The first phase of the Kiser Natural Outdoor Learning Lab (KNOLL), which includes major construction, work on reshaping the banks of China Creek, and the installation of plant life, is complete. It’s now up to Mother Nature to fill the creek, water the trees and shrubs and grow the KNOLL.

Additions, as opportunity arises, will include the purchase of additional property and the addition of other varieties of plants and trees. One of the top assignments now will be the installation of permanent signage before a formal dedication of the KNOLL, tentatively scheduled for spring.

The Kiser Natural Outdoor Learning Lab (KNOLL), will grow into a natural setting that serves as a unique botanical environment containing areas within the city block-sized parcel that represent the different ecological regions of the state.

“It’s important to realize that while the KNOLL has tremendous benefit for the community, it is primarily a natural learning lab,” said Steve Ward, foundation executive director and college vice president for Finances and Administration. “This was put in place to serve the students.”

Ward said that the KNOLL represents a rare opportunity to create something special. On one level it honors Rufus Kiser, one of the patriarchs of the college who taught biology and forestry for many years, and at the same time the KNOLL provides a natural setting for students to get a first-hand look at Washington state ecosystems.

“This is in our backyard. Students don’t have to travel to see the flora that grows naturally throughout the state or to study a variety of ecosystems,” Ward said. “It provides an outstanding learning tool for students.”

Paved and lighted walkways make an inviting venue for members of the community to also enjoy the KNOLL.

Planning for the site included input from Centralia College faculty, led by Dr. Lisa Carlson, biology professor. In addition to helping to select trees and shrubs, she encouraged planners to include aquatic life in China Creek and rocks and geology features of Washington.

Carlson said that many of the trees will be identified to show visitors the types of trees and shrubs that grow in different regions, but not all plants will be identified.

“We need something for the tests students will take,” she said. “After all, it is a learning lab.”

The KNOLL cost over $500,000 and funding came from a capital appropriation from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Donations to the KNOLL campaign will assist with signage and additional plantings.
Charles Littel worked tirelessly to create a junior college, supervised locally but its curricula and the hiring of instructors would be under the control of the University of Washington.

Littel strongly believed that junior colleges, first organized before the turn of the century, would play a vital role in higher education. He has proven to be a true visionary.

The Charles Littel Estate, following the direction of Charles, bequeathed $295,697 to the foundation. The gift will be used for scholarships. A portion will be held locally for immediate use for scholarships for the coming year and the balance be placed into a board restricted endowment under the name of Charles Littel, also to be used for scholarships.

In 1928, Littel, buoyed by his success in Centralia, cofounded Yakima Valley Junior College and two years later, was a cofounder of Grays Harbor Junior College.

Two years later he left Washington state and returned to the east coast where he started a two-year college, the Junior College of Bergen County, in New Jersey. That college has since become the Teaneck campus of Fairleigh-Dickinson University, the largest independent university in New Jersey.

The Centralia College’s boardroom, located in the Hanson Administration building, is named in Littel’s honor. Littel passed away in 1966 leaving his estate to his daughter and son-in-law who later passed away in October 2008 and March 2009 respectively. Money remaining in the estate was then directed to support students attending Centralia College.

The Hoa Van Vu Endowment, a permanent endowment for scholarships, started with a $17,000 donation. It was established by Vu’s six children, all immigrants from Vietnam who escaped the country at the end of the Vietnam conflict in 1975.

The Vu Family was poor, even by Vietnam’s standards. The family didn’t own a television, let alone a home, and neither parent had completed more than a grade school education. But through hard work and sacrifice, Vu and the children’s mother, Hoang Thi Khuong, managed to pay for tuition, uniforms, and books to keep the kids in school.

Not typical of most men of his generation, Vu even refused to teach his children his trade as a tailor because he wanted them to achieve more in life.

During the evacuation of Vietnamese refugees by U.S. troops, everyone but Vu made it safely to the United States. Despite their loss, the Vu children and their mother settled in Olympia, Washington, and lived the dream that he had for them. All six Vu children ultimately graduated from college and became the first generation in their family to do so.

Mai, the oldest of the six siblings, considered attending another community college but was not encouraged by that college’s staff. A neighbor had attended Centralia College and advised Mai to give it a try.

