

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF FRIENDS OF THE ELEPHANT SEAL
November 15, 2011**

Directors present: Jim Brownell, Brandt Kehoe, Sandra Kehoe, George Larson, Donovan Marley, Tim Postiff, Megg McNamee and Michele Roest

Absent: Ken Dunn

Also present: Marcella Boteilho, Christine Heinrichs, Lisa Remington and Brooke Gutierrez, both with Cal State Parks

Meeting was called to order at 2:00. Minutes from October Board meeting were approved.

Presidents Report: Webcam

Brandt met with Brooke and Tom Kitter (IT Chief) and reported that the current design may be too big. The intended equipment required (cameras and radio transmitters) will require 200 lbs of batteries. The solar panels will occupy 8-9 square feet. The concern was that the panels not exceed the height of the current lower boardwalk railings. However, Brooke assured us that the necessary permitting shouldn't be a problem if the design doesn't impact the current planned "foot print". She also assured us that the weight of the batteries would not be an issue as their maintenance department has already built similar battery/solar facilities in other local parks. Tom Kitter, Tom Edick and Brooke will be meeting with "Sparky" (electrician with State Parks) tomorrow (Thursday) to clarify exactly how many solar panels will be required and what size they should be. They will also determine exactly how much battery power will be needed to run the webcam for 8-10 days without sun powering the solar panels. Either Brooke or Tom will get back to Brandt no later than Friday, November 18th with their report.

Brooke also said that State Parks is 100% committed to this project. It is still unclear who will install the solar panels, batteries, radios, etc. The choice is a private contractor or State Parks. The original time line of completion by Thanksgiving is no longer an option, but Christmas looks possible but not yet promised.

Summation:

Step #1. State Approvals. Once the size and placement of solar panels, battery and camera housing is determined, Tom will submit the final design for approval on November 19th. The decision (final approval) should take less than a week, i.e. November 25th. Brooke will contact Brandt when approval has been received.

Step #2. FES to purchase camera, solar panels and batteries and any additional equipment required. It is hoped that the equipment will be delivered by December 1st. Once the equipment is available, State Parks will build the necessary enclosures for the batteries and camera. Brooke estimated that would take 2-3 weeks (December 21st) and will confirm that with Brandt.

Step #3. Connection to the State Parks server will be made at the BLM station at the lightstation. The frequency used for the wireless connection between the bluff and BLM needs to be compatible with other wireless uses along the coast. If an independent contractor is used, he will work with State Parks on the details of that implementation.

It is hoped that the project will be completed and operational by January 1st, 2012!

Cooperating Association:

Paperwork has been sent and is still in Sacramento. Donna Pozzi (Department of Interpretation and Education) has "signed off" and has sent it all to Tony Perez (Deputy Director of Park Operations) for final approval. According to Brooke, approval should be complete within the next 2 weeks.

Lisa Remington reported that the State Parks Data Sheet for FES will be ready by the first week of December. There will be 5-6 required forms for all active FES docents to sign. Lisa has already acquired lapel pins and patches for docents to wear. She will bring patches and pins with her to the next Board meeting and answer any questions regarding them.

Brooke and Lisa also mentioned that our new liability coverage with State Parks will only cover actual docent time on the bluff. This means that driving time, office time, fund raising, Board meetings, etc. will NOT be covered and that FES needs to maintain their own liability policy for times not covered by State Parks Liability policy.

FES will be required to report actual docent hours on the bluff and NOT include driving time, etc. in those reports. Marcella will create a new way of logging docent/volunteer hours that separate bluff hours from other hours.

Miscellaneous State Park:

Brooke reported that their maintenance chief is checking into removing the gate at the north end. There is still some question as to who actually owns the gate as it may be the property of Cal Trans and not State Parks.

Brooke also reported that "headquarters" is checking into the new faded signs on the north end. She said it was definitely a "warranty issue" and that State Parks will soon replace and reposition the signs in such a way as to keep them from direct sunlight.

Brooke also reported that the Coastal Trail Sign near the gate would be relocated to avoid the conflict between visitors viewing the seals and those trying to read the sign.

Brooke also noted that the new brochure boxes were correctly and properly installed.

Lisa Remington will be attending our future Board meetings. She will attend first ½ hour only.
Treasurers Report:

Treasurer's Report:

Megg reported that the current Savings Account balance is \$54,370 and that the current Checking Account balance is \$25,560. We have achieved our goal of having one year's operating expenses available. However, it is estimated that we will soon spend between \$14,000 - \$20,000 to purchase the web cam, etc.

Megg also re-read Marcella's report from last month stating how well the tubes and table are doing at the bluff. As of October 19th 2010 the table had produced \$18,497 and that as of October 19th 2011 the table produced \$27,730. That is an increase of \$9,233 for that same period of time. There

are currently 5 docents taking the table to the bluff on a regular basis with 2 additional that do it when they can. The tubes generated \$11,063 as of October 19th 2010 and \$13,470 as of the same date in 2011. That is an increase of \$2,407 for that same period of time.

Membership Report:

Christine Heinrichs: This is a written report submitted by Christine Heinrichs and reproduced for these minutes:

I was privileged to meet with Jean-Michel Cousteau, his son Fabien (<http://www.fabiencousteau.org/>) and daughter Celine (<http://www.celinecousteau.com/>) at the October 2011 annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists in Miami, Florida. His brother Philippe's children, Alexandra and Philippe, were also at the conference. All five spoke at the opening session of the conference, which focused on the oceans.

