



Slough News

Newsletter of the Columbia Slough Watershed Council

Fall 2011

Volume 11, Issue 2

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Let's Connect

By Sam Schongalla

Introducing your new Community Connections Coordinator, Sam Schongalla

Looking for a way to connect – to connect to your interests, to connect to people, to connect to your environment? Meet Sam Schongalla, the Council's newest staff member charged with connecting people (that means you!) to your watershed. During her 11 month AmeriCorps term of service, Sam will vamp up a volunteer program that supports the organization and serves you, watershed residents and supporters. From the new outreach task force, to monthly Stewardship Saturdays, there are more opportunities to connect than ever before. Take a look, and feel free to get in touch—Sam looks forward to meeting you! Here are some new ways that you can get involved with the Council:

Auction Committee Volunteer

Love tying ribbons? How about fundraising? We need volunteers to help procure and organize donations for the Slough Celebration's silent auction fundraiser on Feb 10, 2012. Come committed – you'll be responsible for one of more auction duties, and must be able to attend monthly or bi-monthly Committee meetings in addition to the big event. Get in touch if interested.

Outreach Task Force

Join the team that expands our reach. This esteemed group of volunteers helps represent the Columbia Slough Watershed Council at events and fairs through out the year. Volunteers receive a one hour training, and are then contacted as outreach opportunities arise. This year, we're looking forward to attending farmers markets, street fairs, and outdoor festivals.

Group/Business Team Volunteers

Looking for a free, fun, rewarding, and team-building activity for your business, school group, or community organization? We're able to host stewardship work parties throughout the year. Events usually involve native plantings, invasive weed removal, or the occasional maintenance or

building project. Let us know what your interests are, and we'll see if we can organize a volunteer event that suits your needs.

Interpretive Walks - Lead Guides & Assistants

We are looking for assistant and potentially lead guides to offer guided nature walks for adults and families across the watershed. Birds, bats, plants, & bugs! Name your expertise, we're interested.



Sam Schongalla, Community Connections Coordinator (and Confluence Environmental Center AmeriCorps Member) plans to cultivate a legion of watershed stewards via a growing volunteer program at the Council. She comes to the Columbia Slough Watershed Council with a year of AmeriCorps experience under her belt, previously serving as a Volunteer Coordinator at Portland's ReBuilding Center. On the side, Sam is actively involved in Portland's local food movement and moonlights as a web and graphic designer.

Contact Sam Schongalla, the new Community Connections Coordinator (CEC AmeriCorps) at 503-281-1132 or sam.schongalla@columbiaslough.org.

New Faces & Projects

By Melissa Sandoz

Dock Repair



Many of you may have noticed that the rickety boat dock at NE 166th and Airport Way had a makeover in August of this year. New decking and floatation has turned this dock into a rock solid place to launch into the upper slough near the Big Four Corners wetland area. The Portland Water Bureau, Bureau of Environmental Services and the Council came together to fund the repair of the dock, which had been vandalized and non-functional since August 2010. The dock is located on Portland Water Bureau property. Folks are urged to utilize the dock and nearby trailhead, and to call the Water Bureau at 503-823-6084 if they notice any suspicious behavior near the dock. Check out the new dock for yourself sometime this fall!

Summer Interns



The Council had help this summer from Alfredo Urbina and Misael Calcano, two students from the Mt Hood Community College's SEED program. Alfredo (from Honduras) and Misael (from the Dominican Republic) are completing a 2-year program in natural resource management with the intention of returning to their home countries to implement their knowledge. They completed their summer internship with the Council by assisting with summer events, the Great Slough Clean Up, raingarden upkeep, and wildlife surveys at Whitaker Ponds. Their fellow SEED students volunteered as well at Explorando.

Moonlight Paddle



The Council's second-ever Moonlight Paddle was a hit as 41 participants and 9 staff & volunteers gathered on August 12th for a nighttime paddle. Groups explored the Slough in the dark with headlamps and glowsticks—though many discovered that there is easily enough ambient light on the Slough to find your way at night. Beaver and bat sightings were numerous! For all those who would enjoy a nighttime paddle, get a group together or sign up for next year's Moonlight Paddle in July.

New Education Intern



Laura Colgan is the Council's new Fall Education Intern. She will be teaching a variety of Slough School education programs, as well as running the Tadpole Tales toddler program in October. She has a background in environmental science and marine ecology, and is currently a graduate student in the Leadership for Sustainability Education program at Portland State University. Laura is excited to be teaching and learning in the field, as well as in classrooms, with students, and community members of all ages.

