

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AFS ESTUARY CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
(SAVE OUR BAYS)**

**From Notes by Jerry MacLeod assembled for the February 2004 annual meeting
Jerry was chief SOB in 1975**

1966

- The committee was formed in January 1966 to focus attention on Oregon estuary values, and man's activities threatening these values, and to recommend actions, which would conserve and/or enhance these values.
- The initial committee consisted of Bob Borovicka – Chairman (BLM), Bob Corthell (Soil Conservation Service), Dale Snow (Oregon Fish Commission), Willie Breese (OSU), Bill Clothier (US Fed. Water Poll. Control Adm.), Dean Marriage (Soil Conservation Service), Glen Carter (Ore. Sanitary Auth.), Monty Montgomery (Oregon Game Commission), and Bill Wick (OSU Coop. Ext. Serv.)
- The committee's efforts the first year were directed toward the following issues:
 - Legal aspects of land control, access and trespass.
 - Consolidating the 40 different public agencies that exert some management control over estuaries.
 - Public access to the land under navigable waters.
 - Developing an inventory of private vs. public tidelands and subtidelands.
- The committee selected Tillamook Bay as a pilot estuary to demonstrate conflicting land claims, proof of title claims and classify land ownership types.

1967

- The committee established the following goals to be accomplished over the next few years:
 - Sponsor an estuary symposium
 - Prepare and distribute a brochure showing the various values and uses of estuaries.
 - Prepare a set of slides showing estuary values that can be sold at a nominal cost to AFS members.
 - Promote realistic legislation to conserve and develop estuarine resources.
 - Provide a service to the public as a source of accurate information on estuaries.
 - Serve as a reviewing body for proposed water and land-development projects involving estuaries.

1968

- A paper titled “Crisis in Oregon Estuaries” was presented at the 1968 Oregon Chapter, AFS meeting. The committee, as a group and as individuals has tried to implement the recommendations of the paper. Over 1,200 copies of the publication were distributed
- A slide series depicting various uses of Oregon estuaries was prepared and used at many meetings in Oregon.
- Public awareness of the status of Oregon’s estuaries was emphasized this year. Committee members participated in many civic, sports groups, and made numerous presentations to state and federal agencies regarding estuary issues. Most people working with resources now know what an “estuary” is.
- Two half-hour TV programs on estuaries were prepared and presented twice on KOAC – KOAP TV and once on Eugene commercial TV. Work was started on a film about Oregon’s estuaries.
- Dale Snow presented the committee’s statement at the first hearings on the National Estuary Pollution Study before the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration at Newport.
- Inventories were completed of Willapa Bay in Washington and Yaquina Bay in Oregon. Committee members critically reviewed the reports.

1969

- Committee members were instrumental in the passing of the Coastal Management Act (S.B. 3183. This legislation will:
 - Established a national policy and program for management and beneficial use, protection and development of land and water resources of the Nation’s estuarine and coastal zone.
 - Strengthened the role of coastal states in managing estuaries and estuarine resources.
 - Recognized national interests.
 - Provided follow-up funds for implementation of adopted plans.
 - Promoted long-range land and water management in estuaries.
- The committee critically reviewed the Preliminary Land Use Plan for the Yaquina Bay by the Bureau of Governmental Research and Service. The report was financed by many state and federal resource agencies. This report represented a major step in the planning for wise use and development of natural resources of Yaquina Bay. The Oregon Chapter-AFS strongly supported the report and urged

the Lincoln County Planning Commission to proceed with legal implementation of the plan.

- Two TV programs on “What’s Happening to Our Estuaries” was shown featuring committee members, Dale Snow and Bill Wick.
- Five thousand copies of “Crisis in Oregon Estuaries” were published and distributed to many state and federal agencies.

1970

- This year was marked by a significant increase in public awareness of Oregon’s estuaries. For example:
 - The Division of State Lands established an Advisory Committee concerned with problems of estuarine ownership and management.
 - The Oregon Journal published an excellent series of articles on estuaries.
 - The Oregon Coastal Ports Federation was established to seek a voice in coastal zone management.
 - The Oregon Coastal Conservation and Development Committee were formed with the goal of fostering programs of wise multiple use of Oregon’s estuaries.
 - Governor McCall implemented a program calling for inventory and classification of the nation’s estuaries in Oregon.
- The committee developed a general policy statement on estuaries, which can be presented at hearings or other occasions at which estuaries are involved.
- The publication, “Crisis in Oregon Estuaries” was updated, edited, and reprinted. It was distributed nationwide and was quoted freely by many political and lay leaders throughout the state.
- The committee sponsored an estuary seminar in Coos Bay. Information on estuarine values and the comprehensive land and water use planning needed to protect these values was the subject of the seminar.
- Oregon Chapter-AFS co-sponsored the Northwest Estuarine and Coastal Zone Symposium held in Portland.

1971

- Committee activities this year focused on responding to requests for information, testifying at hearings and taking a position in the name of the chapter where estuaries were involved.

- The publication “Crisis in Oregon Estuaries” was awarded a national first place blue ribbon by the American Association of Agricultural Editors.
- The state Fill and Removal law was enacted by the Oregon legislature. The Oregon Division of State Lands administers the law. This landmark legislation that required permits to fill or remove material from Oregon’s waterways.

