



South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
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Do you want to Volunteer?

To learn more about South Slough Reserve's volunteer program, please contact Deborah Rudd, Public Involvement Coordinator at 541.888.5558, ext 58, Deborah.rudd@state.or.us or complete and return the form below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I am interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities in the following areas, (mark one or more):

Visitor Services ___ Special Events ___ Research ___

Stewardship ___ Program Publicity ___ Education ___

Trail Maintenance ___ Other ___

Fall
2009



The Newsletter of South Slough
National Estuarine
Research
Reserve
and the
Friends of
South Slough
Reserve, Inc.
Charleston, Oregon

THE FISHING LESSON

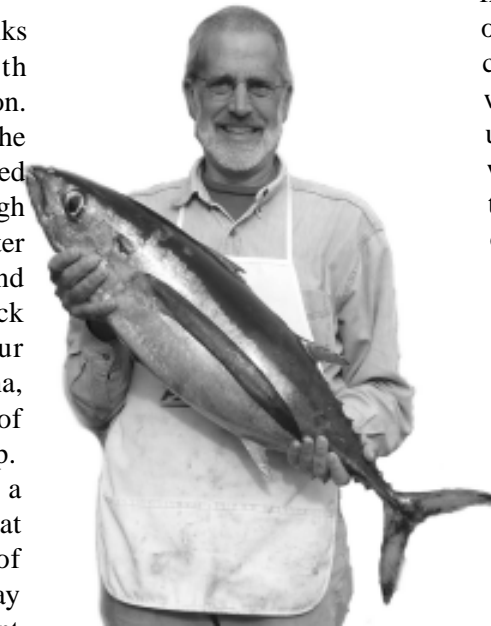
By Michael Graybill, Manager

I would like to offer a hearty thanks to all who participated in South Slough's 35th anniversary celebration. What a wonderful event! As part of the celebration, a group of people involved in the operation of the South Slough boarded a beautiful aluminum oyster barge at the Sloughside Pilings and cruised along the South Slough back to the Charleston Marina. As our massive barge arrived at the marina, we encountered a large number of recreational boaters at the boat ramp.

After I stepped ashore I took a moment to examine the other boats at the ramp. The usual contingent of salmon fishers had been joined this day by other boats adorned with a different sort of gear. Huge ice chests were everywhere, blood stained the concrete piers. Spectators were looking into the holds of boats. My "Aha" moment came when I gazed into the fo'c's'le of a handsome aluminum boat and noticed a half dozen absolutely beautiful albacore tuna stacked neatly in a cubby. Tuna are high speed swimmers that prefer to remain in water that is right around 60 degrees; quite a bit warmer than low- to mid-50-degrees water temperatures that we commonly find near shore on the Oregon coast in summer. Warm "tuna water" had obviously come close enough to shore to lure some brave recreational fishermen out to try their luck.

And what luck they'd had that day! Many of the boats had caught dozens of fish of a very good grade. Commercial fishers had also done very well: some caught hundreds of fish in a single day's effort.

In summer, the north wind blowing along our coast moves surface water out to sea and cold, nutrient-rich water upwells near the shore to replace it. The rich nutrients



Tuna Magic

seeking tuna! Some years the tuna water never gets closer than 60 miles from the beach. A 120-mile round trip is out of reach for most recreational fishers.

Thirty miles from the coast, the ocean is a very different place than near the beach. The water looks different, the birds are different. The pace and scale of things is different.

Out of sight of land we would see only occasional reminders of the shore: a floating log, or just some occasional blades of eelgrass. We saw a curious storm petrel inspecting an orphaned bullwhip kelp frond floating near our boat.

Continued on page 8

from wind driven upwelling form the base of the ocean's food webs; it makes our coast among the richest on Earth. But we'd had a week of calm weather. The upwelling had paused sufficiently to allow warmer, bluer offshore water to approach the coast. That amazingly clear, 60-degree offshore water is where the albacore are at home.

Having seen the good fortune of all those tuna fishers, I called my fishing partner and we made plans to try our hands at tuna the next day.

