

2008/09 FOAM Annual Report (Issued 10/4/09)

Tours: Some 20,469 adults and children visited the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center between September 2008 and August 2009, down nearly 400 from the previous 12-month period. Some participated in the weekly 2 pm tours offered rain or shine by FOAM docents. Tours of the wastewater treatment plant were given the last Saturday of each month by Alan Laurent. FOAM provided docents for about 125 special-request group tours, ranging from classrooms – preschool through college — to community groups.

Education: On July 29, for the second year, FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society partnered to offer a day-long session for nine children age 9-12 at the Arcata Marsh. The module was part of the Wildlife Biology week of the Arcata Recreation Department's Natural Resources Science Camp. The curriculum consisted of a bird walk, a "Mud Walk," and viewing of invertebrates collected from the Bay and Log Pond through microscopes. Instructors were Sean Craig, Bob Rasmussen, Elliott Dabill, Kerry Ross, and Lauren Tompkins. Sue Leskiw pulled together the schedule. FOAM also sponsored two children to attend the camp.

For the fourth year, FOAM funded an award at the Humboldt County Science Fair in March. The \$50 prize for the best project related to wetlands went to Tanner Doan, a 6th-grader at Blue Lake Elementary School. His project, entitled "Oil Spill," examined what material will work best to clean motor oil off the surface of water. Sue Leskiw and Elliott Dabill served as judges.

After many years of discussion and several false starts, the FOAM website launched. Leslie Anderson and Sue Leskiw worked closely with site designer Bob Tucker. The URL is www.arcatamarshfriends.org. FOAM also contributed information and funding to update the Arcata Marsh website created years ago by HSU students.

FOAM awarded a \$1275 research grant to HSU student Mary Burke, to support her project to assess the Arcata Marsh for carbon sequestration. Her advisor is Robert Gearheart, emeritus professor of environmental engineering.

City Naturalist Denise Homer and Sue Leskiw have been participating in quarterly meetings of the California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC). Denise is collaborating with an eighth-grade class from Sunny Brae Middle School to create a "Quest" at the Marsh.

Although Wetlands on Wheels (WOW) was slated to operate in spring 2008, not enough instructors were recruited through the Redwood Science Project at HSU to make the program viable.

Training Opportunities: Docent training was offered twice: 14 people completed a 2-day training on March 28-29 and five attended a session on September 12, both organized by Elliott Dabill. Instructors were Bob Rasmussen, David Couch, Ken Burton, Melinda Bailey, Elliott Dabill, and Sean Craig. A docent training collaboration with Friends of the Dunes began with a 4-hour "mini-session" on May 9, where Bob Rasmussen and Jenny Hanson offered pointers on interpretation.

Public Events: In partnership with Redwood Region Audubon Society, FOAM sponsored the sixth Student Bird Art Contest at Godwit Days. Nearly 550 entries were received from grades K-12 throughout Humboldt County! Thirty-five cash prizes and 17 honorable mentions were awarded at the Godwit Days opening reception. The winning entries were displayed at the Interpretive Center during May. FOAM continued funding the award category of "Best Depiction of a Bird in its Habitat," with five winners selected. Judges were Leslie Anderson, Louise Bacon-Ogden, Art Barab, Gary Bloomfield, Denise Homer, Sue Leskiw, Marsha Mello, and Sara Starr.

For the seventh and eighth consecutive years, FOAM was the beneficiary of the California AAA Great Battery Roundup. Some 589 expired car, boat, and motorcycle batteries were turned in at Humboldt County locations during the April 2008 collection period (representing \$1178 for FOAM) and 226 (\$452) in April 2009, when the collection sites were limited to AAA-participating shops.

In October, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's "Pastels on the Plaza" fundraiser, sponsoring a sidewalk square design by Leslie Anderson and carried out by Marliese Tollner featuring a Great Blue Heron. In November, Art Barab led his ninth consecutive Thanksgiving Day morning "leg stretcher" for 31 people, while Jenny Hanson started what we hope to be a new tradition of a New Year's Day walk that attracted 14. Art Barab and Bob Rasmussen led a slow-speed tour for 12 people with limited mobility on September 3.

