

South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

Barbara Butler
Oregon Institute of Marine Biology
Boat Basin Drive
Charleston, OR 97420

South Slough is one of eleven tidal inlets draining into Coos Bay, Oregon and contains a variety of habitats including coniferous forest, tide flats, eelgrass beds and salt water marshes. Established in 1974, South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (SSNERR) encompasses 4,500 acres and is administered by the Oregon Department of State Lands. SSNERR serves to protect approximately 25% of the South Slough drainage basin and is home to research projects, recreational activities, educational outreach and mariculture leases.

The mission of SSNERR is to "conduct research, restoration, and monitoring activities in order to (1) ensure the long-term protection of the South Slough estuarine ecosystem, and (2) provide technical information to improve coastal zone decision making." To address this mission, four separate goals have been established:

1. Implement a monitoring program that will document and predict trends in the health and viability of the South Slough ecosystem.
2. Develop a research program that will provide opportunities for members of the public, private industry, agency investigators, university faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students to make significant contributions to our understanding of the dynamics of nearshore and estuarine systems.
3. Restore altered portions of the South Slough reserve to a pre-western settlement condition, to the extent practicable, with consideration to existing traditional uses.
4. Gain recognition among state and federal agencies, academic institutions, private industry, and the public as a location of regional ecological significance and as a source of information about estuaries.

A very close partnership exists between SSNERR and the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology (OIMB). South Slough has been the site for numerous undergraduate, master and doctoral research projects. For approximately 25 years the OIMB Library has served as a repository for reports, theses and dissertations generated from these projects. OIMB Library staff are in the process of cataloging these reports in a ProCite database and hope to produce an annotated bibliography of OIMB generated research relating to SSNERR.

While the need for estuarine preservation and estuarine research has not diminished, the operating budget of SSNERR has just suffered a 50% cut. SSNERR staff are searching for ways to continue existing outreach, research and maintenance functions of the reserve.