



SLOUGH NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLUMBIA SLOUGH WATERSHED COUNCIL

SPRING 2002 VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

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Cooperation and Restoration: A new Vision for the Slough

By: John Sheehan, Council Volunteer

With the approach of the bicentennial of Lewis and Clark's historic journey down the Columbia River, the custodians of the Columbia Slough have unfolded a new vision for the renewal of a waterway created by millennia of the Columbia's flooding but more recently suffering under the heavy hand of modern society. It is a vision of a Slough revitalized. According to the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, the Slough is to become "an urban watershed rich in healthy habitats and clean water that supports the needs of fish, plants, wildlife, and people."

DE-ICING

Portland International Airport is one of the Slough's most prominent neighbors, and its operations inevitably affect the area. Historically de-icing operations have had a profound effect on the Slough. In cold weather conditions de-icing fluids are applied to airplanes, runways and taxiways to maintain safe operations. The glycol in the de-icing materials, which until recently flowed from the airport's stormwater system directly into the slough, were having a negative effect on the aquatic life of the Slough.

Indeed, several years ago the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality issued daily limits on materials entering the Slough's water that necessitated that the airport reduce the outflow of glycol by as much as 90% during peak operations, according to Bill Allen, De-Icing Task Force Project Manager for the Port of Portland, the airport's operator.

The solution to this problem came about as the result of an unprecedented coming-together of stakeholders: The Port of Portland, the airlines (which are financially responsible for the costs of regulated practices, such as de-icing mandated by the FAA), various local, state and federal agencies, and environmental and community organizations.

The result is a metering and diversion system now nearing completion that allows airport managers to control the flow of glycol-laced runoff as necessary, diverting it to holding tanks during the peaks. The highest concentration runoff will be diverted to a 2 million gallon tank, then to the sanitary sewer for treatment. The rest will be sent to a 13 million gallon detention pond and metered out over time at levels deemed safe for the Slough ecosystem. At peak operations, the first system will manage up to 50% of the airport's total runoff, mainly from the glycol-heavy terminal areas, and the second will handle another 40%, thus achieving the 90% diversion that will be necessary at peak times.

The partially completed system got its first trial run this winter. Despite the under-whelming snowfall this year, managers got to test and calibrate the meters and software that runs the system, and work out some of the kinks. Most importantly, though, the system "diverted when it was supposed to," according to Susan Aha, Water Quality Specialist with the Port of Portland, and the program is on schedule. Construction should be completed this August, with the first test of the entire system in November, ultimately leading to full compliance with DEQ guidelines by October 31st, 2003. Total program costs will be \$31 million. \$18 million is funded through an FAA grant and the rest is coming from the airlines.



View of the 13 million gallon deicing detention pond under construction near NE Cornfoot Rd. &

Article Continued on Page 4



Grow Wild Native Plant Sale
 Saturday April 20th
 9:30 am - 2:00 pm
 Lakeshore Park in Fairview
 (217th and Fairview Lake Way,
 off N.E. 223)
 Call 503-667-4673 to request a
 pre-order

Soup on the Slough
 Thursday and Friday April
 25 & 26
 11:30 am - 1:00 p.m.
 Whitaker Ponds, 7040 NE 47th
 Ave. RSVP: Joe Annett at (503)
 823-4513 or Email:
 jannett@ci.portland.or.us

**Keeping Out of Muddy
 Waters - Restoration
 Discussion Sessions**
*Part 1 - Site Planning and
 Preparation*
 Thursday April 25
 6:00 - 8:00
 Ecotrust Conference Center
 721 NW 8th Ave
 Free. Dinner is Provided.
 Contact: Markelle Smith (503)
 823-7753
 markelles@bes.ci.portland.or.us

CSWC General Meeting
 Monday April 29
 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
 Nabisco Biscuit Company, 100
 NE Columbia Blvd. Contact: The
 Columbia Slough Watershed
 Council at (503) 281-1132 or
 Email info@columbiaslough.org

**Wetlands 101
 Seminar and Field Trip**
 Thurs & Sat, May 9 & 11
 Seminar: 6:30 pm - 8:30pm
 Field trip: 9am - 1:00
 FREE! RSVP required. To
 register Contact: The
 Columbia Slough Watershed
 Council at (503) 281-1132 or
 Email info@columbiaslough.org



Lights! Camera! Action!

by Jay Mower, CSWC Coordinator

You realize, of course, that before a movie director yells, "Action!" several years worth of preparation went into making that moment happen. My point is that making the moment of action work requires a lot of advance preparation. This is particularly true when the plan involve lots of parties and complex systems.

