



UPWIND

from the Arcata Marsh
Interpretive Center
Vol 18, Issue 4, Fall 2011

Our Mission: To stimulate understanding of the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary, its relationship with Arcata's integrated wastewater treatment system, the surrounding watersheds and bay, and their link with the Earth's water cycle

In This Issue: Annual Meeting...Holiday Tours...Vandalism Reward...Work Day...Art Contest...Research Grants...McNeely...Docent Training...Palestine...WOW...Thesis...Annual Report...Computer...Signs...Pastels...Al Jazeera...Stillman...EE Fair...Naturalist Column...Comments...Green Cards...Artists...Calendar...Visitor Log...Donors



2011-12 FOAM Board of Directors. From left: John McNeely, David Couch, Sue Leskiw, Leslie Anderson, Mary Burke, George Ziminsky, Megan McCue. Not shown: Katy Allen, Elliott Dabill, Lance Torgerson. Photo by Tom Leskiw.

2011 Annual Meeting & Election Results

On Sunday, October 2, FOAM held its 18th annual meeting at the Interpretive Center. Approximately 25 people attended the albacore barbecue lunch by David Couch, with FOAM Board members providing side dishes. Sue Leskiw made a cake featuring a blue Jello Klopp Lake, egrets wading the slough, trees on Mt Trashmore, and a whale in the bay!

President Sue Leskiw reviewed highlights of the 2010/11 Annual Report (see pages 5&6). She also reported the results of the election: 27 ballots were returned by members in good standing, with David Couch re-elected to a 2-year term. John McNeely was appointed to fill one of two vacant Board positions (see page 3). [NOTE: Janet Zich was appointed to the last vacant seat at the October Board meeting.]

City naturalist Denise Homer selected George Ziminsky and Jack Schubert as Volunteers of the Year. George was cited for "taking on the hard jobs that needed done and

instead of growing weary after years of service, increased his participation by serving on the FOAM Board," while Jack was recognized for staffing the Interpretive Center for 83 hours. Each received a certificate and \$25 credit in the bookstore.



Denise Homer with George (top) and Jack (bottom), Photos by Sue Leskiw.

Two Holiday Sojourns

FOAM is pleased to confirm the continuation of two special walks at the Arcata Marsh.

Veteran tour leader Art Barab will lead his 12th annual Thanksgiving morning meander on Thursday, November 24 at 10 am. Meet on the Interpretive Center porch (building will be closed for the holiday) for a 90-minute appetite builder.

Naturalist Jenny Hanson will, for the fourth time, help you celebrate the New Year with a 2-hour ramble starting at 2 pm on Sunday, January 1. Meet on the Interpretive Center porch (building will be closed for the holiday).



2011-12 Board of Directors & Officers

Officers

President: Sue Leskiw (also UPWIND Editor; Mailing; Publicity; Exhibits; Scrapbook; Website) — 707-442-5444

Vice-President: Elliott Dabill (also Education; Computer) — 707-445-3836

Secretary: Katy Allen (also Education; Exhibits; Membership) — 707-822-2312

Treasurer: Art Barab (also Exhibits; Saturday Tours) — 707-826-7017

Other Board Members

Leslie Anderson (Design; Art Exhibits; Exhibits; Website) — 707-822-6444

Mary Burke (Education; Website) — 707-599-1212

David Couch (Special Events) — 707-839-4253

Megan McCue (Education; Art Exhibits; Docents) — 707-826-7487

John McNeely (Art Exhibits) — 860-248-0745

Lance Torgerson (Education) — 707-269-0576

Janet Zich (Membership; Exhibits; Website) — 707-822-4660

George Ziminsky (Habitat Concerns) — 707-826-9240

FOAM website: www.arcatamarshfriends.org



Reward for Marsh Vandalism Convictions

By Sue Leskiw

On August 3, retired HSU ornithology professor Stan Harris was taking his daily walk around the Arcata Marsh with his son Michael. When they reached the south side of Klopp Lake, they found something amiss: someone had chopped out the slats and one arm from a memorial bench. Doc Harris reported the damage to the Interpretive Center staff.

Coincidentally, Doc Harris once was on a trip to the Galapagos with the person memorialized with the bench: Rosalind Novick, a pediatrician who passed away from breast cancer in 2000. The bench was one of the first ones installed at the Marsh (circa 2002). Novick's former partner, Lan Sing Wu, says that the two moved in Arcata in 1977 and became involved with the Audubon chapter, helping to plant trees around the oxy ponds, build bird blinds, and lead Saturday morning bird walks at the Marsh. Another friend recently bought a FOAM life membership for Lan Sing and Rosalind,

City staff responded to Doc's report and discovered that wood from the bench had been transported to steps near the Klopp Lake picnic tables and used to make a campfire. The damaged bench was quickly removed and will be replaced as soon as inmates at the High Rock Conservation Camp can build a new one.

