stormwater and wetlands issues, farming, and history.
11. Include education for all ages - think of the children.
12. Center should be a model for other rural cities in regards to development, planning, stormwater, wetlands, and handling environmental issues.
13. Do not compete with Theler.
14. Theler is here. The Salmon Center won't overshadow it or bury it. Theler will be enhanced.
15. Investigate competing research programs at the universities. Will we be competing with them for funding?
16. How will a research facility impact other facilities - will research be duplicated here?
17. A world-class learning center would be a great thing for Belfair's reputation.
18. Include best farm practices in the education component.
19. Connecting the trails to Davis Farm would enhance the educational opportunities.
20. Will this facility conflict with UW-Tacoma's research on the Foss waterway?
21. Focus the project on education.

F. Planning and Development Issues

1. Remember the impact of the structures and programs on critical areas - build lightly on the land.

2. Do not maximize human impact on critical areas.
3. Keep the Center rural in scale and character.
4. Have you consulted the Belfair Sub-area Plan? Originally, there were three nodes, of which the Salmon Center was one, downtown was another. Partner with the County on this to see where they are.
5. How does this facility affect the Belfair Urban Growth Area?
6. What impact, if any, does the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) have on the site?
7. Have you read the Salmon 2100 Report?
8. How is Fish and Wildlife (DWF) interacting with the sale of the property? Will they be the owner? Will they dictate how the site is used because they provided funds?
9. If we don't develop this site, someone will come in and put a commercial development on it - then we've lost the rural character forever.
10. Development is going to happen - we need to be the ones to direct it - not just allow it to happen wherever it wants.
11. Is the Salmon Center the best way to preserve this land?
12. What better opportunity for that 90 acres is there? The Salmon Center is great. If it was sold to someone else, and it may be if it is not the Salmon Center, we can lose.
13. Do a good job up front with the programming. Don't leave out those who are not as wealthy.
14. Don't put too much on this site - don't overrun the critical areas. The place for development is not on the critical areas.
15. The title Salmon Center is confusing to me, but I understand better after this meeting. Maybe it's not a Salmon Center, but a rural lifestyle center. Maybe you could create a small village center on Hood Canal showing how urban areas can live lightly on the land.

G. Miscellaneous Issues

1. Remember the kids and the people who couldn't be here tonight. The project should represent all of the people - not just those who are here tonight.
2. Do not make this a tourist attraction.
3. Make it a model program for other rural communities and how they interact with the environment.
4. Rural in scale.
5. Blended use - rural in character.
6. Remember who you are building this for - it is for everyone, not just the entitled elite.
7. Create kayak trails that can be linked to other parks.
8. How do we sustain the long-term funding? This town is too small to fund this project long-term.
9. We already have a community center at Theler - don't create another one to compete with it.
10. How do we coexist with other salmon enhancement groups such as Allyn? Should we make this available to all, or create this as the center of all salmon enhancement activities?
11. How can this facility help Salmon when Hood Canal is the so unhealthy?
12. Protect the farmland. Build the Salmon Center smaller in the Development Plan and include an agricultural history component.
13. The scope is too narrow. Expand the scope to study the entire Hood Canal ecosystem. Theler is the jewel of Belfair - make sure this plan enhances Theler.
14. The project shouldn't erase the identity of the farmland.
15. There is sufficient space for the salmon center and to preserve some of the farmland for educational purposes, and to have a pea patch.
16. This facility should not be an edifice for the elite.
17. Belfair is not a wealthy community, there is no middle class. Who is the Center for? Is it for locals or for summer tourists?
18. This is an exciting project - Hood Canal is a classic fiord - work should help protect it.
19. Focus should be Hood Canal. Money will be better spent studying the canal - not just salmon.
20. Consult other organizations who have tried to do this. Don't reinvent the wheel.
21. Be creative about maintenance funding.
22. This place can be great for Belfair. We may be a small town, but we can be something great. A world-class research facility is a really good opportunity. It can show that being from Belfair is not a bad thing.
23. The Salmon Center is economic development but is steeped in restoring and protecting the environment.