We met at the boat at 6:00 a.m. The weather and ocean conditions were very good and we made good progress as we headed toward the tuna water. Although our fishing venture took us out nearly 30 miles, some people reported catching tuna as close as 14 miles from the shore. That's fortunate for those

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2009 SUMMER SCIENCE CAMP HIGHLIGHTS



Stacy Galleher, FOSS Camp Assistant and Jenna Kulluson, OIMB volunteer, lead second week junior science campers on a nature hike.



Tom Gaskill, Ed. Coordinator and Stacy Galleher, FOSS Science Camp assistant play the Salmon Migration game with first week junior campers.



Tom Gaskill gets ready to lead the Summer Science Institute across the salt marsh.



Joy Tally, SSNERR Education Specialist, takes Senior Science Campers on a field trip to view life under the Charleston docks.

READ THE SOUTH SLOUGH NEWS ON THE WEB

The South Slough Newsletter is also available on the World Wide Web in a digital format. To download a copy, log onto www.oregon.gov/DSL.SSNERR/newsletters.shtml and follow the instructions to subscribe.



Newsletter Credits

Article Contributors

John Bragg
Suzan Brawnlyn
Mike Graybill
Sada Huynh

Photo Contributors:

John Bragg, Rich Hamel, Heidi Harris, Charles Hill, Sada Huynh, Hans Klausner, Bob Sleeth, Joy Tally, Pam Wilson

Newsletter Editors & Coordinator:

Deborah Rudd, Editor
John Bragg, Editor
Anterra, Coordinator

Friends of the South Slough

Board of Directors:

President	Suzan Brawnlyn
Vice President	Vacant
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Membership & Contributions: Vacant	
Board Member	David Lunde, Bkstr. Mgr.

HEAVY OYSTER DUTY

By Sada Huynh

The native Olympia Oyster (*Ostrea lurida*) have nearly disappeared since the California gold rush due to over harvesting, degraded habitat conditions, and predation by non-native species.



Hans Klausner, South Slough's stewardship coordinator, loads Olympia oysters for transplanting at Younker Point.

Olympia oyster beds were lost due to heavy harvesting, and their habitat was damaged from excessive sedimentation which flowed muck into the rivers, suffocating the oyster beds. In addition, non-native species appeared and preyed upon the few remaining oysters.

The South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve is now working to accelerate the recovery and restoration of the oyster beds in Coos Bay. Steve Rumrill, research coordinator, and Adam DeMarzo, the estuarine monitoring assistant, drove 300 bags of baby Olympia oysters from a



Juvenile Olympia oysters cluster on the shell of a much larger Japanese oyster.

shellfish hatchery in Netarts Bay to Coos Bay. What was most difficult was that these baby oysters have never been out of the water and for the first time they were out for the seven-hour drive. "All 300 clutch bags

were wrapped up in tarps like a big burrito and were chilled with ice blocks during the drive down the coast to Coos Bay," says Rumrill.

South Slough staff members unloaded the 300 oyster bags in Charleston, rushed to place them on the boats, and transported them out to Younker Point (South slough Estuary) to place the bags back into seawater. There, at Younker Point, the bags were assembled into 30 small pyramids in the lower intertidal zone.

The goal of this project is to restore the native Olympia oyster colonies that will be self sustaining to make a comeback in Coos Bay.

Students Sada Huynh, of Salem, and Jacob Evans, of Astoria, are working at South Slough on summer internships through the Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence program. Sada is working on methods of interpreting information for visitors and Jacob is working with researchers to learn more about the science behind the native oyster restoration project.



Foreground: Steve Rumrill, Research Coordinator. Background: Oregon Youth Conservation Corps crew, scrubbing mud, non-native barnacles and sponges from the shells of native oysters at Eastside boat ramp.

OYSTERS BENEFIT EVERYBODY

By Sada Huynh

Oysters, like other shellfish, play many important roles in the ecology of Coos Bay. Oysters continually filter large amounts of water and decrease the volume of suspended materials in the water, thereby improving water quality. In addition, oyster beds provide valuable habitat for many species of fish, crabs, marine worms, and other species. Finally, the living oyster beds and reefs can protect the shorelines of estuaries from storms, erosion and rising sea levels.