The CSWC is developing an Action Plan for the Columbia Slough watershed. We raised money from grants and hired a team of consultants to help us. A committee of Council members was organized to oversee the project, the Council Technical Committee. CTC members come from both the private and public sectors and are doing this in addition to all their normal duties at their regular jobs. This is a community effort.

The Action Plan will be ready in March 2003. Right now we're doing all the advance work necessary for a successful plan. Sometimes advance work can be tedious and unexciting. It's like preparing to paint a house. The preparation goes slow, but once it's done and the painting begins you're glad you took the time.

We have a lot of project ideas. Some are on lists. Others are still in people's minds. The entire Council developed an extensive list at a retreat two years ago. Nothing's been prioritized. No cost estimates have been developed. We're developing ways to evaluate and rank projects ideas. You'll see the results of this work later in the year. We'll be taking the draft project list on the road to get your reaction and additional input from the public. We promise to bring along blank sheets of paper for brand new ideas.

A few last points: this plan is for the entire watershed, not just the Slough itself. The headwaters of the Columbia Slough start near Powell Boulevard in Gresham where Fairview Creek begins its journey to Fairview Lake and then into the Slough. Our vision is for the entire watershed to be a place rich in clean water and healthy habitats. Everyone has a part to play. Most big projects will require partnerships. Other scenes can be performed by individual property owners. Every single person - a cast of thousands - can do something to produce a clean and healthy watershed. It's a big production, we're making a plan, stay tuned for details.

Jay Mower has been the Watershed Council Coordinator since 1996. In 2001 he was awarded the Governor's Spirit of the Oregon Plan Leadership Award. Jay can be reached at (503) 281-1132 or via email at jay.mower@columbiaslough.org



The *Paddler's Access Guide to the Columbia Slough* is now available! Published by the City of Portland's Environmental Services program, the water-resistant guide contains a general description of what paddlers will encounter during a trip on the Slough including fish, birds, levees, stormwater outfalls, invasive plants and culverts.

Directions to launch and landing sites are detailed. The map also indicates river miles and paddling times which allows anyone, from a novice to an expert paddler, to select the perfect flatwater trip. A full length Fairview Lake -to-Willamette adventure can be completed in approximately 9 hours and will give you a whole new perspective of the waterway. Request a FREE copy of the Access Guide at the Columbia Slough Watershed Council (503) 281-1132 or at Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services (503) 823-7268.
 Happy paddling!



SLOUGH MONITORING IS GREAT!

By Amanda Briles, Volunteer Slough Monitor

Volunteering as a monitor for the Columbia Slough Watershed Council has been most rewarding. This opportunity has enriched my life in ways I'd never dreamed. On the upper slough my reach is an incredible wealth of wildlife, whimsy, fitness and solitude. It's a delightful respite in our urban wonderland.

One summer a few years ago, my mate, John Hollis, and I discovered a "canoe launch" sign at about N.E. 166th and Airport Way. We checked it out and were impressed, but had no idea where the Slough went or how far from there. I phoned the Water Bureau, who got in touch with Susan Barthel at the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services. She called back and set us in the right direction with a map of the Slough and an invitation to the Annual Columbia Slough regatta which occurs in July.

It was the beginning of a beautiful love affair —not with Susan, though we do love her — rather with the Slough itself! It was at the regatta the I got on board the "Eyes on the Slough" program.

I grew up close to the Slough where it runs by N.E. 92nd Avenue just North of Columbia Blvd. My brothers and I would catch mud bugs there as children, and, as I recall, my grandfather took me fishing there at least once. I honor this fond memory and my respect for the Slough by giving back to this water community today.

The "Eyes on the Slough" Volunteer Monitoring Program helps the Watershed Council keep an eye on the health of the Slough. Our volunteers create a consistent presence on the Slough's waterways, watch for illegal dumping and discharges, count wildlife, and note invasive plant communities and areas of bank failure and cave-in. For more information about the Eyes on the Slough Volunteer Monitoring Project contact: Troy Clark at (503) 249-0482 or email brillobrain@ureach.com

Slough Benefits From Clean Water Act Settlement

Update by: Don Francis, Sierra Club - Oregon Chapter

Sierra Club and Oregon Fresh Farms have reached an out-of-court settlement over wastewater discharges into Whitaker Slough. The consent decree, filed in federal court, requires Oregon Fresh Farms to significantly reduce pollution in waste water discharges and make donations to organizations involved in local watershed enhancement and protection.

