



The Program

Extension Sea Grant outreach serves broad constituency

GINNY GOBLIRSCH DASHES out of a blustery Newport rain into a dockside gear shop, carrying plastic bags filled with pamphlets bearing titles such as *Tax Information for Fishing Families* and *Connecting with Fathers At Sea*. After restocking a display rack, she stops to remind a boat owner of a groundfish disaster outreach presentation coming up in a few weeks.

Sixty miles inland, Tara Nierenberg unpacks a box load of thick binders labeled *Watershed Stewardship: A Learning Guide* as she gets ready to teach a class that will help certify a group of Josephine County landowners as master watershed stewards.

Across the United States and abroad, seafood processors log on to the Oregon Sea Grant Web site to download model seafood sanitation plans Ken Hilderbrand wrote for complying with strict federal sanitation rules. Hilderbrand may have retired from Oregon Sea Grant Extension two years ago, but the thousands of continuing downloads of his publications attest to his enduring legacy.

These are some of the faces of Oregon Extension Sea Grant (ESG). Serving constituencies as small as a single beachcomber and as broad as the Pacific groundfish fleet, their job is to anticipate, understand, and respond to the needs of a state, a region, and a world in which ocean and coastal issues loom ever larger.

Despite hard economic times in the state, conditions that have



Northwest fishing fleets and consumers benefit from Oregon Extension Sea Grant research efforts.

reduced their numbers while increasing the need for their help, Extension Sea Grant agents and specialists, under the guidance of Oregon Sea Grant, work to improve the lives and livelihoods of coastal Oregonians.

And beyond—Oregon shares a field agent with California Sea Grant and a regional engineering specialist with programs in Washington and Alaska.

Extension Sea Grant agents are parts of the communities they serve. Goblirsch, based in Newport on the central coast, is married to a commercial fisherman. In Clatsop County, agent Steve Theberge brings a marine education background, experience as a marine biologist,

naturalist, and as a commercial fisherman to the task of helping a beleaguered fishing industry. On the south coast, Paul Heikkila has worked for two decades with organizations, agencies, and landowners to improve the health of local watersheds.

The agents are teamed with specialists, some of whom have OSU teaching and research appointments, who focus on subject areas ranging from marine and community education to marine mammals, fisheries economics and tourism, ornamental fish and port issues. They receive guidance and support from program leader Jay Rasmussen and the

Oregon Sea Grant administrative and communications team.

This combination of community connections, research-based information and teamwork means that Extension Sea Grant can go beyond addressing needs that are already known. Extension faculty also serve as Sea Grant's early warning system, watching developments, identifying trends, and, as a team, planning how to remain educated on coastal change.

Working from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration plan and from the Oregon Sea Grant Strategic Plan, Extension Sea Grant uses surveys, workshops, and other means to determine where its efforts can be most effective. From an overall plan established collaboratively, agents and specialists develop their own annual work plans, share monthly reports with each other and administration, and review their accomplishments each year with the program leader and others.

Like their counterparts in many other Sea Grant programs, Oregon's ESG faculty wear several university hats. While some are funded entirely with Sea Grant dollars, most have received at least partial support from the OSU Extension Service. Because of tight state budgets during the current economic downturn, program leaders and agents have had to work extra hard to determine where the scant dollars can be put to the best use.

All have "academic homes" within university units such as the College of Business, College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences, and Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Such connections offer Sea Grant rich opportunities for collaborative partnerships.

One ongoing example of such collaboration is the Watershed Stewardship Education Program, involving top watershed health people from Extension Sea Grant, Agriculture, and Forestry units. The program, which provides research-based training for local watershed councils, has been recognized by the state as the primary training tool for the ambitious Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. The Oregon effort helped launch a National Strategic Investment project with New York and Louisiana Sea Grant programs, which resulted in a guide that can be used across the country for restoring watersheds.

Collaboration is at the heart of most Extension Sea Grant efforts, including:

- ▶ The "Heads Up!" Web site, operated by Sea Grant and a wide range of commercial and government partners. It brings together news from around the world to fishing families and the industry. It can be seen on-line at <http://www.heads-up.net/>.
- ▶ Efforts to help Oregon's fishing fleet develop better, more cost-effective methods of at-sea handling and refrigeration to guarantee consumers the freshest and safest seafood possible. Similar work, done hand-in-hand with local funding sources and oystermen, has developed new products and processes to add value to the local industry.
- ▶ Public education efforts, many of them based at OSU's Hatfield Marine Science Center, are soon to be supplemented by a new, "free-choice learning" initiative being prepared in collaboration with top educators. The existing program provides school children, teachers, and coastal visitors



Extension Sea Grant agents, such as Ginny Goblirsch (right), are parts of the communities they serve.

information about the coastal environment, marine animals, and coastal processes. The new program envisions making lifelong learners of all Oregonians.

- ▶ Decades of collaboration with state and local government to educate coastal communities about seismic hazards and ways to protect their citizenry from these potential dangers.
- ▶ The program's groundbreaking commercial fishing vessel safety program, the first in the nation to be certified by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- ▶ Years of ESG work with Oregon's ports and marinas, including scientifically valid surveys on issues ranging from the need for more recreational boating moorages to the value of the state's boating industry to Oregon's economy.

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