Fall 2009 at South Slough



DATES

PROGRAMS

- October 3** **South Slough Birding** 8 to 10 am
December 5 Search the Reserve for winged wildlife. Binoculars, spotting scopes provided. (\$1/birder)
- October 3** **Animal Signs and Tracks** 10 am to 12 pm
 Join us for a fun morning looking for animal signs and tracks. Draw in your journal and make a cast of a track. All supplies will be provided. For children 6 years and older. (\$3/animal detective)
- October 9** **Collection of Natural Materials for Coastal Basketry** 12:30 to 4 pm
 Join weaver Nan McDonald as she explores the Reserve for the natural materials used in traditional and contemporary Northwest coast basketry. Gather and process materials for the Coastal Cedar Twined Bag class on Saturday. Sturdy shoes and water recommended. (optional)
- October 10** **Coastal Cedar Twined Bag** 9 am to 4 pm
 Students will construct their own unique Cedar Twined Bag using red cedar, spruce roots, wild iris leaves and coastal sedge. Wild cherry bark and bear grass will also be on hand. All materials will be provided. Approximate size of the finished basket is 8" x 8". Good hand dexterity is essential. Please bring a sack lunch and beverage. Class limit is 8. (\$65/person)
- October 17** **Volunteer In-Service** 9 am to 12 pm
 South Slough volunteers, both new and old, join us for a morning of learning how you can share the stories of South Slough. (free)
- October 24** **Mushrooms, a Wild Edible!** 8:30 am to 4 pm
 Join naturalist Chuck Holbert for a day of foraging for mushrooms and wild edibles. By the end of the day students will feel comfortable with identifying at least a half dozen mushroom species. Class time will be spent in the field on moderate hiking trails so be prepared for the weather with sturdy walking shoes or boots. Please bring a sack lunch, pocket knife and plastic bag for collection purposes. Class limit is 60. (\$20/person or free to FOSS members paid prior to October 24)
- October 31** **Tide of the Toddlers** 10 - 11 am
November 14 Bring your wee ones, 1 - 5 years old. Sing a song, read a story, make a craft and explore the natural world. A new theme each month: Nocturnal Animals, Leaves, Whales (\$1/toddler).
December 12
- November 7** **White Ash Tote** 9 am to 4 pm
 Nan McDonald shares traditional knowledge from her Algonquin indigenous roots to teach the process of choosing and processing Oregon White Ash (found throughout western Oregon) for basket making. Each student will construct a tote with canvas handle ~ perfect for shopping, books and knitting projects. Approximate finished size is 12" x 14". All materials provided. Good hand dexterity is essential. Please bring a sack lunch and beverage. Class limit is 8. (\$65/person)
- November 14** **Winged Migration** 2 pm to 3:30 pm
 Join us for popcorn and a movie on the big screen! (free)
- November 28** **Creature Feature** 1 pm to 3 pm
 All about the many animals both big and small who call the South Slough watershed home. (free)
- December 5** **Estuary Arts & Crafts - Natural Ornaments** 1 to 3 pm
 Create natural ornaments and gifts for the holidays. For artists 6 years old and up. (\$3/artist)
- December 6** **Holiday Volunteer Appreciation**
 South Slough would like to take this opportunity at year's end to thank all our volunteers. (free)
- December 19** **Gray Whale Obstacle Course** 10:30 to 11:30 am or 2 to 3 pm
 Join us for popcorn and a movie on the big screen! (free)

South Slough Lands and Coos Area Youths Benefit from OYCC Summer Job Program



A work crew from the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps spent part of the summer planting trees at South Slough reserve.



Molly Tildon gets trees ready for planting.