Oregon Fresh Farms will make contributions to the Northwest Environmental Defense Center, the Audubon Society of Portland and \$5,000 to the Columbia Slough Watershed Council for the purchase of canoes, kayaks and related equipment to provide educational tours of the Columbia Slough system.



Slough News Subscription Update:

Dear Subscribers,

In an effort to save paper and mailing costs, the Columbia Slough Watershed Council is looking into sending event announcements and newsletters to you electronically.

If you have received a paper copy of this Newsletter, and would like to be on our E-News list. Please send an email to info@columbiaslough.org



Canoe the Slough
Thursday May 16
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
Canoes will be provided.
RSVP Required. Contact: The Columbia Slough Watershed Council at (503) 281-1132 or info@columbiaslough.org

CSWC General Meeting
Monday May 20
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Nabisco Biscuit Company, 100 NE Columbia Blvd. Contact: The Columbia Slough Watershed Council at (503) 281-1132 or email info@columbiaslough.org

Keeping Out of Muddy Waters - Restoration Discussion Sessions
Part 2 - Planting
Thursday April 30
6:00 - 8:00
Ecotrust Conference Center
721 NW 8th Ave
Free. Dinner is Provided.
Contact: Markelle Smith (503) 823-7753
markelles@bes.ci.portland.or.us

Bike Ride on the Peninsula Crossing Trail
Saturday, June 1st
1 pm to 3pm
Meet at the Princeton Trailhead (Princeton and Carey Blvd. two blocks north of Willamette Blvd.). Contact: Friends of Peninsula Crossing Trail: Steve Weir, 503-283-3883, trails@weirscyclery.com

Walk on the Peninsula Crossing Trail
Sunday, June 2nd
1pm to 4pm.
Meet at the Princeton Trailhead (Princeton and Carey Blvd. two blocks north of Willamette Blvd.). Contact Friends of Peninsula Crossing Trail: Steve Weir 503-283-3883, trails@weirscyclery.com or Pam Arden at 503-289-9475
npdarden@teleport.com.



Great Blue Heron Nest Watch
 Tuesday, June 4th
 6:30 pm to 8 pm.
 Meet at Heron Lakes Golf Course, and then walk the nature trail at Smith and Bybee Lakes. Contact Emily Roth: 503-235-6272 or eroth@hevanet.com.

Coyote Cleans the River Native American Stories by Ed Edmo
 Tuesday, June 4th
 7 pm to 8 pm,
 Meet at the City of Portland's Water Pollution Control Lab, 6543 N Burlington Avenue, near the St. John's bridge. Free. RSVP to: Patty O'Malley (503) 823-7863.

What's Happening at Smith and Bybee Lakes?
 Sunday, June 9th
 1 pm to 3pm.
 Meet in the Smith and Bybee Lakes parking area on N. Marine Drive. Registration Required: call 797-1950, then push option 4.

Canoe the Slough
 Thursday June 6
 6:00 pm - dark
 Meet at 16550 NE Airport Way (165th and Airport Way) Call to register. Contact: The Columbia Slough Watershed Council at (503) 281-1132 or Email info@columbiaslough.org

CSWC General Meeting
 Monday June 24:
 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
 Nabisco Biscuit Company, 100 NE Columbia Blvd. Contact: The Columbia Slough Watershed Council at (503) 281-1132 or info@columbiaslough.org

Slough Restoration, cont'd:

Ultimately, the new system will almost completely mitigate of one of the Slough's most serious water quality issues. "It will be the most comprehensive system in the United States," says Allen, who added that the most satisfying aspect of this project is the way it emerged through the cooperation and consensus of all stakeholders and will provide real benefits to the local environment.