According to Doc Harris, this is not the first memorial bench at the Marsh to be vandalized. He remembers damage inflicted on a bench on the west side of the Log Pond that is dedicated to Frank Ferguson, a retired elementary school teacher. And at least one brass plaque attached to another bench has been stolen.

In response to these events — and other acts of vandalism at the Arcata Marsh — FOAM has set up a fund to reward those who report tips that lead to successful prosecution of lawbreakers at the Marsh. Up to \$250 will be paid for information given to the Arcata Police Department that results in conviction for vandalism, destruction of public property, or similar illegal acts within the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary.

Anyone having information on the Novick bench destruction or other vandalism at the Marsh is asked to call APD at 707-822-2428 and ask for Ranger Kevin Stonebarger.



*HSU Natural Resources Club students at the September 17 Marsh work day.
Photo by George Ziminsky.*

Working at the Marsh

By George Ziminsky

The Day of Caring was established by United Way “to promote the spirit and value of volunteerism, increase the awareness of local human service agencies and schools, and to demonstrate what people working together for the community's good can accomplish.” This was the 18th annual event for Humboldt State University, with over 40 students and one faculty member coming out to help at the Marsh.

The new salt marsh restoration area is located on the west bank of Jolly Giant Creek/Butcher's Slough, east of the trail from South I Street to the footbridge and north of the railroad tracks. Last December on a workday sponsored by the North-coast Environmental Center and FOAM, volunteers planted saltgrass rhizomes collected from displaced soil at McDaniel Slough. The lower-

elevation levels of the restoration area, subject to more-frequent tidal inundation to suppress invasive weeds, were filling in nicely with pickleweed and saltgrass. Saltgrass planted on higher ground and the slope leading up to the trail was completely shaded by more-aggressive grasses and weeds.

The workday started with City worker Javier Nogueira, HSU botany professor Frank Shaughnessy, and me imparting background information on salt marsh restoration, ecology, and Humboldt Bay's importance to migrating birds. The HSU Natural Resources Club is renowned for its work on conservation and restoration projects, with members helping out somewhere on the North Coast most Saturdays during the school year. The Legacy is an all-woman club whose mission is creating change through student service, support, and sisterhood. Some of the club members had never been to the Marsh before, and expressed enjoyment working in such a beautiful place so close to town and campus.

The restoration site looked dramatically better as the green saltgrass was liberated from its weedy canopy of various grasses gone to seed. Dr Shaughnessy, a former FOAM board member, led a small group of students on a seed-collecting mission around and beyond the restoration area. Other students walked the trails, picking up the accumulated trash. I walked down the west bank of the slough to retrieve some trash visible from the Log Pond trail on the east bank. Along the way, I was excited to find two piles of bear scat! Last year's visit by a black bear that left footprints on South I and scat on Mt Trashmore caught everyone by surprise. This year's large blackberry crop seems to have enticed another visitor.

Less than two years after breaking ground, the salt marsh restoration area is already providing much for wildlife and people to celebrate at the Marsh. The tapestry of saltgrass, pickleweed, and owl clover clearly outshines the *Spartina* clumps yet to be removed. Birds arrive to forage

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as the waters recede, all a short distance from the parking lot and trail. Many thanks to the HSU students of the Natural Resources and Legacy Clubs, as well as Dr Shaughnessy, for spending your Day of Caring at the Arcata Marsh.

The next Arcata Marsh workday sponsored by FOAM will be held Saturday, December 10. Contact Dennis Houghton at 707-822-8184 for details on where to meet and what tasks will be accomplished.



March 23 Deadline for Student Bird Art Contest

For the ninth consecutive year, FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society are co-sponsoring a Student Bird Art Contest. Some \$550 in prizes will be awarded to Humboldt County students from kindergarten through high school. Special prize(s) will be given for best depictions of birds in their natural habitat.

Entries will be judged by local wildlife artists and educators. Winners will be announced at the Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival in mid-April. Entries will be displayed at the Arcata Community Center during the Festival. Copies of winning artwork will be shown at the Interpretive Center during May.

Artwork may be in color or black and white. Any media may be used (e.g., crayons, pastels, paint, pencil, collage). Subject must be a rendering of bird(s) from a suggested list of 40 species or another common local bird. One entry per person.

