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THE VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

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## State Funds Next Steps in Restoration of Whiteman Cove

**YMCA of Greater Seattle found its legislative champion in Sen. David Frockt (D-Seattle) who heard its message – The DNR plan will destroy the Camp Colman experience.**

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

Washington State Legislators appropriated \$900,000 in the 2022-23 state capital budget for the Department of Natural Resources to advance plans for removal of barriers to fish passage at Whiteman Cove on Case Inlet to comply with a 2013 federal injunction mandating state restoration of salmon habitat.

Two-thirds of that amount will go toward helping the YMCA develop a plan to save salmon and save Camp Colman.

Details of the funding from legislators represented a big win for the YMCA of Greater Seattle.

After the DNR finalized its plan in February to reopen a natural channel to the cove, allowing normal tidal exchanges with Case Inlet, and to build a bridge estimated to cost \$1.9 million over the channel to preserve access to the camp, the YMCA launched a lobbying campaign calling on state legislators to stop funding for the project.

In a promotional video available on YouTube to “Save Salmon – Save Camp,” the YMCA maintained that the lagoon should be left intact because the “DNR failed to include viable options that support both enhanced fish passage as well as preservation of critical environmental education, water safety and recreational programs of Camp Colman.” The video outlines the vision that YMCA’s fish passage expert consultants maintain, that new fish-friendly tide gate options could be designed to accommodate both objectives.

“Sen. Frockt was just a huge advocate for us and really helped us in that space and how we bring all parties to the table and such,” said Gwen Ichinose-Bagley, Youth Development Officer for YMCA of Greater Seattle.

Bagley said the YMCA has more questions than answers at this point. “The

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## Lacrosse and Leukemia — Bo Clark’s Long Game

**The Peninsula junior just finished a winning season in a year of chemotherapy.**

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

The Peninsula High School Boys Lacrosse team won its final game of the season, beating crosstown rivals Gig Harbor High at Roy Anderson Field June 4 by 17-1 and ending the season with a 10-1 record after losing only to undefeated SPSL 4A Bellarmine Preparatory School in Tacoma.

It was a stellar night for graduating Peninsula seniors on the team who never lost a game to Gig Harbor in high school. But the most extraordinary season finish came for the team’s starting face-off player, junior Boden Clark, 17.

In October 2019, Bo and his family moved to Wauna from Spokane where he played a little football, a lot of lacrosse, and also wrestled. He joined the PHS wrestling team right away but was eager to get back to lacrosse.

Bo was psyched after meeting Coach Rusty Wilder at a preseason lacrosse event in early January 2020 and learned the team needed a face-off player.

Meanwhile PHS wrestling got Bo into great shape. But at the end of the first round in tournament play that January, he broke a couple of ribs and lost the match.

A month later, while visiting his dad in Spokane, Bo was overcome by what felt like horrible growing pains — so intense it landed him in the emergency room. By day’s end he was diagnosed with B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and immediately started receiving high doses of chemotherapy.

“We had one conditioning practice for lacrosse before I was diagnosed. And within a week of coming out of the hospital, Coach Rusty and all the guys

**“WHEN THE OTHER KIDS SEE WHAT HE’S DOING AND HOW MUCH HE LOVES THE GAME, HOW MUCH HE’S WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE AND HOW FAR HE’S WILLING TO GO TO DO IT — BO EARNED THEIR RESPECT.”**



on the team had signed a jersey and sent it to me. Rusty visited me in person and that really means a lot,” Bo said.

“I didn’t know any of these guys at all, but they all rallied. Which is more than I could ask from really anybody.”

Bo was on hardcore chemo but because he was in such good shape he was able to complete his first five-week treatment cycle in three weeks. He thought he might return to school, be a normal person, and did despite low energy and bad headaches, but he left after half a day.

The bad headaches came from spinal fluid leaking out of lumbar punctures where chemo was injected into his spine.

Boden Clark on the field. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
All told, he said he spent over 150 days in the hospital.

“I couldn’t eat. I had bad sores in my mouth because of chemo,” he said. “I swelled up like a balloon because of the steroids I was on.”

He weighed 145 pounds at the start of wrestling season but treatment took him up to 186. He said he put on nearly 45 pounds of fat and water weight and lost pounds of muscle.

“You can’t look in the mirror anymore because you don’t like the way that you look. Some days I’d have to use a wheelchair just to get 10 feet to the bathroom. And you just want to curl up into a ball and hide and never come out,” Bo said.

