



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES
Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
115 East Railroad Avenue, Suite 301

April 27, 2015

Superintendent Diana Reaume
NOPSC Administrative Council Chair
North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center
905 W. 9th Street Port Angeles, WA 98363

RE: North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Natural Resources Program

Dear Mrs. Reaume and NOPSC council members,

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) would like to express our concern over the proposed termination of the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center (NOPSC) Natural Resources Program, and provide this letter on behalf of the continuation of the NOPSC Natural Resources class.

The Natural Resources program is one of the few skills programs on Olympic Peninsula that is providing field-based, hands-on experiential learning opportunities that engage and interest students in the natural resources field. Currently, there are no other education programs that provide the opportunities to our youth that the Natural Resources class provides. Peninsula-wide, communities are invested in the best management and conservation of our marine and terrestrial natural resources, and the NOPSC Natural Resources program is an important cog in the efforts to educate and inspire the next generation of environmental leaders, scientists and educators.

The Natural Resources program has built strong relationships with many environmental community leaders from local NGOs, state, federal, and tribal agencies to provide a robust program that fits the needs of its participants. The NOPSC Natural Resources program provides unique learning opportunities to the students of these communities that introduce them to field professionals and future job contacts, while teaching valuable work and life skills, reaching both the academically struggling and the academically thriving students

OCNMS is a place-based organization, with much of our time and focus centered on the under-served and resource lacking communities along Washington's coast, adjacent to the sanctuary. In order for us to fulfill our mission, most of our programs, including education, are carried out in partnerships with other organizations. We consider NOPSC Natural Resources to be a valuable partner in reaching and engaging local youth in marine science and conservation.



OCNMS Advisory Council (SAC), made up of 22 different organizations around the Peninsula, has identified working on the ground with youth as an important aspect of OCNMS mission as it relates to education. Our partnership with Natural Resources gives us important access to these high school students, and past interns have proven to be valuable, irreplaceable components of the OCNMS team. OCNMS has worked with Natural Resources students in planning and implementing local marine-based summer camps, and conducting surveys and data verification for COASST (Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team) and NOAA Marine Debris Monitoring Program along Strait and coastal beaches. In fact, some of our best student interns have come to OCNMS from the Natural Resources program. Karsten Turrey, a former Natural Resources intern with OCNMS was a dedicated and committed volunteer, even receiving OCNMS Volunteer of the Year award for his work. Without the Natural Resources Program, we wouldn't have been able to make contact with Karsten, completed the work we were able to do with him, or help encourage his future as a local natural resource steward.

Future programs that OCNMS are invested in would benefit greatly from the continuation of the Natural Resources program, allowing students with alternative learning styles to find connections and academic success within their community. Termination of the Natural Resources program would be a loss to Olympic Peninsula students and communities alike, and difficult to rebuild if disbanded. We urge you to continue this valuable education program.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Laverdure
Education and Outreach Coordinator





Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

2851 Lower Elwha Road
Port Angeles, WA 98363

(360) 452-8471
Fax: (360) 452-3428

North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Administrative Council
905 W. 9th St.
Port Angeles, WA 98363

April 30, 2015

NOPSC Staff and Administrative Council,

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe (LEKT) was very disappointed to learn that the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Natural Resources (NR) program may not continue after the 2014-15 school year. This letter is intended to express the great value of this program for both LEKT and the local communities, and our strong hope that this program will be continued.

LEKT has been a long-time partner with the Natural Resources program. Some past and current collaborative projects include the following:

- NR students learn coho salmon survey techniques every year on Salt Creek and are instrumental each year in helping the Tribe's fish habitat biologist deploy and remove smolt traps on area streams.
- NR students have been instrumental in surveying Valley Creek Estuary every year, and in fact are considered "Urban Stream Partners" by the Tribe's habitat biologist. Students conduct habitat, water quality, fish trapping and electroshocking surveys.
- NR students monitor beaches at the mouth of the Elwha River monthly, collecting marine debris and helping make the newly-restored estuary and beaches safer for wildlife and visitors.
- Two NR students have been employed as long-term interns with the Tribe's wildlife division. One of those interns was considered one of the best employees the wildlife department has ever had – he was conscientious, timely, intelligent, and brought with him invaluable skills learned in the NR program. He is now a student studying Natural Resources/Environmental Science at Peninsula College.
- For the past 6 years of LEKT summer youth educational programming, the NR program has provided the much needed services of creating and aligning curriculum, supporting students and Tribal educators, assisting in increasing the academic rigor of the courses, and offering much needed credit to our students.

- For 1.5 years, LEKT educator Jamie Valadez and NR teacher Dan Lieberman co-taught a Cultural and Natural Resources 1 class during the school year in Port Angeles. This class awarded credit to more than a dozen students.
- Finally, we have submitted a grant application to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Tribal Youth Initiative Funding for the 2015-2016 school year. The grant proposal, titled "Blending Cultural and Natural Resources: A pathway to engage future natural resource professionals", if funded, would create a partnership between the Tribe and the NOPSC to provide financial resources to the NR program. Specifically, it would fund additional program development, summer programming, internship programs, a recruiter position, and transportation costs.

Though we are sad to see the Cultural and Natural Resources 1 class be cancelled for financial reasons, we see great value in the other two NR classes: 'Natural Resources Options' and 'Natural Resources 2 Internships.' The type of learning exemplified by these programs, in which students work side-by-side with professionals on real service projects, is very fitting for Tribal youth who sometimes struggle in traditional school settings. Following is evidence of how this educational model is appealing to and working for Tribal youth: in 2014-15, more than 30% of the students the NR program serves are Native American.

Again, LEKT is deeply concerned that the NR program might be eliminated after the current school year, and we strongly urge this successful program to continue.

Sincerely,



Frances G. Charles
Tribal Chairwoman

cc:

Port Angeles School District Board of Directors
216 E. 4th St.
Port Angeles, WA 98362

diana.reaume@qvschools.org; mjackson@portangelesschools.org;
claym@crescent.wednet.edu; kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us; kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu;
lrobin@pencol.edu; mboster@pencol.edu; ptempleton@portangelesschools.org;
smethner@portangelesschools.org; Lonnie_Linn@olympen.com;
phappe@portangelesschools.org; ckelly@portangelesschools.org;
sbaxter@portangelesschools.org; ggabbard@portangelesschools.org;

Date: Wed, 29 Apr 2015 19:44:01 -1000

Subject: Skills Center Natural Resources Program

From: rangermegan@gmail.com

To: diana.reaume@qvschools.org; mjackson@portangelesschools.org; claym@crescent.wednet.edu; kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us; kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu; lrobin@pencol.edu; mboster@pencol.edu; ptempleton@portangelesschools.org; smethner@portangelesschools.org; Lonnie_Linn@olympen.com; phappe@portangelesschools.org; ckelly@portangelesschools.org; sbaxter@portangelesschools.org; ggabbard@portangelesschools.org

Greetings,

My apologies for not being able to attend the meeting but I wanted to be sure to send my support for the Natural Resources Program. I first began volunteering with Dan Lieberman at the West and East Elwha River beaches assisting in conducting COASST surveys. I have also worked with Dan to introduce the Quileute Tribal School students to COASST protocols at 'my beach', Rialto.

Aside from my time volunteering with Dan, I have also seen Tara educating dozens of young adults at Feiro Marine Life Center where I work as a contractor and volunteer. I have seen both Tara and Dan mentor the students who come up to the Olympic National Park Visitor Center where I work as a Park Ranger.

While I am proud supporter of the Natural Resources Program at the Skills Center, the true impact of the amazing work they do hit home when I had the privilege of hearing Kayla McLaughlin and Emily Larson speak on their experiences at the Fish on a Fence fundraiser for Feiro Marine Life Center. Their eloquent and passionate sharing was not only touching and sweet but gave me hope for the future knowing such opportunities are available for the youth of our community.