1135 PROJECT

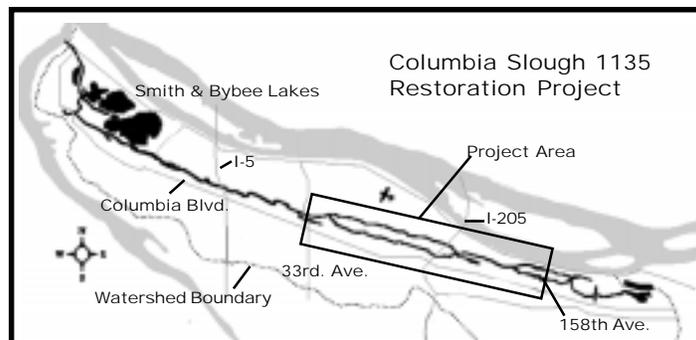
Dave Hendricks has been looking for ways to improve channel conditions in the Columbia Slough for ten years. As the operations manager at Multnomah County Drainage District #1, Hendricks' primary responsibility is flood control, and the slough's increasingly straight and sediment-laden channel was becoming a problem. He wanted to dredge the channel to better manage floodwater, but needed help with the funding.



Meandering channel at the Bridgeton Slough Pilot Project after wetland benches had been created and planted

Enter the US Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps is devoting more resources to restoration work through its Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Program, and was looking for projects in the Slough to support. Hendricks, who had been thinking about how dredging spoils could be used to create wetland benches within the Slough, went to the Corps, showed them his initial ideas, and said, "This is how we can do this." MCDD would get the funding it needed for dredging, and the Corps would get the restoration project it sought.

The Corps was interested, but the immediate challenge was convincing the long list of regulatory agencies involved that the project would produce real habitat and water quality benefits. Pilot projects at Chinook Landing, 122nd Avenue, and Bridgeton Slough convinced the agencies of the idea's feasibility, and a much larger project, the Columbia Slough Section 1135 Project, began to take shape. Hendricks told the Corps he could do the dredging, but would need help with the revegetation and restoration elements the Corps desired.



Enter the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services and its Watershed and Revegetation Programs. BES agreed

not only to plant the wetland benches, but also to work on acquiring and restoring wetlands in the project area. In discussions with the Army Corps and MCDD, it was also decided to enlarge and lower culverts to improve water flow. The Corps agreed to pay 75% of the estimated \$4,563,000 implementation costs, with the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services picking up the other 25%.

The project now has several major components affecting 7.5 miles of the Slough, including: 1) Creating meander channels and wetland benches along the 7.5 miles from MCDD #1 at NE 18th eastward to NE 158th Avenue, 2) Revegetating the new benches and controlling invasive non-native plants, 3) Replacing ineffective culverts in Buffalo and Whitaker Slough and, 4) Constructing a 9 acre enhanced wetland near NE Mason Avenue to provide wildlife habitat and to filter storm water.

Phase I of the project is scheduled to begin in July. The majority of the project will be finished in two years. As the 1135 Project proceeds, its various components can be expected to benefit the Slough and its users in myriad ways. The meandering channel and wetland benches will increase habitat complexity and create a water flow pattern that more closely mimics natural conditions, and yes, they will also improve flood control. The improved culverts at Buffalo and Whitaker Sloughs will improve water flow and drop water levels, both of which will improve water quality. The culverts will also be large enough to allow canoes to pass through. And the enhanced

Mason Avenue wetlands will provide crucial wildlife habitat and filter treated storm water before it reaches the Slough.

All this restoration will take time and effort. As MCDD's Hendricks said, "You can't judge the project right off the bat because it's going to be a muddy mess. There's going to be mudflats without anything on them and people are going to be saying, 'What were they thinking?' But it will clear up; the new plants will grow, and it will be better."

BIG PIPE

Picture a typical living room. Now picture a pipe into which you could fit that living room. That is the scale of the aptly-named "Big Pipe," the centerpiece of an historic public works project recently completed by the city of Portland. Before Big Pipe, literally millions of gallons of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) entered the Slough annually. Such an influx of organic waste, heavy metals, trash and other pollutants had a tremendously negative effect on the Slough's ecosystem. The fact that the water in the Slough moves slowly only made matters worse.

All that has changed, now that Big Pipe is intercepting an estimated 350 million gallons of CSO's annually that used to flow into the Slough. This monumental restoration project—Big Pipe is 12 feet in diameter and 3.5 miles long—has not come cheaply. Taken together, the City's Columbia Slough CSO projects are estimated to cost \$195 million, which will be paid for through increased sewer rates. It is a cost most seem willing to pay for the benefit of a cleaner, healthier Slough.

