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Subject: SOUTHAMPTON: Environmental Talk: Manatees, Sea Otters as Sentinels

Photo attached.

INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED ENVIRONMENTALIST VISITS STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y., October 30, 2009 — Dr. Alonso Aguirre, Senior Vice President, Conservation Medicine Program, at Wildlife Trust, will present a lecture on ocean health at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, November 13, in Stony Brook Southampton's Duke Lecture Hall.

He will discuss the new field of conservation medicine, which links wildlife medicine, public health and biodiversity to ecosystem health. In this field, Dr. Aguirre develops new techniques, tools, and theoretical approaches, and ensures that every advance in his science is communicated to health professionals on the ground, all over the world. He suggests that the first priority is to establish health management plans for the prevention of emerging diseases crossing the species barriers.

The talk, titled "Marine Vertebrates as Sentinels of Ocean Health: Linking Land to Sea," is part of the Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series hosted by Stony Brook Southampton Dean and Vice President Mary Pearl. The event is free and open to the public. For further information, call 631-632-5028.

Dr. Aguirre states that "a system to monitor and gauge marine or terrestrial health threats linked to conservation and management policies is needed." Infectious disease outbreaks, mass mortality events, harmful algal blooms, and anomalous changes in selected species abundance and composition -- occurrences that can be defined as major ecological disturbances -- may signal a decline in marine ecological health. With these thoughts in mind he adds, "I will present the approach of Wildlife Trust to address the issue of sentinel species as detectives of ecological health and how the health of all is connected through land and sea." Examples will include manatees, sea otters and sea turtles being affected by epidemics as never seen before.

Aguirre won the Harry Jalanka Memorial Medal from Finland, the most prestigious award in zoological and wildlife medicine. He is Chairman of the World Association of Wildlife Veterinarians (WAWV). He serves as a clinical assistant professor at Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, and is a research professor at Columbia University, where he teaches in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology. He is also an executive member of the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation (CERC).

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Attachments:

alonso-aguirre.jpg