

5th Annual Heceta Head Coastal Conference

"Oregon's Ocean: The Land/Sea Connection"

Florence Events Center ~ October 23-24, 2009

SUMMARY of CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Friday, October 23

Discovery Trips

In an effort to make the Conference lectures more meaningful, free Discovery Trips were offered to those registered for Saturday. The field outings, scheduled for Friday afternoon, were related to Panel I – “Coastal Management: Making the Land-Sea Connection.”

Three such trips were organized in the following locations with the names of trip leaders: Charleston—Michael Graybill; Florence—Charlie Dewberry; Newport—Jeff Felder. Rain canceled the Florence Trip. Trips at the other two locations went on as scheduled but with only a few participants.

Dinner with Bob Malouf

“Ocean Science & Management: An Assessment of the Past 30 Years”

Robert E. Malouf, PhD ~ Professor Emeritus OSU ~ Retired Director, Oregon Sea Grant

The technological advances that have taken place in ocean science over the past 30 or 40 years are nothing less than astounding. And, those advances have resulted in very real improvements in our understanding of the physical and biological structure and function of the ocean and its resources.

While there have also been changes in the political and legal management structures around ocean resource management, I would argue that advances in our ability to manage and conserve marine resource have not kept pace with technology. Let me give you two examples - by no means a complete list - of advances in ocean science and technology that we have seen in the last 30-40 years.

- GPS. Satellites to aid navigation ("Navistar") were launched in the early '70s, but the last of the 24 global positioning satellites was not launched until 1993.
- Satellite remote sensing and digital image analysis. Together these allow us visualize and study everything from cloud cover to fish scales.

We have also seen important structural changes in ocean management in the past three or four decades. Those changes include:

- The 200 mile EEZ changed everything about resource management beginning about 1976.
- Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs), marine reserves and ocean zoning have become part of the marine management conversation.

But, how have these new technologies, new science and new management structures changed the way we make decisions about managing using and conserving marine resources?

[Dr. Malouf then recounted his work in the clam fishery off Long Island, NY, which was robust in the 1970s and how and why the fishery declined by the 1990s.]

What does this have to do with Oregon? The enormous historic shellfishery on Long Island collapsed in part because of the inability of responsible parties to communicate effectively through complex overlapping jurisdictions and interests.

Speaking and communicating are not the same thing. Scientists live in a world where we are constantly judged by their peers, and we learn to speak defensively in a kind of code. We are taught to speak, but we are not taught to listen except as a way to prepare our own rebuttals. Of course this is by no means unique to scientists. I know that managers and members of the industry have their own codes too. The point is that none of our technological advances really matter if we don't understand each other. Without understanding there can be no trust and without trust there can be no progress.

Conferences such as this one offer critical opportunities for real communication – let's not waste it.