I am in full support of the the Skills Center Natural Resources Program and I hope to be volunteering my time and energy with them for years to come. I think the students of our town deserve a chance to learn about and explore the natural resources around them and I hope you do too.

Thank you for your time,

Megan Juran

From: Ann Soule <asoule@sequimwa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2015 7:52 AM
To: Daniel Lieberman
Cc: 'kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us'; David M. Garlington
Subject: RE: Need help with stormwater project

Good morning Dan,

Wanted to send my regrets in hearing that your program at the Skills Center may be eliminated. While the City hasn't connected with a Natural Resources student directly, yet, I am sure it's only a matter of time. I have worked lately with a Sequim High School club and truly value the perspective and energy of that age group for my purposes in advancing awareness of local creeks and water management. Also, since there is no longer a Senior Project requirement at SHS, opportunities for connection between teens and the local community are more rare than a few years ago.

Please forward this email as you see fit. Best wishes,
Ann

Ann Soule, LHG
Water Resource Specialist
City of Sequim, Public Works
360-582-2436
[Stormwater Stewardship Project Webpage](#)
[Sequim's Water Cycle Story Map](#)

Stormwater Stewardship

Our Water, Our Future!



April 29, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to share some concerns regarding the potential discontinuation of the Natural Resources Options program at the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center. I empathize deeply with the challenges of the five districts who participate collectively with the Skills Center to align to shifts in state accreditation rules and budgets. As a nonprofit providing up to eight hours or more of education daily on a year-round basis with only a handful of employees, I fully understand that you must stay flexible when constraints out of your control occur and programs need to shift as a result. Change is a difficult process to undertake both for those who have to make decisions, as well as those affected by them.

As a new resident to the region, however, I would like to share that this area's unique natural setting provides a learning laboratory unlike that of most urban or suburban settings. Busloads of students come from schools out of the area to learn in our environment because of its unique features. They come to learn about our intertidal regions, our rainforest, our watersheds and mountains. They are drawn by the largest dam removal project in U.S. history, by the innovations developed over thousands of years of residence by Klallam, Makah and other peoples indigenous to this region, and by the continuing authentic project-based learning opportunities that this area affords. Of all the programs to consider for elimination, the Natural Resources program seems to be the one that may have the best opportunity to engage local youth to realize that they are the future stewards and caretakers of resources that are becoming increasingly scarce. With no offense meant to the short term employment training offered through programs like welding, cosmetology and the building trades, Natural Resources offers the best opportunity for young people to develop a land ethic that will have the North Olympic Peninsula leading the way in living sustainably to ensure thriving natural ecosystems. Interns and students working with Feiro have determined *e coli* levels at Hollywood Beach, used underwater robots to video sea life living on the Pier pilings, learned to identify and count plankton (source of half of the world's oxygen), and conducted independent studies focused on animal care. So perhaps the question is not how can we afford to keep the program, but how can we afford to lose it? With a room full of very smart and creative thinking individuals working around constraints, this program could influence this region in a visionary way.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa A. Williams".

Melissa A. Williams
Executive Director

NATURAL RESOURCES LETTER

Dear Skill Center administrative council: My name is Jacob Franks and I am writing this letter to persuade you to NOT cut the funding of the natural resources program in Port Angeles and Forks. I am a senior in Forks Alternative high school, and I chose to do my senior project with the Olympic National Park through the natural resources program. If it wasn't for this program I don't know if I would be graduating this year. Because there isn't many options for senior projects, you have to work with what you have provided. If you're like me, you liked being outside and feeling like you accomplished something at the end of the day. This program definitely helped me achieve that and has helped many seniors just like me do something fun and physical for ^{the} their community service and culminating projects. Not only is a lot of the work fun but it is also a hands-on approach to learning that many other programs do not provide. Many students at the Forks high school and Alternative school are hands-on or "tactile" learners and it really helps physically doing something in order to retain the information. I've learned many things while completing my project with the Olympic National Park and I give a lot of credit to their physical style of learning.

When I first started my beach debris project I thought it just consisted of picking trash off the beach. All though I was partially right, there is a whole other side to it, that side is science and was a very large component to the project. last year if you would've told me garbageology was an actual study I would've called you crazy, but it is very real indeed. ~~and~~ waste management and disposal is very important to individual communities and the world as a whole. Thanks to the natural resources program I was able to participate in and learn alot about how ~~there~~ ^{their} water is collected and used. This not only gave me an extra option for my culminating project but also opened the door for many careers in the Olympic national park and departments of natural resources I would not have known about otherwise. In my opinion this is an excellent program for any kid that likes being outside and learning about your environment. most of the male students at my school choose a project provided by this program and our graduation rates would not be nearly as high with out it.

Thank you for considering my proposal

Sincerely,

Jacob Franks

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **dana wu** <dwu@alum.ups.edu>

Date: Mon, Apr 27, 2015 at 10:06 PM

Subject: Please reconsider keeping the Natural Resources Program at NOPSC

To: Dana Wu <dwu@alum.ups.edu>

Dear NOPSC Administrative Council Members, and Members of the Port Angeles School Board,

My name is Dana and I am a community volunteer, working with students from Forks High School. I am writing to let you know that I do not understand nor do I support the decision to cancel the Natural Resources Program at the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center. I hope you can take the time to read this letter and better understand the tangible implications of such a detrimental decision.

The Natural Resources Program is unparalleled in its ability to appeal to such broad constituencies. It offers academic credit to both advanced and remedial students alike. Additionally, students are able to earn paid internship positions following the successful completion of their first Natural Resources term.

Through my participation with the Natural Resources class and consistent support from Dan Lieberman, I am able to serve as an adult mentor to many of the students who are completing their Senior Culminating Projects. Other students are simply looking for community volunteer opportunities along with the prospect of connecting to their natural surroundings. A few others are drawn more to developing their own career skill sets while networking with natural resources professionals.

The Program greatly benefits the isolated student demographic in and around the Forks area. Students, who are otherwise unable to or not interested in traveling to various ecosystems on the Olympic Peninsula, are encouraged to explore their expansive backyards through the Natural Resources class. I take students out to the coast to study relevant marine environmental issues through interactive and tactile learning assignments. Students who struggle with classwork in a traditional learning environment thrive when they are out in the field and can apply abstract concepts to real-world situations.

Just this past weekend, I had five Natural Resources students participate in the Washington Coast Cleanup and Forks' first-ever Trashion Show. This unique program has given another viable career option for these students as they learn more about and adopt environmental stewardship principles. When I asked Edwin Cisneros, a current sophomore at Forks High School, what he would be doing after school if he was not enrolled in the Natural Resources class, he admitted that he would be stuck at home playing video games or sleeping. Skyla Dawkins is home-schooled and answered that her learning experiences would be more limited and textbook-based in the absence of the Natural Resources program. Simply put, the decision to eliminate this program would only serve to harm the students and community of Forks.

In conclusion, I do hope you can reconsider the decision regarding the Natural Resources Program and realize the irreversible damages that could follow as a result of the Program's extinction. More programs of this caliber and structure should be established and nurtured, not stripped down and destroyed. In the best interest of all students across the Peninsula, please make the right decision to keep the Natural Resources Program at the NOPSC.

Sincerely,

Dana Wu

April/2015

To Whom it may concerne,

Please! Do not end or reduce the "Natural Reso. Program". It and its Instructor and ~~and~~ ^{the} "VOLUNTEERS" that make up this valuable part of our Education available to enhance the lives of so many in our community.

It would be in poor judgement to not offer this class and the knowledge gained from it to our children. We live in an area that requires great respect and stewardship to protect it for future generations. I for one would like to know they have access to the info to do so. Please keep this going!