Flyers with complete rules will be available in mid-November at the Marsh Interpretive Center, Strictly for the Birds in Old Town Eureka, or by sending a self-addressed stamped

envelope to Louise Bacon Ogden, 2337 B St, Eureka 95501, as well as posted at www.rras.org. Artwork may be dropped off at Strictly for the Birds, 123 F Street, Eureka, or the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center, South G Street, Arcata, or mailed to Louise. Entries must be received by Friday, March 23 to be considered.

FOAM Research Grants

By Sue Leskiw

Two Humboldt State wildlife students have been awarded funds to underwrite part of their research. Both are advised by Dr Micaela Szykman Gunther and are studying river otters. Ted Torgerson will be reimbursed \$1155 for travel and supplies to study latrine site selection and habitat use of a coastal river otter population. Hilary Cosby will receive \$500 for travel and supplies to research diet and activity of river otters, based on seasons and ecosystems. Both will provide FOAM with a copy of their Master's thesis, as well as give a lecture at the Interpretive Center. The money underwriting the two grants represents the last of FOAM's \$10,000 bequest from the estate of Sylvia Fisher, in memory of her son Marcus.



Board Member John McNeely

By Sue Leskiw

FOAM is lucky to welcome John as our newest Board member. He was recruited by Alex Stillman as an attendee on one of her Saturday afternoon tours. He moved to the Arcata area about a year ago from the East Coast and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, especially about birds and videography.

Because John was appointed at the October FOAM annual meeting,

he was not able to introduce himself via a candidate statement on the ballot. Therefore, I asked him to give me a paragraph or two to include in UPWIND. He sent in a handwritten page, from which I extracted highlights: first National Audubon Society intern; naturalist at Assateague Island National Seashore; member of California Condor recovery team responsible for capture of last wild bird in 1987; first US person to initiate migratory bird surveys in Cuba, documenting 2 new species; helped establish two national parks and shut down huge illegal logging operation in Chile; production associate on Smithsonian IMAX film, "On the Wing"; developed and managed Connecticut's largest land trust.

Fall Volunteer Training Held

By Katy Allen

On the weekend of October 8-9, 11 people (nine of them new) went through FOAM's docent training program. On Saturday morning Bob Rasmussen, former long-time FOAM Board member, provided a fascinating look into the history of the Arcata Marsh, from the early Wiyot fishing camps up to the present wildlife sanctuary we all know and love. Jenny Hanson, naturalist and seasoned docent at Friends of the Dunes and FOAM, then shared her interpretation tips. She and Bob then took the docent trainees — plus three community members — on a walk through the salt marsh, freshwater marsh, and upland areas. As a former HSU biology professor, Bob did a beautiful job of explaining the different needs of saltwater versus freshwater plants. Jenny shared interesting facts about some of the more-conspicuous upland plants and trees. To finish off the day, Elliott Dabill, FOAM vice president, led the group to retrieve some of the rich slough mud and bring it back to the Interpretive Center to examine. The trainees huddled over the tubs of muddy water, searching for mollusks, amphipods, and worms.

Sunday began with a presentation by Rich Ridenhour on bird iden-

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Volunteer trainees learn about birds at the Marsh. Photo by Leslie Anderson.

ification, including habits, songs, and habitat. He then led a walk around the Marsh, the highlights of which included a peregrine on the power tower and returning gadwalls and wigeons in the freshwater marshes. Board member Dave Couch finished off the training with a talk about and tour of the all-important wastewater treatment plant, without which there would be no Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary.

The new attendees — Chaunice Bodkin, Nola Cole, Gabriella Guerra, John McNeely, Stephanie Nass, Tina Nguyen, Erik Rademacher, Marina Reya, and Adam Webster — received “graduation certificates” and we hope they will soon start volunteering at the Marsh. FOAM thanks Sue Leskiw for recruiting and scheduling the presenters and Leslie Anderson, Katy Allen, and Megan McCue for providing on-site logistics and refreshments.

Palestine Presentation

By Mary Burke

On August 31, graduating engineering student Alaa Shelbaia gave a talk at the Interpretive Center on the environmental and political situation around water resources in Palestine. Alaa, from An-Najah National University in Palestine, completed a 2-month internship with Dr. Gearheart’s research group at the Arcata Marsh. Her lecture, sponsored by FOAM, discussed how a proposed design project modeled after the Arcata Marsh could provide a resource such as agricultural irrigation and therefore an important solution in the conflict in Palestine. Approximately 45 people attended.

