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2007 Winter Meeting in Astoria

by Ed Horn
OSSS Past President

We had a dedicated and enthusiastic group of OSSS'ers that braved the weather and made it to Astoria, Oregon for the 2007 Oregon Society of Soil Scientists Winter Meeting, "Explore the Earth on Lewis and Clark's Turf". Our meeting facilities at the Holiday Inn Express were first class and came with an up front view of the mouth of the Columbia River. We saw boat traffic travel up and down the river, including container ships, grain barges, oil spill cleanup vessels, tug boats, research ships, and more.

Our meeting kicked off Wednesday evening at the Wet Dog Café and Brew Pub for a no host social. We sat at the long table, sampling the Astoria Brewing Company's latest selections of micro brewed beer and schmoozing with other OSSS members catching up on the latest happenings.

Thursday morning, Pat Corcoran, a dynamic and entertaining speaker filled up the first hour talking about the early history of the Columbia River, its people and its hazards. He talked about the time before Lewis and Clark when the Clatsop and Chinook Indians were the master river boatmen of the area. Pat, being a coastal hazards specialist, talked about Tsunamis and what to do in case one occurred. He talked about making friends in higher places as that is where people need to be to survive a Tsunami event.

Our next speaker was Abdelhamid Elnaggar, an Egyptian PhD student from Oregon State University. He talked about his soil modeling project, which looks at modeling topographic and climatic factors and comparing these factors against existing soil surveys. By refining and developing this technology, it is hoped that this will speed progress and improve the quality of ongoing soil surveys.

Tamzen Stringham talked about vegetation community dynamics and the importance soils have in shaping that dynamic. Biology, which includes vegetation, is one of the five soil forming factors. That factor is important in determining the vegetation community potential and is used by the Bureau of Land Management to rate current vegetation condition on public lands.



Astoria-Megler Bridge
photo courtesy of Jude Dady



Bijon Pour and James Cassidy
photo courtesy of Jude Dady

Will Austin and soil physics instructor James Cassidy put together a hands-on demonstration of water movement through soil pore spaces. Filling ant farms with varying layers of coarse and fine textures, dripping water into the mini profiles, and measuring the water front at a set time intervals, gave everyone in the room a look at how water moves through soil layers.

Dave Ambrose, Watershed Technical Specialist for the Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District, talked about land use planning and the importance of developing good conservation practices to keep soil in place for land disturbing events.

(cont. on page 4)

President's Message



by Will Austin

I would like to thank the membership for their continued magnificent volunteer effects and overall support of this last year. Well done!

The Pacific Northwest regional collegiate soil judging contest was held at Sunriver, Oregon in the fall of 2006. The contest was a grand success and thanks to the OSSS for contributions to this event. Thanks to OSSS members Tom Clark, Ron Reuter, and Steve Wert for their help in giving the students an outstanding field experience. The OSU soil judging team is on its way the national contest in Logan, Utah on April 13, 2007. Thanks again to the OSSS for supporting, both in labor and finance to make soil judging a positive professional enhance activity.

What a grand winter meeting in Astoria! If you missed it, you did miss a great venue and many fine speakers. My favorite part of the event was sitting in the back of the room watching as the speakers were presenting their items, and then watching audience tilt left or right to obtain a better view of the ships passing by under the Astoria-Megler Bridge. Truly a unique spectacle.



The planning for the OSSS summer 2007 tour is well underway.

This is not a winery tour, as some have commented. We are taking a vineyard tour complete with soil descriptions, soil physical data, soil chemical data, with associated plant analysis. However, the vineyards we will tour do have their own wineries on site. So if you do choose to visit the winery at each vineyard that is your option. I suggest the Hershey's Red pinot noir at the Ankeny Vineyard. The Washington Society of Soil Scientists is joining us for the summer tour. I look forward to meeting the northern brethren and sethren!

A brief outline of the summer tour:

Thursday 8.23.07 - a pre-meeting group tour of the Evergreen Aircraft museum in McMinnville, then a trip to Erratic Rock State Park, back to McMinnville for dinner.

Friday 8.24.07 - meet at Western Oregon University in Monmouth for a geology talk, a climate change talk, and some logistics. Then we travel to the vineyards for tours and lunch.

We have made a change this year in accordance with OSSS membership guidance. This change is the electronic delivery of the Sharpshooter. In fact this is the first attempt at electronic delivery of the Sharpshooter. The next delivery, with summer tour information will be a hard copy mailing, followed by an electronic delivery, then finally a hard copy delivery with information regarding the winter meeting.

Safe travels and see you this summer for the vineyard tour.

