

## Crawford, other aquarium volunteers attend summit in Washington, D.C.

### Summit on Oceans and Coasts draws students and teachers from all over US, 1 group from Mexico

NEWPORT, Ore. – Four youth volunteers from the Oregon Coast Aquarium traveled to Washington, D.C., recently to attend the 2011 Student Summit on the Ocean & Coasts.

The student delegation, accompanied by Tricia Ratliff, aquarium youth volunteer coordinator, and Jessica Haxel, teacher at Siletz Valley Early College Academy, spent five days in the nation's capitol and presented programs on ocean acidification and hypoxia (dead zones).

The summit, sponsored by Coastal America, drew 20 delegations of 80 students and 40 educators from 19 Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers throughout the United States and one delegation from Mexico.

The summit was held Feb. 14-17 and included a talk and ocean film footage by Jean-Michel Cousteau and Jack Hanna, director emeritus of the Columbus Zoo, conservationist, author and television personality. Hanna offered students an opportunity to interact with wild animals from penguins to cheetahs.

"The student presentations and poster sessions were beyond all expectations. The use of a video format for the student presentations was very effective and enabled us to get the story out to a broader audience via the Web," said Virginia Tippi, Coastal America director.

Tippie said the summit reached a nationwide audience via live streaming video. On opening day, the summit website received more than 85,000 hits

from people viewing the streamed student presentations.

The Smithsonian currently is archiving the students' presentations and the Jean-Michel Cousteau speech for viewing on the Ocean Portal (<http://ocean.si.edu>).

The aquarium group, which named itself the Dungeness Avengers, made its presentation at the Smithsonian Institution followed by Cousteau's talk. The local group includes seniors Chris Crawford and Crystal Hawk from Siletz Valley Early College Academy and junior Daniel Persson and senior Jessica Whaley from Newport High School.

The students also attended workshops on climate change and worked with other students to create a unified goal. They also met with Sen. Jeff Merkley and Sen. Ron Wyden's staff to discuss their project and how they plan to implement it in Oregon.

"The trip to D.C. and this project in general has been life-changing," said Whaley. "I never thought I would meet Jean-Michel Cousteau and Jack Hanna. Cousteau is an intelligent man and from the talk he gave to us I learned that even though I am a teen, I can make a difference. I was inspired to take action and to strengthen my commitment to better the world for future generations."

Persson also said the summit had a big impact on him.

"It was inspirational to see so many of my peers that wanted to make a differ-

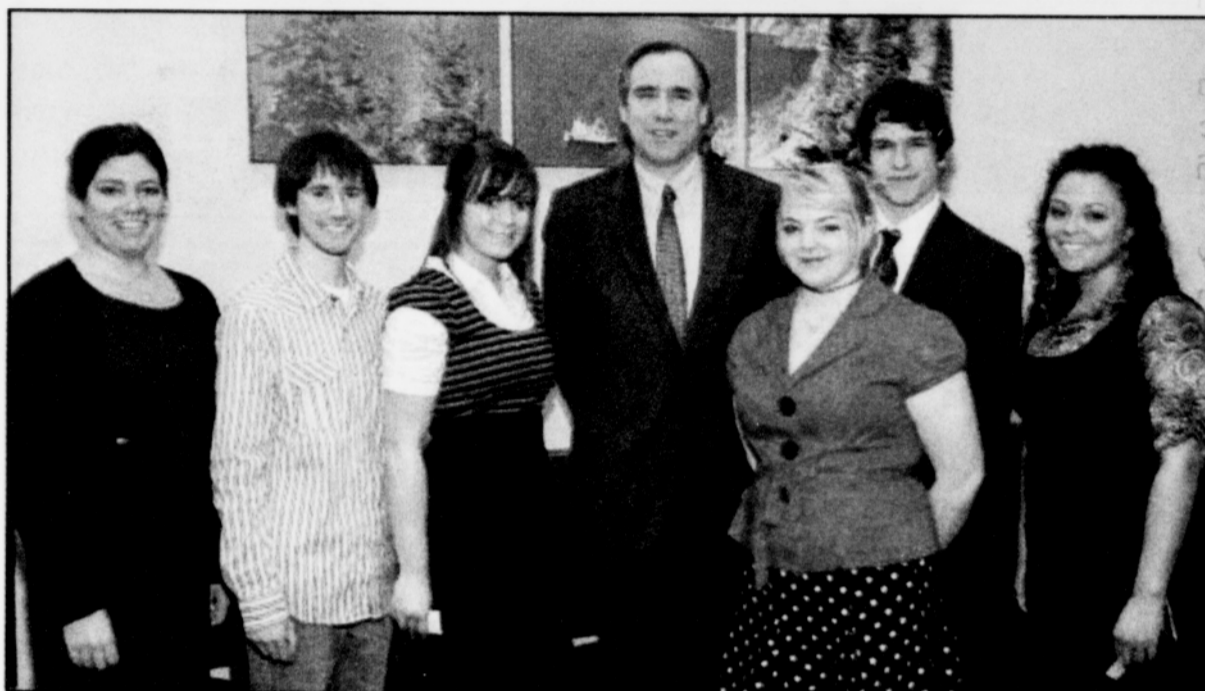
ence and fix the problems we are facing now and prevent more in the future," said Persson. "This experience has definitely made me reconsider my life goals. Now I am looking at a career in environmental engineering."