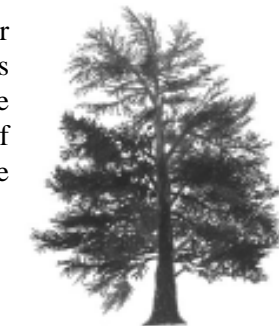
Each summer South Slough Reserve hosts young workers from the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) to build trails, remove invasive species, or assist with stewardship and research projects. Crew members are from the Coos Bay area. This summer they helped to reestablish a colony of native Olympia oysters in Coos Bay and the South Slough, pulled weeds and removed invasive, non-native plants from Slough property.

The OYCC was established by the Oregon Legislature to conserve, natural, historical and cultural resources. Participation also provides education, training and employment opportunities for young people. The summer work program helps youth improve their work skills and ethics, gain on-the-job experience, improve their social skills and build self-esteem. In years past the crews have built trails, boat docks, disability access ramps, fences and picnic tables; restored wetlands, stream banks, wildlife habitat, and historical and cultural sites; and helped with routine maintenance work. They have planted trees, tested water quality, and helped with monitoring, mapping, surveying, and other tasks.

A nine-member three members Governor, Senate the House of oversees the



Maintenance foreman Nate Damewood and manager Mike Graybill, lend a hand as OYCC workers maneuver a skiff into a tidal inlet.



advisory committee, with each appointed by the President and Speaker of Representatives, organization.

OSU, NOAA, BEGIN MAPPING TERRITORIAL SEA

the Oregon State University News Service
CORVALLIS, Oregon

Funding from the 2009 Oregon Legislature combined with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will help researchers from Oregon State University and private firms create the most detailed maps of the seafloor off Oregon ever made.

With a resolution of a half-meter or better, the maps will cover about 34 percent of State of Oregon waters and 75 percent of its rocky reefs, recording every bump, depression, reef and boulder on the seafloor from a depth of 10 meters out to three miles, the boundary of Oregon's territorial sea.

"Developing an image of our ocean floor will help us model tsunamis, identify marine habitats, select

alternative energy sites, identify geological hazards, and enhance safe and efficient marine transportation," said Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski. "Gov. (Arnold) Schwarzenegger of California, Gov. (Christine) Gregoire of Washington and I set a goal of mapping our three states' oceans by the year 2020.

"Thanks to the strong partnership between academia, private industry, fishermen, coastal legislators and multiple state and federal agencies, Oregon is on track to reach that goal," Kulongoski added.

Chris Goldfinger, an associate professor of oceanic and atmospheric sciences at OSU, says the work will begin immediately and focus initially on sites from Cape Perpetua northward, including sites important for tsunami modeling, wave energy and marine reserves proposed at Cape Falcon, south of Cannon Beach; Cascade Head, near Lincoln City; and Cape Perpetua, near Yachats.

"We'll be hiring local fishing boats and crews to help us with the surveys," Goldfinger said, "so there will be

a real Oregon flavor to the project. We should get about halfway done this summer and finish up next year."

The project later will focus on others sites that are being evaluated for future marine reserves, including Cape Arago/Seven Devils, south of Coos Bay, as well other rocky reef areas such as the Rogue and Blanco Reefs.

Goldfinger and his colleagues at OSU will work with David Evans & Associates in Portland on the project.

OSU will use an allocation of nearly \$1.3 million from the Oregon Legislature, which was part of the settlement from the cleanup of the New Carissa, a ship that wrecked off the southern Oregon coast in 1999 carrying an estimated 135,000 gallons of oil.

David Evans & Associates will be funded by a grant of approximately \$4 million from the

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 through NOAA's Office of Coast Survey (<http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/>), which creates nautical charts and surveys. A second company, Fugro Seafloor Surveys, Inc. of Seattle, has received a separate grant from NOAA to map the southern Oregon coast. The combined project will be funded at about \$7.3 million.

Goldfinger said that the maps have other benefits beyond siting marine reserves and developing tsunami inundation models. The maps will be beneficial to fishermen, boaters, and scientists studying sea level rise, potentially catastrophic earthquakes, wave energy and other issues. "The resolution will be on a scale we've never had before," he said.

