

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nhatt Nichols, bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, April 1, 2026.

Today we're looking at the future of the Discovery Bay Golf Club, as reported on by Rachael Nutting.

The team seeking to transform the historic Discovery Bay Golf Club into a multigenerational wellness community is making its case directly to the public. They held two information sessions in late March as they worked to secure funding and meet a critical November deadline. Patty Schmucker, one of three partners in the proposed Discovery Bay Wellness Community, outlined the project's evolution and community-focused vision in creating what the team calls an "intentional community designed as a multigenerational community." The outreach comes as neighbors pursuing a conservation alternative await word this month on whether the Jefferson Land Trust will formally explore protecting the property's wetlands and forests through conservation easements, requiring the Discovery Bay Wellness Community to radically alter or abandon their plans.

Schmucker, a Discovery Bay homeowner with a background in economic development and wellness, described how the current proposal emerged from conversations with neighbors and potential buyers over the last year. When the property went on the market, Schmucker approached the broker and asked to be introduced to potential buyers. Her goal was to better understand what the community wanted before any deal was struck.

That approach led her to Collin Thompson, a Yakima-based developer who has spent the last decade building rural affordable housing and farmworker homes across Washington state through his work with the Office for Rural and Farmworker Housing. A one-hour meeting turned into four hours of envisioning what a Jefferson County-specific project could look like.

The updated March 18, 2026, investor presentation, titled "A Multigenerational Community for Healthy Living in Jefferson County" lays out a project designed to address what the team identifies as critical unmet needs in the county: housing shortage, limited community spaces, and aging care access for the county's growing 60-plus population. The proposal includes 42 homes, down from earlier projections of 48. These homes will range from attainable housing options for young families and the local workforce to residences designed for active aging. The project also features a nine-hole golf course, down from the current 18, with preserved open space and trails to enhance community access to nature. Additionally, a Longevity Center will be established, offering clinic, spa, and physical recovery services.

Six extended-stay cabins are planned to accommodate wellness guests. Community amenities will include pickleball courts, barbecue pavilions, and various gathering spaces to foster social interaction and recreation. Schmucker directly addressed the most significant hurdle facing development on the property: the Nov. 4, 2026, expiration date of the preliminary permit approval granted to current owner Nicolas Hurtado in 2021. Schmucker acknowledged the complexity, noting that the 2021 approval came with approximately 104 conditions that emerged from community opposition in previous fights over the property. Those concerns have been taken into account with their new plan.

A key evolution in the project's structure involves who would ultimately own it, which would be the people who live there. That community ownership model is central to the current pitch. Even as the development team ramps up its public engagement, neighbors pursuing a conservation alternative await word from the Jefferson Land Trust. Bob Heinith, a longtime community advocate involved in the effort, confirmed that Land Trust staff have indicated they will decide this month whether to formally explore a conservation easement that could permanently protect the property's wetland and forested areas from development.

The Land Trust is also considering establishing a wildlife corridor in the forested lands above the upper 9 holes of the golf course, which is currently slated for several clustered housing developments. The Land Trust's recently completed 2026-2030 Strategic Plan identifies "preventing land conversion" as "the defining challenge of our time" and prioritizes protecting habitat and wildlife corridors, including the Quimper Wildlife Corridor that connects to the Discovery Bay area. Whether the Discovery Bay property ranks among the organization's immediate priorities will become clearer with this month's decision.

Schmucker framed the community's choice in stark terms, warning that if the property goes to auction there could be a less considerate development of the property, and it's likely that it will be sold off as individual lots. The current owner, who is 85 years old and living in Chile, has "deal fatigue" and wants to sell, according to Schmucker. The Discovery Bay Golf Club has anchored this corner of the Olympic Peninsula since 1925. Its second century now hangs in the balance.

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