Dates to Remember

June 10-15, 2007: Society of Wetland Scientists Annual Meeting; Sacramento, California. Information is available at www.sws.org/sacramento2007/index.html

June 17-21, 2007: Western Society of Soil Science Meeting; Boise, Idaho. Information available at www.asa-cssa-sssa.org/branch/western-soils/

August 23-24, 2007: Oregon Society of Soil Scientists Summer Tour; McMinnville and Monmouth, Oregon

November 4-8, 2007: Soil Science Society of America Annual Meeting; New Orleans, Louisiana. Information available at www.acsmeetings.org/2007

The Survey by Randy Hinson

Back in time, in history we know,
The first Soil Survey went up the big Mo,

Clark did the veg, Lewis the soils,
They drew out new maps, the landforms, the spoils.

Over the Bitterroot to the Snake River plain,
Gathering quamash for hunger, willow for pain.

At the mother of rivers westward it flowed,
Clouds of salmon went by; "well" that's what we're told.

Onward they pushed this un-daunting crew,

Lewis, Clark and Sacagawea too.

Un-named rivers empty into the one we explore,
Over Celilo Falls an ominous roar.

Past potential site for city or town,
The fleas are of clouds and bring us all down.

We can't quit now, we are so near,
But, the crew is sickly, sickly we fear.

It's been raining for days, will it ever end?
Just beyond our reach, just around the bend.

West wind blowing, a fresh new scent,
As a chill comes over, we know what is meant.

Standing upon the sands, the horizon is vast,
The Pacific, pacific at last.

Imagine if you can, no Buoy 9 Restaurant & Lounge,
No fort to hold up in, not one could be found.

No Rusty Cup Beanery to get something to eat,
No market or grocery just up the street.

No Wet Dog Cafe to get a cold brew,
There was nothing like that for those exhausted few.

No Holiday Inn under the bridge,
No Column to stand near up on the ridge.

It was a journey unwritten, a story to be told,
No one knew how it all would unfold.

For the first Soil Survey crew, this was, a Journey to
the Future.

Eastside Notes

by Ryan Miebach

Prineville Area Soil Survey is on the Web

The original Prineville Area Soil Survey was published in 1966 and the field work was completed in 1955. Many things in the area have changed since that time including land use. The population of Crook County has more than doubled and the population of Prineville has tripled resulting in a greater demand for housing. Although the area has not experienced the extreme growth of surrounding areas such as Bend and Redmond, I do not believe that the writers of the 1966 soil survey had anticipated the existence of three massive destination resorts with more to come.

Agriculture in the area has also changed over time. Gone are the days of potatoes that were once a chief cash crop. Other cash crops no longer grown to any great extent are wheat, barley, oats, and rye. Timber is still a major agricultural product of the county but no where near the quantity that it was. Hay production continues to be the number one, by acreage, crop grown. Livestock production, then and now, still remains the largest percent of total agricultural income in the area.

The changes from the 1950s and 1960s in the Prineville area and also in the field of soil science prompted the Natural Resources Conservation Service to begin an update to the soil survey in 1995. Recently the updated Prineville Area Soil Survey was posted to the web. If you wish to view it visit <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>.

2007 Winter Meeting in Astoria (cont.)



Kim Aldrich

At our banquet Thursday evening, John Good presented the 2007 JB Good scholarship award to Kim Aldrich. Kim told about herself and her work with kids groups, educating them about the earth and its properties. Three other awards were presented to deserving society members. Scott Burns and Tom Clark were presented with a lifetime membership to the OSSS for their long service and dedication to the Society. Kathy Clark was presented an award for her help in making the meeting a success. A smoked salmon and prime rib banquet was capped off with a travelogue and talk by Jay Noller about his work in Cyprus. He told about the problems he had bringing warring factions together to develop a shared soil conservation strategy for the country. He also showed us stone and boulder distribution along the Cyprus coast indicating past evidence of tsunami occurrence on all sides of the island.

Friday Morning, we had a talk from retired soils professor Herb Huddleston giving us a basic lesson in soil chemistry and how it relates to hydric soil properties in vernal pool wetlands. He gave examples from California and eastern Oregon. Karin Baitis, Area Soil Scientist, Eugene District Bureau of Land Management can't pass up a road cut or gully showing stratigraphic soil layering. She developed timing sequences of the major down cutting erosional events in central Oregon with the completion of her master's thesis. Her fascination of stratigraphy and dating sediments has led to some interesting and sometimes controversial hypotheses about Mazama ash deposits in the Willamette Valley. Karin recommended to the group to look to the paleontologists for help in putting the time factor into sediment deposition and soil formation.

The final talk was given by Scott Burns, Portland State University Geology Professor, who talked on Coastal geology, how sand and sediment move up and down the Oregon coast, earthquakes along the tectonic plates, and the resulting movement of water from these quakes producing tsunamis hazards to low lying coastal areas of Oregon. He talked about landslides and community developments that sometime do not go as planned.

Don Leach, retired Natural Resources Conservation Service Clatsop County District Conservationist, gave us a slide presentation of tide gates and diking districts during lunch. These dikes were put in to convert marsh wetlands to agricultural land. Don showed us how tide gates are installed and how they work with a one-way flapper valve.