I took the opportunity to suggest to Jean-Michel and Celine and her husband Capkin Van Alphen that Friends of the Elephant Seal would welcome their help in raising money to support the organization. Jean-Michel's Ocean Futures organization is dedicated to saving the oceans and takes a special interest in supporting nonprofits. His web site, <http://www.oceanfutures.org/>, has a comment page and the email for the agency which arranges his speaking engagements is contact@oceanfutures.org. Address and phone, Ocean Futures Society, 325 Chapala St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101, 805-899-8899, ext. 124. I have followed up with a message but have not had a response.

Celine is expecting her first child in January. She plans to give birth at the family home in France. Capkin ('Dan') is a filmmaker and they partner in making films about the ocean. They have four films on their 2012 schedule but are open to considering the Piedras Blancas Elephant Seals. He saw two obstacles to overcome: that the Northern Elephant Seal is not endangered and that there aren't major problems associated with them. Conflict is an important dramatic element. I asserted that telling a success story could be important. I have followed up those contacts (info@celinecousteau.com) but have not had a response. I left a voicemail message today.

When asked for suggestions as to stories she would like to see covered in the news, Celine responded that she was concerned about the recent seal shooting in Massachusetts. Those shootings are being investigated by NOAA and I have followed them, since writing the story of the Piedras Blancas elephant seal shootings. She expressed interest in that story and I sent her the link to the version published in the local paper. The longer version will be published by the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference in 2012.

Jean-Michel hosted the American premiere of his film *My Father, the Captain* at the conference. He handed out red knitted caps like the one his father always wore. These could make a good fundraiser, along with a showing of the film.

I was not able to speak directly with Alexandra (<http://www.alexandracousteau.org/>) and Philippe (<http://www.earthecho.org/about>) this year, but I did visit with them two years ago at the SEJ conference. They were both enthusiastic about elephant seals and expressed interest. Alexandra gave birth to her first child in July. There is much excitement about the fourth Cousteau generation.

The family members have struggled with various public disagreements over the years, but were united at the conference. All have their ocean advocacy projects and are frequent public speakers. It's possible that one or more of them could be persuaded to appear for an FES fundraising event. My time is presently absorbed with professional obligations (I'm revising one book and working on another) but I am happy to work with the board to encourage them to assist us.

Thanks for your work and this opportunity to participate.

Christine and Gordon Heinrichs

The Board unanimously encouraged and approved Christine to follow up with the Cousteau family via email. Donovan volunteered to assist Christine with any future plans.

Donovan reported that average docent donations have increased from \$67 to \$132. He also presented the 2012 Marketing Budget for the next membership campaign. He has set the goal for 2012 to \$28,500 and budgeted for \$7,100 in expenses for the campaign. Donovan also said that the Acquisition brochure has not been successful. He intends to re-design a new brochure for next year aimed toward single donations as opposed to acquiring new memberships.

Donovan will write a letter to all donors, thanking them for their donations and explain that even though the Webcam has been paid for, the installation will be delayed beyond Thanksgiving. He will include The 2012 Seminars and Rookery Tours brochure in that same envelope.

Training Committee:

Tim reported that there are 16 new docents. Their picture has been added to the web site. Dates for the 2012 Training Schedule are: September 29th, October 13th and 27th, 2012. Tim also introduced a new stamp for the Journal Project. The stamp will be added at the bottom of each rookery. Docents will be asked to include this as part of their journal recording procedure. **The Board** unanimously approved the stamp and its use.

Miscellaneous Business:

Tim Postiff, Megg McNamee, Brandt Kehoe and Jim Brownell will meet to start re-designing the photo book. The newer version will include 4x6 or 5x7 photos depicting the chronological life cycle of eSeals. The new books will also include the various charts and graphs that we currently laminate. It is hoped that this will eliminate much of the pack "clutter" and make it easier for the docents to handle.

Joan Crowder has indicated that she does not want to continue working in the office. She has agreed to continue to write the docent letters, membership letters, copy for local newspapers, media responses, etc. from her home. The Board unanimously agreed to pay her \$20 per hour with a \$200 per month ceiling. Any special projects she does will be considered on an individual basis. **Michele Roest** will draft a proposal letter to that affect.

Docent Appreciation Dinner will be on January 21st at the Vets Hall in Cambria.

Table Committee: Marcella attended a Table Committee meeting and reported that a representative from that committee will send a representative to address the board on the direction the table committee wants to go in.

State Park Patches: The Board discussed the need for docents to have more than one patch as there are many different "outfits" worn while on duty at the bluff. Printing the patches on t shirts

was one option, but expense may be prohibitive. It may be advisable to put patches on the packs. We will discuss this further with Lisa Remington at the next Board meeting.

Inactive Docents: There are a number of inactive docents that still have access to the office. Whether this is a problem or not is still undecided. However, it was noted that when FES docents are required to sign documentation for State Parks Volunteers, inactive docents will probably not bother. When all active docents have signed, a follow up letter will be sent out to confirm inactive status. Those inactive docents will have their security numbers removed from the security lock if they choose to remain inactive.

FES will buy a new padlock for the old access door. The new lock will have a different combination and only active docents will be provided the new combination.

Marcella will calendar a date each calendar quarter to change the batteries in the security lock. Change batteries in main lock every 3 months.

Docent Packs: It was unanimously decided that docents should have the option to own their own packs. Docents can purchase their own packs and FES will provide the information materials. Marcella will pick up a few packs from local retailers as samples.

Next meeting will be on December 14th @2:00

Respectfully submitted by Megg McNamee, secretary
November 17th, 2011