Slough School Mentors

By Sheilagh Diez

Every year, from mid-January through the end of March, Slough School works with hundreds of students in native habitat restoration. They love digging mud, we love the hands-on science, and the plants love to get their roots in the soil. However, as you can imagine, it can be tricky to wrangle a group of 12-15 nine year olds and a few armfuls of plants (not to mention trowels) and get the plants in effectively.

Enter MYC. The Multnomah Youth Cooperative is a high school program housed at Reynolds Learning Academy, located at the eastern edge of the watershed in Fairview. With their support, there is a high school student working with almost every younger student. Mud is enjoyed, science taught, and every plant is planted well.

One crisp, winter morning, the MYC crew leader and I began to scheme. She loved the ownership and pride that her students took from mentoring. I wanted to share their skills with more schools. So we

launched a program, Salish Ponds Days, in which MYC students develop and lead stations for students from Salish Ponds Elementary. The program went so well that we began right away to plan for the next year. Last year, all three of the second grades participated. We were making strides.

As the school year ended, I was extremely proud of the MYC students and of all we had accomplished, but, something was missing. I wanted to know the MYC students from the start, to support them as they cultivated their skills as educators. Some of them might serve as student leaders for Outdoor School, work at a summer camp, and perhaps one or two would go on to become educators themselves. I wanted Slough School to be able to encourage that growth.

This fall we dove right in. Not just a jumble of classes here and there thrown together, but a carefully plotted schedule designed to prepare students to become



strong mentors. A series of classroom programs on local watershed ecology and mentoring skills, a field day for training, a fall mentoring opportunity with yet another Reynolds school, mentoring planting dates in the winter, more classroom support, further educational programs, and finally, three more Salish Ponds Days programs.

As the sun shone on our first mentoring field trip this fall, I was reminded how special it is to watch someone you have supported step up and take on their own role as an educator. Watching young children learn from them is magical, and you know the experience will stay with them. Through these experiences we are truly cultivating the next generation of watershed stewards.

Slough Celebration!

By Melissa Sandoz

Save the date for the upcoming Slough Celebration on Friday, February 10, 2012! The Council will gather with 200 of its strongest supporters for an elegant evening of fun, award presentations, and a slough-themed silent auction.

How can you help?

- Nominate a Leadership or Achievement Award Winner by Tuesday November 22nd. Find the nomination form online at www.columbiaslough.org.
- Sponsor a table and invite your friends to join you! Contact Melissa at Melissa.sandoz@columbiaslough.org for table sponsorship options.
- Help plan the silent auction & raffle as part of the Volunteer Auction Committee. See more details on page 1.
- Donate an auction item such as a stay in your beach/mountain cabin, a restaurant gift certificate, new camping gear, or a bottle of wine.

We look forward to seeing you there!



The silent auction and raffle alone at last year's Slough Celebration raised over \$7400 for the Council's programs! With your help, we can raise even more this year in support of our youth education programs, habitat restoration activities, workshops, and community festivals.

El Décimo Explorando el Columbia Slough

By Melissa Sandoz

Thank you to our Explorando Sponsors

The Boeing Company

Bustos Media

City of Gresham

City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

**East Multnomah Soil and Water
Conservation District**

New Seasons

Oregon Screen Impressions

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Portland Parks & Recreation

**Portland Timbers Community Fund
of the Oregon Community Foundation**

Portland Water Bureau

Proud Ground

REI

Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel

Squires & Associates, P.C., Attorneys at Law

Verde

**Willamette River Fun(d)
of the Oregon Community Foundation**

This year marked the 10th annual Explorando el Columbia Slough, the Council's bilingual nature festival. On June 18th, 322 attendees and 63 volunteers gathered despite the cool and rainy day to enjoy free canoe trips, free t-shirts, live Latino entertainment, live bugs and birds, and community resource information.

Explorando is a community-organized event, utilizing the help of volunteer planning committee members. This year, Explorando received major financial support from the City of Portland's Fish Advisory funds, the Portland Timbers Community Fund and the Willamette River Fun(d) of the Oregon Community Foundation.



Aquifer Adventure a Summer Success

By Melissa Sandoz

The Portland Water Bureau and the Council partnered this September 17th on Aquifer Adventure, a pirate-themed groundwater education festival. Despite the cool rainy day, over 300 people came to NE 166th & Airport Way to learn about groundwater in our area. Children had the opportunity to make an edible aquifer, calculate their water usage, listen to live music by the Alphabeticians, go on a canoe ride, and track down treasure with groundwater-themed clues. Aquifer Adventure continues to draw a diverse crowd of attendees from nearby schools and neighborhoods.

