



# Funds Distribution Report

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**Puget Sound Estuarium**

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<https://www.pugetsoundestuarium.org>

**Organization's General Goals:**  
Our mission is to foster learning opportunities that inspire people of all ages to connect with, protect, and enjoy the unique estuary environment of Puget Sound.

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<b>Date of Award:</b>	<b>Level:</b>
2023 Q3	\$500 to \$2,500

For more information, please read the attached report from Puget Sound Estuarium.

8802 27th Ave NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271

**TulalipCares.org**

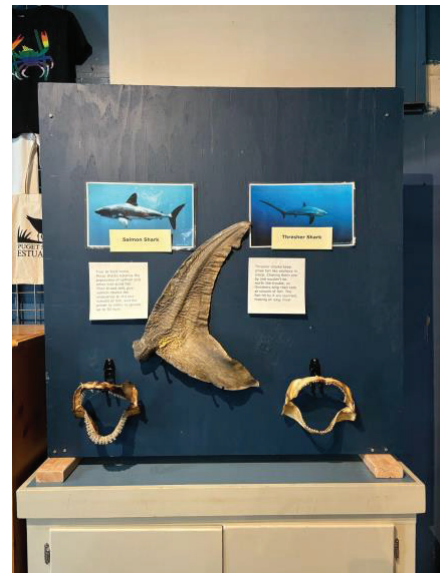
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## Puget Sound Estuarium: 2024 Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund Grant Report



We received Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund Grant in January 2024, to appoint Payton Kammerer, the Estuarium's Lead Interpreter, as the project manager and the staff member responsible for creating a welcoming and educational space for the public in our facility. Payton has been instrumental in managing this project from the outset and in 2023, they became certified as an Interpreter through the National Association for Interpretation. Receiving partial funding from the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund Grant allowed us to secure their continued involvement which has been pivotal for the Estuarium's efforts to better serve the members of our community that most need our support. In January of 2024, we promoted Payton to the full time, permanent staff position of Visitor Experience Coordinator. Payton oversees all things related to our Estuarium facility including: open hours for the public; lead interpreters; permanent exhibits, rotating exhibits as well as ongoing planning and development to make our marine discovery center more accessible to all community members and visitors to the Southern Salish Sea region.

The effectiveness of this project was measured by accomplishments toward facility improvements in the short term, and changes in visitor behavior over course of the project. The project manager's deliverables include a detailed project plan, accessibility guidelines to use for all future projects; contractors for HVAC upgrades, door modifications, and exhibit design; and draft content in line with industry accessibility standards. During the course of the project we: installed a new HVAC system in the back room of the facility; installed new signage on the western facing outdoor wall of the building; installed 2 new ADA ramps (one for the front door and one for the entrance from the front to the back room) and we commissioned a local cabinet shop to build all new aquarium tank stands for us.



*Panel from our new accessible Sharks of the Puget Sound rotating exhibit.*

This year, we've leveraged our temporary seasonal exhibits to break ground on improvements to our exhibit content and design. For exhibit content, we've begun focusing on key messages to inform what should be included in displays, activities, and labels. This focus allows us to organize the visitor experience, helping participants build

a deeper, longer-lasting connection to the Salish Sea. Moreover, in response to research on what inspires people to adopt sustainable behavior, we've adopted a new approach to discussing conservation issues and solutions. In sum, because people are unlikely to change their behavior based on knowledge alone, we now focus on lowering barriers to desired behaviors. For example, rather than simply educating people about the importance of supporting native pollinators this spring, visitors took home over 250 packets of native wildflower seeds. By eliminating the barrier of researching and purchasing native seeds, we ensured that all our visitors were immediately empowered to be part of the solution to pollinator loss. This orientation to exhibit content, which focuses on long-term learning and realistic behavioral changes, is now the standard for all new exhibit materials at the Estuarium.



*Some of the case displays from our new accessible rotating Birds Exhibit.*

These changes in exhibit content would not be effective without the right materials to deliver them. With a focus on accessibility, we've been steadily raising the bar on design standards at the Estuarium. All new labels this year have been written at or below a 6th grade reading level, presented with a minimum size of 22 pt, clearly legible fonts, and high color contrast. The physical layout of the space and objects has also been updated to adhere to accessibility best-practices, from label lighting to the height and depth of interactive objects.

Throughout the redesign of our temporary installations, we have identified key barriers to exhibit improvements – the removal of which will be our major focus for 2025. In particular, the furnishings on the exhibition floor need to be updated to improve the functionality of the space and allow room for 3-dimensional engagement. We aim to create movable exhibit walls to better guide visitors and increase the wall area available for exhibit displays, free-standing plinths for visitors to view objects from all sides, and space-efficient interactive displays. We also hope to repaint the space to better accommodate bright, eye-catching displays. With these changes, we will have laid the foundation for a complete transformation of the Estuarium visitor experience.

We were able to develop an accessible design guide based on current research into designing accessible exhibits. All our current rotating exhibits in 2024 were produced using our accessible design guide. The design guide is also informing our decisions on permanent exhibit redesign work. We are currently working on redesigning all our permanent exhibits. I will attach a copy of our accessible design guide along with more photos with this report in my email to you.

We are very thankful for the support from Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund this year. This funding has helped us maintain Payton’s coordinator position which includes managing and curating both rotating and permanent exhibits at the Estuarium. Payton has excelled at monitoring the visitor experience at the Estuarium; managing and training Lead Interpreters; coordinating and creating our exhibits; facilitating facility improvements and working on short, and long-term planning for Estuarium improvements.



*Visitor Experience Coordinator, Payton Kammerer interpreting for the public at the Estuarium.*