Sincerely,
Dorinda Hunter

Katherine Krueger
790 J Street, PO Box 1607
Forks, WA 98331
(360) 374-4311
chicago1@centurytel.net

April 28, 2015

North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center,
Administrative Council
905 W. 9th Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Re: termination of Natural Resources Program

Ladies and Gentlemen of this Council:

Before I start with my concerns, I want to introduce myself to you so you know who is writing. I am 71 years of age and still working in Natural Resources. I live in Forks, Washington, and am a policy analyst, grant writer, and attorney for the Quileute Tribe's Natural Resources Department. Before that I was an environmental attorney in the legal departments of oil and chemical companies (Amoco Corp., Dow Chemical) in Houston, and also for the City of Houston. Before that I was a geologist at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and a geologist for Gulf Oil Corporation in New Orleans. I have a B.S. and M.S. in Geology from Tulane in New Orleans and my law degree is from Northwestern University in Chicago. I have passed the bar in Illinois, Texas, and Washington. I say all this because I think there is a tendency to disparage voices from little Forks. We do run into this! I want you to know that out in Forks, we do have qualified citizens to evaluate the problem of whether Natural Resources should continue as a curriculum within the Skills Center. And I am not alone in that regard.

This world is facing climate change and if that is not a natural resources problem, I don't know what is. We need informed citizens who can vote wisely to solve this problem (assuming it has not gotten out of hand, which may be a grim reality). We need to develop people who can work on the ground to address this issue, at whatever level, at whatever scale. I don't know what programs you are saving at the Skills Center, while you propose to drop this one, but you might want to revisit this decision. Our very planetary home is at stake. We want a public that understands the issues, for this impending crisis. Ignorance may have very well led to it.

As a representative on two Lead Entity committees (both NOPLC and later North Pacific Coast)—salmon habitat restoration, and on the North Pacific Coast Marine Resources Committee since their inception, I can tell you the school programs for natural resources matter. Further, the exhibits, student involvement, and "internships" conceived by Dan Lieberman are successes. The students are engaged. I have seen this first hand. Further, recently I was a guest lecturer when Dan came out to the Quileute Tribal School in La Push, and saw how he was able to relate to students from very humble backgrounds, who were not engaged, and how well he could engage them. I need to share with you that with all my fancy education, I could not engage them. This is a gift, being able to reach students who are not initially interested, and to get them

involved. Dan has this gift. So I would urge you not only to keep the program, but also, absolutely, to keep Dan Lieberman in it. Good teachers are an underappreciated rarity.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Krueger". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being significantly larger and more decorative than the others.

Katherine Krueger
790 J Street, PO Box 1607
Forks, WA 98331

Brian Phillips
525 W. 4th St.
Port Angeles, WA 98362
360-670-2232

Port Angeles School District
NOPSC Administrative Council Members

April 23, 2015

Dear Council Members,

I'm writing in support of the continuation of the Natural Resources (NR) Program offered to students at the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center (NOPSC). As a volunteer with the NR Program, I can attest to the great value of the program to students and to the communities of Clallam County which directly benefit from it.

My role as an NR volunteer stems from my experience as a Streamkeepers of Clallam County volunteer. As a Streamkeeper, I've worked with NR students since 2010 monitoring local streams. Since that time, my role as a Streamkeepers volunteer has expanded to become that of an NR volunteer performing activities with students in the field and in the classroom.

The Streamkeepers/NR experience benefits students in a variety of important ways. First and foremost, students are taught to apply the scientific method to test hypotheses concerning environmental phenomenon on local streams. Data collected by students in the field, and also gathered from professional and citizen scientists, is used to test hypotheses. During this process, students not only exercise use of the scientific method, they are also exposed through firsthand experience to a deeper understanding of the local environment and the problems facing it than they might otherwise be. Research in the field and in the classroom (data gathering and interviewing projects stakeholders from around the community, for instance) therefore combine to provide students with a thoroughly comprehensive approach to learning about local natural resources and how best to manage them.

Furthermore, when performing Streamkeepers quarterly monitoring on Valley Creek and Tumwater Creek, students gather data used by Clallam County and other decision making entities to make important determinations regarding local stream and fish habitat restoration. Ultimately, student activities through the NR Program directly impact natural resource management in Clallam County.

I cannot think of another educational program available to students in Clallam County which so meaningfully connects young people in this community to our famously rich natural environment and specifically to the management of our vital natural resources. In our region where sport and commercial fishing are so important to the economy, where fish and wildlife are so culturally significant, and where

natural resource management of one form or another is a way of life for so many people, the NR Program is a perfect fit for students. The experiences provided to students in this program are invaluable learning opportunities. They go into the field, produce data of real world significance, interact with community stakeholders, write about their experiences, and all the while they learn to apply the scientific method. I urge you to sustain support for this dynamic and very relevant program for many years to come.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Brian Phillips

Austin Jay

Hello, I'm Austin Jay and I would like to state that without the natural resources program I will not graduate with my class. Students such as myself that are behind in credits are in search of alternative ways to earn credit. Not only is the natural resources program a good way to earn credits, but it is also a great way to help learn work ethics, and job skills that can be applied in many settings. This program alone offers 3 opportunity's to earn credits. With the opportunity's given from this program an individual would be able to catch up in credits within a year.

As an individual, I have worked in nearly all aspects of natural resources including things such as marine debris, NOAA and coast surveys all of which are a great way to be a positive member of your community while also learning new job skills. This program has opened up opportunities such as town hall sit ins on the oil spill prevention subject, as well as an opportunity to teach fifth graders about this program and what we do for our community.

After choosing to attend an alternative school, I was given the opportunity to attend the natural resources program, where I was given the opportunity to earn 3 separate types of credits which are, science English, and cte credits. After I was aware of the potential credits that could be earned in this program, I entered every aspect of the program that I possibly could. Doing so has helped me learn what it is like to have priorities and what it feels like to be a positive member of my community. All of which are a great way to help your community.

In my opinion I feel that this program alone will be a very large key to my success due to the credits and opportunity's that it offers if this program were to no longer be an option I would not be able to graduate when I'd like to because this is the only program I know of that provides students with three types of credits and gives them several options on how or where they work.

This program gave me what some would call a new hope, before I was given this opportunity I was unsure that I would be capable of meeting my goals.

Thank you for your time, I hope this has changed your opinion on the possible termination of the natural resources program.

From: Carolyn Wilcox <carolyn@riseup.net>

Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2015 11:44 AM

To: tmorrow1008@gmail.com; diana.reaume@qvschools.org; Marc Jackson; claym@crescent.wednet.edu; kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us; kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu; Irobins@pencol.edu; mboster@pencol.edu; Peggy Templeton; Sarah Methner; Lonnie_Linn@olympen.com; Patti Happe; Cindy Kelly; Steve Baxter; Gerald Gabbard

Subject: Save NOPSC Natural Resources Program

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the NOPSC Natural Resources program. I am endorsed by Washington State to teach biology and science at the secondary level. I have worked as a guest teacher for the Natural Resources class and have had first-hand knowledge of the benefit of the program and the need for natural history education in the Port Angeles School District. The Natural Resources program has an important cultural component but given my background, I will focus my concerns on experiential science education.

We are fortunate to live adjacent to Olympic National Park, a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. As climate change, deforestation, and overfishing continue to threaten our community, programs like the Natural Resources Programs should be funded, not abandoned. Our students need to be taught about the value of trees beyond the quick dollar for lumber and the importance of leaving big fish to carry out their reproductive life cycle.

As a guest teacher in the Port Angeles School District, I have seen that some teachers and administrators do not value the natural world. For example, I taught a lesson on mushrooms that was interrupted by a principal and teacher who feared that mushrooms were dangerous for the students to touch. It is hard to value what we don't understand.

I am concerned that the NOPSC decision to cut the Natural Resources program is based on ignorance – ignorance of the value of experiential education, the value of learning about the natural world, and the value of students developing mentor relationships with scientists and citizen scientists.