Portland Water Bureau Administrator David Shaff and Metro Naturalist James Davis (below right) had the honor of being Pirate Captains at Aquifer Adventure. Portland Water Bureau staff and volunteers ran four stations.



Regatta's New Location a Hit

By Melissa Sandoz

The 17th Annual Columbia Slough Regatta was held on Sunday, July 31st this year. That morning dawned with light fog that quickly burned off to a sunny 80 degree day. 463 people came out to enjoy the festivities, making 195 boat launches into the Slough near Big Four Corners.

It was a challenge this year to determine the best location for the Regatta, which typically rotates each year through sites in the Lower, Middle, and Upper Slough. After changes at the Portland Water Bureau Canoe Launch at NE 166th & Airport Way, the Council has been unable to use this Upper Slough site for the huge crowds at each Regatta. Luckily, some brainstorming from the Regatta Planning Committee revealed the potential of a perfect new Upper Slough site at NE 150th Ct & Mason. The site's owners, Tri-State Construction, graciously donated the use of this site to the Council for the weekend. Participant feedback indicates that this site was one of the most popular in recent Regatta history, and the Council hopes to work with Tri-State Construction again for a future Regatta.



Participants enjoyed free t-shirts and free boat rentals at the 2011 Columbia Slough Regatta.

"Thank you for the wonderful adventure during the Regatta. It was so much fun being in so many different sizes and types of borrowed/loaned craft with so many other people, many obviously novices. We paddled, we swerved, we had near-misses at 1/2 mph, we laughed at ourselves and each other - and we experienced the Columbia Slough. Your volunteers were exemplary. I was so impressed. From site entry to water entry to site exit, every step of the process went smoothly. Everyone was friendly and helpful and seemed to know what they were supposed to do. Really, they all deserve hugs for their efforts, including the gentlemen in the orange jump suits. So thanks for raising my awareness about the Slough and for giving all of us a lovely experience." – N.A.

Thank you to this year's Regatta Sponsors

Alder Creek Kayak & Canoe
City of Gresham
City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Coffee Bean International
East Multnomah Soil and Water
Conservation District
Multnomah County Drainage Districts
Multnomah County Sheriff's Department
Oregon Screen Impressions
OWEB
Port of Portland
Portland Water Bureau
REI
The Boeing Company
Tri-State Construction
Tualatin Riverkeeper
Willamette River Fun(d) of the
Oregon Community Foundation

GET INVOLVED!

Volunteer at Stewardship Saturdays!

On the second Saturday of each month, from 9am until 12pm, volunteers gather to do great things for the Slough! Here's what's happening next month:

Stewardship Saturday, November 12

9:00am—12:00pm

Conifer Parks at Fairview Creek, 143 SE 205th Pl, Gresham

Get ready to plant! We'll be planting willow and cottonwood along Fairview creek, one of the few surface streams in the watershed. We'll be doing a ton of live stake planting - where fresh branches are planted straight into the ground. It's one of nature's cool tricks - check it out. Join us as we enjoy the day in this beautiful area along the creek. Kid and family friendly. Drinks and treats provided.

To RSVP: Call (503) 281-1132 or email sam.schongalla@columbiaslough.org

Mark your calendar for more Stewardship Saturday fun!

Dec 10, Jan 14, Feb 11, Mar 10, Mar 24

Fall Events

For more information about Columbia Slough Watershed Council events, visit our website at www.columbiaslough.org.

Groundwater 101

Saturday, November 5th, 8:45am—1:30pm

NECA-IBEW Training Center, 16021 NE Airport Way, Portland

Join the Portland Water Bureau and the Columbia Slough Watershed Council for Groundwater 101 - a FREE educational workshop that will teach you groundwater basics including some local geology and hydrology, what role groundwater plays in our drinking water system, and what needs to be done to protect this important resource. Light refreshments will be provided. Pre-registration is required.

To sign up for Council events, visit www.columbiaslough.org or call Melissa at 503-281-1132.

Tadpole Tales

Wednesdays in October, 10:00am—11:00am

Whitaker Ponds Nature Park, 7040 NE 47th, Portland

Children 3-5 years old with their parents are invited to storytime and a nature walk with the Council. \$3 donation per child. Held at Whitaker Ponds Nature Park; contact Laura at intern@columbiaslough.org for more information.



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Sheilagh Diez, Education Director
Michelle Boercker, Stewardship Coordinator
Sam Schongalla, Community Connections Coordinator
Laura Colgan, Education Intern



Council Wish List

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council is on the hunt for:

- Auction items
- Well-functioning laptop
- Baskets, tissue paper, and ribbon
- Children's life jackets
- Sturdy loppers

If you have something in good condition to donate, please contact us at 503-281-1132!