Estuary Restoration in Oregon
A Personal View
Ken Bierly
Oregon Estuary Status

- DSL Ownership Surveys 1973
- Intensive Inventory Work 1973-1974
- Carol Jefferson Dissertation
- ODFW “Raccoon” Reports 1979
- Estuary Plan Book 1987
- Russel Scranton 1999
Management Structure

- Estuary Classification System
- Protection Standards
- Mitigation Requirements
Restoration the Missing Ingredient

- Not anticipated in the Classification Scheme
- Significant consequences of treating diked areas as outside the estuary
- Lack of funding to address private costs
- Politically difficult
What has Happened over the last Decade

- Ballot Measure 66 dedicated Lottery Funds for Ecological Protection and Restoration
- Agricultural Economy has declined
- Restoration infrastructure has been developed
What has been Accomplished?

- Approximately 600 acres of restored habitat since 1999
- Increasing in scale from 1-2 acres to 70-80 acres
- Activity throughout the Coast
New Resources

- Tidal Wetland Prioritization
  - Siuslaw
  - Nehalem
  - Umpqua
  - Smith
  - Yaquina
  - Alsea

- Estuary Chapter to the OWEB Watershed Assessment Manual

- HGM for Tidal Wetlands of the Oregon Coast
What’s in Store for the Future

**Larger Projects**
- Ni-les’tun Unit of the Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge (Great Uncle Philpot’s ranch) - 582 acres funded and in process
- Waite Ranch – 209 acres

**Tamara Quays and Pixieland in the Salmon River** - 110 acres

**Project Exodus Tillamook** – 650+ acres

**Coquille** – possibly 1100 acres.
What’s Needed

- Status and Trends Analysis
- Ecological Evaluation of effects of Restoration
- Salmon river data is intriguing – needs additional time
- Monitoring on a coast wide scale (not just projects)
Information Needs
From: A National Strategy to Restore Coastal and Estuarine Habitat
by Restore Americas Estuaries 2002

- Lack of agency coordination and lack of designated single responsible agency.
- The newness of the implementation phase of the programs.
- Lack of resources for monitoring, public involvement or outreach.
- Lack of scientific data and tracking of changes in data.
- Imperfect results (e.g., low salt marsh returns instead of high salt marsh returns).
- Assumes command and control is a preferred model.
- I think we are beyond this.
- Chronic problem.
- Written by a scientist.
- Is this an information need or an expectation problem?
Information Needs
From: A National Strategy to Restore Coastal and Estuarine Habitat
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- Need for updating older restoration plans.
- Mapping problems.
- Use of plugs to direct water flow.
- Need for research in sedimentation process, fish stranding and ecosystem relationships.
- Need for a comprehensive look at historical estuarine data (e.g., where, what kind, and how to restore).
- Need plans for each estuary.
- Sooo.
- Plugs????
- Is the need for research or for tools from research to guide restoration>
- Totally agree!! The Benner data for Coquille is way cool!
Information Needs

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- Rate of restoration too slow to meet resource and habitat management goals.
- Need for research on restoration in brackish water sloughs.
- Need for cost-effective methods to study the survival of biological populations in habitats or the changes in survival resulting from capacity or other limiting factors, such as available food sources.
- Need for research on the effects of climate change and rising sea level on estimated tidal levels, so that restoration plans can take these issues into account accurately.

- Doesn’t look like it from where I sit now!
- What kind of research? (another scientist heard from!).
- The Salmon River salmon research is a start at this rather large need.
- Cooperative effort with California using NAS in process.