

Tours: Nearly 18,500 adults and children visited the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center (AMIC) this past year. Some of them participated in tours provided by FOAM docents. Within our schedule of weekly 2 pm Saturday tours were tours of the wastewater treatment plant given the last Saturday of each month by Alan Laurent. This year, FOAM began offering tours of the aquaculture site located next to the treatment plant.

We also organized tours of special interest given by people whose knowledge of a particular subject makes the tour a special event. These "focus tours" were led by HSU professor and FOAM board member Sean Craig (mudwalk and invertebrate hunt) and wastewater treatment operator and FOAM board member David Couch (oysters). FOAM treasurer Art Barab led his third consecutive Thanksgiving Day morning "leg stretcher," attracting 24 people in 2002.

May 21 marked the 10th anniversary of the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center. FOAM president Jenny Gelber accepted a proclamation from the City Council honoring the AMIC and its volunteers. Board member Richard Vincent organized a "May Marsh Masters Megatour" series featuring speakers who were instrumental in establishing Arcata's unique wastewater treatment system. Some 100 people attended the lectures and/or tours given by Dan Hauser, Frank Klopp, Stanley Harris, George Allen, Robert Gearheart, and David Couch.

In addition to public tours, FOAM has provided docents for many group tours, ranging from classrooms - preschool through college - to community groups such as Cub Scouts and Rotary. The City of Arcata has had a California Conservation Corps intern to assist Denise and help manage tour requests. Tour scheduling may be arranged by phoning the AMIC at 826-2359.

In addition to docent and specialist tours, many self-guided groups visit the AMWS. Several teachers bring their students to this wonderful outdoor classroom weekly to note changes with the seasons and take advantage of the ever-growing AMIC exhibits.

Education: In addition to tours and volunteer training, FOAM continued its Wetlands on Wheels (WOW) outreach program to local schools. Board members Jeffrey White and Melissa Neuffer recruited five WOW instructors who worked in pairs, together with the classroom teacher, to present WOW to 23 classrooms, reaching 460 elementary students at eight schools in the McKinleyville, Arcata, Eureka, and Korbek areas. Instructors had the opportunity to receive course credit for their work through HSU's Extended Education program. WOW teaches important concepts about wetland ecology, wildlife adaptation, and wastewater reclamation through hands-on activities, slide presentations, and role-playing dramatizations.

FOAM cooperated in the HSU Natural History Museum's summer Marsh Explorers Program led by Carrie Gergits. Four 1-week classes were offered: one for 4- to 5-year-olds (2 hours/day), two for 6- to 8-year-olds (3 hours/day), and one for 9- to 12-year-olds (3 hours/day). A total of 44 students participated.

FOAM also collaborated with Humboldt State's Redwood Science Project (RSP) to conduct two all-day teacher workshops focused on wetlands ecology (both fresh and saltwater), aquatic organisms, biogeochemical cycling (including water, nitrogen, and carbon), global climate change, and the biology of Arcata's integrated wastewater treatment process. Teachers were provided scientific background and teaching materials and had rich hands-on opportunities to explore the many wonderful aspects of the Arcata Marsh. Board members Jeffrey White, David Couch, and Sean Craig, together with John DeMartini, organized the event. The RSP is a professional development program for K-8 teachers that aims to enhance the quality and access to science education in the north coast region.

Training Opportunities: Training sessions for docents have been scheduled twice a year. One was offered in late February and another finished on September 14.

Public Events: In October, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's

"Pastels on the Plaza" fundraiser, sponsoring a panel by Rick Kruse. Also in October, FOAM participated in the Arcata Co-op's Invitational Harvest Festival. A pumpkin with a marsh scene carved by Ode Bernstein and Melissa Neuffer won second prize. FOAM honored individuals who have volunteered at the AMWS by sponsoring a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and presenting "Volunteer of the Year" awards to Sue Leskiw and Martha Baxter on March 30. In April, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival. Nearly 100 parents and 40 children participated in the free weekend family activities offered at the AMIC, coordinated by Darlene Marlow. Five 90-minute tours -- led by Ode Bernstein, Art Barab, and David Couch -- served another 55 individuals. Many visitors learned about wetland ecology and had fun exploring pond water, building milk jug bird feeders, making peanut butter pine cone bird treats, dissecting owl pellets, and making fish prints and puppets. In June, to celebrate Arcata's Oyster Festival, David Couch led canoe tours to Humboldt Bay's native oyster beds.

FOAM's Monday night lecture series featured Rhonda Wiedenbeck of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project and AMIC naturalist Denise Homer (full moon walk)

Marsh and Wildlife Through the Eyes of Local Artists: Since December 1998, FOAM has sponsored monthly art shows representative of the scenery, plants, birds, and animals that inhabit the Marsh and Humboldt Bay, both above and below water level. Our goal has been to provide interpretive works that reflect the beauty, ecology, and history of the Marsh as well as serve as a sales venue for our many talented local artists. This past year, works by Jo Anderson, Campbell Shepard, Coco Thorpe, Susan Fox, Gary Todoroff, Mariana Kratiger, Karen Wehrstein, Michelle Murphy-Ferguson, Sara Starr, Jill Faulkner, John Palmer, and Susan Kohl were featured. Children's artwork was displayed during June.

Publicity and Communications: FOAM continues to publish its quarterly newsletter, UPWIND. Notices of art shows, training, and special events have appeared in a timely manner in local publications, including the Arcata Eye, EcoNews, the North Coast Journal, and the Times-Standard. We take this opportunity to thank them for helping us get the Marsh message out. UPWIND is mailed to an average of 550 addresses from Washington to Maine and Florida. Anyone can receive free issues by signing the guest book with a full address.

City Relations: The Interpretive Center was re-sided and the deck repaired. The City of Arcata now provides Worker's Compensation coverage to all volunteers. The City received a grant from the California Department of Water Resources, through the urban streams restoration program, to further restore Butcher's Slough at the north end of the log pond. The channel has been widened and planted with salt marsh and riparian vegetation.

Membership: As of September 1, FOAM had 106 members in good standing, down from 125 one year previously. Several Life Members continue to contribute on an annual basis, even though their \$750 qualifying amount has long since been met. Honorary Life Memberships were presented to long-time volunteers Anne Weiss and Mary Bobillot.

Fiscal Accounts: FOAM began its fiscal year in January 2003 with total cash on hand of \$18,199.16. As of August 1, 2003, FOAM had a bank balance of \$17,608.71, of which \$14,049.27 is in a money market account. Proceeds from the AAA Battery Roundup in April (not yet received) will contribute another \$760. Our largest expense thus far in 2003 has been \$1488.72 for the Wetlands on Wheels program. No major expenditures are anticipated for the rest of the year and, given the level of FOAM expenditures in general, the organization is in excellent financial shape. Disappointing for reasons other than financial has been our decline in membership.

Board of Directors: There are 10 current Board Members. Nine will be continuing: Sean Craig, David Couch, Jenny Gelber, Sue Leskiw, Darlene Marlow, Melissa Neuffer, Patty Siering, Richard Vincent, and Jeffrey White. Retiring is Frank Shaughnessy.