

## NOTICES

### Recent DNA Discoveries Helpful for Sea Otter Reintroduction

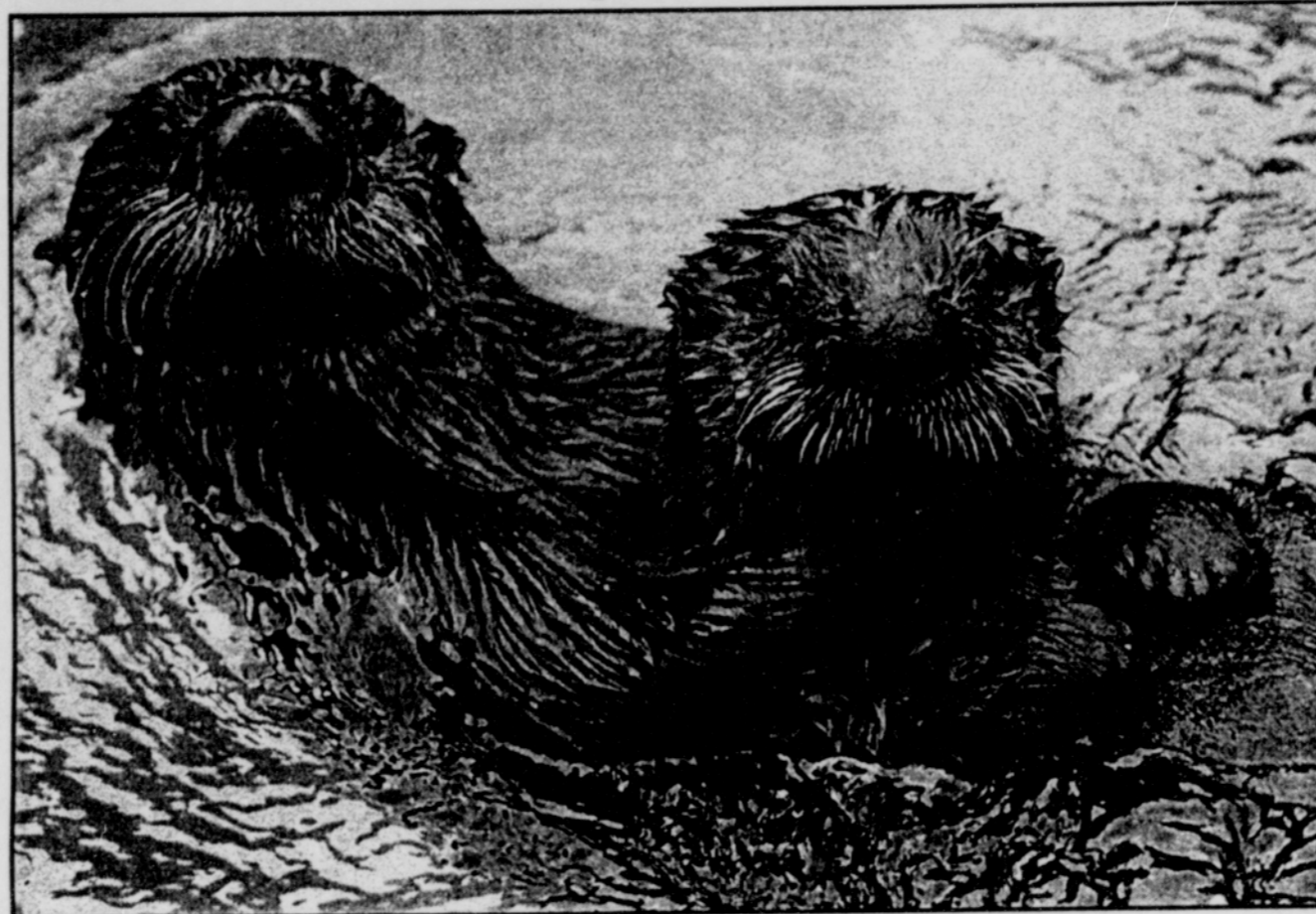
PORTLAND, Ore. – In 1970, efforts were under way to reintroduce sea otters to the Oregon coast. That effort failed, but scientists now believe that they may have discovered why.

New DNA research conducted at Portland State University on ancient sea otter bones from 200 to 2000 years old has revealed that native sea otters may be more closely related to southern sea otters than previously thought.

The Elakha Alliance, an informal association of tribes, agencies, individuals, and organizations, including the Oregon Zoo, is pleased with the results of the DNA research. The alliance sees the eventual re-establishment of sea otters as an important step in restoring the ecosystem of the Oregon coast.