Please don't cut the NOPSC Natural Resources program.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Wilcox

306 W 3rd Street

Port Angeles WA 98362

360-797-1364

On Monday, April 20, 2015, Diana Somerville <writer@olympen.com> wrote:

It's rare to have an educational program that succeeds with young people who grow restless in traditional classrooms and feel confined by traditional curricula – and the Natural Resources Education does that. And more.

It's dynamic combination of classroom education with real world, hands-on and feet-in-the mud experience is moving students toward rewarding and much-needed careers in fields like wildlife biology, fisheries and forest management.

Program director Dan Lieberman has done a masterful job of tapping into the wealth of local organizations from the Marine Sanctuary to Olympic National Park. He makes certain that Natural Resources students take on meaningful fieldwork tasks. Working with professionals in a variety of projects, student interns are introduced to the nitty-gritty of field study.

Students from five school districts -- Sequim, Port Angeles, Crescent, Quillayute Valley, and Cape Flattery --plus Peninsula College – provide enriched opportunities beyond what each school could create on its own. These are learning experiences equivalent to many graduate school courses. Available right here. Right now.

If you are concerned about the quality of all the educational offerings on the Olympic Peninsula, you should be touting this program from the rooftops.

It's an amazing treasure!

Where else can students experience what it is like to make a real contribution to understanding the natural world, while working with world-class places like Olympic National Park and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration? Where else can students give back to their communities as part of their own education? In a program that pays for itself?

Please do everything you can to preserve, protect and enhance this vital, unique program that benefits students from all the school districts and Peninsula College by partnering with the peninsula's native, scientific and environmental communities. Students for the next seven generations will appreciate your foresight.

Thank you.

Diana Somerville
Writer * Editor * Author * Teacher
Box 744
Port Angeles WA 98362

American Society of Journalists and Authors
National Association of Science Writers
American Society of Environmental Journalists

Connecting Environment, Health, Science & Spirit

From: Ed Chadd [<mailto:edchadd@olypen.com>]

Sent: Sunday, March 22, 2015 12:20 PM

To: diana.reaume@qvschools.org; mjackson@portangelesschools.org; claym@crescent.wednet.edu; kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us; kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu; lrobbins@pencol.edu; mboster@pencol.edu; ptempleton@portangelesschools.org; smethner@portangelesschools.org; llinn@portangelesschools.org; phappe@portangelesschools.org

Cc: Kevin Van De Wege (vandewege.kevin@leg.wa.gov); Steve Tharinger (steve.tharinger@leg.wa.gov); Jim Hargrove (Jim.Hargrove@leg.wa.gov)

Subject: Termination of the NOPSC Natural Resources program

Dear public servants charged with the education of our young people:

I am quite disturbed by developments involving the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center's Natural Resources (NOPSC-NR) program. I was dismayed to hear that at its March meeting, the NOPSC Administrative Council voted to terminate the NR program at the end of the current school year.

A former educator myself (public high schools, Peninsula College, Outward Bound, Student Conservation Association, Peace Corps of the USA), I know what a gem this program is, and what a value to this community: our students, our schools, our natural resources, and our agencies working to protect them. With shoestring staffing, this program involves young people in real-world work assessing, protecting, and restoring our natural resources; connects them with key government and nonprofit agencies performing this work, getting them into internships and jobs; centers around the scientific method but also offers credits in English and Career Education; offers programming from Sequim to La Push; and works with many would-be dropouts yet is open to students taking classes in traditional schools. It is a model for community-based, experiential education, something that many pay lip-service to, but few actually make happen.

When I heard news of the program's termination from its instructor, Dan Lieberman, I asked what rationale was given. As he ticked off the reasons, I asked if they were true, and in each case I was told they were not. Something seemed terribly wrong. At my request, Mr. Lieberman has composed a document which I've attached here, laying out the various rationales given for closure and his documentation of facts which tell a much different story. The bottom line is that the rationale provided to the NOPSC Administrative Council, upon which the vote for closure was taken, is apparently erroneous on every point.

I gladly support this program with my tax dollars; in return, I expect thoughtful management that carries out the organization's mission, vision, and guiding regulations, as well as accountability to the public. However, unlike ordinary School Districts, NOPSC is not run by an elected body, and its Administrative Council does not chronicle its meetings or invite the public to them on the NOPSC website. This structure presents a hazard to public accountability and needs to be re-examined by someone with the political authority to do so. In the meantime, I would ask those of you on the Administrative Council (as well as those on the Port Angeles School Board, where the NOPSC is housed administratively) to:

- Investigate the situation to understand the discrepancy between the assertions made by the NOPSC director and the documentation provided in the "NR Program Clarification" document attached to this email.
- Put the decision to close the NR program on the agenda for your next meeting, which apparently will take place on April 14.
- Invite Mr. Lieberman and any other parties he feels should accompany him to that meeting.
- If the decision to terminate the NR program is rescinded, provide redress for the lost time and resources in recruiting students for the next school year.
- Produce a public record of this meeting, so concerned citizens such as myself can see how our public servants are meeting their responsibility to the public interest.

Sincerely,

Ed Chadd

307 W. 6 St.

Port Angeles 98362

President Sarah Methner

Port Angeles School District Board of Directors
216 E 4th St
Port Angeles, WA 98362

RE: Skills Center Natural Resources Program

Dear President Methner,

I have recently learned that the North Olympic Skills Center's may not continue the Natural Resources program in the 2015-2016 school year. The purpose of this letter is to strongly urge you to continue this program.

Over past 5 years I have volunteered for the forestry unit of the Natural Resources 1 class. In this unit students visit and measure four different forest stands. The stands range in age from recently clear-cut and replanted to old-growth forests. The students use tools like maps, compasses, GPS units, diameter tapes, and clinometers that foresters use in the normal work-day. During the field work students learn how to identify and measure trees and other vegetation. Typically, students have no knowledge of any tree or plant species on the first field day, but can identify all tree species and many of the shrub and understory plants on the final field day. For the unit's final project students test a hypothesis about a change in forest characteristics through time by comparing measurements of differently-aged stands. Although this is a survey course in many subjects of natural resources, the hands-on learning gives students a real and memorable understanding of forest ecology. Similarly, students in the class get exposure to other Natural Resources subjects such as wetland ecology, geology, and marine biology.

This sort of understanding of the natural world isn't just nice to have, it is critically important to being an informed citizen. A large portion of our county's wealth and tax revenue is derived from natural resources, and the politics our region often hinge upon environmental issues. Because the knowledge learned from the Natural Resources program is so essential, I strongly urge you to continue the Natural Resources program at the Skills Center.

Sincerely,

Reed Wendel
Forester
Green Crow
reed@greencrow.com
(360) 912-2214

On Wed, Mar 11, 2015 at 9:19 AM, Stephens, Heather <heather_stephens@nps.gov> wrote:
Hey Patti,

I just want to make sure you are seeing both sides of the debate about student hours and cost associated with the program. I also wanted to say that Dan L. works very hard, even as we car pool back and forth he is calling kids and parents, following up with work assignments and schedules, and writing grant proposals.

Port Angeles requirements maybe changing but Forks schools have been positively impacted by this program, as well as all of the educators ,counselors, NGO, and government programs involved with Dan's NR option class. The kids enrolled need some special help and we have been able to fill a gap that is missing for them that traditional teaching has not been able to fill.

Professionally I have been hearing about mentors and it would seem that this language is the new "buzz word" that nontraditional and traditional educators are starting to incorporate into their grant proposals. I think it's ironic that this program is being phased out and it absolutely exemplifies what mentors can do to positively impact and change paths for young students. Maybe I'm wrong but I don't see any other skills program working on the west end the way that the NR options class is?

You don't have to respond. Thanks for considering the email.