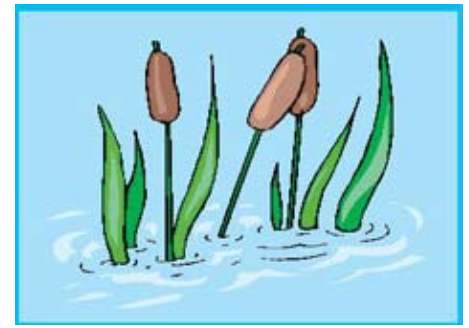
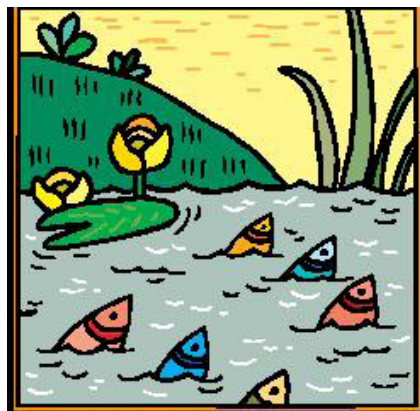
WOW Curriculum

By Mary Burke

This summer, FOAM’s education committee worked in partnership with the Natural History Museum and Humboldt State University’s Interpretive Program advanced students to bring wetland curriculum to fifth graders. The in-class curriculum from FOAM’s previous Wetlands on Wheels program was rewritten (and renamed Wonders of Wetlands, still WOW) and a field trip curriculum was developed and taught to HSU interpretive students. The students delivered the program this fall to three local fifth-grade classes: Ms Marjorie’s class from Coastal Grove Charter School (who rode their bikes over to the Marsh); students from Freshwater Elementary School; and Ms Nancy’s class from Union Street Charter School.

Ms Nancy’s class was given an introductory slide show followed by interactive learning at four stations: birds, wetland plants, water cycle, and “ABCs” (for algae, bacteria, consumption). During their field trip to the Marsh, the students learned about the wastewater treatment facility; plant, bird, and invertebrate identification; and functions of a wetland. This partnership gave FOAM an opportunity to develop a program that teaches twice: first to the HSU interpretive students and then to the fifth graders.

A printout of the WOW Powerpoint presentation, as well as notes for teachers and 21 pages of program activities, are available for review in the FOAM library and will soon be loaded on the Interpretive Center computer.



Burke Thesis in Library

By Sue Leskiw

The product of Master’s degree research by Mary Burke, partially underwritten by a FOAM research grant, is now in the FOAM library. “An Assessment of Carbon, Nitrogen, and Phosphorus Storage and the Carbon Sequestration Potential in Arcata’s Constructed Wetlands for Wastewater Treatment” examined whether the high productivity rates, low decomposition rates, and soil carbon accumulation of wetland plants at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary present an opportunity for carbon sequestration.

Mary examined whether a constructed wetland could accumulate more carbon in biomass (e.g., settled solids, macrophyte biomass) than it releases through decomposition or discharge. She studied cattails (*Typha latifolia*) and bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*) in Treatment Marsh 2, a 1.9-acre wetland that receives influent from Oxidation Pond 2 and has been in operation since 1986. She found that bulrush is better at storing carbon and nitrogen. The treatment marsh sequestered 21,000 kg C/yr and has accumulated 120,000 kg C over its 24 years of operation. “The carbon sequestered in the constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment plays a beneficial role in balancing greenhouse gas emissions from the treatment of municipal waste and for adding benefits to the City of Arcata facility,” concluded her abstract.

Her preface thanked FOAM for funding her research and “always finding space in the Board minutes to laugh and tell stories.” Congratulations, Mary, on your MS degree in Environmental Systems International Development Technology!

2010/11 FOAM Annual Report (Issued 10/2/11)

Tours: Some 19,729 adults and children visited the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center between September 2010 and August 2011, down more than 1400 from the previous 12-month period. Some participated in the weekly 2 pm tours offered rain or shine by FOAM docents. FOAM provided docents for 147 special-request group tours, ranging from classrooms – preschool through college — to community groups.

Education: On June 29, for the 4th 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, Melinda Bailey, Tom Leskiw, Chet Ogan, and George Ziminsky. Sue Leskiw pulled together the schedule and brought lunch. FOAM sponsored one child to attend the camp. FOAM also underwrote the cost of books and provided some supplies for the City's Marsh Explorers and Young Explorers summer camp sessions.

For the 6th year, FOAM funded awards at the Humboldt County Science Fair in March. A \$50 prize for the best project related to wetlands went to Jacob Ireland, a fifth-grader at Arcata Elementary School. His project was entitled "Environmental Chemistry: Phytoremediation of Copper by Water Plants." Due to the quality of the entries, FOAM awarded a second-place prize of \$25 to Keaton Sullivan, a student at Garfield School, whose project was entitled "Floating or Rooted?" Keaton's research was done at the Arcata Marsh, investigating whether a floating marsh would work as well as a rooted one to treat wastewater. Sue Leskiw served as judge.

