

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF FRIENDS OF THE ELEPHANT SEAL January 18, 2012

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

Also present: Marcella Boteilho, Christine Heinrichs, Lisa Remington, Carolyn Skinder (MBNMS/NOAA Southern Region Program Coordinator, Robert Yerena (NOAA Enforcement), Dawn Hayes (MBNMS/NOAA Education and Outreach Coordinator)

## MBNMS/NOAA

**Dawn Hayes** clarified the history and relationship between FES and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. She welcomed our continued participation in the stewardship of our marine resources. She reiterated how important it is that we all work together for the common goals. She is also quite interested in the web cam and would welcome some brainstorming with Brandt. A copy of her written hand out is attached to these minutes.

**Bob Yerena** spoke to us about his role as an enforcement officer with NOAA. He suggested that he wants to hear of any disturbances regarding harassment of the elephant seals. If concerns are "minor", he suggested we call the park rangers as they would be able to get to the bluff much faster than he would. A NOAA uniformed officer will be installed in Santa Maria sometime in 2013 which will mean a quicker response time. He also said that NOAA is should be notified and would handle any unauthorized fishing, low flying aircraft, water sports, etc. Even though FAA controls the air and NOAA controls the water, overlapping authority is still a problem. He also said that if anyone reports any harassment issues that they should get as much information as possible regarding the perpetrator, i.e., type of automobile, license number, airplane tail number, blimp advertising, etc.

**Carolyn Skinder** also asked that FES communicate directly with her especially regarding resource protection issues, marine protected areas and resource education

## STATE PARKS

**Marcella** tried to clarify how FES was to track docent hours with regards to State Parks requirements. She had questions about whether or not to include drive times, number of visitors spoken to, school groups, tour groups, etc. **Lisa** suggested that Marcella, Lisa and Penny get together to determine exactly how FES is to track hours. Timing of that meeting was left to them. Marcella will let us all know what the new procedure will be.

**Lisa** will provide Brandt with the State Parks form that all docents need to fill out. Once he receives that form it will become available for the FES docents to fill out. When the forms are completed and the information has been put into the data base, FES docents will receive the State Park Volunteer patches. Lisa confirmed that the forms will require Social security numbers. State Parks needs the social security

numbers for Workman's Comp. She also assured us that those numbers are "highly confidential" and will not be shared. All State Park employees and volunteers are required to provide their social security numbers.

## **OCEAN FUTURES SOCIETY EVENT**

**Christine Heindrichs** reported that Jorge Barbajas at the Hearst Castle is delighted that FES wants to hold the Ocean Futures Society Event on May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Castle. Christine has a meeting with him on Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January to confirm details. Christine is hoping for a March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for all parts to be in place, including publicity. The Board unanimously approved \$300 be given to Christine Heindrichs as "seed money" for expenses she may incur while putting the Ocean Futures Event together.

**Carolyn Skinder** also said that as part of the MBNMS Friday night lecture series at Rabobank in April and May, she plans to have Karin Forney from the SW Fisheries Center in Santa Cruz give a presentation on Cetaceans of the Central CA Coast on May 4th. In addition to that lecture and as part of the regular FES members lecture series there will be a lecture about the catastrophic molt earlier in the day on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Brandt reported that the webcam project is still one month away. As it is currently planned, the Ethernet service will go through the BLM server to the Castle. Donovan suggested that FES might be better off using an "outside" server, rather than the Castle. Cost for this service will depend on demand. Demand will fluctuate from season to season and will probably be hardest hit at the very beginning of initial set up and announcement. FES will be solely responsible for insuring the webcam and all of the ancillary equipment. Brandt will also add the webcam access information on our site.

Brandt also told us that there is a CALPA meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup> in San Diego. Anyone interested should think about attending.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Megg presented a Year End Sheet Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss by Class Statement and Income and Expense graphs as of December 31, 2011.

It was noted that webcam expenses listed were much less than had actually been spent. Megg said she would look in to it and report back.

Donovan suggested that we may need to create an escrow account for insurance and upkeep of webcam .

