



# Slough News

Newsletter of the Columbia Slough Watershed Council

## Winter 2009

Volume 9, Issue 1

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### 2008 Award Winners:

James Davis

Portland Int'l Airport Wildlife Hazard Management Program

Fairview Creek Water Quality Facility

Harbor Oil Superfund Community Advisory Group

Keelin Sanger

## *Congratulations 2008 Award Winners!* By Melissa Sandoz

### *Leadership Awards*

**James Davis, Metro** – Recognized for over 12 years of outstanding environmental education at Smith and Bybee Wetlands. His extensive knowledge, curiosity, humor, and passion for wildlife and wild places inspires thousands of students and adults annually. With his enthusiasm for encouraging others to learn about the natural world, participants feel that their own observations make a contribution. Davis recently completed a revision of his book: The Northwest Nature Guide, a comprehensive guide to wildlife watching in our area.

**Portland International Airport Wildlife Hazard Management Program** – *Nick Atwell, Dana Green, Sharon Gordon* – Recognized for innovative and progressive wildlife management at Portland International Airport. In contrast to nearly every other major airport in the nation, the Port of Portland has chosen a progressive approach to wildlife management that focuses on non-lethal actions for native species. Coyote exclusion fencing, landscape design, a raptor trapping and relocation program, surface water management, and an intensive dawn to dusk hazing program combine to create an environment for safe aircraft operations. With human lives and millions of dollars at stake, the innovative Wildlife Hazard Management Program reflects the values of the community and demonstrates a commitment to the welfare of wildlife populations in the Columbia Slough Watershed.

### *Achievement Awards*

**Fairview Creek Water Quality Facility** – *City of Gresham Environmental Services & Partners: Dave Rouse, Steve Fancher, Tom McCausland* – Recognized for restoring floodplain capacity and enhancing wildlife habitat and water quality along Fairview Creek near Division & 202<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The eight-acre Fairview Creek Water Quality Facility was constructed to treat stormwater from a combined drainage area of approximately 800 acres of residential, commercial, and industrial development. The facility treats stormwater, provides flood storage, and enhances wildlife habitat with native plants. This project helps remove pollution from Fairview Creek, and thus benefits the whole Columbia Slough.



James Davis accepts his 2008 Leadership Award at the Slough Celebration.

**Harbor Oil Superfund Community Advisory Group** – *Mark Stephan, chair, et.al.* – Recognized for four years of advocacy for prompt clean-up of the Harbor Oil Federal Superfund Site in North Portland. This small group has shown resilience and persistence as members took the initiative to learn about superfund, the clean-up process, and the assignment of responsibilities. The Advisory Group was awarded a US Environmental Protection Agency grant to monitor and improve the clean-up process, and they continue to educate their Kenton and Arbor Lodge neighbors about what is happening in their backyard.

**Keelin Sanger, Reynolds Middle School** – Recognized for inspiring her students and her community to become active stewards of their watershed. Over the years, Sanger's English Language Learners classes have logged in over 6100 volunteer hours and planted over 800 native plants. She has sponsored an after-school environmental club, which worked to develop compost projects and plant natives on school grounds. Sanger also initiated the first ever Water Festival at Reynolds Middle School, involving dozens of community partners and performers. When Sanger was recently transferred to teach math, she made sure another science or English Language Learners teacher would continue this good work.

# Slough Celebration a Success!

By *Melissa Sandoz*

On Friday, February 6, 2009, Slough supporters gathered to celebrate ten years of hard work and great successes. At the Acadian Ballroom, the atmosphere was festive and relaxed as nearly 200 attendees enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner and bid on silent auction items.

Five awards were given in the course of the evening, and each recipient was honored with a special tribute, be it song, skit, or movie. Elected officials, council members, and prior council staff were also honored at this tenth annual event.

A special tenth-anniversary song, "On the Slough Again," was performed by Council staff members Nathaniel Talbot and Sheilagh Diez. Teacher Mark Hansen shared his moving experiences with Slough School and other council programs. The silent auction items and raffle prize drew the attention of many bidders; congratulations to all the auction and raffle winners!

A special thank you goes out to all the Slough Celebration sponsors and auction, raffle, and event donors. Your support helped the Council to raise over \$16,000 at the event! The proceeds will go directly to Council programs and events.