To: North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Administrative Council

Subject: Proposed termination of the NOPSC Natural Resources program

Date: April 22, 2015

Dear NOPSC Administrative Council members:

I have been informed that the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Administrative Council will consider terminating the Natural Resources (NOPSC-NR) program at the council meeting April 28, 2015 and I am writing this letter in support of the program.

As a volunteer educator at Feiro Marine Life Center and as last year's instructor for the NOPSC-NR summer program, I have worked with numerous high school students participating in the program. I think the NOPSC-NR program fills an important niche in the educational system on the North Olympic Peninsula.

The program works with students of all backgrounds from would-be dropouts to accomplished students in the traditional schools and provides them with a hands-on learning experience. The program teaches the students about assessing, protecting, and restoring the natural resources; connects them with community members, community projects and local internship opportunities; and offers credits in science, English and career technical education. The scientific method is emphasized throughout the program. As the students gather and investigate the data, they develop their own hypotheses, create their own research projects, and evaluate their findings in a variety of media such as scientific posters, several of which have been displayed at the Port Angeles Library.

If the NOPSC-NR program is terminated the greatest impact will be felt by the high school students on the North Olympic Peninsula especially students who have a difficult time in the traditional school system. For these students the NR program offers an alternative way to learn about science and graduate from high school. Without the program these students could linger in the traditional school system for years, unaware of science as a viable choice or option, or become drop-outs.

I therefore urge you to explore ways to maintain this program for the benefit of the students and our community. A viable compromise may be to run the NOPSC-NR program as "CTE Instructional Worksite Learning.

Sincerely,

Helle Andersen

111 Whidby Ave,

Port Angeles, WA 98362



HOH INDIAN TRIBE

PO BOX 2196 • FORKS, WASHINGTON 98331
TELEPHONE (360) 374-5404 • FAX (360) 374-9788

April 1, 2015

Superintendent Diana Reaume
NOPSC Administrative Council Chair
North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center
905 W. 9th Street
Port Angeles, WA 98363

Subject: Proposed termination of the NOPSC Natural Resources program

Dear Superintendent Reaume:

I have heard from several reliable sources that the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Natural Resources (NOPSC-NR) program is imminently scheduled for termination after the 2014 – 2015 school year. As Director of Natural Resources for the Hoh Tribe, Hoh Tribal representative for the North Pacific Coast Lead Entity Group (NPCLEG) and North Pacific Coast Marine Resources Committee (NPC MRC), secretary of the Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition (PCSC) and a 32-year resident of Forks, WA. ; I am seriously concerned about the potential elimination of this valuable program.

As stated in a similar letter of endorsement sent by the NPC MRC, a West End environmental and marine educational needs assessment initiated by the Feiro Marine Life Center “identified the NOPSC-Natural Resources program as exemplary and one that should not just be continued, but funded by additional available sources”. In support of this suggestion, the NPC MRC has awarded funding to the NOPSC Natural Resources program over three consecutive grant cycles.

Many community-based natural resources programs benefit from the efforts and accomplishments of NOPSC-Natural Resources students. Ed Chadd, Streamkeepers Program Coordinator, estimated that Natural Resources program students have spent 1100 hours conducting stream monitoring since 2009. The Natural Resources class serves as the lead for monitoring on Tumwater and Valley Creeks in Port Angeles. The PCSC, a Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (RFEG) in Forks, WA., has benefited greatly by enlisting Natural Resources students and interns to help with fisheries and habitat projects including nutrient enhancement of streams with surplus salmon carcasses, water quality studies on Mill Creek, revegetation of fish passage project sites and collection and analysis of marine debris. Most recently, the Hoh Tribe Natural Resources Dept. has mentored Natural Resources students in the collection of shellfish for biotoxin analysis and offered future opportunities for cultural resource inventory and forest practices review.

In essence, the NOPSC Natural Resources program internalizes the value of the Olympic Peninsula’s irreplaceable environmental systems in future generations of potential resource technicians, managers, researchers and educators. Hands-on, real world experience working with resource professionals establishes work ethics, applicable skills and valuable contacts for future employment. Termination of

the NOPSC Natural Resources program would be a tragic loss to the students, communities and natural resources of the western Olympic Peninsula.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Allison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "Allison" clearly legible.

Steve Allison
Director, Hoh Tribe Natural Resources Department
(360) 374-5404
stallison2000@yahoo.com

Cc: North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Administrative Council
Clayton Mork, Superintendent
Kelly Shea, Superintendent
Kandy Ritter, Superintendent
Dr. Marc Jackson, Superintendent
Dr. Mia Boster, Associate Dean
Dr. Luke Robins, President
Peggy Templeton, Director

Cc: State Legislators
Kevin Van De Wege
Steve Tharinger
Jim Hargrove

From: Jean Sigmar [mailto:jeano@olympen.com]

Sent: Monday, March 23, 2015 4:05 PM

To: sbaxter@olympus.net; pattihappe@gmail.com; ctkelly@olympen.com;

mjackson@portangelesschools.org; ptempleton@portangelesschools.org; lrobins@pencol.edu

Subject: Retaining Natural Resources class at Skills Center

You may know me as a retired teacher. I taught for 35 years and after retiring I taught a Careers in Ed. course at our local Skills Center for 3 years for High School juniors and seniors. Some of the students were from the alternative HS, but it was a perfect environment for all of them to improve basic skills and see possible career opportunities. I believe this is also true of the current Natural Resources course. I am retired now and have volunteered for our local watershed protection program, Streamkeepers of Clallam County, for the last 10 years. Besides stream monitoring, I also publish their newsletter. I know about the Natural Resources class as they have done work for Streamkeepers out in the field. They make quite a contribution to our cause. In class they build skills through hands-on activities using math, writing and problem solving. I have personally helped some of the students with their writing. These students put out a wonderful newsletter and they have had some wonderful learning experiences through Dan Lieberman's instruction. It's a valuable learning program for the community, but it also gives the students a possible career path. I urge you to retain this program.

Sincerely,

Jean Sigmar

From: Jeff Ward <jaward@olyphen.com>
Subject: North Olympic Skill Center Natural Resources Program
Date: April 21, 2015 at 3:44:48 PM PDT
To: kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us

Superintendent Shea:

My name is Jeff Ward. I am a recently retired scientist with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (Sequim Marine Sciences Lab), President of the Northwest Straits Foundation, and member of the Clallam County Marine Resources Committee. I am also a long-time advisor to Dan Lieberman's North Olympic Peninsula Natural Resources Program, and am writing today in support of that program and the good work Dan is doing.

Over the past few years, Dan has assembled a varied and knowledgeable group of advisors that includes members of local industry, retired and active scientists and researchers, and members with extensive experience in public education and outreach. We have watched Dan effectively engage young people and spark their interest in science- often reaching kids that have had difficulty in more conventional education programs. Dan is completely invested in this effort, and is a positive force in the lives of these kids. Many of his students have pursued college-level education as a direct result of his efforts and his inspiration. These are local success stories.

As I am sure you are aware, the Natural Resources program has struggled at times with recruitment. I suspect this happens commonly in these kinds of programs, given the challenges of fitting the classroom and field efforts into a tight academic schedule, and a variety of other issues and challenges, but Dan keeps trying to make it work. I suspect you also know there are many ways of assessing success, with the number of bodies in a room the most basic metric. To be honest, for those of us that are not involved in the daily activities of community school districts, understanding the requirements acceptable levels of FTEs, or the working definitions of alternative learning experiences (ALS) versus "CTE instructional worksite learning" is daunting, to say the least. And determining the overall value of a program based on those, or other competing or conflicting financial metrics, while important, can often overlook other critical attributes of a program, and its importance to a community.