1972

- The committee initiated efforts to develop a new brochure as a follow-up to “Crisis” which would be “positive” and outline steps needed to protect and enhance estuaries.
- Committee members assisted OCC&DC in developing a list of “fragile” estuarine areas at the request of the Governor.
- The Committee toured proposed spoil disposal sites in Tillamook Bay with District Fish Biologist, Dave Heckerth, and assisted in developing comments on a report entitled “Development Program for Tillamook Bay, Oregon” which advocates dredging a channel for an industrial park.

1973

- Committee members provided comments on dredging projects in Tillamook and Coos Bay, the proposed filling of 50 acres of Young’s Bay on the Columbia River and a zoning exception request on a Yaquina Bay salt marsh.
- Several members at OSU attended a Dredge Disposal Conference. Ways to better use dredge spoils, including incorporating them with seafood wastes and garbage as a soil for production of nursery crops and vegetables were explored.
- A slide series on Oregon estuaries was developed with a written text and made available to biologists and other interested groups. The Wildlife Society assisted with slides and text review.
- The Coastal Port Federation and OCC&DC established planning groups in each coastal community or bay in Oregon. Concerns that the planning groups were being loaded toward industry and development interested prompted the Committee to assign members to participate in each group.

1974

- The estuary slide series was shown several hundred times to more than 113,000 people. The OSU Marine Science Center taped the narrative and ran the series every half hour to its visitors.
- The Committee initiated efforts to promote creation of a “Joint Estuary Research Committee”, to bring about improvement in coordination of estuary research efforts by all concerned agencies and groups.
- The draft of a new Committee publication “Oregon’s Fragile Few ... Estuaries” was distributed for review and funding sources researched.
- The Committee continued monitoring OCC&DC activities, continued “watchdog” surveillance of estuarine activities and supported experimental program plans for artificial reefs made of tires.

1975

- The estuary slide series was updated and several additional copied developed and distributed. Copies were sent to OMSI in Portland and Humboldt State College.
- Committee members were involved in fill, removal, or development issues in Coos Bay, Tillamook Bay, Astoria, Siuslaw Bay, Alsea Bay, Siletz Bay, and Yaquina Bay.
- Members toured Salmon River Bay, the Salmon River Scenic Research Area, and the Columbia River estuary from Hammond to Tongue Point before regular committee meetings. Ideas and suggestions were shared with tour leaders, John Fortune and Terry Durkin.
- The publication “Oregon’s Fragile Few Estuaries” was finalized and funding sources for publication were explored.
- The Committee began efforts to compile a bibliography of estuary publications and establish a list of areas with potential for salt marsh restoration.

1976

- The Committee toured the Coos Bay estuary and discussed fill removal proposals at Jordan Cove, Pony Slough, North Bend Airport expansion, and the Charleston Boat Basin.
- The publication “Oregon’s Fragile Few ... Estuaries” was completed and the Pacific Northwest River Basins Commission provided funding.

1977

- Committee members toured the Umpqua River estuary. The purpose and responsibilities of the Committee were reestablished. They are:
 - Promote public awareness of estuarine values.
 - Serve as “Watchdog” of man’s activities in estuaries.
 - Encourage proper planning for estuary development and discourage proposals, which will result in irreversible damage.
 - Update and distribute “Oregon’s Fragile Few . . . Estuaries”
 - Update and distribute the estuary slide series.
 - Identify potential areas for saltmarsh restoration.

- Committee members were extensively involved in the issue of mitigation for estuarine development. Standards and criteria for the concept of mitigation were developed.

- A sub-committee was formed to review LCDC Estuary Plans after they are submitted by local jurisdictions.

- Committee members developed a list of potential estuary restoration sites throughout Oregon and a report was completed and distributed.

- The Committee, concerned about the increase of seals in Oregon’s estuaries, began an effort to restore management authority of the animals to the state. Dale Snow attended hearings in Washington D.C. to request state jurisdiction.

- The Committee initiated efforts to establish aerial surveys of the state’s estuaries to look for illegal fills. Subsequently, the Northwest and Southwest Regions of ODFW authorized the use of the State Police plane twice a year for these surveys.

- The Committee’s “Watchdog” efforts were extensive and involved activity on nearly every estuary in Oregon.

1978

- The Committee became involved in the raft culture of oysters in Coos, Alsea, and Tillamook Bays and the issue of offshore dredging of clams.

- Several Committee members participated in the evaluation of an offshore reef near the mouth of the Umpqua River.

- The advent of private hatchery operations in Oregon's estuaries has generated considerable concern and the Committee began action to conduct an agency-wide meeting regarding this issue.

1979

- The Committee extensively discussed the various methods available for estuary sampling including, underwater observations, drift gill net sampling, trawling, purse seining, beach seining, and bottom grab sampling.

1980

- The Salt Marsh Restoration publication was completed and made available to agencies, coastal biologists, and AFS members.

1981

- Copies of "Oregon's Fragile Few ... Estuaries" were sent to each coastal high school biology instructor with a recommendation that they devote some teaching time to estuarine study.
- Every coastal high school was notified of the availability of the estuary slide series at a nominal cost.
- Committee members responded to permit requests for commercial clam harvest in several Oregon estuaries.
- Committee member "Watchdog" efforts continued in the Columbia River, Necanicum River, Nehalem Bay, Netarts Bay, Fort Stevens State Park, Alsea Bay, Yaquina Bay, Siuslaw Bay, Umpqua Bay, Coos Bay and the Chetco tidewater.