

## 2006/2007 FOAM Annual Report (Issued 9/30/07)

**Tours:** Some 18,828 adults and children visited the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center (AMIC) between September 2006 and August 2007, down 500 from the previous 12-month period. Some 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. In addition to public tours, FOAM provided docents for many group tours, ranging from classrooms – preschool through college — to community groups.

**Education:** FOAM continued a grant program for HSU students pursuing research projects that are related to the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS). The program was expanded to include College of the Redwoods. Financial support came from the estate of Sylvia Fisher, in recognition of the enjoyment that her late son Marcus received from visiting the Marsh. In spring 2007, Erin Atkin received \$750 to support her project investigating genetic variation and dispersal of northern California's coastal river otters. Her advisor is Brian Arbogast of the HSU Department of Biological Sciences. Melissa Krey was awarded \$250 for her project investigating metal accumulation in steelhead. Her advisor is Kristine Brenneman of the HSU Fisheries Biology Department.

A successful season of Wetlands on Wheels (WOW) concluded in June with 9 schools, 29 classrooms, and 690 students served. Four instructors handled presentations for Lafayette, Pine Hill, Cutten, Maple Creek, Washington, Lincoln, South Fortuna, and Ambrosini Schools. WOW also participated in a Science Night held at Ferndale Elementary, enjoyed by many children and parents.

For the second year, FOAM sponsored an award at the Humboldt County Science Fair in March. The \$50 prize for the best project dealing with wetlands went to Jennie Kaplan-Woodson, an 8<sup>th</sup>-grader at Sunnybrae Middle School. Her project, entitled "Baywatch," examined the spread of petroleum products in water bodies.

FOAM purchased a new computer for the AMIC and had the three ancient software programs operating on the old one transferred. Photos of plants, birds, insects, fish, and marshscapes will be uploaded soon, as well as interactive software to identify California birds and a Powerpoint program on AMWS history.

Design of a FOAM website is underway. The URL will be [www.friendsofthearcatamarsh.org](http://www.friendsofthearcatamarsh.org).

FOAM again collaborated with the HSU Natural History Museum's summer Marsh Explorers program.

**Training Opportunities:** Finding volunteers to lead Saturday and weekday tours has been especially difficult this year. Docent training was offered twice: 16 people completed a 2-day training on March 3-4, but no one showed up for the mid-September session.

**Public Events:** In partnership with Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS), FOAM sponsored the fourth Student Bird Art Contest at Godwit Days. Nearly 350 entries were received from grades K-12 throughout Humboldt County. Twenty-four cash prizes and 16 honorable mentions were awarded at the Godwit Days opening reception and the winning entries were displayed at the AMIC during May.

For the sixth consecutive year, FOAM was the beneficiary of the California AAA Great Battery Roundup, again splitting the proceeds with the Manila Community Center. During the April collection period, 2270 dead vehicle batteries were turned into locations throughout Humboldt County, bringing in \$2270 to FOAM and putting Humboldt number one in the nation yet again for battery collection.

In October, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's "Pastels on the Plaza" fundraiser, sponsoring a sidewalk square drawn by board member Caitlin Collings representing a "birds-eye view" of the Marsh. In November, FOAM treasurer Art Barab led his seventh consecutive Thanksgiving Day morning "leg stretcher."

In May, FOAM partnered with RRAS to sponsor a 2-hour Bilingual Family Bird Walk & Reception. Leaders were Lauren Tompkins, Tom Leskiw, and Frank Anderson. FOAM president Sue Leskiw baked "Hoot Owl" cookies for the occasion. A Spanish-version Marsh bird checklist was produced. Five adults and four children attended. Also in May, FOAM co-sponsored a walk with the local California Native Plant Society (CNPS) entitled "*Spartina* and the spartan salt marsh: the ecology and biology of invasive cordgrass and other salt- and fresh-water invaders of the Arcata Marsh." Twenty-eight people attended the 90-minute tour led by Suzanne Isaacs and Annie Eicher. On July 4, Jenny Hanson led 32 people on a "What's in a name" walk co-sponsored by CNPS and FOAM. Her 1-mile course was selected to teach the significance of the terms native, non-native, and invasive in regard to Arcata Marsh plants.

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In April, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's Godwit Days 12<sup>th</sup> Spring Migration Bird Festival. Approximately 70 children and their parents took part in FOAM's free one-day family nature activities coordinated by Sue Leskiw and Darlene Marlow. The kids made Arcata Marsh water cycle bracelets, peanut butter pinecone bird feeders, 3-D paper birds and butterflies, and fish prints. Two 90-minute tours — one on history and ecology led by Art Barab and a wastewater plant tour by David Couch — were offered as part of the festival schedule. FOAM volunteers staffed an information and sales table in the Bird Fair vendor area.

**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 Patty Sennott, Stock Schleuter, Mary Harper, Mariana Krattiger, Mike Anderson, Ron LeValley, John Pelafigue, Rick Kruse, Michelle Murphy-Ferguson, Leslie Reid, and Sara Starr were featured. FOAM board member Leslie Anderson organized receptions for most of the artists. Winners of the Godwit Days student bird art contest were displayed during May.

**Publicity & Communication:** We would like to thank newspapers, radio, and TV stations for helping us get the message out about weekly tours, docent training, art receptions and exhibits, and other special events at the AMIC/AMWS. FOAM continues to publish its quarterly newsletter, UPWIND, which is mailed to an average of 275 addresses throughout the US. Local schools have been added to the mailing list. Anyone can receive two free issues by signing the guest book with a full address.

**City Relations:** FOAM collaborated with the City, HSU, and California Sea Grant on a grant from NOAA and the Nature Conservancy to look at colonization, survival, and growth of native oysters at four sites within the City's tidelands jurisdiction. Monthly monitoring, under the direction of outgoing FOAM board member Sean Craig, will include measuring oyster settlement and rate of growth on six different substrates, biofouling in shells, and predation. Later in the process, FOAM, with the aid of former board member David Couch, will lead monthly educational walks that include a stop to view one of the native oyster sites, plus sponsor a public lecture and canoe excursion. FOAM wrote a letter in support of a successful grant from the McLean Foundation to allow the City to put a floating dock at the foot of I Street. The City has asked FOAM to "adopt" some of its invasive plant removal work days, the next one being December 15. Board member Ken Burton has initiated a partnership with CNPS to collect native grass hair seeds for reseeding sites after invasives are removed.

**Membership:** As of September 26, FOAM had 124 members in good standing, up from 115 one year previously. Several of the 46 Life Members continue to contribute on an annual basis, even though their \$750 qualifying amount has long since been met.

**Fiscal Accounts:** FOAM began its fiscal year in January 2007 with total cash on hand of \$15,228.15, plus certificates of deposit with a combined principal of \$25,916.20. At the end of August, FOAM had total cash on hand of \$6,987.85 and CDs and interest-bearing account investments of \$33,086.18. The largest expenditures this year were \$1,000 in educational grants and \$1,074.44 for a new computer. A large outlay (not to exceed \$4,000) is expected for the Wetlands on Wheels program. FOAM is slated to receive a check for \$2,270 from the California AAA as beneficiary of its annual Battery Round-up Program.

**Board of Directors:** Five current Board Members will be continuing: Leslie Anderson, Art Barab, Elliott Dabill, Lumei Hui, and Sue Leskiw. Appointees Ken Burton and Lance Torgerson are running to confirm their seats and Janet Zich is running for a second term. Caitlin Collings and Gwen Thoele left prior to completion of their terms. Board Members Jeffrey White and Sean Craig are leaving due to term limits and will be greatly missed.

-- Sue Leskiw, President