

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2008

Welcome New Volunteers

Please join me in welcoming new volunteers Elizabeth Athair, Genie DeVine, Tove Edouart, Kayli Gently, Lisbeth Jardine, Bill Lynch, Sheila Null, Douglas Parks, and Barbara VanderWerf to the Olympic Coast Discovery Center team. They have completed five days of training including Ocean Literacy, marine diversity, maritime history, and research and current issues in the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. In addition they explored tide pools at Tongue Point, visited the Makah Cultural and Research Center, hiked to Cape Flattery, and learned first hand about the restoration of the Elwha River ecosystem.

Thank You "Winter" Volunteers

A sincere Thank You to Bruce Ferguson, Lu Lovely, and Becky and Jim Jewell who volunteered consistently through the cold, dreary winter months when there are so few visitors to the Port Angeles waterfront. Special thanks to Jim and Becky for reorganizing the Discovery Center photo album and writing informative summaries of many of the animals. Excellent work!

Summer Events

Lots of special events are happening in and around Port Angeles this summer. Here are a few you might consider:

Octopus Expert - June 26

Jim Cosgrove "Octopus expert" from Victoria, B.C. will be in town Thursday, June 26. Cosgrove, who spent 20 years as manager of natural history for the Royal B. C. Museum, has logged over 1000 dives and is one of the world expert on the giant Pacific octopus. Watch for details on where and when he will be speaking.

Tall Ship Festival in Victoria - June 26-29

Commemorate Victoria's maritime heritage with the historic visit of over two dozen tall ships from around the world. Visitors will be able to walk the decks, touch the massive timbers, look up through the rigging at the sky, and turn back the clock to a time when the city's future was being built by ships like these. For festival details go to <http://tallshipsvictoria.ca/>

Sail Race aboard the Lady Washington - July 1

Sail race between the Lady Washington and the Hawaiian Chieftan from Port Angeles to Port Townsend. Full details on the Lady Washington website at <http://historicalseaport.org> or by calling 800-200-5239.



The Blue Planet Live! - July 8 - 9

Explore the mysteries of the deep on-screen at Benaroya Hall. This concert and theatrical presentation showcases the most remarkable film sequences from the celebrated BBC television series, The Blue Planet. The sequences are shown on giant screens, accompanied by Seattle Symphony performing the music from the series, written and conducted by film score composer George Fenton. Order tickets online at <http://www.seattlesymphony.org/symphony/buy/single/reserve.aspx?id=6971&src=t>

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Beach Cleanup a Big Success

The results are finally in: Washington Coast Cleanup Day was a huge success! 1176 volunteers helped remove 22.84 tons of debris from Washington's Pacific Coast. That's by far the highest number of volunteers that have ever turned out. It shows that more and more people are becoming aware of the marine debris problem and want to do something to help.

Special thanks to all the OCDC volunteers who joined this effort, and especially to Elliott Soelter who helped clean up the Kalaloch beaches with his dad and younger brother. Way to go, Elliott!



Volunteer Opportunities

Olympic Coast Discovery Center - From June 12 to Labor Day the OCDC is open daily from 10:00 to 5:00. That means there are many opportunities for everyone to sign up for the shifts of their choice. Stop by and take a look at the schedule book or email me the times that are best for you and I will let you know the dates that are available. (janet.lamont@noaa.gov) Remember, volunteers who work the most hours in the OCDC from May 1 to Labor Day will be treated to a day on the RV Tatoosh on September 3. Don't be left out!

Jim Cosgrove's visit - We are looking for volunteers to help with publicity, refreshments,

and other aspects of this special event. To volunteer contact Deborah Moriarty at 457-6622 ext. 31 or by email at Deborah.moriarty@noaa.gov.

Mora Campfires - We are still looking for volunteers who are willing to plan 20-minute talks on topics of interest to campers in the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. Science, history, beachcombing, storytelling – whatever your special interest, this is a great opportunity to share it with others.

Beach Cleanup 2009 - We are working to improve the recycling that happens associated with the April beach cleanup. This year we did a pilot effort at a few sites and would like to expand the effort next year. Roy Morris is taking the lead, with some support from Liam Antrim. We are looking for a volunteer who is interested in working with Roy over the next year to figure out a plan for 2009.

Scientists warn of rising Pacific Coast acidity

By DAN CATCHPOLE, Associated Press Writer

Wednesday, May 28, 2008

A panel of marine scientists are warning that the Pacific Coast's increasing acidity could disrupt food chains and threaten the Pacific Northwest's shellfish industry.

The increasingly corrosive water threatens the survival of many organisms, from microscopic plants and animals at the base of the food chain to shellfish, corals and the young of some marine species, the researchers told a congressional field hearing Tuesday at the Seattle Aquarium.

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V O L U N T E E R N E W S L E T T E R - J U N E 2 0 0 8

The data indicates acidic water is appearing along the Pacific Coast decades earlier than expected. The acidified water does not pose a threat to humans, but it could dissolve the shells of clams, oysters and other shellfish.

The acidic seawater is moving closer to shallow waters containing the bulk of marine life, according to a recent article in the journal *Science*.

One of the article's authors, Christopher Sabine, said Tuesday he watched small marine snails placed in water of similar acidity to that recorded last summer off the northern California coast.

"We actually saw the shells dissolving off these living organisms. They were dissolving off the terapods as they were swimming around," Sabine said. Such creatures comprise as much as 40 percent of the Pacific king salmon's diet.

Global ocean currents make the Pacific Northwest's coastal ecosystems particularly vulnerable to acidification's effects, Sabine said.

A worldwide "conveyor belt" very slowly carries colder water from the North Atlantic to the North Pacific. Along the way, the water accumulates carbon dioxide from dead organisms, so it naturally has a higher carbon dioxide concentration before man-made carbon dioxide is added. A process known as 'up-welling' drags this water into shallower, coastal areas.

"As long as CO₂ continues to increase in the atmosphere, the oceans will continue to absorb that," Sabine said. "What we're seeing is only going to get worse."



Corrosive water could be disastrous for Washington state's shellfish industry, noted one panel member, Brian Bishop, owner of Little Skookum Shellfish Growers in Shelton, Wash. Washington state produces 85 percent of all shellfish on the West Coast, Bishop said.

"This acidity dissolves calcium carbonate, which is the thing that shells are made out of. If diatoms, corals, clams and oysters succumb to this it not only wipes out the shellfish industry but potentially the entire marine food chain," said Bishop, a fifth-generation shellfish harvester.

The panel members said they did not know exactly how acidification will affect Puget Sound and other Northwest coastal waters.

"We know very little about the biological effects of acidification on the West Coast," said Terrie Klinger, of the University of Washington's School of Marine Affairs. However, research has demonstrated that there will be early and strong effects in Northwest coastal ecosystems, she added.

"We won't see a total collapse in food chains, but we will see substitutions," Klinger said. "We may end up with food chains or food webs that are highly undesirable and not productive for the means that we use them today."