“...The counselor here was very supportive and told me that I could succeed. He had no reservations about my abilities and that made all the difference. The counselor at the other school said college would be too difficult for me, the one at Centralia College said I could do it. I was very grateful,” said Mai. “And he was right.”

She successfully completed one year, transferred to the University of Washington, earned her degree there, and became a dental hygienist. She later returned to school, earned another degree and is now a budget analyst with the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

To honor their father’s memory and to pass on the value of education to the next generation, the Vu children have created an endowment to support first-generation college students at Centralia College. The first award will be made for fall quarter 2012.

“This endowment is the realization of a dream of the Vu family,” said Dr. Jim Walton, college president. “The vision that education is important and that it does transform lives is the dream that Hoa Van Vu had for his children. Through this generous gift, that vision will benefit deserving students attending Centralia College.”
John Braun, when he’s not rescuing crews from sinking subs, serves on the foundation board

John Braun, 44 and president of Braun Northwest, is the newest member of the Centralia College Foundation Board of Directors. When he’s in Chehalis and not supervising employees or solving business problems, John’s a spectator at one of his children’s sporting events. He is also a board member of the Timberland Regional Library and a commander in the Navy Reserves.

Equipped with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Washington and a Master of Engineering-Manufacturing from University of Michigan, this 6-foot tall, soft-spoken man enjoys bringing the best out of people. He runs an efficient manufacturing plant which builds three and a half emergency vehicles each week.

John traveled most of last year. Not only does he deliver ambulances and prisoner transport vehicles within 13 western states, he also commands 60 Navy Reserves within the Deep Submergence Unit (DSU) – the Navy’s only worldwide deployable submarine rescue unit.

As a Navy reserve in a special unit, John is on-call 24 hours each day. His team can assemble in 72 hours to rescue sailors from bottomed submarines. DSU performs rescue operations on submerged, disabled U.S. and foreign navy submarines. They use pressurized rescue modules that are able to lift 1,000 pounds and dive to depths of 5,000 feet. The rescue module was developed as the result of the U.S.S. Thresher submarine (a nuclear-powered submarine that sank during deep-sea diving tests) accident in 1963, when all hands were lost. The rescue vessel was first launched in 1970.

His navy career takes him on submarine rescue drills around the world. “This year we’ll train near the Catalina Islands with members of the Chilean navy,” he said. Then they’ll be on another mission off the coast of India. His position as commander is a two-year term which expires in December 2012. He will continue being an active reserve member after his term expires

When asked what he’d like to accomplish as a board member for the Centralia College Foundation, John replied that he’s still learning what he needs to do.

“Centralia College is a key part of our community and this is a great opportunity to get more involved,” he said.

“I’m happy to have the opportunity to serve and contribute.”

Braun Northwest, founded in 1986 by the Braun family, specializes in designing and building ambulances, fire rescue and command vehicles, and police command vans, hazmat vehicles, patrol cars and prisoner transport systems. Twenty to 30 percent of the business involves producing law enforcement vehicles. His goal is to increase production to four vehicles each week.

He left for college, got married, and joined the Navy in 1989 to work on nuclear submarines. He returned to Chehalis in 1999 to become the general manager of his family’s successful business. After the events of 9-11, John re-enlisted as an active reserve. He lives in Chehalis with his wife and four children.

He now turns his skills toward helping the Centralia College Foundation in its efforts to support deserving students.

Student says “thank you” for your support

(Note: this is an edited thank you letter much like one sent by 195 students who appreciate the financial support they have received this year.)

Dear Lloyd Fuller Estate:

Thank you very much for providing the funds for my scholarship. I truly appreciate it! Before I received word that I had been awarded the Lloyd Fuller Estate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) scholarship, I was getting ready to go to Pacific Lutheran University. Although PLU gave me a good scholarship, it was still not enough to cover the large tuition, causing a great amount of stress for me and my family. However, upon receiving the STEM scholarship, all those worries melted away.

I no longer have to worry about how I’m going to pay for college. I can also save money for when I transfer to a university by living at home and putting any money I make into a savings account instead of towards my tuition. A full-ride scholarship is truly a blessing and I thank you profusely for your part in it.

