

#### Plastic Bags Poison Our Environment



We recently added facts about plastic bags to the marine debris display in the Discovery Center. Here are a few of the statements included in the display:

- Somewhere between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year.
- Less than 1% of all plastic bags are actually recycled because it costs more to recycle a plastic bag than to produce a new one.
- Plastic bags pollute every part of the environment from the arctic seas to the African savannah.
- Nearly 200 species of sea life die due to plastic bags.
- Over time plastic bags break down into smaller, more toxic petro-polymers which contaminate soils and waterways and enter the food chain.
- By banning free plastic bags, China will save 37 million barrels of oil each year.

- Using a cloth bag saves an average of 288 plastic bags a year. If everyone in Port Angeles alone used a cloth bag it would save 5,472,000 bags a year!

Stop by the Discovery Center to read the full text of the display, and then join me in spreading the word to everyone you know.

*Need bags? We have a supply of reusable bags in the second floor office for volunteers who need them.*



Oil rigs off the coast of California

#### Oil exploration in the OCNMS?

Last month President Bush lifted an executive ban on offshore oil drilling, and with gas prices above four dollars a gallon, the prospect of opening up more areas for drilling is gaining popularity. But that doesn't mean you'll spot an oil rig on your next trip to the Washington coast. Oil exploration and drilling are prohibited under the National Marine Sanctuary Act.

In the Northwest it's not clear how much oil and natural gas is out there under the waves since only a handful of tests have been conducted. Other known resources exist off California and the Gulf Coast. **Either way, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary will keep half of Washington's continental shelf off limits.**

### **Field trip to Theler Wetlands in Belfair on August 18**

You are invited to bring a picnic lunch and join us for a trip to Theler Wetlands in Belfair on Monday, August 18. We have arranged a guided tour for Discovery Center volunteers beginning at 10:00 A.M. The Theler Wetlands is an estuary located at the very northern end of Hood Canal. Four separate walking trails are open to the public during daylight hours seven days a week. Birdwatchers and photographers come to the wetlands to see kingfishers, herons, eagles and other wildlife. Please leave your pets at home as they are not permitted on wetlands trails. For more information about the area go to [www.thelercenter.org](http://www.thelercenter.org). Please call or send an email if you plan to attend so we can arrange carpooling to share fuel costs. On our way home let's stop at the Undersea Naval Museum at Keyport and check out their ocean environment exhibit.



### **Still time to vote for the Dungeness Lighthouse**

As reported last month, the Dungeness Lighthouse is a finalist in a contest in which the winner, selected by popular vote, will receive all new windows and doors. To learn more about the contest or to vote for your favorite lighthouse go to [www.jeld-wen.com/lighthouse/](http://www.jeld-wen.com/lighthouse/) and click on "vote now." You may vote as often as you wish until the winner is announced on September 7.

### **Volunteer recognition event in September**

Volunteers who work the most hours in the OCDC from May 1 to September 1 will be invited to spend a day aboard the OCNMS research vessel Tatoosh on September 3. Currently that's Jim and Becky, Bruce, Lu, Lis, Mary, Genie, and our new Americorps volunteer John Ketchum. With one month of summer still to go, if your name is not on the list you may want to stop by and sign up for a few shifts while you still have a chance at this very special event.