

**SOUTH SLOUGH NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

South Slough Reserve Interpretive Center
Charleston, Oregon

DRAFT Minutes of the 125th Regular Meeting
March 19, 2009
1:00 – 4:00 pm

Commission members present:

Richard Hamel
Craig Young
Robert Emmett
Louise Solliday, Chair

Ron Stuntzner
George Boehlert
James Fereday

Commission members not present:

Mark Ingersoll

South Slough NERR staff present:

Mike Graybill
Pam Wilson
Steve Rumrill
Alicia Helms
Robin Elledge
Tom Gaskill
Adam DeMarzo
Joy Tally
Deborah Rudd

Kathy Andreasen
Tom Elledge
Craig Cornu
Jake Robinson
Hans Klausner
John Bragg
Nate Damewood
Alix Laferriere

Others present:

John Schaefer, Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua and
Siuslaw Indians.
Nora Terwilliger, SSNERR Advisory
Jody Hamel
Margot Hessing-Lewis, OSU-SSNERR NERR Graduate Research
Fellow
Thomas G. and Teri A. Stark, SSNERR neighbors

**The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by the Chair of the
Commission, Louise Solliday. She announced that Commissioners**

George Boehlert and Robert Emmett would be participating via teleconference.

INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone present introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Chair Solliday asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. **Commissioner Hamel moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting and Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.**

PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Solliday asked if there was any public input. SSNERR neighbor and property owner, Teri Stark voiced her concern regarding the proposed placer mining in Coos County. She said that her husband was expected to join the meeting shortly.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Volunteer Recognition Awards

Louise Solliday recognized the contributions of volunteers to the South Slough Reserve. She named everyone on the list that was compiled and certificates and plaques were handed out. Chair Solliday recessed the meeting at 1:10 pm so cake and refreshments could be served.

The meeting was reconvened at 1:20 pm.

Tom Stark joined the meeting and Chair Solliday asked him if he would like to contribute to the public input. Mr. Stark said he was concerned that Coos County seemed to be supportive of the proposed mining and perhaps lacked good or factual information regarding the operations. The Starks were trying to negotiate with Oregon Resources Corporation about the hours and intensity of the mining operation. He expressed concern that if the area is mined, toxic storm water runoff could contaminate the South Slough watershed.

OLD BUSINESS

Upland Habitat Restoration Plan

Jake Robinson, SSNERR Forest Science Coordinator gave a PowerPoint presentation. A near final draft of the South Slough NERR's Upland Habitat Restoration Plan has been completed and the Commission was encouraged to comment on their review of the document. The draft plan is still out for final review by the advisory group.

The Commission commented very favorably on the draft plan and on the work Mr. Robinson has accomplished. Chair Solliday asked Mr. Robinson regarding the potential for plan implementation to generate revenue. Mr. Robinson indicated that while the priority of the plan is to support forest restoration, some potential to generate revenue exists but this is not likely to be sufficient to implement the plan without grant subsidies, especially considering the depressed market prices for the types of materials likely to be produced by the proposed restoration actions.

Chair Solliday asked if there was a motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

- 1.) Adopt the Upland Habitat Restoration Plan with the understanding that comments from the advisory committee may result in slight modifications to the near final draft.**
- 2.) Direct staff to pursue funding to support Plan implementation.**

Mr. Graybill requested that the motion be amended to include the Commission's intent to incorporate the approved Upland Habitat Restoration Plan as an appendix to the SSNERR Management Plan.

Commissioner Young moved to approve and Commissioner Stuntzner and Commissioner Boehlert seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation as amended. The motion passed with all in favor.

State and Federal Budget Developments

Louise Solliday discussed the Department of State Lands budget. She said that revenue producing agencies are expected to fare better during the current times of declining state revenue, and that the South Slough NERR was doing a good job of managing their budget. She added that

the Program Option Packages requested by the agency may not be approved by the Legislature.

Mike Graybill reported on a number of federal stimulus funding opportunities expected to come up. Commissioner Stuntzner suggested that SSNERR use any stimulus funds for acquiring buildings or equipment that will be retained when the funding goes away. Commissioner Young said that some grants possibly could be funneled through the University of Oregon.

Chair Solliday asked if the Commission would like to approve the staff recommendation to submit the FY 2009 application to NOAA for Operations; and to pursue funding from other programs detailed in the briefing packet with one caveat: Due to the current capacity of the DSL fiscal staff to handle an increase in the number of grants to manage, it is requested that for the next six months, SSNERR seek funding for larger projects in the \$500K or \$1 million range; and seek projects that can be immediately started.

Commissioner Hamel moved to approve the motion and Commissioner Stuntzner seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

Update on Charleston Coast and Ocean Center

Mike Graybill gave a brief update on the plan to move the administrative offices of the SSNERR to Charleston. Staff have continued as a participant in the Oregon Solutions project planning team working to design a multi-use, multi-tenant facility in Charleston. After one year of planning, the Oregon Solutions team has developed a plan designed to address the needs of the community. The project vision, key players, and steps necessary to attain the vision are memorialized in a declaration of cooperation document that has been signed by the parties who will be involved in carrying out the plan.