In January, FOAM co-sponsored another public meeting on *Spartina* (cordgrass) eradication and native salt marsh restoration. About 45 attended the event, held at the D Street Community Center.

In February, FOAM participated in an Environmental Education Teacher Fair held at the Humboldt County Office of Education in Eureka. Mary Burke and Katy Allen staffed the booth, which was visited by approximately 30 teachers and school administrators.

In April, FOAM published a 54-page, full-color book covering the 50 most common birds at the Arcata Marsh. The book represented a collaboration among Ken Burton, Leslie Anderson, and David Fix. Over 200 copies have already been sold, beginning with the FOAM booth at Godwit Days and subsequently through local bookstores and the Interpretive Center.

In recognition of the statewide Coastweeks celebration, two free public lectures were held at the Interpretive Center in October: HSU chemistry professor Matt Hurst, updated results (third year) results of Marsh and Bay water analysis and HSU graduate student Mary Burke, carbon sequestration research at Arcata Marsh. City Naturalist Denise Homer led a Twilight Walk on October 19.

FOAM — represented by Mary Burke and Katy Allen — is collaborating with the Natural History Museum to resurrect a new version of Wetlands on Wheels (WOW). Mary rewrote the classroom curriculum for fifth graders, HSU students under the tutelage of Jen Ortega have been trained to handle the school presentations, and classrooms will follow up with a visit to the Marsh, with some already scheduled in September.

Volunteer Training & News: Docent training was offered once (with the fall session upcoming on October 8-9). Three people completed a 2-day training on March 12-13, organized by Elliott Dabill. Instructors were Bob Rasmussen, David Couch, Rich Ridenhour, Jenny Hanson, and Elliott Dabill. Megan McCue initiated a series of informal evening get-togethers at coffee shops or breweries for volunteers and also organized special group trips on Humboldt Bay in February for FOAM docents through Humboldt Baykeeper.

Public Events: In partnership with Redwood Region Audubon Society, FOAM sponsored the 8th Student Bird Art Contest at Godwit Days. Some 470 entries were received from grades K-12 throughout Humboldt County. Thirty-two cash prizes and 20 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 three winners selected.

In October, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's "Pastels on the Plaza" fundraiser, sponsoring a sidewalk square. In November, Art Barab led his 11th consecutive Thanksgiving Day morning "leg stretcher" for 30 people, while Jenny Hanson for the third year led a New Year's Day walk that attracted 28. Jenny also initiated seasonal plant-focused public tours at the Marsh (April, June, and October, to date).

In March, FOAM cosponsored a Barn Dance fundraiser with the Humboldt Folklife Society. George Ziminsky spearheaded the effort, aided by volunteers David Couch, Katy Allen, Sue Leskiw, Megan McCue, Alex Stillman, Tara Hohoff, and Cindy Moyer, who baked goods to sell or staffed the bar/food area.

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

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Marlow, assisted by volunteers Katy Allen, Grace Marton, and four 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, bird callers, and eagle talon key chains. A tour of the wastewater plant by David Couch and two children's bird walks by Mary Burke were offered as part of the festival schedule. FOAM volunteers also staffed an information and sales table in the vendor area, coordinated by Janet Zich, and helped to hang bird art entries.

In May, Megan McCue started leading jogging tours (early morning, evening) of the Arcata Marsh trails.

In June, FOAM staged free educational activities at the Interpretive Center in conjunction with Arcata's Oyster Festival. Dave Couch put together a sea creature touch tank and Sue Leskiw created the kids craft events. Other volunteers were Mary Burke, Katy Allen, Megan McCue, and Darlene Marlow. Twenty children participated.

In June, FOAM cosponsored — with Greenwheels and the City — an 8-mile bike tour of McDaniel Slough and Janes Creek restoration projects. About 20 cyclists showed up for the ride led by Julie Neander of Arcata's Environmental Services Department.

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 and photographers. This past year, Snowy Plover art contest winners, the HSU Scientific Drawing class, Michael Van Devender, Lorraine Miller-Wolf's photography class, Ron LeValley, Darlene Marlow, Red Jioras, Amy Granfield, Jim Welsh, and Michael Harris were featured. Leslie Anderson scheduled the shows and hung the artwork.

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 exhibits, and other special events at the Marsh. FOAM continues to publish its quarterly newsletter, UPWIND, which is mailed to an average of 350 addresses throughout the US. Anyone can receive a free issue by signing the guest book with a full address.