I believe the work Dan is doing is extremely important, valuable to the kids and the community, and should be supported. In recent months, the Natural Resources Advisory Group reached out to members of the Port Angeles School District, and recently we were able to meet face to face. The outcome was disappointing, to say the least, in that there seemed to be a preordained decision and virtually no interest in finding creative ways to succeed. The conversations focused primarily on dollars and cents, and seemed to dismiss not only Dan's work, but the work of the professionals on the Advisory Committee that have given of their time to help this program succeed. At the end of the meeting in Port Angeles, our group voiced continued support to Dan and his program, and offered to work closely with the Skills Center and local school districts to improve enrollment. That offer still stands.

I hope you will consider this, and the other comments you receive, and help us find a way to keep the Natural Resources Program on the Olympic Peninsula.

Best regards

Jeff Ward
jaward@olyphen.com
(360) 461-9604

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jim McCullough** <jimmcc51@gmail.com>

Date: Saturday, April 25, 2015

Subject: NOPSC Natural Resources Program

To: diana.reaume@qvschools.org, mjackson@portangelesschools.org,
claym@crescent.wednet.edu, kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us, kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu,
lrobin@pencol.edu, mboster@pencol.edu, ptempleton@portangelesschools.org,
smethner@portangelesschools.org, Lonnie_Linn@olypen.com, phappe@portangelesschools.org,
ckelly@portangelesschools.org, sbaxter@portangelesschools.org,
ggabbard@portangelesschools.org, tmorrow1008@gmail.com, Streamkeepers
<Streamkeepers@co.clallam.wa.us>

To whom it may concern,

I writing in support of the Skills Center Natural Resources Program. I've been able to work with some of the students on Streamkeepers and roadway culvert surveys and have found the students very helpful. I hope you will continue to fund these students and programs.

James N McCullough
211 Vogt Road
Port Angeles, WA
98362

360 504-2068

From: knattinger@hotmail.com

To: diana.reaume@qvschools.org; mjackson@portangelesschools.org;
claym@crescent.wednet.edu; kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us; kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu;
lrobin@pencol.edu; mboster@pencol.edu; ptempleton@portangelesschools.org;
smethner@portangelesschools.org; lonnie_linn@olypen.com; phappe@portangelesschools.org;
ckelly@portangelesschools.org; sbaxter@portangelesschools.org;
ggabbard@portangelesschools.org

Subject: Natural Resources Program

Date: Fri, 24 Apr 2015 17:28:35 -0800

To those it may concern,

I am writing to express my feelings on the proposed closure of the Natural Resources (NR) Program at the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center.

First, I want to make it clear that I have a ton of empathy for any organization that is struggling with funding, especially NOPSC and PASD both who have treated me very well as I developed my skills as a teacher. Making decisions to cut programs we know are valuable in order to keep an institution solvent is very hard, and I am glad that I am not in that position.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks, where I am currently enrolled and employed, has had to make some very difficult choices recently. Our chancellor resigned last week, due to the stress of making the "who to cut" decisions.

In times of scarce resources, educational institutions must find a way to balance the diversity and quality of the educational programs they offer.

I had the honor to work as the long term substitute for the NR Program twice. It was amazing to see how effective the outdoor and hands on curriculum of the program was with students who were unreachable in a classroom. For some, this program created a learning environment that truly allowed them to succeed, and in a few cases lead them to a career in Natural Resources. For everyone, NR provided a connection with the natural world and local resource management that cannot be underestimated. I will never forget the engagement and pride that I observed in the many students working on the NR Options Internships. For example, I recall Sequim kids who worked with the Audubon Center develop projects that helped the center through education and restoration. They started just wanting to get some credit, and 2 months later when I returned to my normal job, they understood the value of giving back to their community and ecosystem.

To be fair and accurate, I do need to express my one concern with the program. I worked harder in many ways during the second time I spent as a substitute for Natural Resources than I have worked in any other job. I spent countless hours talking to students and parents, and working individually with students outside of the class. I will never forget helping an ESL student and father in Forks who had been injured in a logging accident to complete his NR Options work. For a student who had so much else going on in life to try so hard to graduate high school, it inspired me to keep

working and helping him and others. I returned to my normal job with great relief that I would be able to work at a normal pace again.....but sad to no longer be working with these students. My concern is that after Dan Lieberman moves on from this job, that the district will not be able to find someone who has the passion and commitment to replace him and allow the program to continue.

In conclusion, I feel that the Natural Resources Program provides such a valuable experience for students that NOPSC should attempt to find a way to keep this educational opportunity available for the students who can truly benefit from it.

In 2001 students, teachers, and myself advocated to keep Lincoln School (then Choice) open, when budget troubles threatened to shut it down. That investment in our youth I believe has paid off. I cannot say if keeping the NR program will or will not be a good investment, but I can share my personal experiences watching the program change lives.

Thank you for your hard work on difficult issues,
KC Nattinger

Kristian C Nattinger
1-907-699-4090



QUILEUTE TRIBAL COUNCIL

POST OFFICE BOX 279
LA PUSH, WASHINGTON 98350-0279
TELEPHONE (360) 374-6163
FAX (360) 374-6311



April 2, 2015

Diana Reaume, Chairperson
North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Administrative Council
411 S. Spartan Ave
Forks, WA 98331

Dear Diana;

Quileute Natural Resources (QNR) was very disappointed to learn that the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center (NOPSC) Natural Resources program was chosen for elimination at the end of the 2014-15 school year. We have seen the great benefits of this program for our Tribal youth, and we strongly urge you to continue this program.

For years, QNR has sought to engage local students in hands-on, field-based learning experiences. The confines of the regular school day and traditional educational system were significant barriers that kept us from successfully working with students. However, in 2013, we partnered with the NOPSC Natural Resources program and the Quileute Tribal School to start getting students working on real projects with QNR and earning credit through the NOPSC 'Natural Resources Options' class.

Over the past three years, we have had more than a dozen students participate in 'Natural Resources Options' in partnership with QNR. These students have helped with water quality analysis, salmon escapement surveys, fish habitat survey work, noxious weed removal, native plant re-vegetation, and other projects that help us monitor and protect our treaty rights.

While many students know people who work for QNR, they have very little real experience of these fields of work. Getting them out and working helps the students see natural resources as a possible future career path. There are many natural resource jobs with QNR and other local Tribes and agencies, and it is a priority of ours to recruit local youth into these positions. It also provides the tribal students with an opportunity to discover their traditional lands and river systems and reconnect them with a part of their culture.

The NOPSC Natural Resources program was instrumental in getting community-based educational programming to happen for Quileute Tribal students, and without the help of NOPSC Natural Resources, we see ourselves reverting back to our prior struggles and losing the momentum that we have gained toward training our future work force. Getting youth interested in the field of science and natural resource management has been a tremendous struggle and this program has been very beneficial in sparking interest in these students.

It is our understanding that the 'Natural Resources Options' and 'Natural Resources 2 Internships' classes not only comply with state regulations, but are also financially-viable. This is in addition to the unarguable value of these classes to students, community, and environment. It does not seem like a wise or well-supported decision that these classes should be eliminated, and we urge you to reverse your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Naomi Jacobson', with a long, wavy flourish extending to the right.

Naomi Jacobson, Chair
Quileute Tribal Council

> Date: Wed, 22 Apr 2015 11:34:57 -0700
> From: lindsey@world.oberlin.edu
> To: "diana.reaume"@qvschools.org; mjackson@portangelesschools.org; claym@crescent.wednet.edu; kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us; kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu; lrobins@pencol.edu; mboster@pencol.edu; ptempleton@portangelesschools.org; smethner@portangelesschools.org; Lonnie_Linn@olypen.com; phappe@portangelesschools.org; ckelly@portangelesschools.org; sbaxter@portangelesschools.org; ggabbard@portangelesschools.org; tmorrow1008@gmail.com
> Subject: support the Skills Center's Natural Resources Program

>
> Dear PA School Board and Skills Center Administrative Council,
>
> We know that most students learn best through hands-on experiential
> education. That suggests that we should be promoting programs like the
> Skills Center's Natural Resources Program, which gets students connected
> with scientists in multi-disciplinary learning environments.