Now that the Oregon Solutions program process has finalized the declaration of cooperation, a local project implementation team consisting of representatives from The University of Oregon, Coos Watershed Association, The Port of Coos Bay, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, South Slough NERR, and Oregon State University has assumed the responsibility to implement the actions outlined in the plan. The University of Oregon planning office gave \$10 million as a rough estimate for the overall cost of the project.

Staff will continue to pursue funding for the project.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed Placer Mining

Mike Graybill provided an update on the proposed placer mining in Coos County. A mineral sand mining company, Oregon Resources Corporation (ORC), has approached Coos County with a proposal to expand the area leased for mineral sand mining. A substantial portion of the proposed 6,000 acre lease proposal falls within the Winchester Creek Drainage Basin, the primary fresh water tributary flowing into the South Slough NERR. Commissioner Young asked about containment of runoff from the operations. Mr. Graybill answered that staff was currently fact finding on the subject. Chair Solliday said there will be more opportunities for the Commission to comment on the proposed mining operation.

Chair Solliday asked if the Commission would like to approve the staff recommendation to send a letter to the Coos County Board of Commissioners identifying the statutory objectives set out for the operation of the South Slough NERR and request that they take these objectives into consideration in their negotiations with prospective mining operators.

Commissioner Fereday moved, and Commissioner Young seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation. The motion passed. Commissioner Stuntzner excused himself from the vote, citing a conflict of interest.

Grant Applications

Mike Graybill provided an update on grant applications. Staff have been developing proposals for both federal and non-federal entities. Robin Elledge has developed a spreadsheet representation of the numerous proposals and the dollar values which is available in the briefing packet. Some of the proposals include the Reserve as either a subcontractor, or a partner providing in-kind match.

NOAA construction proposals include the Phase II construction of facilities necessary to create a high performance wireless wide area telecommunications network for the South Slough NERR. Hinch Road

improvements is a project that will improve the utility and integrity of Hinch Road by: 1) redesigning it to minimize sediment runoff; 2) relocating the primary trailhead for the southern portion of the Reserve to an area adjacent to Hinch Road; 3) constructing and installing a security gate near the entrance; and 4) updating information and regulatory signage.

YR 2010 Federal Budget

Mike Graybill gave a preliminary overview of the recently released 2010 federal budget. The proposed budget holds potential to expand financial support for several SSNERR programs.

A total of \$98,755,000 is requested in FY 2010 for NOAA's Office of Coastal Resources Management. This will increase the base level of funding for the following programs:

Coastal Zone Management Grants	\$1,723,000
CZM Management Program Administration	\$1,119,000
NERRS	\$ 402,000
Marine Protected Areas Center	\$ 664,000

Increases are likely to be seen in the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of the Interior.

Salmon Research Request

Mike Graybill described Art Bass' research project to place Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) antennae in Winchester Creek to facilitate research on the movement behavior of juvenile salmonids. The proposed antennae placement would block boat passage on Winchester Creek above Hinch Bridge, a low use area, within the Reserve for a period of up to one year.

Winchester Creek is an important part of this study because it is one of the only ungated, coho-bearing, lowland streams in the Coos estuary. By establishing a pair of PIT antennae it can be determined how frequently coho smolts and fry move up and downstream in a natural system as

well as what environmental factors might influence this movement. The project was discussed and Art Bass answered questions from the Commission.

Chair Solliday asked if there was a motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

- 1. Approve placement of the PIT antennae above Hinch Bridge as requested**
- 2. Request that project participants work with SSNERR staff to develop interpretive materials to be placed at the Hinch Bridge paddle launch and at the Interpretive Center to alert boaters to the temporary impediment to boating and explain the purpose of the research project**
- 3. Request that project participants keep SSNERR staff and the SSNERR Commission updated on project results**
- 4. Request that project participants work with SSNERR staff to present the research project as part of SSNERR educational programming.**

Commissioner Fereday moved to approve and Commissioner Stuntzner seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Addendum to Meeting

Interpretive Center Operating Schedule for 2009

Mike Graybill presented the background material to the Commission, recapping some brief points regarding adjusting the SSNERR Interpretive Center public hours to emphasize and more selectively target educational opportunities during summer months.

The Commission discussed the issue and Louise Solliday asked if they would like to approve the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Hamel moved and Commissioner Young seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to direct South Slough staff to:

- 1. Adopt Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00 am to 4:30 pm as the year round daily hours of operation for the public at the South Slough Interpretive Center starting June 1, 2009;**

- 2. Work to ensure that the new hours of operation of the South Slough Interpretive Center are highlighted in publications and notices to alert visitors;**
- 3. Conduct a marketing campaign to make the community aware of the new hours of operation and interpretive programming available on Saturdays in particular.**

The motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATION

Margot Hessing-Lewis, Graduate Research Fellow gave a report and PowerPoint presentation on her graduate thesis project titled, "*Measuring Eelgrass-Macroalgae Interaction Strength in Upwelling Influenced Estuaries in Oregon*".

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Solliday adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.