Written by Ann Musché
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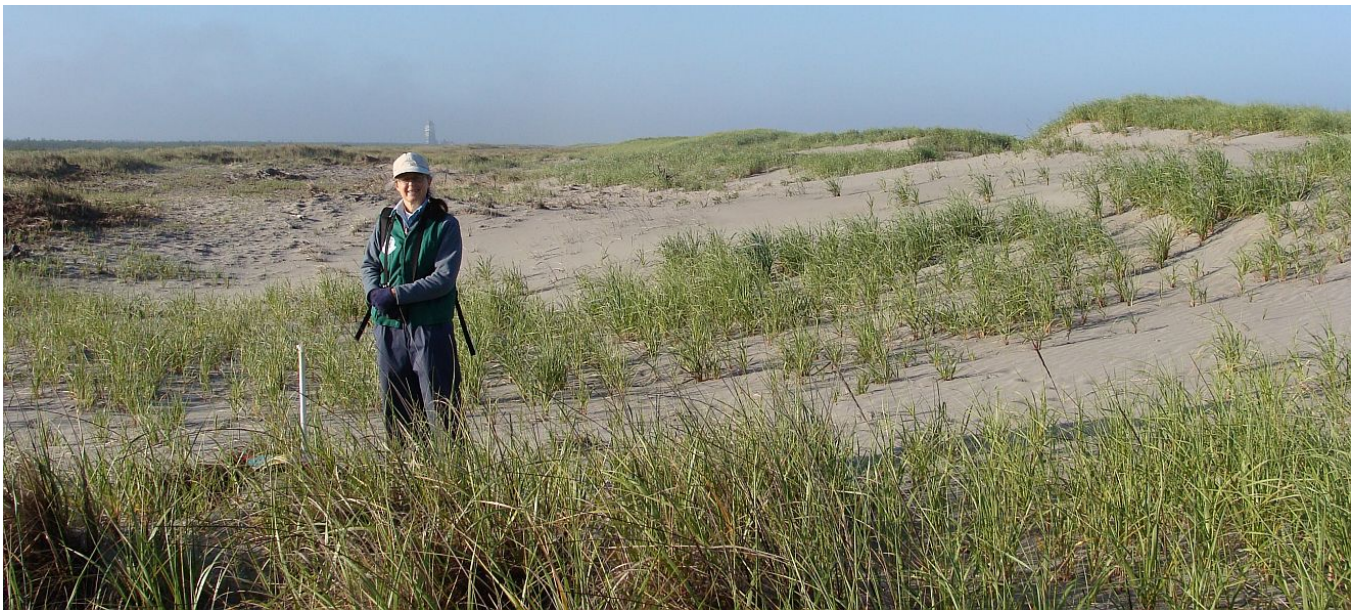
Strenuous walking through sand, extremely early starts requiring alarm clocks to jangle at times like 3 a.m., and many hours of mist, rain and wind were rewarded with occasional alternate hours of glorious sun and views of pelicans, eagles, peregrine falcons, and a variety of shorebirds. Some of us were lucky enough to see Snowy Plovers, both adults and young fluff balls, north of the restoration area in the federal refuge.



What was it inspired all this activity? Our chapter continues to cooperate with Grays Harbor Audubon and with state agencies to
create additional habitat at Leadbetter Point for the Western Snowy Plover and the Streaked Horned Lark. Both of these birds were once more abundant along our coasts. South of the federal Willapa Wildlife Refuge at the tip of the Long Beach peninsula, within Leadbetter State Park, our effort involves creating and monitoring ten smallish plots which follow the land contours. Here the exotic, densely-thatch-forming European grasses (brought in originally by humans for erosion control) are being removed and native plants retained and enhanced (by plantings of natives grown from local seed.)

During 2007, Jan McMillan of Grays Harbor Audubon coordinated volunteers in several plant-related work parties at the site. This year, I am the coordinator of our efforts. Last year and this, Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) hired the talented, encouraging and very knowledgeable expert, Kathy Gunther, part of whose duties is to survey the LHRA for animal activity, especially birds. Our volunteer efforts this final grant year have shifted to doing surveys along with Kathy, and recently, on our own.

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