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putting oregon's ocean to work

Oregon State University Extension Service
Sea Grant / Marine Advisory Program

Why a Marine Advisory Program?

In Oregon, as virtually everywhere, attention is shifting to the sea to replenish the dwindling resources of the land. Oregon State University, one of the first four universities to be designated a Sea Grant College by the Federal Government, is at work finding better ways to harvest and manage marine resources.

Supported by the National Sea Grant Program and by funds from the State of Oregon and coastal counties, the OSU Sea Grant College Program conducts an energetic program of research and instruction bearing on the uses of marine resources. This Sea Grant College Program is developing knowledge and new talent to put Oregon's ocean resources to work. Sea Grant sponsors projects in economics, engineering, physical and biological sciences, law, and the social sciences.

To extend the dividends of Sea Grant research into practical application in the community is the goal of the Marine Advisory Program (MAP). This program is carried on by agents and specialists of the OSU Extension Service who work expressly as a marine advisory service for the Sea Grant College Program.

Oregon State University's Marine Advisory Program illustrates what Athelstan Spilhaus, who conceived the Sea Grant College idea, had in mind when he began crusading for the U.S. to develop "county agents in hip boots to take the findings of the marine scientists...[and] accomplish the true use of the sea for and by people."

How It Became a Program

Oregon's marine Extension work began in the 1940s, with programs in seafood technology that encouraged the use of fish in the home. By the early 1960s, county agents in hip boots were a familiar sight in Oregon, as they sought to save oyster beds from predatory burrowing shrimp.

Extension's marine commitment came to a focus in the mid-1960s when foreign fishing fleets appearing off the Oregon coast galvanized public concerns.

The University opened its Marine Science Center in Newport in June 1965 and since has maintained and expanded public programs in marine education. Over the same span OSU Extension supported a succession of advisory educational projects dealing with marine problems. These ranged from crises in fisheries to citizen concerns over the environmental quality of estuaries. The country's first full-time marine Extension agent went to work in Newport in 1967.

After Congress wrote the National Sea Grant Act, marine Extension services in Oregon assumed an identity in their own right. OSU was named a Sea Grant Center in 1968, and MAP became one of its three main components. Through the years following, MAP has grown to a 17-member faculty in the coastal counties and on campus.

The Who, Where, and How of MAP

Presently there are four Extension agents on the MAP staff. Each has an office in, and lives in the vicinity of, a port community. They provide marine advisory services to all coastal counties and along the Oregon side of the Columbia River, and help to identify problems for investigation by Sea Grant.

To augment their teaching, advisory projects, and investigations, the agents enlist support from 13 marine Extension specialists. Five MAP specialists are stationed at the Marine Science Center on the central coast, and eight are based on campus. The Willamette Valley and metropolitan Portland are usually served by the specialists from Corvallis, but all of the staff travel throughout Oregon to conduct programs.

MAP specialists are based in the schools of engineering, oceanography, and agriculture (including agricultural engineering, agricultural and resource economics, and food technology), and in Extension communication. Besides specialists, every MAP member can draw on the research and training supported directly by Sea Grant, and all other OSU departments and schools.

By communicating actively among themselves as well as with Extension audiences, MAP members strive to function as a coordinated

team. Agents and specialists work independently within their professional specialties, and they can call in appropriate members of the OSU family for teamwork where other skills are needed.

Thus, they can serve a great variety of clients: recreationists, youth groups, students, teachers, aquaculturists, commercial fishermen, seafood processors, service industries, maritime industry, government, and the general public. Potential MAP clients include just about anyone in Oregon with a concern for how marine resources are used.

Reflective of Athelstan Spilhaus' philosophy, MAP is sensitive to the need to present new knowledge in ways that make it acceptable. Thus, advisory service is another name for information transfer--two-way, active exchange. It involves responsibility for identifying audience and responding to that audience's needs with practical solutions to real problems.

In communicating research findings, doing their own investigations, and locating resources for projects, MAP staff bridges between university and community. Communication flows both ways. Agents and specialists involve their audiences in the delivery of advisory services. They use news media, educational publications, lectures, individual consultation, and a mix of town hall sessions, educational short courses, vocational symposiums, liaison conferences, and public hearings. Whatever their means, the end is to suit the delivery method to the audience so the information is absorbed and put to work.

