

FALL 2022

**VISITOR SERVICES MISSION:**

EMPOWER THE COMMUNITIES OF THE  
LOWER COLUMBIA RIVER TO SEE  
THEMSELVES AS PART  
OF THE STORY OF  
INTERCONNECTEDNESS  
BETWEEN HUMANS  
AND NATURE



NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM

COMMUNITY  
NATURE CENTER

# PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

Pedestrian bridge over train tracks

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*an overview*

# YOUR VOICES HEARD

## PROJECT UPDATE

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Complex) strives to provide diverse experiences for Southwest Washington communities to discover their personal connection to native fish and wildlife through our visitor programs, volunteer opportunities, and site enhancements.

Over the last summer, our team continued community engagement virtually, and connected with partners and organizations that serve the diversity our community represents. Our goal was to listen and provide spaces for you to tell us your needs and give input on the design and programming for the future Community Nature Center (CNC) at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. Here are some of the reoccurring needs and ideas we heard:

### WELCOMING TO ALL

Design a community center that invites and excites diverse communities.

Ensure accessibility to all visitors and supports various learning styles.

### CULTURAL EDUCATION

Teach about traditional ecological knowledge and cultural connections to the natural resources of the Complex.

Provide opportunities to engage with the Tribes in respectful ways.

### ENGAGEMENT

Host programs, trainings, skills building opportunities and provide meaningful volunteer activities for the public.

### INTERACTION

Provide interactive and hands-on features and programs to engage people in learning and enjoying the site. Provide maps, art, plants and animals, and features to explore & discover.

## COMMUNITY VOICES & IDEAS

### CONNECTIONS TO NATURE

Design a center that focuses on the natural surroundings. Provide spaces to sit, listen and take in the diverse settings at the Complex & enjoy the change of seasons.

### EXPANDED PARTNERSHIPS

Broaden partnerships to serve a wider audience that is more inclusive. Develop partnerships that highlight technology and conservation.

### COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES

Create spaces for people to connect, share, and learn together and individually.

### WILDLIFE

Learn about the animals and their habitats throughout the Complex across the seasons.



Female  
Wood  
Duck

## MILESTONES

### Phase 1:

- The Complex administrative building was completed in the Fall of 2022. It is now open to the public, Monday through Friday 8am - 4pm.

### Phase 2:

- The CNC continues to rank as the #1 priority visitor center for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) in the Pacific Region. Completion of the Administrative Building is the first step in this process.
- Conceptual Interpretive Design by a contractor based on community input received to date, by December 2022.
- Interpretive Contractor and Architect have been provided summaries of community engagement to date and are utilizing that input to help develop final plans and documents.
- The Service has requested funding for Phase 2 of the CNC in the FY 2023 President's Budget. We are awaiting final FY 2023 Congressional Appropriations

## GENERAL TIMELINE







# THE VISION BECOMES REALITY...

Now that the construction of the new Administrative Office for the Refuge Complex is wrapping up, we are focusing on further enhancing the site by shaping the Community Nature Center to meet the needs of the community.

Picture: As cooler evenings and morning fog return to the Pacific Northwest, the Complex Administration Building holds new capacity for visitor engagement.