## **TRAINING COMMITTEE**

Bette Bardeen announced that Spring Training will be on March 24, 2012. Deadline to sign up will be March 15<sup>th</sup>. Brandt will add this to the website. Bette also said that the new docents went to the bluff with Katherine Karako the day before and will again on the following day. She also mentioned that we need more substitute docents for bluff duty. The current list of subs is out of date and there are far too

few. She will make sure that the next docent letter mentions the need for more subs. We also discussed the growing number of docents that just don't show up for their shifts. Tim Postiff said that he will try to add a statement to the current scheduling request to remind docents the importance of showing up for their shifts or get a sub.

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Donovan reports that the 2011 Membership Campaign secured \$50,468 in donations from 534 members.

Campaign costs of 21.08% totaled \$10,641.16. Net income was \$39,827.

With an average donation of \$136.32, fifty-three docents led all 2011 contributors.

Thirty-one Business Partners gave an average donation of \$106.45.

An average of \$88.76 was donated by the other 450 members.

378 donors gave \$15,233 in gifts ranging from \$1 to \$99.

156 donors gave \$35,235 in gifts ranging from \$100 to \$3,000.

In the 2010 campaign, 229 members gave a total of \$11,190.

In the first 12 days of the 2012 campaign, 46 donors have given \$2,866.

Donovan said that the new membership campaign will be geared to acquisitions rather than renewals.

He hopes acquisitions will represent 40% of the new campaign for 2012.

Donovan also noted that he hasn't quite figured out how to structure the eFriend category (\$1-24) and is still working on it. He also made note of the fact that Phil and Carol Adams had personally signed each book that was given to the Great Friend members, i.e. those who donated \$100-249.

Donovan also said that 55 people showed up for the last membership seminar and rookery tour. He was very pleased with number who attended and their enthusiasm.

We discussed a possible theme for the next membership drive. The idea of sponsoring school bus visits to the bluff might allow more children to visit the bluff and would fall in line with our mission statement. George Larsen will investigate what it costs for a bus and driver and report back to the board.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Press Release** for FES/State Parks: Prior to her resignation from the Board, Michele Roust volunteered to write a press release regarding FES becoming a cooperating association with State Parks. Megg will follow up with Michele. We will also need a press release regarding the launch and operation of the webcam once it is up and running. Donovan will be mailing a postcard to the members.

**Cappuccino** cove sign - FES to pay for. It was determined that the new sign would cost approximately \$2,000. The Board unanimously approved the \$2,000 expenditure. If the sign costs more than that, Brandt will email the Board for further approval. Brandt will talk to Nick with State Parks about getting the sign made.

**Next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Megg McNamee, secretary

The following report was submitted by Carolyn Skinder, Dawn Hayes and Robert Yerena

**Summary of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's relationship with Friends of the Elephant Seal (FES) to the Board of FES– December 2010 (by Michele Roest and MBNMS)**

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries has a mandate to enforce the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), which protects marine mammals from human-induced harassment, injury and death.