Don Leach

photo courtesy of Jude Dady

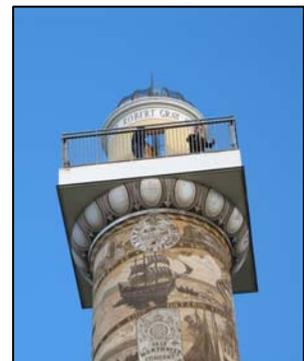


Ron Reuter measures up against a tide gate
photo courtesy of Ed Horn

For our Friday afternoon field trip, Don led the group to the first stop to see a tide gate in action at low tide. The one-way flapper tide gate closes during high tide and opens during low tide, allowing water behind the dike to flow out. Our second stop was at a wetland restoration area near the Astoria airport, where the dikes were breached to restore some of the tide marsh wetlands behind the dikes. These wetlands are used as mitigation measures for wetlands destroyed because of developments elsewhere.

The third stop was at the Astoria Column view point; Scott Burns and Don Leach pointed out landscape features and talked about local soils and geology. The Astoria column was built in 1935 as a marker to display the history of the Columbia River. The final stop on the field trip was a landslide in Astoria interpreted by Scott Burns. He showed us how important it is to recognize where you are at in the landscape and that landslide movement and home damage can occur far up hill from the base of the slide by removing the support at the toe of the land slide.

Thanks go out to all of the presenters and to Scott and Don for leading and interpreting the field trip stops. This EI Presidente salutes all of you for helping make the 2007 "Explore the Earth on Lewis and Clark's Turf" a success.



The Astoria Column
photo courtesy of Ed Horn

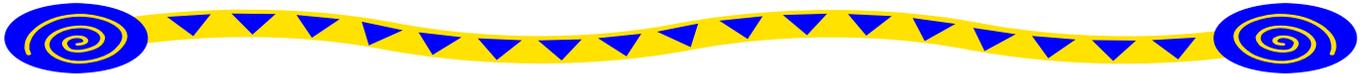
Member Spotlight



Ryan Miebach, newly elected OSSS Eastside Director

I graduated from West Albany High School in 1994 and Oregon State University in 2004 with a Bachelors degree in Soil Science and a Minor in Chemistry. This will be my fourth full time field season with NRCS besides my two summer internships. Until recently, I have been assigned to the Crook County soil survey, primarily mapping the Ochoco National Forest. I have recently begun working on the Wheeler County soil survey focusing on private lands. Along with mapping, I am the lead for GIS spatial data in the Redmond NRCS office.

I and my wife Brooke have one child, Conagher, who is two years old. He was named after a character of the famous western writer Louis L'Amour. We enjoy just about anything outdoors including horseback riding, hiking, camping, grilling, biking, skiing, fishing, boating, rafting, and I enjoy just about any kind of hunting.



Kurt Moffitt, newly elected OSSS Secretary

I was born and raised in Spokane, Washington, however my family members (whom all are from Oregon) are quick to remind me that I am not from Oregon. During my summers growing up, I stayed with my grandparents in The Dalles and worked on a cherry orchard pruning trees, spraying, and flailing the rows. During this time, I was exposed to the NRCS and the Wasco Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) as my grandfather was on the board there. This inspired me to volunteer at the Spokane SWCD, and it was then that I realized that a career in soil science was for me.

After graduating from high school in Spokane, I took some time off from school to pursue rock climbing and a paycheck. I ended up working for Entre Prises USA, an indoor climbing wall manufacturer. After a few years of that, I decided it was time to go back to school and I enrolled at Oregon State University. In December 2006 I graduated with a degree in Crop and Soil Science, with two minors, one in Geology, and another in Natural Resource Environmental Law and Policy. I was an active member of the OSU Soil Judging Team and really enjoyed learning from Coach Will Austin. For the last two summers I have worked for the Crook County Soil Survey with the NRCS as an intern. Following graduation I was hired at the Redmond office, and am now starting my first full field season working in Crook County. I am excited to be a part of the OSSS; it is a great organization with great people, and I look forward to many more years with the Society.

Sharpshooter

The *Sharpshooter* is the official newsletter distributed to the members of the Oregon Society of Soil Scientists. Published quarterly by the Oregon Society of Soil Scientists and J.B. Good, Inc. Address changes or inquiries about membership to:

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Advertisements

Reach more than a hundred soil science professionals with an advertisement in the *Sharpshooter*. And the price is right—whole page \$45, 1/2 page \$25, 1/4 page \$15, or 1/6 page \$10. All you need to do is provide a disk and hard copy to the *Sharpshooter* editor by the deadline (first of the month – January, March, June, and November).

All articles and advertisements submitted are subject to room available basis.

News items

Remember all articles submitted to the *Sharpshooter* can be sent on 3-1/2" disk in most any DOS, MAC or ASCII format, along with a hard copy. In doing so, the *Sharpshooter* can get to you faster.

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