City Relations: In December and July, FOAM and the Northcoast Environmental Center sponsored invasive plant workdays at the Marsh, concentrating on first transplanting, then weeding around, salt grass at the restoration area on South I Street. George Ziminsky worked with students from the Educational Resource Center and founded an "on-call" group to handle spot cleanups between the major efforts.

FOAM funded two "Volunteer of the Year" awards, presented to Elliott Dabill and Ken Burton, at the September 26 Annual Meeting.

Membership: As of August 30, FOAM had 130 members in good standing, up 4 from a year ago. A whopping 6 new Life Members were added this year — Chris Frolking & Margaret Nulsen, Ron & Melanie Johnson, Bruce & Pam Kessler, Sue Leskiw, Rosalind Novick & Lan Sing Wu, and Nancy Reichard — for a total of 61 (some of which are deceased or have no current address).

Fiscal Accounts: As of the end of August 2011, FOAM had a checking account balance of \$16,203 plus a time deposit CD for \$30,000. The largest expenditures FOAM has incurred in the past year have been for the production of sale items and its newsletter, UPWIND. FOAM's largest annual revenue source is membership dues and donations, which have provided a total of \$5,437 during the soon-to-end fiscal year. Other significant revenue sources have been sale items, the George Allen Memorial Fund, and proceeds from a barn dance event. The organization has shown a net gain of \$1,914 during the fiscal year and is in excellent position to fund future programs and events.

Board of Directors: Nine current Board Members will be continuing: Katy Allen, Leslie Anderson, Mary Burke, David Couch, Elliott Dabill, Sue Leskiw, Megan McCue, Lance Torgerson, and George Ziminsky. There are two open slots on the Board, due to the untimely death of Guy Kuttner in March and resignation for health reasons of John Claggett. Art Barab continues as treasurer and Janet Zich as database manager.

— Sue Leskiw, *President*

Resources on FOAM Computer

By Sue Leskiw

Have you ever directed a visitor to the FOAM computer, or used it yourself to look up natural history information? Here is a list of all the resources available on the machine (no connection to Internet):

- ☛ Birds of California (Thayer Field Guide)
- ☛ Plants of Humboldt Bay Dunes & Wetlands
- ☛ Humboldt Bay Saltmarsh Fauna (Milt Boyd PowerPoint)
- ☛ Bees of Humboldt Dunes
- ☛ FOAM Docent Manual
- ☛ UPWIND newsletters, 2006 to present
- ☛ Maps of Humboldt Bay
- ☛ McDaniel Slough Final EIR
- ☛ Common Birds of Arcata Marsh book
- ☛ Estuary Restoration (proceedings of 2003 symposium)
- ☛ Arcata Marsh history (PowerPoint)
- ☛ Stormwater information from EPA

New Signs Funded

By Sue Leskiw

The City of Arcata has obtained a grant for \$25,500 from the California Coastal Conservancy to create and install 24 signs at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. Twelve of the signs will be for interpretation and 12 will be directional. FOAM is a partner in the project, with Board member Leslie Anderson contributing as graphic designer and George Ziminsky serving on the committee to develop the content and locations for the new signs. Four temporary interpretive signs had been posted at the Marsh for Godwit Days and were very well received. The signage will incorporate Gary Bloomfield's template borders for interpretive signage that appears along the Hammond Trail and other locations in coastal Humboldt.



FOAM Square on Plaza

FOAM again participated in Pastels on the Plaza on October 1. Board member Leslie Anderson, with help from Julie Neander, created a pair of cute-as-can-be Mallard ducklings. The event functioned as both a fundraiser for North Coast Children's Services and publicity for FOAM.

Stillman Is New Liaison

By Sue Leskiw

In response to a letter requesting reinstatement of a City Council liaison to FOAM, Alex Stillman has been appointed to fill that role. She will attend FOAM Board meetings periodically and serve as a two-way information conduit between the two entities. Alex, who is an active FOAM tour leader, agreed to take on the post in advance of FOAM's sending the letter on August 9.

The letter requested that the position — last filled by Harmony Groves, with Bob Ornelas prior to that — be reinstated because “there currently is a lot of negative activity going on at the Arcata Marsh (e.g., graffiti, camping, defecation by homeless, vandalism, littering, drinking, off-leash dogs).” It also pointed out that FOAM would like to receive frequent reports on the results of police patrols and any other pertinent actions that affect the Marsh, “reducing any surprises for either of us.”

Al Jazeera at the Arcata Marsh

By Mary Burke

How many times can you say the same line and keep a lively intonation? A full Saturday, August 27, was spent repeating lines about Arcata Marsh water quality and wastewater treatment on camera for Al Jazeera English. Bob Gearheart and I talked the film crew through the treatment process and lab work to explain how our unique system functions.