The Council looks forward each year to celebrating great achievements and extraordinary leadership with close friends. Thank you to everyone who attended!

## Thanks to our Slough Celebration sponsors!

### *Celebration Sponsors*

Multnomah County Drainage Districts  
 City of Portland - Environmental Services

### *Presenting Sponsors*

The Boeing Company  
 City of Gresham - Watershed Management Division  
 City of Portland - Parks and Recreation  
 Port of Portland

### *Table Sponsors*

East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District  
 Portland Water Bureau

### *Media Sponsor*

The Daily Journal of Commerce



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

### Stage Donation

- Interstate Special Events

### Beer Donation

- Hopworks Urban Brewery

### Wine Donations

- King Estate Winery
- Klickitat Canyon Winery

### Dessert Donations

- New Seasons
- Pambiche
- Saint Cupcake

Alder Creek Kayak & Canoe  
 Arthur Murray Dance Studio  
 Audubon Society of Portland  
 Beaumont Hardware  
 Bolt  
 Breitenbush Hot Springs  
 Chuck Harrison  
 Ciao Vito Restaurant  
 Garden Fever!  
 Il Piatto  
 Jake's Restaurant  
 James Davis  
 Janis Christian  
 Klickitat Canyon Winery  
 Laughing Bird Adventures  
 Leatherman  
 Linda Robinson  
 Lompoc

McKee Enterprises/Electric  
 Castles' Wunderland Video  
 Mt. Hood Meadows  
 Multnomah County Drainage  
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 Susan Barthel  
 Suzi Cloutier  
 The Meadow  
 Theaterworks, Inc  
 Tom Auckland  
 Wanderlust Tours  
 Wilsonville Family Fun Center  
 World Forestry Center  
 Yoga in the Pearl  
 Zoller's Outdoor Odyssey

## Restoration at Whitaker Ponds

By Nathaniel Talbot

Budding cottonwoods, melting pond ice, and some happily dabbling widgeons are not the only hallmarks of a January morning at Whitaker Ponds. Along with these winter charms, the average hiker may find herself encountering a different, rather unexpected, phenomenon: a mob of eager middle school students wielding shovels and sword ferns. That's right, the 2009 planting season is full steam and this year the plans are grander than ever. With the helping hands of several hundred local elementary, middle and high school students, this winter the Columbia Slough Watershed Council intends to plant over 1600 hundred native plants throughout the diverse habitats types of Whitaker Ponds Nature Park. This park represents one of the last intact wetland and forested areas of the historic Columbia River floodplain and is thus the perfect site for the restoration of some of the region's native, botanical communities.

After several years of weed removal with the help of City of Portland's Watershed Revegetation Program, the forest around East Whitaker Pond is free of invasive plants and poised for a thorough native understory planting. So, with tools and plants in hand, student groups tromp across the forest floor in search of a specifically-colored flag to which they were assigned. They've been taught that each color represents a unique plant species - blue for Trailing Blackberry, white for Snowberry, green for Sword Fern - and that the flags are strategically located to meet the habitat needs of that species. Overhead, a canopy of Black Cottonwood and Ash provides cool shade and fertile leaf litter for these young, understory shrubs to thrive. Further downhill near the water's edge the soil is still wet, having been recently flooded by the seasonally-dynamic pond. Here the students find flags of pink, yellow and red representing a future thicket of water-loving Douglas Spirea, Red-Osier Dogwood and Slough Sedge. They learn that this modest emergent wetland is actually what much of the historical Columbia Slough area used to look like, before its water level began to be managed for flood control. Thus, as spade enters soil, the students not only get hands-on restoration



Students learn how to plant native Slough Sedge at Whitaker Ponds. Their efforts are part of a larger ecological plan at this wetland site, including a new wildflower

experience but also learn about Whitaker Pond's diverse habitat types and their associated plant communities.

But wait, for our restorations plans do not end where the forest meets the pond. This year an entirely new botanical splendor awaits our spring pollinators: Enter the state-of-the-art Whitaker Ponds Wildflower Meadow! This spring, as our winged friends sleepily emerge from their burrows and hives, they will be greeted with a luscious feast of lupine, fireweed, goldenrod, aster and pearly everlasting. With less than one percent of our original Willamette Valley upland prairie remaining, this meadow could provide critical habitat for many native bee and butterfly species that rely on these plant communities for food. The planting is located along the inside of the 47<sup>th</sup> Ave fence, providing a visual treat to passersby. A special thanks to Portland Parks Ecologist Mart Hughes for helping conceive and implement these ambitious restoration plans for winter 2009.

