

2009/10 FOAM Annual Report (Issued 9/26/10)

Tours: Some 21,150 adults and children visited the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center between September 2009 and August 2010, up nearly 700 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 discontinued at the request of the City. FOAM provided docents for 146 special-request group tours, ranging from classrooms – preschool through college — to community groups.

Education: On June 28, for the 3rd year, FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society partnered to offer a day-long session for 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 Elliott Dabill, Bob Rasmussen, Julie Koeppel, Tom Leskiw, and David Fix. Sue Leskiw pulled together the schedule and Jean Santi helped set up and clean up. FOAM sponsored two children to attend the camp. FOAM also underwrote the cost of equipment and art supplies for the City's new Marsh Explorers and Young Explorers summer camp sessions.

For the 5th 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 Ryan Thomas, a 7th-grader at Laurel Tree Learning Center's Mattole Valley Charter School. His project was entitled "Water Quality of Little River, Moonstone Beach as Reflected in Bacterial Counts." Sue Leskiw and Elliott Dabill served as judges.

FOAM published an updated Marsh bird checklist, compiled by David Fix and Rob Fowler.

In October, FOAM co-sponsored a *Spartina* (cordgrass) forum with the City of Arcata. About 35 attended the event, organized by habitat concerns chair Ken Burton and held at the Arcata Community Center.

In recognition of the statewide Coastweeks celebration, Bob Rasmussen and David Couch arranged for three free public lectures at the Interpretive Center in October: HSU chemistry professor Matt Hurst, final results of Marsh and Bay water analysis; HSU graduate students Teresa Persons and Mary Burke, their research at Arcata Marsh; and HSU graduate students Julie and Robert Koeppel and David Couch, native oyster restoration research. An average of 20 attended the talks.

FOAM purchased two new spotting scopes and tripods for use in the Interpretive Center and by docents. FOAM also split the cost of a digital projector with Redwood Region Audubon Society.

FOAM awarded additional funding to HSU graduate student Mary Burke, to cover the increased cost of sample testing for her project assessing the Arcata Marsh for carbon sequestration.

City Naturalist Denise Homer, Sue Leskiw, and Katy Allen 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.

Ken Burton, with help from David Fix and Julie Neander, wrote a site description of the Arcata Marsh, which had been selected as one of six Important Aquatic Bird Sites in northwestern California.

The FOAM Board led a successful effort to keep Segway (motorized scooter) tours off Marsh trails.

Katy Allen served as FOAM point person at meetings concerning a Class 1 trail through the Marsh.

Leslie Anderson, Ken Burton, and David Fix are cooperating to produce a binder with color photographs and species descriptions of the 50 most common birds at the Marsh.

There was no Wetlands on Wheels (WOW) program this year.

Volunteer Training & News: Docent training was offered once (with the spring session cancelled because of few signups). Ten people completed a 2-day training on August 14-15, organized by Elliott Dabill. Instructors were Bob Rasmussen, David Couch, Ken Burton, Jenny Hanson, Denise Homer, and Elliott Dabill. Most of the new docents attended a follow-up plant walk on August 28 offered by Jenny Hanson. In December, David Couch gave a refresher wastewater treatment course to docents, as long-time monthly tour leader Alan Laurent retired due to poor health. Long-sleeved T-shirts were printed for active volunteers. Sue Leskiw initiated a monthly e-mail message to volunteers, to both recruit tour leaders and to keep docents updated on happenings at the Marsh.

Public Events: In partnership with Redwood Region Audubon Society, FOAM sponsored the 7th Student Bird Art Contest at Godwit Days. Over 600 entries were received from grades K-12 throughout Humboldt County. Thirty-two cash prizes and 18 honorable mentions were awarded at Godwit Days. 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, Sara Starr, and Gwen Thoele.

In October, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's "Pastels on the Plaza" fundraiser, sponsoring a sidewalk square design by Leslie Anderson with help from Judy Sears that featured a Wood Duck. In November, Art Barab led his 10th consecutive Thanksgiving Day morning "leg stretcher" for 12-15 people, while Jenny Hanson for the second year led a New Year's Day walk that attracted 14.

In April, FOAM continued its participation in the Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival. Approximately 80-100 children and parents took part in FOAM's free family nature activities coordinated by Sue Leskiw and Darlene Marlow, assisted by volunteers Katy Allen, Shana Steam, Lori Loveall, and five members of the Sequoia Park Roots & Shoots Club. The kids made Arcata Marsh water cycle bracelets, peanut butter pinecone bird feeders, 3-D paper birds and butterflies, fish prints, and eagle talon key chains. 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, which showcased the new FOAM poster display designed by Leslie Anderson.

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, Yvonne Kern (paintings), Rich Ridenhour (photos), Louise Bacon-Ogden (drawings), Mike Anderson (photos)/Leslie Anderson (drawings), Susan Bornstein (paintings), Anita Punla and Friends (knitted creations), Jamie Ford (photos), and Linda Parkinson (paintings) were featured. Leslie Anderson organized receptions for many of the artists.

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: In December, FOAM was one of 11 nonprofit groups recognized by the City of Arcata for its "community service toward stewardship of Arcata's watersheds."

FOAM continued its partnership with the City on work days to remove invasive plants from the Marsh. On October 24, over 30 volunteers removed fennel, teasel, and Himalayaberry on South I Street. On July 24, 18 people helped remove fennel, periwinkle, and bull thistle along South I Street and levees. Board members Katy Allen, Ken Burton, Elliott Dabill, and Sue Leskiw worked both events, which garnered Terrence McNally photos in the Arcata Eye.

FOAM funded two "Volunteer of the Year" awards, presented to Megan McCue and Colleen Russell at the October 4 Annual Meeting.

The South I Street floating dock was finally installed, with a plaque noting FOAM's financial contribution.

Membership: As of August 30, FOAM had 126 members in good standing, up 4 from a year ago. Fifty-five are Life Members, of whom five are known to be deceased and eight for whom we have no current address.

Fiscal Accounts: At the end of August 2010, FOAM had a checking account balance of \$14,262, plus a certificate of deposit for \$30,000 (vs \$11,191 and \$34,651, respectively, in August 2009). Significant expenditures incurred over the past year were a research grant to an HSU graduate student; two spotting scopes, tripods, and a digital projector for the Interpretive Center; prizes/expenses for the Student Bird Art Contest; printing and mailing UPWIND; and underwriting the cost of camp scholarships and supplies. FOAM's largest revenue sources are membership dues and donations, which have provided \$4800 during the soon-to-end fiscal year. Although FOAM is in the position of being a deficit spender, its overall financial position will allow it to operate in this manner, even without new revenue sources, for many years.

Board of Directors: Five current Board Members will be continuing: Katy Allen, Leslie Anderson, David Couch, Elliott Dabill, and Sue Leskiw. Ken Burton, Robert Rasmussen, and Janet Zich are retiring. Running for a second

term is Lance Torgerson; running for a first term are Mary Burke, John Clagett, Guy Kuttner, Megan McCue, and George Ziminski. Art Barab continues as treasurer and Janet Zich as database manager.

-- Sue Leskiw, President