It is that precision that will allow scientists and decision-makers to better understand and prepare for earthquakes, tsunamis and sea level rise, as well as better manage marine resources.



OSU and NOAA will build detailed maps revealing previously unseen details of Oregon's territorial sea floor.



Fall 2009 at South Slough



All programs begin at the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve Interpretive Center unless otherwise noted. **Please call (541) 888 - 5558 to pre-register and confirm all programs. Programs may be cancelled due to low enrollment or hazardous weather.** Activity fees and donations cover materials and are used by the Friends of South Slough in support of the Reserve. The Interpretive Center, located 4 miles south of Charleston on Seven Devils Road, is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 4:30 pm.

For more information visit us at www.southsloughestuary.org

DATES

September 5th
November 7th

September 12th

September 12th

September 18
October 9
October 30
November 13

September 19
October 31
November 21

September 20

September 26

September 30

PROGRAMS

Birds on the Estuary 8 - 10 am

Explore the shores of our estuary in search of winged wildlife. An interpreter will provide binoculars and spotting scopes. **Meet at the Charleston Visitors Center.** (\$1/birder)

Crabbing Around 10 am - 12 pm

Cast a crab ring from the dock while you learn about proper crab harvesting methods. Explore the estuary for various species of crab. **Meet at the Charleston Visitors Center** (\$1/person)

Chisum Lucas Art Opening 1 - 3 pm

Welcome Chisum Lucas's paintings to South Slough. Chisum paints landscapes, seascapes, florals, portraits and wildlife in their natural habitat. Light refreshments provided. (free)

Fit Friday Hikes 8:30 - 10 am

Fit Friday Hikes get our hearts pumping while remembering you may want to take the time to appreciate the environment and soak in the scenery. Each hike will range from 2 - 4 miles along various portions of the Reserve. Please wear layers, sturdy hiking pants, thick socks and hiking shoes or sneakers. Bring water, snack and any other items in a backpack. (free)

Paddle the Estuary 9 am - 2 pm

Explore South Slough on a trail that flows with the tide from the Charleston Bridge to Hinch Lane Bridge. **Provide your own canoe or kayak (no inflatables or pedals), paddles, PFDs, water and lunch.** Be prepared to get feet and legs wet and muddy at launch points. A driver and shuttle will be provided. Trips may be cancelled up until launch time due to hazardous conditions. **There is a 3 boat minimum and 8 boat maximum.** (\$15/boat)

Friends of South Slough Members Picnic 1:30 to 5:30 pm

Please join us for a **Members Only** potluck at the South Slough Spruce Ranch facility. We'll provide grilled tuna, beverages, plates, cups, etc. Bring your favorite picnic dish to share. We will have music, lawn games and other fun activities for everyone to enjoy.

Please RSVP: (541) 888 - 5558 ext. 58 or deborah.rudd@state.or.us

National Estuaries Day

Explore Your Estuary 10 am to 4 pm

Come out and explore the trails and waterways of South Slough in honor of National Estuaries Day. Explore the exhibits and get trail recommendations. (free)

Film: Frontline's Poisoned Waters 10 am to 12 pm or 1 to 3 pm

View the film today and then join us on September 30th and Coos Watershed Association for a discussion of the film and what you can do to help protect your estuary. *Poisoned Waters* examines the state of Puget Sound and Chesapeake Bay three decades after the passage of the Clean Water Act. (free)

Poisoned Waters Discussion Night 7 to 9 pm

Join us and Coos Watershed Association for Green Night at Java Jones in Empire as we show excerpts from the PBS Frontline Documentary *Poisoned Waters* and discuss the impacts for the Coos Estuary and our lives. Discussion leaders will focus on what's in our drinking water, how does land use affect water quality and the best ways to grow. (free)

South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve's mission is to improve the understanding and stewardship of Pacific Northwest estuaries and coastal watersheds.

Fishing continued from page 1

We saw albatrosses, shearwaters and fulmars—ocean travelers rarely seen from land.

