OSU to co-host forum in Tillamook on ocean acidification, low oxygen

By Mark Floyd, OSU | Posted: Friday, October 12, 2012 10:54 am

A public forum on Tuesday, Oct. 23, in Tillamook will explore the current and potential future impacts of two emerging phenomena along the Oregon coast – increasing ocean acidity and seasonal incidence of low-oxygen waters, or "hypoxia."

A series of speakers will present the latest research at the free community event, "Demystifying Coastal Hypoxia & Ocean Acidification," which begins at 6:30 p.m. at Tillamook Bay Community College Room 214/215. A panel discussion will follow, focusing on what individuals, communities, government agencies and others can do to reduce and manage potential impacts ocean acidification and hypoxia, both globally and locally.

The event is particularly timely, organizers say, as the fishing industry, agencies and scientists are expressing increasing alarm at the trend of more acidic ocean waters that have less oxygen to support marine life. The effects already are being felt in Oregon, where acidic, low-oxygen seawater contributed to the death of a substantial fraction of the young oysters produced by the Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery near Tillamook.

Oregon is a prime location at which to study these threats, scientists say, and the public will have an opportunity to learn more about them at the forum.

Hosted by the Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans program led by Oregon State University, the forum will feature researchers from OSU, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It is supported by Oregon Sea Grant.

More information on the event is available at: http://www.piscoweb.org/node/522

Speakers and panelists include Francis Chan and Jack Barth of OSU, who have documented and explained increasing hypoxia events off Oregon; Burke Hales and George Waldbusser of OSU, who have helped Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery offset the effects of acidic and hypoxic water that had been killing juvenile oysters; Alan Barton, manager of the Whiskey Creek hatchery; Steve Rumrill, the head of ODFW's shellfish program, Waldo Wakefield of NOAA, who studies how environmental factors like hypoxia influence fish abundance and distribution; and others.

Tillamook Bay Community College is located at 4301 3rd St. in Tillamook.