## Meet Our New Outreach Director

By Jane Van Dyke

Melissa Sandoz has returned to the Watershed Council as our new Outreach Director. We had the pleasure of working with Melissa as our AmeriCorps member two years ago on Slough School and stewardship projects.

Now she completes the circuit of our three program areas as the Outreach Director. She is a graduate of Linfield College with a degree in Environmental Studies. She has worked with diverse populations, recruited and trained volunteers, and is knowledgeable about software and computers. Bringing her organization skills and enthusiasm, we know she will do her best to ensure the smooth running of our workshops and special events. Those of you who have met Melissa would not be surprised to learn she is also involved in theatre and costuming. Assisting with Aquifer

Adventure last fall, Melissa made sure that every staff member had a pair of striped pirate socks. And using a vintage 1952 pattern, she made the beautiful party dress she wore to the Awards Celebration. Welcome back, Melissa!

New Outreach Director  
Melissa Sandoz at the Slough  
Celebration.



# 2009 Columbia Slough Watershed Council Event Calendar

## March

7 8:45 to 1 Slough 101 Workshop Mult. Cty. Drainage District

## April

24 7 to 9am Birdsongs at Whitaker Ponds Whitaker Ponds

## May

1 7 to 9am Birdsongs at Whitaker Ponds Whitaker Ponds

8 11:30 to 1 Brunch with the Birds Whitaker Ponds

11 6 to 9pm Rain Gardens 101 Workshop EMSWCD

16 8:45 to 1:30 Wetlands 101 Workshop TBA

27 6 and 7 Evening Canoe the Slough Whitaker Ponds

## June

12 7 to 9am Birdsongs at Whitaker Ponds Whitaker Ponds

13 9 to 1:30 Cycle the Well Field TBA

20 1 to 5 Explorando El Columbia Slough Whitaker Ponds

## July

11 9 to 12 Great Slough Clean Up Whitaker Ponds

26 9 to 1 Columbia Slough Regatta TBA

## August

14 11:30 to 1 Subs on the Slough Water Bureau Canoe Launch

## September

12 12 to 4 Aquifer Adventure Water Bureau Canoe Launch

## October

7 6 to 8:30 Evening Canoe the Slough Whitaker Ponds

22 6:00-7:30 Brew on the Slough TBA

## November

14 9 to 1:30 Groundwater 101 Workshop NECA-IBEW Electrical Center

We hope you'll join us for this year's great events! For more information, go to the Council website at [www.columbiaslough.org](http://www.columbiaslough.org), or contact Melissa at 503-281-1132.



## 2008 Fundraising Campaign

By Jane Van Dyke

### Thank you for your gift:

Dan Allen	Frederick and Kristine Field-Eaton
Kathy Balogh	Tony Fuentes
Susan Barthel	Karen Garber
Joseph Bartley	Frederick Hall
Steve Berliner—TimBerland Development	Michael Hayakawa and Chris Scarzello
Rex Burkholder and Lydia Rich	Nancy Hendrickson
Steve Cameron	Trudi Herzog
Gary Cannon	Linda Hulme
Troy Clark	Christine Poole Jones
Matt Clark and Abby Sarmac	David Kaplan and Karen Oehler
James Davis	Jerome Keaton
Robert Derbyshire	Laf Keaton
Bob Dolphin	Gordon Kiyokawa—Columbia Edge-water Country Club
Jeremy Engle and Rachel Felice	Theodore Labbe
	John and Ursula Moyer

Thank you to the many people who responded to our first annual campaign in December 2008. We raised over \$2,400 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. We look forward to providing restoration, enhancement, outreach, education, monitoring, and recreation throughout the watershed.

Bronson Potter and Jane Van Dyke  
 Tony Pulokas and Sheilagh Diez  
 Linda Robinson  
 Louise Shorr  
 Jim Sjulín and Gay Greger  
 Eric Swehla and Janet Range  
 Richard and Gyrid Towle

## Christmas Bird Count Results

By Melissa Sandoz

Before dawn on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 132 intrepid birders gathered at Delta Park to get themselves organized. The plan: divide up into groups with cars, maps, binoculars, and data sheets. The goal: count every bird in the Columbia River riparian area – a designated boundary that almost matches that of the Columbia Slough watershed. These people were part of the annual Christmas Bird Count, instigated by the Audubon Society every year, to gather data on bird populations across the nation.