After a great day of fishing we turned toward land and made a straight shot for the harbor entrance. We cruised for some time through the clear blue water but about six miles from the coast the appearance of the ocean began to change. Common murre became very abundant. The water temperature dropped and the color of the ocean changed from deep, clear blue to a distinct brown. Gulls flew about our boat calling and feeding. As we drew closer to shore the murre and gulls were joined by pelicans and cormorants. Entering the Coos estuary I was astonished by the incredible concentration of gulls, murre, cormorants, pelicans and sandpipers. In contrast to the relatively empty expanses of the offshore water, the estuary hosted a show-stopping concentration of life, and not just birds. The bay was filled with small boats – such a contrast to the vast, empty expanse of water 30 miles from the coast. The increase in life at the end of our transit was like the crescendo of an orchestra at the end of a symphony.

I felt so lucky that I had a chance to go fishing that day. The richness provided by the ocean will sustain our household and my spirit for the coming year. The ride back to shore held the important lesson for me; a striking reminder about the richness of the shore and estuary. Because we live close to the shore we become accustomed to its richness. It becomes our base of reference. It is easy to imagine that the whole ocean is like this, but the fact is that our coast and the estuaries that punctuate it are some of the richest places on Earth. I can think of no better demonstration of that richness than to spend the day in the magnificent isolation of the ocean and then to return, across the vastness, to be greeted by that abundance.



Help save the Planet!

When you buy your re-usable cotton carry sack from the Friends of South Slough, you will...

- ~reduce paper and plastic waste
- ~reduce the need to recycle
- ~look very chic when you shop!

Get yours now at the Friends of South Slough Bookstore & More (in the Interpretive Center) **WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!**

FOSS continued from page 5

maintenance area to tour the yurts and Spruce Ranch guesthouse. We saw some new land recently acquired by South Slough, and we learned about and saw some of the exciting research being done in the Slough's wetlands, streams and forests.

Also we are offering for sale a handsome, South Slough re-usable tote bag made to commemorate South Slough's anniversary. The bags are available at the Friends of South Slough Bookstore and More, located

at the Interpretive Center on Seven Devils Road, four miles south of Charleston.

So, if you have one Tuesday evening free, (specifically, the third Tuesday of the month), please come to our board meeting at the Interpretive Center at 5 p.m., or call Public Involvement Coordinator Deborah Rudd for more information. Add your reason to our list of why people love to work with the Friends of South Slough!

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Friends of South Slough earn exciting benefits!*

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Call (541) 888-5558 for more information.

www.friendsofsouthslough.org

FOSS NEWS

WHY NOT DEEPEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH SLOUGH?

By Suzan Brawnlyn, FOSS Board

In our last newsletter, you might have read that I was elected vice-president of the board for the 2009 year. Well, with the publication of this newsletter, I am officially the president of the Friend of South Slough Board of Directors!

How did it happen? Well, like all unpredictable things (including our weather), we started as a strong, well represented board, with even the idea that we might have too many board members. A few weeks and months into it, we find ourselves in a different situation, one quite the opposite of where we were. We are now a very small board but even though we are short by a few members, our enthusiasm has not wavered. We are still active and we are actively seeking new board members to help us finish this year (and maybe stay on, because you are having so much fun, for the following year).

At our July meeting, we discussed how to reach the FOSS membership at large and encourage more of our members to become board members. We each introduced the reason why we became board members. Some have been long-standing volunteers, but that is not a necessary requirement. One member has been on the board for several years and all he did was just show up to the meeting as a visitor. All of us have been volunteers and have been active with the programs. I realized that my reason for wanting to become a board member was to deepen my experience with South Slough. I am

sure previous board members could add their reasons as well, but we would love to hear yours and we need your input!

I have been looking for a job, and I found one, thank goodness, but it got me to thinking about what a job listing for a FOSS board member would look like. Here's what I came up with:

WANTED: Board Members. Should have some interest in and knowledge about South Slough, but be willing to be



The Friends of South Slough directors

trained and broaden their knowledge and scope. Some computer savvy would be helpful, but you might not need it, depending on what type of work you would be willing to take on. Fundraising experience would be helpful, but not required. Possible interest in finances or accounting would be great, but not required. You will need to talk up South Slough on occasion, but that is very easy. You should be willing to deepen your commitment to South Slough. A sense of humor is absolutely required. Previous board experience is not required. You should have an interest in helping to direct and raise funds for grants and projects at South Slough. And you must be able to meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m. at the Interpretive

Center at the Slough, but if you can't make a meeting or two, just let us know and you'll be excused.