Uncovering opportunities for Sea Grant research is an important, continuing responsibility. Besides organizing programs, the marine advisory staff joins frequently in forums initiated by citizens, special interests, communities, and government--searching for new subjects for university attention.

The most productive mechanism for identifying new areas and priorities for MAP attention is personal contact. Through the relationships that MAP staff build where they live and work, the program is able to monitor the pulse of much of the marine community. Often it is this close tie that

wins acceptance for advisory information, and that keeps MAP attuned to community concerns.

Helping People Help Themselves

Examples of recent activities illustrate the variety of MAP's work.

Workshops, seminars, and meetings. When marine resource users need information, MAP helps provide it. Advisory presentations have included: conferences on managing estuarine resources; workshops on fishing gear; town hall sessions on university research, issues affecting fisheries, and government regulation; demonstrations of liferafts and cold-water survival gear; workshops on marine electronics and navigation; training programs for seafood processors and their employees; seminars for marine businessmen on finance, management, and insurance; seminars on marine careers, for high-school counselors; recreational shellfishing demonstrations; and industry conferences on Oregon's maritime future.

Resource planning and management. MAP is active in resource management in the coastal zone. MAP assisted Lincoln County in its precedent-setting zoning of the shore, water, and bottom of Yaquina Bay; advised the Tillamook Bay Study Task Force in its analysis of and development of recommendations for Tillamook Bay resources; helped the Oregon Coastal Conservation and Development Commission involve the public in devising management guidelines for coastal resources; and maintains liaison with the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission.

Industry liaison. In 1976 MAP staff was instrumental in helping charter boat operators organize an association to strengthen their industry. Where competing demands for marine resources are not the responsibilities of other agencies, MAP can help resolve differences. From 1972 to 1975 MAP hosted annual meetings between Pacific towboat operators and crab fishermen. There the contesting groups cleared shipping lanes, protected fishing grounds, and all but eliminated previously numerous lawsuits and conflicts. Now they are holding the meetings.

Agency cooperation. MAP works closely with

Federal and state agencies such as the U.S. Coast Guard, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Oregon's Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality, and the State Marine Board. It has recently begun cooperating with the Pacific Regional Council, which oversees fisheries under extended jurisdiction.

Publications. MAP newsletters and single-issue publications furnish practical information to ocean resources users. One-time publications include calendars of advisory activity, "how-to" bulletins, proceedings from conferences, and many more materials. Publications are an essential educational tool, and the program welcomes suggestions for new titles.

Public education. To stimulate appreciation for the importance of ocean resources, MAP education specialists lead school tours of the Marine Science Center and of nearby estuaries and beaches. Year-round they offer educational programs for the general public. These include the summer Seatauqua lectures, short courses, hikes, and films. The public programs at the center have served almost 3,000,000 visitors since 1965.

Recreation and youth programs. MAP staff has originated marine projects for 4-H clubs, which have now been adopted by California, Washington, and Alaska. OSU undergraduates directed by MAP education specialists have developed coastal nature trails and lab exercises in marine biology.

Marketing; tax and business management. Workshops by Extension economists have explained seafoods for home and export markets. MAP specialists have documented economic data, enabling seafood producers to qualify for loans to expand their businesses. Agents and specialists were instrumental in opening Production Credit Association loan programs to commercial fishermen. Tax management workshops for marine businessmen have returned thousands of dollars to local entrepreneurs by familiarizing them with tax incentives such as investment credit, and have helped them obtain rebates by amending past tax returns.

Regional cooperation. To bring programs to Oregon that are beyond its own specialties, the MAP staff cooperates with sister

programs in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Hawaii, and California. Cooperatively the several advisory programs exchange temporary services of agents and specialists on a reciprocal basis. Oregon has held electronics workshops featuring lecturers from Alaska and British Columbia; MAP faculty have presented workshops on economics, food technology, and marine education in every other cooperating state and British Columbia. In a similar way, appropriate educational media are produced cooperatively and shared by MAP and the sister programs.

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OSU Marine Science Center

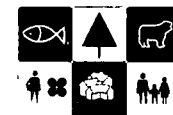
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