[continued on page 4]

In April, FOAM continued its participation in the Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival. Many children and their parents took part in FOAM's free family nature activities coordinated by Sue Leskiw and Darlene Marlow, ably assisted by volunteers Erin Casper and Hannah Schwent. The kids made Arcata Marsh water cycle bracelets, peanut butter pinecone bird feeders, 3-D paper birds and butterflies, and fish prints. A 90-minute tour of the wastewater plant by David Couch was offered as part of the festival schedule. FOAM volunteers staffed an information and sales table in the Bird Fair vendor area, coordinated by Janet Zich.

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. 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, etchings by Marsha Mello, fiber art by Yael Bentovim, photographs by Dana Utman, watercolors and monotype prints by Patricia Sennott, artwork by Jay Brown, photographs by Leslie and Mike Anderson, poems and artwork by Lance Torgerson, paintings by She'ifa Punla-Green and Benjamin Green (a father-daughter combo), and pastels by Libby George were featured. Leslie Anderson organized receptions for many of the artists. Winners of the Godwit Days student bird art contest were displayed in May.

Publicity & Communication: We would like to thank newspapers, radio, and TV stations for helping us get the message out about our weekly tours, docent training, art receptions and exhibits, and other special events at the Marsh. FOAM continues to publish its quarterly newsletter, UPWIND, which is mailed to an average of 250 addresses throughout the US. Anyone can receive a free issue by signing the guest book with a full address.

City Relations: FOAM continued its partnership with the City of Arcata on Marsh work days to remove invasive plants. On October 11, Sue Leskiw, Ken Burton, David Couch, and Elliott Dabill joined the president of the local native plant society and 10 students from the HSU Natural Resources Club to remove Himalayaberry bushes, grub out coyote brush roots, and extract teasel on Mt Trashmore. Sue arranged for Channel 3 News to feature the effort on its Friday "Green Segment." Ken Burton continued a partnership with the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society to collect native seeds for reseeding sites after invasives are removed.

FOAM funded two "Volunteer of the Year" awards, presented to Alan Laurent and Wayne Butterfield at the September 28 Annual Meeting.

Several board members were on hand in September when the City of Arcata celebrated the dedication of a recognition plaque at the Interpretive Center.

FOAM contributed \$2000 toward construction of a "floating dock" at the I Street boat launch. Installation has been delayed until reconstruction of the Klopp Lake levee and armoring of the roosting islands is completed this fall.

A series of break-ins at the Interpretive Center led to discontinuation of the FOAM donation box.

Membership: As of September 11, FOAM had 122 members in good standing, down one from a year ago. Fifty-four are Life Members, of which five are known to be deceased and eight for which we have no current address.

Fiscal Accounts: As of the end of August 2009, FOAM had a checking account balance of \$11,191, plus a certificate of deposit for \$34,651. The largest expenditures this year was a \$2000 donation to the City of Arcata for construction of a floating dock at the end of I Street. Other significant expenses have been scholarships, prizes/expenses for the Student Bird Art Contest, printing and mailing UPWIND, and purchase of a flex cam. FOAM's largest revenue source is membership dues, which has provided \$4825 during the last fiscal year. Over the last eight years, FOAM has received a total of \$13,613 from the state AAA as the beneficiary of its Battery Roundup program. However, it is likely that this annual contribution will end with this year's donation. A series of break-ins and thefts at the Interpretive Center has caused FOAM to remove its donation box from the counter. This loss, plus the termination of CSAA revenues, puts FOAM in the position of being a deficit spender in the immediate future. However, the organization's financial position will allow continued operation for many years.

Board of Directors: Five current Board Members will be continuing: Ken Burton, David Couch, Robert Rasmussen, Lance Torgerson, and Janet Zich. Running for second terms are Leslie Anderson, Elliott Dabill, and Sue Leskiw; running for a first term is Katy Allen. Lumei Hui resigned before completing her term. Art Barab is retiring from the Board, but will continue as treasurer. One opening remains on the Board.

-- Sue Leskiw, President