Volunteer programs like FES help MBNMS fulfill this mandate. This is why FES has received so much support from MBNMS over the years. Here is my recollection of how the relationship between FES and MBNMS developed: When the elephant seal colony formed at Piedras Blancas (1990-1992), the agencies responsible for enforcing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) convened. These included Joe Cordaro from NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, Scott Kathey from NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries, and Don Kinney, a superintendent from State Parks. Also included were reps from CalTrans, SLOCOG, the CA Resources Agency, SLO County Supervisor Bud Laurent, and the Hearst Corporation. The question was who the lead agency should be in the protection of the elephant seals at the rapidly spreading Piedras Blancas colony, and how the other agencies would support that leader. The lead agency technically should have been NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, who is responsible for the protection of all marine mammals. But Joe Cordaro was quite clear -- they did not have enough man-power to address the kinds of harassment violations occurring at Vista Point 3. State Parks said it could not be involved because of conflicts of interest with the Hearst Corporation (at that time the elephant seal colony was on Hearst land, and State Parks dealt with Hearst over management of Hearst Castle). The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary was just being formed at that time. It was undergoing a massive public comment period that included the designation of where its boundaries would be. Protection of the elephant seals and sea otters were factors in the southern boundary determination for MBNMS. Many local residents were involved in lobbying for MBNMS protection to include the elephant seal colony. Agency representatives recognized the need for federal protection of the growing colony and supported the boundary designation into SLO County. MBNMS was designated on September 18, 1992, with marine mammal protection one of its top mandates and responsibilities. As the Piedras Blancas colony grew, MBNMS became more active in the growing harassment concerns, which were violations of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act as well as the MMPA. Around this time, the North Coast Local Plan (NCLP) was developed by SLO County and the Coastal Commission. The plan highlighted the growing concern of human-elephant seal interactions. The first elephant seal volunteer program was formed in 1995-96 in response to the elevated public and agency awareness of these concerns. MBNMS and the CA Resources Agency were the primary agency supporters of this program.

The first training for FES docents was provided by the Center for Marine Conservation (a private non-profit today known as the Ocean Conservancy) using its own volunteer organization, BayNet. CMC's Bay Net program conducted the first two trainings of docents. The training program was subsequently adopted by a newly created local organization – Friends of the Elephant Seal.

From 1997 - 2004 all FES docents had NOAA/MBNMS patches on their blue jackets, identifying them as partners of the MBNMS. In addition to supporting the training of FES docents, MBNMS also paid for a part-time ranger stationed at Limekiln to patrol the southern region and offer protection and support to the elephant seals and FES.

In 2000, when the MBNMS southern region coordinator position was created, approximately 25% of that position was dedicated to supporting FES. MBNMS is still considered an advisory agency to the FES Board. MBNMS staff gave training programs and provided funding for FES's docent trainings through 2007. In 2002, due to FES concerns over human-elephant seal interactions at Arroyo Laguna, MBNMS paid for and developed a "traffic redirection" program to send visitors to the formal viewing sites at Vista Point 3. FES docents were teamed with paid MBNMS contractors. The program prevented thousands of people from harassing seals at Arroyo Laguna. Agencies with overlapping jurisdictions try to avoid jurisdictional conflicts. In 2006, when State Parks took over jurisdiction of the land where the elephant seal colony and viewing site existed, the federal agency (MBNMS) took a step back from its highly public, local role with FES. However, MBNMS still pays for cross-training State Parks law enforcement officers so they can enforce federal MMPA laws at San Simeon. MBNMS and State Parks officers meet regularly to discuss enforcement issues in the shared jurisdiction of intertidal and nearshore waters throughout the MBNMS range. MBNMS continues to be a significant supporter and representative at the federal level, seeking funding to support elephant seal research. Nearly all the California elephant seal breeding colonies are under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Sanctuary Program: Point Reyes, Farallon Islands, Ano Nuevo, Gorda, Piedras Blancas, and Channel Islands. Staff from all three California sanctuaries meet regularly to discuss common concerns, including elephant seals. Major violations of the MMPA (such as the elephant seal shooting in May 2008) remain under the jurisdiction of NOAA, with local support from State Parks. MBNMS has recognized the important role FES docents play in marine mammal education and protection by awarding it several prestigious awards: Star of the Sea Award, Non-Profit Organization of the Year, Volunteer of the Year (Phil and Carole Adams were sent on an all-expenses paid trip to Washington DC for National Oceans Week in 2007), and NOAA's Office for Law Enforcement Stewardship Appreciation Award. These awards and plaques were posted on the walls of the FES Office. MBNMS has nominated FES for Community Foundation grants, and has written letters of support on others. Funding for docent trainings in 2004-2006 came from the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation. No federal organization has provided more staff time and financial support to FES than MBNMS, nor given it greater recognition and appreciation. Current FES Board members may be unaware of this. Perhaps we should consider inviting MBNMS representatives to our Board meetings to revive the elements of that partnership, which may have waned in recent years.