The previous day, the film crew from Make World Media went on a boat tour of the bay and oyster beds arranged by Dave Couch, then interviewed Mark Andre (Arcata Environmental Services), Mark Wheatley (Arcata City Council), and Denise Homer (City Naturalist). The end result will be a 5-minute fun and informational piece for the Al Jazeera audience.



FOAM at EE Resource Fair

By Mary Burke

On September 21, FOAM participated in an Environmental Education Teacher Fair sponsored by California Regional Environmental Education Community Network. The event was held at the Natural History Museum in Arcata. The fair offered an excellent opportunity for teachers to learn about environmental ed opportunities in our region, including field trips and in-class presentations. FOAM was pleased to advertise its new fifth-grade Wonders of Wetlands curriculum, classroom tours by docents, and weekend guided tours. Approximately 30 teachers and other interested people attended, of which a dozen or so stopped by to talk to me.

Seasons Around the Marsh – Fall

By Denise Homer

Walking up the path to the Interpretive Center in dense fog, I could see where Halloween decorations come from. The trees, bushes, and grasses were covered in spider webs revealed by the fog. For some reason, I've never photographed spider webs. I wondered if I could capture all this webby décor. I looked through the camera, but no web. I moved to one side and looked again, no web. I tried a totally different angle... ah, there's a web in the viewfinder. I put the camera down to check with my eyes. I couldn't see it. Suddenly it hit me. I had entered a fly's world, that tricky flight navigation through a sky full of webs seen, then unseen. No wonder spiders are so successful.

I'm getting lots of questions about a web that looks like a box made out of web with a leaf suspended in the center. Turns out it's actually a string of debris consisting of dead insects and plant material held together with webbing. Look closely at the bottom of this string and you'll find the female *Metepeira grinnelli*.

Banded woolly bear caterpillars, *Pyrrharctia isabella*, are easy to see right now. Since childhood I've had the habit of moving them from roads and paths to plant matter in the hopes that enough of them survive. I like the way they curl up in a tight spiral in my hand when I pick them up. Why they wander in autumn is a mystery. Their diet of greens, including grass and dandelions, is easy to find. It has been suggested that they are looking for a place to curl up and spend the winter, usually under bark, leaf litter, or logs. This morning I found one resting on coyote bush leaves, curled around the stem. I checked on it later, but it was gone.

In the spring, the overwintering caterpillars warm up and begin to feed. They then form a cocoon and pupate, emerging as an Isabella tiger moth with golden brown forewings dotted with small black spots.

The same foggy morning, while putting out the open sign, I spotted



a yellow woolly bear, *Spilosoma virginica*, on the underside of a stem. It had already eaten several red-osier dogwood leaves. I don't see these caterpillars very often.

Another typical caterpillar on the walkway to the Interpretive Center is the yellow-spotted tiger moth larva, *Lophocampa maculate*. It looks similar to a woolly bear, except it has tufts of long, white hairs over its entire body. Then I saw a bright yellow, fuzzy caterpillar with a row of black spots along the back and tufts of long, white hairs over its entire body. What's that one? I wondered. Turned out it's also a yellow-spotted tiger moth larva. The species is extremely variable in coloration and pattern. The larvae eat coast willow and other willows, red alder, and other broadleaf trees. No wonder I'm seeing so many!

Today I went out at lunch to watch birds when a monarch butterfly, *Danaus plexippus*, drifted by. I thought of Robert Brault saying, "Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things."

Visitor Log

By Sue Leskiw

Every so often, I take a look through the Visitor Sign-in book placed on the front desk. I like to see how many states — and countries — are represented by the relatively small percentage of people who take the time to write in the register.

Since the summer issue of UP-WIND was published, the Interpre-

tive Center guestbook lists visitors from 22 states and the District of Columbia (AZ, CA, FL, HI, IL, KS, MA, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, NM, NJ, OH, OR, PA, SD, TX, UT, WA, WI), as well as England, Italy, Switzerland, and Thailand.

Some of their comments follow: "Thanks for teaching; keep on going"... "Wonderful, accessible variety of landscapes, flora, and fauna — a great treasure"... "Lovely area; nice development and people"... "Waterbirds were fascinating"... "Wonderful displays"... "Fun things for kids"... "Has a certain serenity, peaceful"... "This sort of facility is always great to see"... "Innovative, necessary, beautiful."

Green Cards, Great Ratings

By Sue Leskiw

Recently, I discovered that those green postcards that tour attendees are asked to complete are available for perusal in a three-ring binder. So, during my last staffing stint at the front desk, I leafed through the results. The ratings and comments from visitors confirmed what I already knew: our tour leaders are friendly, knowledgeable ambassadors for the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary.

