



# Slough News

Newsletter of the Columbia Slough Watershed Council

## Winter 2011

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Current Stewardship Coordinator, Nathaniel Talbot, will be leaving the Council in March to pursue his dreams of organic farming. The Council is interviewing candidates to fill this position—look for their welcome in the Spring edition!

## *Winter Restoration*

My, what a busy winter!

Winter is in full force and here at the Columbia Slough Watershed Council we're gearing up for a planting season of unprecedented proportions. On top of the 2,000 native trees and shrubs set to be planted here at Whitaker Ponds Nature Park, an additional 2,500 will be distributed among several partnering properties in the watershed, including Conifer Parks Home Association on Fairview Creek and Colwood Golf Course on Whitaker Slough.

Where does one part-time Stewardship Coordinator find the person-power to get all these plants in the ground? All over the watershed! Over the years we have rallied a robust coalition of students, volunteers, and work crews, from Gresham to St. Johns, ranging from 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to seniors, to make this effort possible. Drop by Whitaker Ponds any day during the next two months and you are likely to find a group of excited, trowel-wielding youngsters from a nearby school planting dogwood and snowberry along the water's edge. High school, college and adult volunteers join the action every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month for our Stewardship Saturday work parties. To assist with many of our off-site planting projects we are fortunate to have the hired help of Verde NW, a local landscaping and restoration non-profit that provides jobs for Latinos and other disadvantaged populations.

The Council is also excited about an interesting new stewardship pilot project this winter season. Through a grant from East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District and consultation from JOIN, a non-profit that works to get homeless into permanent housing, the Council was able to

*By Nathaniel Talbot*

work with two formerly homeless workers to assist with all of our winter restoration needs. This crew has been working alongside Stewardship Coordinator Nathaniel Talbot, gaining work experience and specialized training in the field of restoration. While much of society is currently experiencing unemployment due to a depressed economy, this problem is even exacerbated within the



Staff and volunteers have been hard at work this winter to prepare for and to plant over 4500 native plants in the watershed.

homeless and formerly homeless community. Thus, the stipend this crew will receive for their hard work will be a much welcomed source of income during hard times. This project is a great way to improve watershed health both ecologically and economically.

## 2010 Slough Award Winners

By *Melissa Sandoz*

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council was proud to give five Leadership and Achievement Awards for 2010. These awards are given to individuals or projects that demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to the Columbia Slough Watershed.

### Achievement: Bruce Gilles

Bruce Gilles, with DEQ's Northwest Region, is the cleanup program manager who is responsible for initiating the settlement process to further investigation and cleanup of contaminated sediment in the Columbia Slough. Mr Gilles developed a settlement frame-



work that calculates a payment amount for each facility based on estimated costs that would be incurred in a sediment investigation and cleanup. After paying this amount to a state cleanup fund for the impacted area, facilities are released of liability for site-associated histori-

cal contribution to contamination. Mr Gilles developed the framework for this process and was able to carry it through after numerous meetings with responsible parties, state and private lawyers. The Slough is now benefiting from his efforts. Also, an additional fund from optional releases for natural resource damages has provided over \$2 million for sediment investigation and cleanup efforts.

### Achievement: Sue Bielke

Sue Beilke has worked as a wildlife biologist since 1987 and is well known for her passion for turtle conservation. She



has conducted surveys for and monitored Western Painted Turtles and Western Pond Turtles throughout Oregon, and has conducted habitat restoration on both private and public lands. Ms Beilke worked with fellow biologists to conduct some of the first surveys for turtles in the Portland area in 2009, as a member of the Northwest Ecological Research Institute. She is a key member of the Lower Willamette Turtle Working Group and she manages a turtle hotline and rescue operation for injured turtles.

### Achievement: Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife and City of Portland



The City of Portland in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife conducted a study of fish species in the lower 13.5 km of the Columbia Slough. The goal was to determine if the species of fish changes among seasons and to provide a baseline of information on fish distribution. Twenty-five species of fish were found, including Chinook and Coho salmon, confirming that fish are present throughout the entire Lower Slough. This work enhances coordination between jurisdictions involved in the protection of endangered/threatened species and Oregon sensitive species while providing insight for restoring habitat throughout the area.



## 2010 Slough Award Winners (cont.)

By *Melissa Sandoz*

### Leadership: Rebecca Geisen

Ms Geisen, the Water Resources Program manager with the Portland Water Bureau, has worked to protect local groundwater for over seven years. She oversees the Groundwater Protection Program, which uses innovative government-business-nonprofit partnerships to prevent contamination from entering local groundwater and the Columbia Slough. Ms Geisen created the Drop of Prevention program and spearheaded collaborative efforts with the Council to educate the public about groundwater. Current activities that focus on groundwater include Slough School presentations, Cycle the Well Field, Groundwater 101, and the pirate-themed Aquifer Adventure.



### Leadership: City of Portland, Terrestrial Ecology and Enhancement Strategy



The Terrestrial Ecology and Enhancement Strategy was developed over 2007-2009 as a part of the City of Portland's Watershed Management Plan. Managed by Claire Puchy and aided in substantial part by David Helzer, the program provides guidance to city bureaus and citizens for improving habitat and addressing plant and wildlife management issues. The Strategy identifies Special Status Species and Habitats and key management issues, as well as articulating watershed-specific priorities and actions for the next 2-5 years for terrestrial habitats and biological communities. The Strategy represents a key shift in conservation focus from just the waters of the Columbia Slough to *both* the water and the upland habitat.

## Meet Our New Education Intern

By *Sophie Perillo*

Kate Davis has joined the Council staff for the spring of 2011 as the Education Intern. She will be assisting with Slough School classroom presentations and field trips, as well as leading Tadpole Tales programs in April and May.