Attending Centralia College isn’t just about saving money. This college has memories from my childhood attached to it, since my mother worked in Student Support from the time I was born until just a few years ago. I actually know some of the staff working here already, which makes attending college a little less intimidating. I’ve more or less come full circle, since I attended day care and preschool, and now I’m about to start classes. I truly believe it will be a nice transition from high school to a four-year university.

I plan to major in biology and graduate from Centralia College with an Associate in Science degree. From there, I’ll transfer to a four-year university, though I’ll be honest, I’m not sure which one as of yet. Someday, I hope to do genetic research on human diseases to try to find cures. Though I’m too squeamish to become a doctor, I still want to help people with my love of science.

Thank you again for your generosity!

Kayleen Carl
The Lewis County Rotary Clubs Foundation presented the Centralia College Foundation with a check for $70,000, the proceeds from the last two Tri-Club Auctions. The donation will be used to enhance the Rotary Hall in the TransAlta College Commons. Accepting the check from Rotary’s Rose Bowman, right, is Brian Nupen, foundation president.

The foundation’s goal for the current campaign year is to raise $450,000 to help deserving students pay for their college expenses. The foundation is coming off of a campaign during which it met its goal of $415,000.

This year, the Washington state Legislature bumped tuition at the state’s two-year colleges by 12 percent. For fall quarter 2011 a student taking 15 credits (considered a full-time load) pays $1,170, plus books and any fees that might apply. The cost of attending Centralia College full-time is over $3,500 for three quarters.

As increasing numbers of men and women turn to Centralia College, there is a corresponding rise in needed support to help students with the cost of education. Through your gifts to the Future Leaders Fund, you are investing in the future of our students and our community.

**AN IMPORTANT YEAR-END TAX-PLANNING ANNOUNCEMENT!**

The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act of 2010 reinstates the Rollover for 2011 and allows an eligible gift made by December 31, 2011, as a donation.

More specifically, the legislation allows tax-free distributions of up to $100,000 per donor, per year, from traditional IRA accounts to organizations that qualify for charitable deductions as defined by the IRS. **This annual tax-free distribution of up to $100,000 is available for 2011.**

**Other IRA Gift Requirements**

- The IRA gift must otherwise have been includible as ordinary income to the IRA owner.
- The IRA owner must be 70½ or older.
- The year in which annual gifts of up to $100,000 may be made is 2011.
- The recipient may not be a private foundation, supporting organization or donor advised fund.

For further information contact the Centralia College Foundation at 360.736.9391, ext. 290.

**FYI: Investing in Our Future**

Your investment in our future does more than provide much needed scholarships to deserving students at Centralia College. According to a report created for the state of Washington, keeping our young men and women in college adds value in the form of student, society, and taxpayer benefit.

- At career midpoint, community and technical college graduates earn an average of $49,000 annually, 35 percent more than those with just a high school diploma.
- Taxpayers see a 6.4 percent rate of return on their investment in Washington’s community and technical colleges.
- Former students of Washington’s community and technical colleges add $11 billion annually to the state’s economy.

Using a Smartphone with a camera (and Internet connectivity), scan the barcode to visit the Centralia College Foundation Website and see all the features we’ve got listed.
Thank you very much for playing a part in advancing educational opportunities at Centralia College through your support of the Future Leaders Fund.

I am pleased to support your continuing efforts to provide opportunities for deserving students in Lewis and south Thurston counties helping them to reach their full potential by attending Centralia College.

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of:
- $500
- $200
- $100
- $50
- Other $_________

I am happy to pledge $__________ to be billed monthly/quarterly/annually.

I would like my contribution to support:
- Future Leaders Fund
- Scholarships
- Other

Yes, I would like to help you save resources.
Please e-mail my receipt.

Please make your check payable to Centralia College Foundation.

Name _____________________________________
Company/Title ______________________________
Address ___________________________________
City ______________________________________
State/Zip __________________________________
Phone (_________ ) _________________________
E-mail ____________________________________

Centralia College Alumni class of _____________
Gift made in the memory of or tribute to __________
__________________________________________

Please contact me for a tour of the campus
Please send me details on the Legacy Society

Centralia College Foundation
360.736.9391, ext. 290
foundation@centralia.edu
http://foundation.centralia.edu

To make your tax-deductible donation to support deserving students attending Centralia College, please fill out the card above, clip it, and mail it to the Centralia College Foundation, 600 Centralia College Blvd., Centralia WA 98531.