>
> So I'm befuddled that the Skills Center Administrative Council is
> rumored to want to cut this program. I'm befuddled further because it
> sounds like budget is the underlying argument, but the budget has yet to
> be examined.

>
> I hope the PA School Board inquires into how much the Natural Resources
> Program actually costs to run, and how that compares to other courses,
> and I hope that the Skills Center Administrative Council presents clear
> transparent reasons for its decision on the future of this program.

>
> I plan to attend the next Administrative Council meeting, where I hope
> to see the facts inform the decision making.

>
> Thank you,
> Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin
> Port Angeles High School 1998
> Oberlin College 2002
> Gonzaga University School of Law 2013

>
>
> --
> Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin
> 306 West Third Street
> Port Angeles, WA 98362
> lindsey@world.oberlin.edu
> phone (360) 406-4321
> fax (360) 752-5767

> --

From: **Terry Harbaugh** <txgrelber@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu, Apr 23, 2015 at 1:14 PM

Subject: The NOPSC Natural Resources Program

To: diana.reaume@qvschools.org, mjackson@portangelesschools.org, claym@crescent.wednet.edu, kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us, kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu, lrobbins@pencol.edu, mbooster@pencol.edu, ptempleton@portangelesschools.org, smethner@portangelesschools.org, Linnie_Linn@olypen.com, phappe@portangelesschools.org, ckelly@portangelesschools.org, sbaxter@portangelesschools.org, ggabbard@portangelesschools.org

Cc: tmorrow1008@gmail.com, txgrelber@yahoo.com

To: The North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Administrative Council

Regarding: The NOPSC Natural Resources Program

Over the past six years, I have occasionally interacted with the students enrolled in the Skills Center Natural Resources Program led by instructor Dan Lieberman. My first personal contact was as a volunteer Clallam County Streamkeeper enlisting the help of the students to perform watershed monitoring on Valley and Tumwater Creeks. The students provided real support gathering real data using strict sampling protocol. They had received classroom preparation for the tasks; each student had chosen an element of the sampling plan on which to concentrate; and each followed up with a classroom presentation. The group showed a great deal of respect for Mr. Lieberman and for the adults with whom they were working. They worked in teams with one another, gained confidence using sophisticated electronic equipment, collected accurate data, and at a later date, reported on their findings in front of an audience.

The class has gone on to become the lead team on Valley and Tumwater Creeks here in the city, and now, community volunteers help them at times. Adult volunteers always receive personal notes of progress and thanks from the students. Mr. Lieberman and the students accomplish significant field-work within narrow time constraints. They publish a quarterly newsletter highlighting the projects in which they have been involved. The newsletter itself is impressive, having been generated with advanced desktop publishing applications

It is difficult to think of educational activities that tie so many disciplines together. The students have used skills in practical mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, report-writing, public speaking, computer applications, and teamwork; and they have developed an appreciation of the interdependency in our natural world. Additionally, the exposure they receive to potential occupational and career paths through interaction with adults working in forestry, marine science, wildlife, and fisheries--the majority of employment opportunities available on the Peninsula--allows them to see a hopeful future here in Clallam County.

This past January 2015, one of the students organized and led a beach clean-up on the newly-

enhanced West Bank at the mouth of the Elwha, in celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday. The public was invited to participate and I was pleased to be among them. I met this student's grandfather who said that prior to joining the Skills Center Natural Resources class, his grandson was unlikely to finish high school. The pride every adult in attendance felt as we listened to this young man express his new-found respect and responsibility for Mother Earth is the best testimony for the preservation of this program that I can imagine.

Many of the students who choose this program are challenged by work in a traditional classroom. Mr. Lieberman works to find and nurture ability in each of his students to elevate confidence and self-esteem. As an educator, Dan Lieberman is worth his weight in gold and the Natural Resources program is an asset to the community-at-large.

Please do all within your power to not only keep this program, but allow it to expand and offer these opportunities to even more students on the North Olympic Peninsula.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Harbaugh
312 W. 5th Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362
(360) 417-8949
txgrelber@yahoo.com

cc: Members of the Port Angeles Board of Education and Administrators

March 23, 2015

I wanted you to know I have written to the Skills Center Council, encouraging it to do everything it can to support the Skill Center's Natural Resources Program, taught by Dan Lieberman.

Mr. Lieberman's knowledge, teaching skills and other abilities have impressed me he was on the faculty of Olympic Park Institute (now NatureBridge), and I was serving on that Board. He received a financial award to write lyrics and compose music that could be used for teaching and inspiration. He contributed his talents to lead a Procession of the Species costume parade and singing at several of the North Olympic Land Trust StreamFests at our Ennis Arbor Farm, where Ennis Creek salmon habitat and other special qualities are permanently protected through a legal agreement with the Land Trust. All ages enjoyed learning through such creative experiences.

He has brought students to our place so they can learn from Ennis riparian area. Sometimes Jamie Valadez, a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, teacher of the Klallam Language and highly regarded author, accompanies the groups and provides context related to Ennis Creek, the Y'innis tribal village, and other area history.

I have visited the website where his curriculum, grading standards and other materials for students appear and have been impressed with their clarity, detail and high standards. Students should be able to transfer the skills they can obtain just through following required sequences and recordkeeping to many job opportunities besides natural resources. I have been impressed especially by the way Mr. Lieberman has incorporated requirements for transmitting information to others, using new technology as well as more traditional written and spoken communications.

My professional background includes some two decades as a college teacher in the communications field, so I know how important and yet difficult it can be for many students to become proficient in speaking and writing. The Skills Center's Natural Resources Program not only gives students practice in these essential skills but it also provides them with content they can use. I am confident that Mr. Lieberman's creative teaching skills and carefully directed assignments motivate many students to *want* to share with others, making their speaking and writing all the more effective.

My volunteer activities in addition to the Olympic Park Institute and Land Trust boards and StreamFest leadership have included several years on one of the regional watershed planning units and a citizen group focusing on Ennis Creek restoration and protection. I've also attended sessions sponsored by Puget Sound Partnership and other organizations seeking ways of protecting natural resources for their economic as well as ecological benefits. Participants have agreed on the importance of well-informed citizens if we are to sustain such key elements of our economy as forestry and fishing. Mr. Lieberman's program seems a model for education that ideally would be available to all students.

For students who might pursue jobs in natural resources, the program seems an ideal introduction. They can continue preparation for careers through an associate degree at Peninsula College and even complete a bachelor's degree at the local Western Washington University Huxley Program. Higher education options are available at numerous colleges and universities. Many graduates of these programs are working for private businesses, governments and nonprofit organizations, experiencing financial security as well as satisfaction that they are contributing to economical and ecological well-being for our area and beyond.

We are fortunate that Dan Lieberman has used his professional background and outstanding abilities to build an outstanding program at the Skills Center. I hope you will do all you can to enable him to continue building on this foundation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this important program.

Robbie Mantoath



Clallam County
Department of Public Works – Roads
223 East Fourth Street, Suite 6
Port Angeles, WA 98362

To: North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Administrative Council: diana.reaume@gvschools.org;
mjackson@portangelesschools.org; claym@crescent.wednet.edu; kshea@sequim.k12.wa.us; kritter@cfsd.wednet.edu;
lrobins@pencol.edu; mbooster@pencol.edu; ptempleton@portangelesschools.org;
Cc: State Legislators: Kevin Van De Wege (vandewege.kevin@leg.wa.gov); Steve Tharinger
(steve.tharinger@leg.wa.gov); Jim Hargrove (Jim.Hargrove@leg.wa.gov)
Subject: Proposed termination of the NOPSC Natural Resources program
Date: March 27, 2015

Dear NOPSC Administrative Council members:

I have been informed that the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center's Natural Resources (NOPSC-NR) program is in jeopardy and would like to support its continuation on behalf of the Clallam County Streamkeepers program.