H. Written Comments Received Outside of the Meeting:

1. It should be a research center open to the public, tours, trails, dining, etc. It's the best of all developments. Upscale tourism and employment in downtown Belfair.
2. Tie in as much community use as possible. This would also expand the community support in a number of ways. Expand the trail system all the way to Belfair State Park. This would create a very large and very unique trail which would be used significantly more. It would lead to increased visitation at the Theler Center and the Salmon Center as well as the other functions going on at the Salmon Center location.... i.e... Saturday Farmer's Market, "Music on the Estuary", etc...
3. I think the Farmer's Market is perfect there. Provide a covered area for presentations during the week and cover for the Farmer's Market on Saturdays.
4. The amphitheater is a great idea if done right. One that is done 'on the cheap' would be disappointing but one done on a first class basis would be an absolute draw!
5. An area for a few (3 - 7) picnic tables would be great but often I see these in places and they rarely get used. Perhaps have a lawn area where several could be moved to for an event / hosting a few bus loads of school children etc... but most could be moved to a covered storage area when not being used???
6. Architectural uniqueness is **ABSOLUTELY KEY TO THIS PROJECT!!!!** This place should be **GRAND** and **VERY UNIQUE** architecturally. It should have the observations windows to live environments with salmon, etc... It should have multiple displays, hanging whales, etc....
7. I would think it should be interactive learning / interpretive with a bit of historical / museum -like component to it. It should also have an area for lab / research work that is in a wing out of the way. If the main building or the lab was to be two stories... put offices upstairs and out of the way yet with views of the mountains / canal etc.... Maybe these offices end up being leased from the Salmon Center from other agencies which can further assist with cash flow for the PNWSC. Their parking area should be considered out of the way and hidden from general public users.
8. The main building could have a gift shop and / or cafe' in it. Another idea may be to build a wing or extension to the building or have a pad available for future development that would allow the construction and lease of a 'high end' restaurant tenant.... ie... Anthony's / Duke's or the like.
9. This is the single most important project Belfair has seen. It will be amazing for our area. It will be an Economic Development driver as well as assisting in making Belfair and the Hood Canal a **DESTINATION** throughout the entire Northwest and beyond !!!
10. I appreciate the efforts of the PNWSC to involve the public in your planning process.
11. It is equally important to involve our local government, Mason County, as they are mandated to comply with Growth Management and are the responsible planning body.
12. Did the stormwater ponds have a public process involved with their placement on the site? There might be cheaper properties available for the same purpose.
13. I don't believe the Belfair community can support a PNWSC of the size and scope as originally proposed in the Belfair sub-area plan or as shown on the Chamber website. As with the sub-area planning process all the "stakeholders" need to be involved with the planning process, not just the folks with special interests.
14. I am concerned that research and educational efforts might be better focused on best farm management practices in unison with habitat preservation as is currently ongoing at the Hood Canal Institute and the Theler wetlands rather than strictly focusing on wild salmon.
15. I would like to see the farm preserved.
16. In my research there is evidence that an un-named stream that originates up Romance Hill, bisected the farm at one time. If anything needed to be restored maybe the stream could be but please leave the historic farm intact!
17. The Puget Sound region is losing farmland at an alarming rate. There is the potential for Federal money to preserve the farmland. I would suggest building the salmon center on a much smaller scale utilizing the existing buildings and leave the farmland operational. In partnership with WSU and the USDA the PNWSC could showcase the farm, it is a beautiful example of best farm management practices and habitat preservation for mankind, wildlife and fish.
18. The farm could be used as "pea patch gardens" for those folks in the UGA that don't have garden space available. Children could have something to do in the summertime.
19. Consider an anaerobic digester operation. To flood 45 acres for "salmon habitat" is counter productive, the land is far more valuable left as is. I am also concerned that this flooding and conversion might be counter to the Farmland Protection Policy Act, which was passed as part of the 1981 Farm Bill.
20. Three important wetland functions that the Johnson farm are providing currently are removing sediment and nitrogen, recharging groundwater, and providing much needed open space.