More than 30 years ago, sea otters were taken from Alaska's Amchitka Island and released along the coasts of Washington and Oregon with the hope that they would create new colonies. Although the otters flourished in Washington, Oregon's new population did not fare so well and after several years vanished altogether. Scientists are unsure why the otters disappeared.

To understand why the otters vanished, PSU, with funding from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, began to study the DNA



*Thelma and Ozzie at the Oregon Zoo*

of ancient Oregon sea otters. Mitochondrial DNA was extracted from samples of teeth and bones collected from Native American middens. The DNA information collected from the ancient sea otters was then compared with DNA information collected from modern otter subspecies.

The side-by-side comparison of the two genetic blueprints has revealed a possible reason for the failure of the transplanted northern sea otters. Researchers discovered that Oregon's

native sea otters might have been more closely related to southern sea otters.

Though making sure that any future reintroduction effort uses the correct sea otter subspecies is important, it's still not enough to assure that sea otters will thrive in Oregon. To increase the chances of their success, they also need protected areas in which to live and breed.

The Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Council recently recommended that the governor establish and test a limited system of marine reserves. These efforts

are aimed at restoring the health of the coastal ecosystem, of which the sea otter is a vital part.

"We know that the sea otter is a keystone species," says Tony Vecchio, Oregon Zoo director. "Losing sea otters resulted in a sea urchin bloom, which clear cut our kelp forests and destroyed the homes of animals and fish that relied on these forests. The ocean we see today is not the healthy ecosystem which was once here."

The Oregon Zoo is a member of the Elakha Alliance and uses its position to facilitate communication between the alliance and other organizations that care for sea otters. The zoo is supportive of research that may lead to the successful reintroduction of sea otters to Oregon's coast.

The Oregon Zoo is home to three southern sea otters, Thelma, Eddie, and Ozzie. Ozzie has the distinction of being the world's first southern sea otter to be conceived, born, and raised by its mother at a zoo or aquarium.

Other southern sea otters have been born in zoos or aquariums, but none have survived. The zoo works closely with Monterey Bay Aquarium and other agencies in sea otter conservation programs to help ensure the continuing survival of the sea otter through rehabilitation and research.

### Preventing Hazardous Trees Seminar Coming Up

A day-long continuing education seminar, "How to Prevent Hazard Trees," will teach landscape professionals, highway maintenance personnel, utility workers, etc., how to prevent trees from becoming hazardous.

In February, the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (PNW-ISA), which is headquartered in Silverton, are sponsoring this educational opportunity in Albany, Roseburg, and Coos Bay.

"Usually, ODF helps arborists and landscape professionals identify whether or not trees are a likely hazard," said Paul Ries, ODF urban forester and seminar instructor. "Conducting this

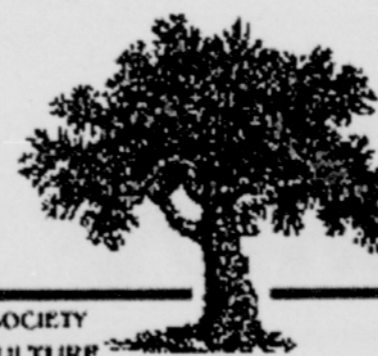
seminar is a new approach. Instead, we will be trying to reach people who don't regularly work with trees. We'll show them how to work safely around healthy trees to prevent them from becoming a hazard."

The development of the seminars was prompted by a severe Feb. 7, 2002, windstorm that hit Coos, Curry, Douglas, Linn, Lane, and Benton counties. During the storm, several trees were uprooted and many fell on power lines.

The "How to Prevent Hazard Trees" seminars will be held at the following locations: Feb. 4, Linn Benton Community College, Albany; Feb. 11, Umpqua Community College, Roseburg; and Feb. 12, Southwestern

Oregon Community College, Coos Bay. The seminars are being funded, in part, by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Oregon Emergency Management.

The cost to attend the seminars is \$20 and registration forms can be downloaded from [www.pnwisa.org/news.html](http://www.pnwisa.org/news.html) For more information, contact the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture at 503-874-8263.



### Attention Siletz Tribal Members!

If you are a diagnosed diabetic, think you may be diabetic, or just feel that you are at increased risk for becoming diabetic and you do not receive primary care at the Siletz Clinic, you need to contact us!

Without your mailing address and telephone number, we are unable to include you in our diabetic events and monthly mail-outs! Please call or write us at SCHC, Attn: John Jasper or Laura Duarte, P.O. Box 320, Siletz, OR 97380, or call us at:

541-444-9611 or 541-444-9659

Toll-free: 1-800-648-0449

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