Council member David Helzer led the sub-group that prowled the Middle Slough, including stops at Johnson Lake, Whitaker Ponds, and Rocky Butte. Council staff Jane Van Dyke and Melissa Sandoz provided two sets of eyes in this four-vehicle caravan. Birding from sunrise to late in the afternoon, this full day of bird-watching ended with some impressive results.

The Columbia Slough has a reputation for an incredible diversity of bird species. This year was no different with 104 different species counted and over 30 species of waterfowl, including Snow Geese, a Red-throated Loon, and no fewer than 66 Great Blue Herons. The birds of prey were in fine form, with 12 species spotted including merlins, Peregrine Falcons, and Short-Eared Owls. A variety of gulls, warblers, wrens, sparrows, pigeons, woodpeckers, and finches all showed up at some point during the day. Birders were pleased to see both our national and state birds, the Bald Eagle and the Western Meadowlark, in the Columbia Slough Watershed.

It was a long day, but extremely satisfying to all the bird-watchers who took part. They were rewarded with the knowledge that they had set a new record this year with 119 bird species seen in the Portland area. This annual tradition not only brings bird-lovers together in the middle of winter, but helps us understand changes in bird populations across the U.S. To learn more about the Christmas Bird Count and this year's results, contact the Audubon Society of Portland at [www.audubonportland.org](http://www.audubonportland.org).



Downy woodpeckers, such as this one at Whitaker Ponds, were seen at this year's Christmas Bird Count.

Photo by Robert Ringland.

## GET INVOLVED - VISIT, PARTICIPATE, VOLUNTEER, ENJOY!

### 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 14th

9:00am—12:00pm

Johnson Lake, NE 92nd Dr & NE Colfax St.

Join the Columbia Slough Watershed Council on March 14 for a morning of good ol' invasive weed removal at Johnson Lake. This little-known 9-acre natural area acts as a vital refuge for many wildlife species. The park relies partially on volunteers to keep the invasive blackberry and ivy populations under control. Stewardship Coordinator Nathaniel Talbot will lead a short natural history hike to start the event. Weather-appropriate clothing and study shoes are encouraged. Drinks and snacks will be 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 11, May 9

### CSWC Spring Event Calendar

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

#### Slough 101

Saturday, March 7; 8:45am—1:00pm

Multnomah County Drainage Districts, 1880 NE Elrod Drive, Portland

This FREE, hands-on workshop explores the unique character, challenges and opportunities of the Columbia Slough and its watershed. Learn about water quality, neighborhood history, vegetation, and urban development challenges. Whether you're interested in fish, wildlife, communities, or businesses, this workshop has something for you.

#### Birdsongs at Whitaker Ponds

Fridays, April 24, May 1, June 12; 7:00am – 9:00am

Whitaker Ponds Nature Park, 7040 NE 47th Ave, Portland

Join David Helzer, with City of Portland Environmental Services, for a FREE early-morning birding hike around Whitaker Ponds. Learn about the birds that utilize the Slough and work on your birdsong ID skills. Bring your binoculars! Trip meets at 7am and last 1-2 hours.

**Pre-registration is required for these events.** Please register by contacting Melissa at [Melissa.Sandoz@columbiaslough.org](mailto:Melissa.Sandoz@columbiaslough.org) or 503-281-1132.



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[www.columbiaslough.org](http://www.columbiaslough.org)

Jane Van Dyke, Executive Director  
Melissa Sandoz, Outreach Director  
Sheilagh Diez, Education Director  
Nathaniel Talbot, Stewardship Coordinator

### SOLV Planting 3/14

Join SOLV and the Columbia Slough Watershed Council for some old-fashioned watershed restoration along Fairview Creek. Volunteers will plant native trees and shrubs as part of an ongoing project.

**Saturday, March 14**

**9:00am—12:00pm**

Meet at the **Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church** at 2420 Fairview Ave

To register or for more information, visit [www.solv.org](http://www.solv.org).

### Council Wish List

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council is on the hunt for:

- Well-functioning binoculars
- Small cooler
- Rakes
- Tool sharpener
- Child-sized PFDs

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