Streamkeepers is a citizen-science watershed monitoring program of Clallam County's Public Works - Roads Department, established in 1999, involving volunteers in gathering high-quality data relevant to the effort to protect and restore our local watersheds, and sharing the data with natural-resource professionals, decision-makers, and the general public. For more information about our program and the state of our local watersheds, see our website (address below).

We have been involved with the NOPSC-NR program since its inception and have developed a strong working relationship. The NR class serves as the lead for our monitoring team on Tumwater and Valley Creeks in Port Angeles, performing the same rigorous scientific protocols as the rest of our volunteer corps, and checking and submitting the data. Our adult volunteers work alongside these students in the field, but the class is ultimately responsible for the data submitted. These students have spent 1100 hours doing Streamkeepers field work since 2009, plus many more hours entering and reporting on their data. And Streamkeepers is just one of a long list of community natural resources programs supported by the NR class.

One particularly powerful aspect of the NR program is its emphasis on the scientific method. As they begin to gather and study the data, students develop hypotheses of their own, create their own research projects, and evaluate their findings in a variety of media. They have produced dozens of scientific posters, one of which proudly hangs in the lobby of the Clallam County Courthouse. They produce annual seminars in which each student presents their research and defends it in front of an audience of fellow students, natural resource professionals, and members of the general public. They produce educational videos, GIS story maps, newsletters, blogs—the list goes on and on.

The NR program is a model for public-school education: It teaches young people about assessing, protecting, and restoring our natural resources; involves them in hands-on work with nature; connects them with important work being performed by community agencies and gets them into internships and jobs; emphasizes the scientific method but also offers credit in English and Career Education; offers programming from Sequim to La Push; works with many would-be dropouts yet is open to students taking classes in traditional schools; and apparently brings in a net profit to the school system, thanks to the resourcefulness of its part-time instructor.

It would be difficult for Streamkeepers to replace the loss of the NR program. We urge you to explore ways to maintain this program for the benefit of our community and our natural resources.

Sincerely,

Ed Chadd, Program Coordinator

Dear Skills Center Advisory Committee,

I wouldn't have been able to get this far in my senior year without The Skills Center Natural Resource Program. The natural Resource Center helped me out a lot. This program helped me earn credits that I was missing and that I needed in order to graduate. It was better than working in regular Science and English Classes. I loved how hands on it was. This made it easier to learn. Instead of sitting at a desk learning how fish give the water nutrients I can actually be giving the water nutrients myself by throwing fish into the water. This was one of my favorite things to do in Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition. Now I am doing the garden with Ms. Dahn this has been a great experience, I love how hands on this job is and how I can get down and dirty. I like helping out the community because helping it out is just helping me out. I am learning and teaching about companion planting. Companion planting is just what plants are good to grow next to each other or help each other grow. I also learned what plants are bad to grow next to each other. The other students are learning and teaching about crop rotation, soil health, and organic pest management. We all had to interview local gardeners. I chose my dad and now that I am doing this program I can help my dad with his garden and teach him new stuff. If the school were to drop this program I feel that other future students wouldn't have as many opportunities to learn new things in a fun way, help the community, and earn credits while doing it.

Sincerely,

Alexis Ortiz

Dear Skills Center Advisory Committee,

I would not have been able to fulfill my credit requirements to graduate high school without Natural Resources. I enjoyed working on a team. We did many hands on projects which were not as hard as learning from a book. I developed many new skills and learned many new things about the local ecosystem. I joined the natural resources program because I needed an English credit. This program gave me the opportunity to have a second chance at graduating. This program helps the students to become more involved in the community and try to make things better for the environment. We have experienced replanting trees and flaying fish. We had also threw salmon into the rivers around forks to help bring nutrients. Salmon Coalition and natural resources have done many good things for the environment. Everyone in the salmon coalition got a long very well and we always went out and sometimes we stayed inside the building to work on papers, but my favorite part was going out with everyone and doing the hands on work, we all played a role and each and every one of us was given a certain job, we could also ask for help if we needed to. Most of the time we went out it was cold and sunny but that didn't stop us from doing what we wanted. The salmon doesn't only help the environment but also the community. The Salmon Coalition would also bring fish to the food bank. I think the salmon coalition and natural resources is very important to the community of forks, it plays a very important role in forks for the community and environment. You are also learning while working which is what is important for us to do and learn. I am also starting a garden with Ms. Dahn and other students, we are starting our own garden and we have already planted strawberries, peas, and garlic. We still have a lot of gardening to do. We are learning about crop rotation, soil health, companion plants and non-companion plants. Which we are trying to figure out which plants to not grow together and which ones grow together better. I am learning many new gardening skills just by working on the garden once a week on Tuesdays. I am hoping the garden will turn out very well. If the school were to drop this program many students would not be able to develop many skills, learn things they never knew and will never get the chance to do hands on work in a fun way with others.

Sincerely,

Alexis Vera

April 21, 2015

Dear Skills Center,

The Natural Resources Marine Ambassadors have taught me many things. I have experienced some very fun and helpful things during my time in this program. Going to the beach for surveys is fantastic! I have learned many skills that is required in the real world when I am finally on my own. I have met some pretty cool people and I have learned a great deal about beaches and the different zones. Without this program I wouldn't be able to get my extra credits.

I love going to the beach. When I go there with my group and my instructor I take as many pictures as possible. The view is amazing also. The waves and the sun is very pretty. I tell my mom about beach 4 (the beach we go to for field work) and how it's even better than La Push beach (1st beach). I spend so much more time at the beach because of this program.

The skills that I learned in this program for the real world is very helpful. It's going to be so much easier to get my first job this summer. In this program we have to right down the hours that we worked almost like a time card. We also are responsible for being late and get held accountable for example if we are late we get 20 or 50 dollars docked of our pay for the end of the semester. Pretty much if you don't work you don't get paid. I have also learned and developed better communication skills.

The people that I have met are awesome. It's great hanging out with them while we do our work. I've learned a lot about beaches and the different zones that they have like the surf, wrack, and the wood zone. I also learned about the different plants that thrive in beaches like dune grass.

Without this program I wouldn't be able to get the extra credits that I have. I want to get as many credits as possible. I dream about going to college and this program will make it a lot easier. It will be a lot easier to get a job this summer too. Having done this program and having it on my resume will again make it a lot easier. And will make me look better.

This program is very important to me it has given me many skills. Without it, it will be a lot harder to achieve different goals. I also have many friends who want to do this because they have a lot of failing grades and would like to graduate on time and get the credits that they need. I would love it if you guys didn't end this program it has been great for me!

Sincerely,

Skyla Dawkins

Dear Skills Center Administrative Council,

My name is Taylor Graham and I am a senior high school student volunteering with the Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition and the Olympic National Park service. These two programs have been a really positive opportunity for me and my peers in high school. The programs offer .5 high school credit in English, science and CTE for each semester. I have spent over 300 hours volunteering with the Salmon Coalition and I strongly suggest that by getting rid of the Skills Center you would be harming the environment in the long term. The reason I feel this way is because most of the salmon restoration that is done in the forks area is done by the volunteer students. The employers do not have enough employees to get all of the work done that needs to be done and as a result more and more salmon die off. Currently there are as many as 11 high school students enrolled at the Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition trying to earn high school credit for their hard work. I am not just speaking for myself I am speaking for the many other students that deserve the opportunity that I had with the Skills Center. I am graduating this school year and will not be around to see what happens with the skills center but it would mean a lot to me and the other students deserving the opportunity if you could consider keeping the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center for our students in the future.

Sincerely,

Taylor Graham