“It’s like all of the worst — stripping someone down to nothing, you take away everything they like to do, take away their

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**CAMP COLEMAN FROM PAGE 1**

funding allows us the opportunity to dig into a more well-rounded plan that takes into consideration all the different stakeholders.”

The funding comes with a number of strings attached, as described in the capital budget:

First, legislators stipulated that \$100,000 of the appropriation “is provided solely for DNR to contract with a third-party facilitator for the purpose of collaborating with the YMCA of Greater Seattle Camp Colman on finding solutions for maintaining a high-quality camp experience while establishing a barrier-free passage for migrating fish species at Whiteman Cove.”

Second, that “\$500,000 is provided solely for the department to grant to the YMCA of Greater Seattle to retain expertise to scope, plan and advance the future of the Camp Colman experience given the restoration of the Whiteman Cove estuary.”

Third and lastly, “the remaining \$300,000 is provided solely for the department to fund the design of the fish blockage removal, and predesign enhancements for a new bridge and roadway across Whiteman Cove that are part of the barrier to the fish passage removal project and necessary as part of maintaining the primary route as access to Camp Colman.”

The planning must also include tribal input and participation from the departments of ecology and fish and wildlife, to create “a vision benefiting native flora and fauna, as well as serve as an environmental outdoor education opportunity that will serve youth and families, especially those from historically marginalized and under-represented communities, plus provide educational opportunity for youth and families to learn of native cultural heritage unique and specific to the natural and human history of the site.”

Any plan for restoration of the cove must identify projects and costs for improvements for the camp, such as water access or swimming facilities with recommendations for funding. DNR, on behalf of the YMCA, must submit the plan in a report to the fiscal committees of the Legislature by Dec. 31.

All told, legislators gave DNR and the YMCA a tall order. DNR had already consulted with local tribes and experts for eight years to create its first proposal to restore salmon habitat and maintain access to Camp Colman. The new plan must do the same while not affecting Camp Colman’s aquatic activities in the cove, which under the original plan would fill and drain with the tide.

Bagley said the YMCA focus has always been to find a win-win solution.

“We will be partnering with DNR and various departments, leaning on the Squaxin Island Tribe for their knowledge and their perspective in creating

this plan, so that we continue to honor all of our agreements and continue to meet our common goal.

“We feel like this is really a great milestone on what the future will be,” she said. ■

**BODEN CLARK FROM PAGE 1**

friends, take away athletics — your brain stops working because of chemo brain and you’re left with just this shell. And then you have to keep deciding every day whether you want to keep living. It’s really tough.”

After finishing the bulk of his treatment, Bo didn’t know if he would be able to continue being an athlete. He was chunky, had little strength, and his confidence was nonexistent. But he knew he wouldn’t be able to live with himself if he stopped doing what he loved.

By January 2021, lacrosse conditioning practices were approaching. Bo had his port removed early in the morning so he could show up for the first conditioning practice. He thought the odds he would get to play were low, but he was determined to be the best teammate he could possibly be.

“I don’t want to be a charity case that’s on the team just because everyone feels bad that I’m a cancer patient,” he said.

Having met Bo before he got sick, to see him as strong as he was then and to see his decline was heartbreaking for Wilder.

“That kid threw up every single practice at one point,” Wilder said. “When the other kids see what he’s doing and how much he loves the game, how much he’s willing to contribute and how far he’s willing to go to do it — Bo earned their respect.”

The first week Wilder was worried. But they made sure Bo stayed hydrated and when he did get sick, he stopped and that was it.

“I’ve never met a kid that had so much tenacity and fight in them, especially when they didn’t feel good,” Wilder said. “Bo is just a remarkable kid and it has been kind of a privilege to coach him.”

To Bo, the privilege was all his.

“I really don’t think I could have done it with any other group of guys. They all treated me like I was one of them. Nobody treated me like I was different. I remember one of our senior captains, in the beginning of our regular season practices, he was dodging around and put me on my ass. And I was like, ‘Great,’ ” he said.



*Tina McKail, KP News*

“I think without that — I don’t think I would have gone as far as I have. I don’t think I would have been where I am.”

Trulie Helgerson is proud of her son. She said Bo goes to practice or a game, comes home and takes chemo, goes to bed, and starts all over again.

“I think that takes a lot of courage, to

put yourself out there knowing that you might not be at a high enough level, but he’s still doing it and still trying,” she said. “He inspires us every day.”

Bo earned a berth in a select lacrosse league for the summer. He flew to New York June 24 to play in his first tournament.

He plans to be back at PHS this fall. ■