Though the challenges to a revitalized Columbia Slough are great, we are already well on our way. In the past five years over \$215 million have been invested in Slough restoration. 440,220 trees and 238,000 shrubs have been planted in the watershed. More generally, an era of litigation and consent decrees has largely given way to a new mood of cooperation and consensus. Says Nancy Hendrickson, Columbia Slough Watershed Manager for BES, "There is a lot more coordination and cooperation among stakeholders. A lot of the credit goes to the Watershed Council for getting people talking to each other, and building on each others' strengths." Stakeholders of all stripes have come together and will continue to do so, often through the activities of the Council, to create restoration projects large and small that will work to make the vision a reality.



Sidewalk at the Columbia Blvd. Waste Water Treatment Plant passing through a Cross-section of the Big Pipe



Keeping Out of Muddy Waters - Restoration Discussion Sessions
Part 3- Site Maintenance and Monitoring
Thursday June 27
6:00 - 8:00
Ecotrust Conference Center
721 NW 8th Ave
Free. Dinner is Provided.
Contact: Markelle Smith (503) 823-7753
markelles@bes.ci.portland.or.us

Explorando el Columbia Slough
Saturday June 29
4:00 - 8:00 pm
The first ever Spanish Language Slough Festival. Free food, music, and guided canoe trips.
Location: Whitaker Ponds Education Center 7040 NE 47th Ave. Contact: The Columbia Slough Watershed Council (503) 281-1132 or info@columbiaslough.org

The 8th Annual Columbia Slough Regatta
Sunday July 28
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Bring your family and your boat to the Largest paddling event in Oregon.
Location: Launch at 16650 NE Airport Way
Contact: The Columbia Slough Watershed Council (503) 281-1132 info@columbiaslough.org

W a n t e d

Bilingual Festival Hosts: Translators for the first ever Spanish Language Columbia Slough Celebration: We need bilingual people to serve as translators and staff for the Explorando el Columbia Slough Fiesta on June 29. Contact info@columbiaslough.org or (503) 281-1132

Regatta Volunteers: The Annual Columbia Slough Regatta is powered largely by volunteer efforts. We need people to help with: Set-up, Parking, Registration, Loading Boats, and Clean-up. Contact info@columbiaslough.org or (503) 281-1132

Slough Stewards: The Columbia Slough Watershed Council is seeking volunteers to do maintenance work on restoration sites throughout the Slough. Contact info@columbiaslough.org or (503) 281-1132

Eyes on the Slough Volunteer Monitors: Volunteer to keep an eye on the health of the Slough by paddling a reach of the Slough. Our Eyes of the Slough Volunteers create a consistent presence on the Slough's waterways, watch for illegal dumping and discharges, count wildlife, and note invasive plant communities and areas of bank failure and cave-in. Contact: Troy Clark at (503) 249-0482 or email brillobrain@ureach.com

Librarian: The unattended Columbia Slough Watershed Council Library is looking for a librarian to reorganize, build, and catalogue it. Contact info@columbiaslough.org or (503) 281-1132



Columbia Slough Watershed Council
7040 NE 47th Avenue
Portland, OR 97218

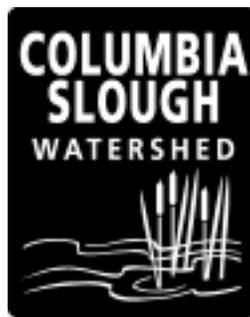
Join the Columbia Slough Watershed Council for Wetlands 101

This two-part seminar is designed to give both a classroom and a hands-on overview of wetland ecology and regulations. Seminar topics include wetland function and values, wetland mitigation, and regulation. Field trip activities include digging and examining wetland soils, viewing wildlife, and plant identification.

FREE. RSVP required. Please register for both the workshop and the field trip.

To register, contact The Columbia Slough Watershed Council at (503) 281-1132 or info@columbiaslough.org.

Seminar:
Thursday, May 9, 2002
6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
The seminar will be held at the
Ecotrust Conference Center,
Jean Vollum Natural Capital
Center, Second Floor,
721 NW Ninth Ave, Portland
Located between NW Johnson
and Irving Streets and NW 9th
and 10th Ave in the Pearl
District.



Field Trip:
Saturday, May 11, 2002
9:00 am to 12 noon
"South Shore Rabbit" is a
unique mitigation site located
on the Columbia Slough, off
NE Airport Way just past 158th.
Seminar students will be given
a detailed map and directions
to the site. Wear sturdy shoes,
dress for the weather, and
bring binoculars.

**Space is Limited!
Register Today!**