

## Aquarium offers teens an ocean of summer fun

NEWPORT — Do you know a teen who aspires to be the next Jack Hannah, Jeff Corwin or the late, great Steve Irwin?

The Oregon Coast Aquarium is offering youngsters a chance to tread in their footsteps.

The aquarium's volunteer program takes high-school age youth on a journey of discovery. Speaking on behalf of animals and their environments is no simple task, which is why the aquarium is currently recruiting future youth volun-

teers for a free six-weekend crash course on the coastal and marine sciences of Oregon.

Youth will go on to share what they learned with the aquarium's visitors. The 15,000 animals that reside in the aquarium's exhibits cannot speak for themselves, so interpretive volunteers of all ages do it for them.

The experience is not all work and no play. Youth volunteers also go on whale watching expeditions, outdoor adventures and learn important

skills like deploying a life raft and putting on survival suits.

After a summer learning through teaching, many youth volunteers choose to continue their service throughout the school year. They team up with aquarium staff to develop their own ocean advocacy initiative to help teach their peers and aquarium visitors about marine conservation.

The program draws high-school age students from as far away as Portland, and seems to provide an important summer

time social network — especially for homeschooled kids.

The aquarium's youth volunteers may not become the next Jacques Cousteau or Sylvia Earle, but they will carry environmental awareness and stewardship they develop for the rest of their lives.

To complete an application to join the aquarium's volunteer teams, visit [ww.aquarium.org](http://ww.aquarium.org), or contact the aquarium's Volunteer Services department at [volunteer@aquarium.org](mailto:volunteer@aquarium.org).

## Walks, talks begin today at Cape Perpetua

YACHATS — The Cape Perpetua Visitor Center will feature free programs and guest speakers on Saturdays in January as part of its ongoing Winter Series of events.

On Saturday, Jan. 17, at 2 p.m., Paul Engelmeyer will present "Land and Sea Conservation Issues: Marine Reserves, Marbled Murrelet, and Forage Fish."

A threatened seabird that nests only in old-growth forests, Marbled Murrelets embody the interconnection between ocean and forest ecosystems.

Cape Perpetua's unique connection between protected coastal rainforest and marine reserve provides crucial habitat for this species.

Engelmeyer has directed Portland Audubon's Tenmile Creek coastal conservation program since 1990 and is a recognized leader in coastal conservation efforts. He has been a respected voice and key collaborator in a number of Oregon coast conservation partnerships and councils, including the MidCoast Watersheds Council and the

Ocean Policy Advisory Council.

On Saturday, Jan. 31, Cape Perpetua visitors may enjoy guided hikes led by Forest Service staff.

Hikers will explore the cape's temperate rainforests and discover the evolving history of forestry practices on the Siuslaw National Forest with staff experts.

"This Winter Series brings home issues that are important not just to Cape Perpetua and the Siuslaw National Forest, but to the whole Coast region," says Forest Service volunteer Roger Grace. "These programs relate to everyone involved in the health of forests, oceans, and communities."

The visitor center provides regular film screenings, exhibits and junior ranger activities, and serves as a base to explore the areas trails and tidepools.

The Cape Perpetua Visitor Center is open Friday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is closed Wednesdays and Thursdays.

## Fourth annual Agate Festival underway in Yachats today

YACHATS — Yachats is gearing up for its fourth annual Agate Festival, to be held Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 17 and 18, during the weekend of the Martin Luther King three-day holiday.

Yachats is internationally known for its natural beauty, including the treasures uncovered by winter storms and winds, making January a prime time for agate hunting.

Vendors from throughout the state as well as from Washington and Northern California will be on hand to

display and sell rough specimens and finished artistic creations of minerals, gems, crystals and fossils.

The show will take place at the Yachats Commons, located at Highway 101 and West Fourth Street, in the heart of town. In addition, there will be speakers, demonstrations and fun activities for all ages.

Noted geologist William Orr will speak on Saturday at 3 p.m., and Guy DiTorriss, "The Fossil Guy", will speak on Sunday at 1 p.m.

This year, the festival will

offer a raffle for a valuable basket of fine prizes from many local merchants. The basket will include a gift certificate for an overnight stay at the famed Heceta Head Lighthouse Bed and Breakfast.

In keeping with the festival's commitment to preserving and enjoying the magnificent natural environment that surrounds the Yachats area, proceeds from the raffle will be contributed to the Yachats Trails Project, an organization that has helped create and maintain a comprehensive system of

trails in the area that has attracted outdoor enthusiasts from near and far.

Since the festival began in 2012, the event has been a big success, drawing visitors from throughout the Northwest and beyond. Merchants, restaurants and lodging providers enjoy participating in the weekend activities.

More information about the festival is available online at [www.yachatsagatefestival.com](http://www.yachatsagatefestival.com) as well as the Yachats Area Chamber of Commerce website at [www.yachats.org](http://www.yachats.org).

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