How easy is that?

What are we working on as a board for South Slough? We hope to find funding for a 12 person canoe, so that we can get more people involved in water trips around the slough—after all the Slough is about water, right? We also hope to investigate the feasibility of a floatable boat house, to take the Slough to other locations in the Coos Bay area. We are seeking funding for an Americorps volunteer to help us out on a more regular basis and do some of this investigative work. And recently we had a poster contest with school children and hope to create stationery from their artwork to sell in the gift shop.

Of course there have been the "not so exciting" tasks as well, like assuring that grants are proceeding, updating our insurance, and the other nuts and bolts tasks that are purely administrative, but we are still having fun doing it.

What have we done so far? We have celebrated the 35th anniversary of South Slough just recently, and because we were board members, we were treated as special guests. We toured the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, where the labs and research areas are, ate lunch with dignitaries, helped dedicate the new North Creek trail and bridge and rode back to Charleston on an oyster barge. (The drawbridge even opened for us!)

Mike Graybill, South Slough's manager, recently gave the board members an overview tour. We started at OIMB, learned of some possible upcoming developments there, then we headed to South Slough's

Continued on page 8

SOUTH SLOUGH CELEBRATES AN ANNIVERSARY AND THE OPENING OF A NEW TRAIL



Bridge architect Aron Faegre and wife, Kathy



Guests stroll across the new bridge connecting North Creek Trail with the Tunnel, Railroad and Hidden Creek trails.

Saturday, July 11 was a special day for South Slough friends, supporters and staff who celebrated the 35th anniversary of the nation's first National Estuarine Research Reserve. Dr. Jane Lubchenco, recently appointed head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, was a guest of honor and keynote speaker. She spoke to a crowd of more than 100 people at the Interpretive Center, following a luncheon and tour of the Estuarine and Coastal Ocean Sciences Laboratory on the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology campus. Before President Barack Obama appointed her to the NOAA leadership position, Lubchenco was a professor of marine ecology at Oregon State University.

Dr. Craig Young, director of the marine institute, entertained guests with a delightful presentation about the Oregon hairy triton, the state's official shell. Reserve manager Mike Graybill recognized a number of people who had been instrumental in establishing the original South Slough Sanctuary in 1974. Since South Slough Reserve's founding, 26 additional national estuarine research reserves have been established in nearly every coastal state, including the Great Lakes, to improve our understanding of estuaries.

Following the tours and after slices of anniversary cake, guests took a stroll on the new North Creek Trail, which officially opened that day. The trail descends a gentle grade to the estuary near the Sloughside Pilings, a distance of about 1 1/2 miles. At the lower end the trail crosses a large tidal channel by way of a 75 foot, arched, aluminum box-truss bridge, designed by Aron Faegre Associates and fabricated by Coast Metal Works of Coos Bay. The completion of the bridge and trail, after more than five years of mostly-summertime work, also completes a long-planned loop trail, since the new North Creek trail joins the Tunnel, Railroad and Hidden Creek trail network after crossing the bridge.



Jane Lubchenco, NOAA administrator



Clockwise from above: Guests wave from aboard an oyster barge enroute from the Sloughside Pilings to Charleston; SSNERR Research Coordinator Steve Rumrill; visitors fill the auditorium at the Interpretive Center.



Clockwise from left: SSNERR SWMP Monitoring Coordinator Ali Helms chats with Jan Hodder of OIMB; Former Secretary of State Bill Bradbury and Louise Solliday, director of the Oregon Department of State Lands, inspect the cake; Education Coordinator Tom Gaskill and FOSS board member Susan Brawnlyn check out wildflowers.