Kate graduated in 2009 from the University of Oregon with a BA in Public Planning, Policy, & Management with a concentration in health and social services. When she isn't teaching classroom programs or field trips for Slough School, Kate can be found skiing, doing yoga, or speaking French to her dog Rudy. Welcome to the team Kate!



Lead Educator Sophie Perillo and Education Intern Kate Davis helped out at this year's Slough Celebration. Kate will be working Slough School activities this spring, including Tadpole Tales.

## Slough Celebration a Success!

By Melissa Sandoz

This year's Slough Celebration drew a crowd of over 230 people to the Melody Ballroom on February 4th. After bidding on 30 silent auction packages, guests settled down to a delicious sit-down meal and the presentation of five 2010 Slough Awards, hosted by Steve Fancher. Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder encouraged fellow attendees to support the Council with a donation, which was picked up in true Slough style with a water bug net.

The evening's entertainment included a musical tribute to the Slough by the Council's own *Meganütria*, debut viewings of five videos from SloughTube, and "Bluegrazz" fun from Lincoln Crockett & Friends. Stuart Ticknor was the lucky winner of the raffle, worth over \$500 indining and entertainment gift certificates.



Thank you to all our sponsors, raffle item donors, event donors, award winners, and attendees! We're so glad you all could help us celebrate another great year of work in the watershed. With your help, we raised over \$22,000 to support the Council's work with education, recreation, and restoration.

### Thanks to our Slough Celebration sponsors!

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### Thank you to all of our auction, raffle, and event donors!

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The Missing Link  
The Oregon Garden  
Trade Up Music  
Vita Café  
Wilsonville Family Fun Center  
Working Class Acupuncture  
Yakuza Lounge  
YoChoice Frozen Yogurt  
Yoga Pearl

## 2010 Fundraising Campaign

By Jane Van Dyke

Matt Clark & Abby Sarmac  
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 Susan Barthel  
 Ann Beier  
 Erwin Bergman  
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 John & Ursula Moyer  
 Kathleen Murrin  
 Christine Poole Jones  
 David Porter  
 Linda Robinson  
 Elizabeth Robinson  
 April Minister & Rod Smith  
 Michael Rounds

Thank you to the many people who responded to our special appeal in December 2010 through February 2011. We raised over \$6800 in unrestricted funds. Your gifts by mail and online at our website, [www.columbiaslough.org](http://www.columbiaslough.org), will provide necessary financial resources for our work this year.

Zari Santner  
 Lew Schoenberg  
 Dale & Victoria Shamp  
 Julie A. Snyder  
 Vic Stibolt  
 Jennifer Sutter  
 Skip Tarr  
 Randall Thayer  
 Katherine Thomas  
 Dick & Gyrid Towle  
 Stacey Triplett  
 Helen Warbington  
 Fred & Anna Wearn  
 Eric Wentland  
 Joy Wieting  
 Byron & Lisa Woltersdorf  
 Rachel Wray

## Board Member Changes

By Jane Van Dyke

In late summer, Meei Lum, Project Leader with Leatherman Tools was elected to a one-year term on the Council's Board of Directors. Ms. Lum has a background in market research and project management. She is interested in sustainability and eco-friendly practices and has already offered her volunteer time at several Council events.

Bob Eaton, a long-time member of the Council, announced his retirement in February of 2011. In his years on the Council, Bob created a great working partnership between the Multnomah County Drainage Districts and the Council. We will miss his practical insight and good humor at Council meetings, but wish him lots of enjoyment (and golfing) in his retirement.

The active leaders on the Council's board drive the Council's successful programs, getting people out canoeing on the Slough, restoring natural habitats, or teaching children about nature. Council board members serve on committees, spearhead projects, and bring essential support to the

Council's programs. Thank you to all of our Council Board members for their dedication to the Slough!



Bob Eaton, a long-time Council board member, announced his retirement this February.



## 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, March 12th

9:00am—12:00pm

Whitaker Ponds Nature Park

Join not one, but TWO Stewardship Coordinators for a native plant work party at Whitaker Ponds! Help to plant native trees and shrubs onsite at the end of Nathaniel Talbot's term as Stewardship Coordinator, and the beginning of the next Stewardship Coordinator's. Come dressed for the weather; snacks and tools provided.

To RSVP: Call (503) 281-1132 or email [nathaniel.talbot@columbiaslough.org](mailto:nathaniel.talbot@columbiaslough.org)

**Mark your calendar for more Stewardship Saturday fun!**

April 9, May 14

### Spring Events

For more information about Columbia Slough Watershed Council events, visit our website at [www.columbiaslough.org](http://www.columbiaslough.org).

#### Slough 101

Saturday, March 12th, 8:45am—1:00pm

MCDD, 1880 NE Elrod Dr, Portland OR

Learn about the history, water flow, and wildlife of the Columbia Slough at Slough 101, a free workshop. Slough experts will lead hands-on activities including a tour of a pump station and water bug discovery. Pre-registration is required and light refreshments will be provided.

**To sign up for Council events, visit [www.columbiaslough.org](http://www.columbiaslough.org) or call Melissa at 503-281-1132.**

#### Tadpole Tales

Wednesdays in April and May, 10:00am—11:30am

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 in April and the Columbia Slough WQF (Gresham) in May; contact Kate at [intern@columbiaslough.org](mailto:intern@columbiaslough.org) for more information.



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*Jane Van Dyke, Executive Director*  
*Melissa Sandoz, Outreach Director*  
*Sheilagh Diez, Education Director*  
*Nathaniel Talbot, Stewardship Coordinator*  
*Sophie Perillo, Lead Educator*  
*Kate Davis, Education Intern*



### Council Wish List

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council is on the hunt for:

- Well-functioning binoculars
- Paddles
- Children's life jackets

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