The Dungeness Avengers are raising funds for their project with hooded sweatshirts that say, "Invertebrates: Kind of a big deal" on the front and "Grow a backbone: Protect those that can't" on the back. The sweatshirts sell for \$35 each

and can be purchased by calling Ratliff at 541-867-3474, ext. 5312.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational attraction dedicated to the highest quality aquatic and marine science programs for recreation and education so the public better understands, cherishes and conserves the world's natural marine and coastal resources.

For more information, visit the aquarium's website at [www.aquarium.org](http://www.aquarium.org) or call 541-867-FISH.



Courtesy photo

Aquarium youth volunteers meet Sen. Jeff Merkley while attending the 2011 Student Summit on the Ocean & Coasts in Washington, D.C. L to r: Teacher Jessica Haxel and students Chris Crawford and Crystal Hawk, all from Siletz Valley Early College Academy; Sen. Jeff Merkley; students Jessica Whaley and Daniel Persson from Newport High School; and Tricia Ratliff, aquarium youth volunteer coordinator.

## Recycling may not be answer for plastic bag problem

Recycling has its place – however, it's not the solution to the plastic bag problem.

Recycling rates for plastic bags are extremely low. Only 1 percent to 3 percent of plastic bags end up getting recycled. In addition, the economics of recycling plastic bags are not appealing.

From the process of sorting to the contamination of inks and the overall low quality of the plastic used in plastic bags, recyclers would much rather focus on recycling the vast quantities of more viable materials, such as soda and milk bottles, that can be recycled far more efficiently. If the economics don't work, recycling efforts don't work.

For example, it costs \$4,000 to process and recycle 1 ton of plastic bags, which then can be sold on the commodities market for \$32 (Jared Blumenfeld, director of San Francisco's Department of

the Environment as reported by *Christian Science Monitor*).

Furthermore, many bags collected for recycling never get recycled. A growing trend is to ship them to countries like India and China, which are rapidly becoming the dumping grounds for the Western world's glut of recyclables. Rather than being recycled, they are cheaply incinerated under more lax environmental laws.

Even if recycling rates of plastic bags increase dramatically, it doesn't solve other significant problems, such as the use of non-renewable resources and toxic chemicals in their original production or the billions of bags that wind up in our environment each year that eventually break down into tiny toxic bits.

What to do? Choose to reuse!

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The Siletz Tribal Energy Program has set up recycling stations in Tribal office buildings to recycle plastic bags if you wish. As you just read, however, recycling is not the best answer.

If you need reusable bags, please contact us and we may be able to help you find some. Many are available and they are a great idea.

Try to remember your bags when you go to the store by putting them with your keys, wallet or purse so you remember them when you leave home. Put some in your car so they are available when you stop to shop.

For more information on the topics of reduce, reuse and recycle, contact us at 541-444-8271 or 800-922-1399, ext. 1271; e-mail [step@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:step@ctsi.nsn.us); or follow us on Facebook. Search for Siletz Tribal Energy Program and "like" us.

## General Council Meeting

May 7, 2011 • 1 p.m.  
Siletz Tribal Community Center  
Siletz, Oregon

Invocation  
Flag Salute  
Roll Call

Approval of Agenda  
Approval of Minutes

Tribal Council Committee Reports

Tribal Members' Concerns

Chairman's Report

Announcements

Adjourn

## Native Youth Prom will celebrate hard work, accomplishments and goals

Native Network is proud to present the first Native Youth Prom on May 28. This year's prom will be a celebration of Native youth in the Portland metro area and an affirmation of their hard work and accomplishments as they pursue their academic goals.

Before this year, many Native youth have not been able to attend or celebrate a traditional prom that other high school students enjoy every year. Recognizing a need to provide a traditional prom

for these students, several people in the Native community, along with Native



Network, started a planning committee to organize this event. Sponsors and donations are needed.

We will have an ongoing prom dress,

tax and accessories drive to collect items for students in need. We also will have

an American Indian art exhibit and silent auction fundraiser to help with event costs.

Thank you to the folks at NARA for the generous contribution of helping to

secure the Crowne Plaza Hotel as the venue for this year's prom.

For more information on becoming a sponsor or donating, please contact Casandra Belgard at 971-998-4567 or Nicholas Belgard at 503-758-2019; or visit [www.NativeYouthProm.com](http://www.NativeYouthProm.com).

Note: Because of capacity limitations, this event is for Native youth in the Portland metro area, including Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Clark counties only.