The notebook contained cards for most of our active docents: Rich Ridenhour, Bob Rasmussen, Alex Stillman, Katy Allen, Emily Janzen, Megan McCue, Jenny Hanson, Louise Bacon-Ogden, George Ziminsky, and Art Barab. Nearly all received the highest accolades — three perfect 5s — from tour attendees. Some visitors took the time to fill in comments: "Outstanding experience"... "Well-presented, fun, informative, beautiful walk"... "Very inspiring and hopeful"... "Guide enthusiastic and flexible"... "Guide pleasant; had a great time and it's free!" I did not see one negative comment for 2011!

Congratulations docents, for helping FOAM achieve its mission of public education and community outreach. I hope that some of the new trainees (see related article, page 3) will soon join the club and be out on the trails spreading the word.



NOVEMBER ARTIST

DANA UTMAN

When I began to get serious with photography 10 years ago, a high-end digital camera was an effective 6 megapixels that could cost \$7000 and photo printing was left to the pros. Today, digital photography is more common and not the exception. Cameras are better and less expensive, and learning the art of printing is an important component in achieving the final satisfaction I seek.

I love the pursuit of photography, beginning with the initial adventure of finding a wonderful image to share, through to the final print. I don't specialize in one style, but rather enjoy learning as many as I can — from representational to painterly and impressionistic, from high dynamic range to composites, from color to black-and-white. I've learned that, in the beginning, it's good to learn the basics, such as the Rule of Thirds, but that discovering your own way is even more important. I have traveled to Europe, Canada, and a fair amount of the United States to look behind a camera. Most of what I bring home to post-process is natural outdoor grandeur. Living on the North Coast has been a great asset for someone who loves forests, lakes, marshes, and ocean and wants to preserve them with captured images. I don't have to go far. I can walk out my front door with my camera on Jacoby Creek and find myself surrounded by the exceptional beauty and wildlife that helps sustain me. How lucky I am.

An artist friend told me a story recently about how a woman looking at his paintings remarked: "This must be how you express yourself." He paused, then replied "No, this is how I lose myself." I understand what he meant.

Dana can be reached at jacob-dan@suddenlink.net

DECEMBER/JANUARY ARTIST

SELON HOLSTEIN

Throughout my life, I have been captivated by forest, lakes, and wilderness. This experience has been intensified since I have been able to "see" this world through the lens of my camera. I am intrigued by the beauty, vocalizations, and behaviors of loons, an ancient species of birds. Over the years, I have had the fortunate opportunity of photographing pairs of loons throughout their breeding cycle. By patiently drifting in my kayak, the loons of "Golden Pond" have become comfortable with my presence and camera — allowing me to record five seasons of their life cycle. They have permitted me to photograph their amazing beauty during different lighting conditions



throughout the summer and fall seasons.

During this same time, I have spent many hours photographing puffins and murres in a breeding colony off the coast of Canada. Although these reclusive species also reside off the Humboldt Coast, through these photographs, I can share their beauty, up close, with their spectacular breeding plumage and behavior.

Selon can be reached at solon-holstein@sbcglobal.net.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

[Docent tours leave the Interpretive Center every Saturday at 2 pm]

November — photographs by Dana Utman

November 10 — FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

November 13 — Artist reception, 2-4 pm

November 24 — Thanksgiving Meander with Art Barab, 10 am

December/January — waterbird photography by Selon Holstein

December 8 — FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

December 10 — Marsh Work Day (see pages 2&3)

January 1 — New Year's Day Ramble with Jenny Hanson, 2 pm

January 12 — FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

Visitor Log

The Interpretive Center had 2227 visitors in August and 2113 in September.

Recognition & Thanks, August-October 2011

☛ Best Friends (\$100): Bruce & Pam Kessler (new Life Members!); Mark Wilson & Patty Siering

☛ Sponsors (\$50): Tom & Katy Allen; Gloria Baxter; Richard & Chris Beresford; John Claggett; Fred Leissler (Reno); Bill & June Thompson

☛ Friends: Anonymous; Mark & Melinda Bailey; Mary Burke; Karen Cunningham; Bruce Dickmeyer Family; Carol Fuller (Santa Cruz, "with thanks to Bob Rasmussen!"); Thea Gast; Cindy Kuttner; Jim Lennon; Sue Lee & Archie Mossman; Lucille Martin; John McNeely; Bev Post; Jack Schubert; Gretchen Stadler & Family; Don Staudenmaier; George Ziminsky

☛ In memory of George Allen (donations now total \$1200): Anonymous; Ingeborg Leonardos (West Chester, PA); Anne Weiss