

**FRIENDS OF THE ELEPHANT SEAL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
APRIL 16, 2014**

Present: Dave Bauer, Bill Goodger, Kathy Hurrle, Donovan Marley, Tim Postiff

Absent: Bette Bardeen, Cristel Chesney, Brandt Kehoe, Sharkey Warrick

Also Present: Marcella Boteilho, Michelle Roest, Carolyn Skinder, Ellen Stoner

In Brandt's absence, Dave Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 19TH MEETING:

A motion was made and carried to approve the February 19 minutes.

GUESTS:

Carolyn Skinder discussed the issue of drones. [E-mail to Ellen after the Board meeting: Scott Kathey (MBNMS/NOAA): "The operation of aerial drones below 1000 feet altitude within over-flight restriction zones of the sanctuary is prohibited by existing sanctuary regulations. Operation of aerial drones is thus prohibited over all ocean waters from the Carmel River mouth to Cambria (Fiscalini Ranch) and offshore 3 nautical miles. If they [docents] get information and/or photos of someone operating a drone over sanctuary waters, they should contact NOAA or State Park enforcement to investigate."]

The beach that the seals are on is included because they are marine mammals and protected by both state and federal law. If the seals react to the over-flight, they have been harassed and NOAA will investigate. If they do not react, State Parks will investigate. The docents do not need to make that determination; they only need contact the State Parks Rangers. Ellen will include guidelines for the docents in the May docent newsletter.

Carolyn listed the annual lecture series for May, and will provide the information to the office for posting.

Michelle Roest will be point-person to coordinate activities of the various organizations in San Simeon. The chamber will now be open weekday mornings 9-1 using volunteers, and in the afternoons Michelle will be there 1-4, plus Saturdays 11-1. There will be a major revamp of media relations for Hearst Castle. The AMGEN tour is May 14; it will end in Cambria so there will be closures in Cambria all day for a street fair. There will be rolling closures as the tour comes down the coast; the bicyclists will be in San Simeon about 3 pm. The docents who are scheduled that day should be made aware of the closures.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Kathy moved that FES support the development of the path from VP4 to the old motel and designation of the area as a National Monument. The motion was seconded and passed. Supporting the pathway by donating funding to it will be postponed until the May meeting when there will be more Board members present.

Dave indicated that he talked to several docents about the docent dinners, which resulted in everything from "everything is wonderful" to "I hate pizzas" and "I hate potluck". There was a proposal to develop a questionnaire for the docents on the subject. Ellen indicated that of the 30 or so school group docents who were sent a questionnaire only 3 responded so far, which is not atypical of questionnaires, and that she is discussing this item with the docents as she does her spring individual docent interviews.

Tim moved to authorize \$2,000 for library research as discussed at the retreat. He already has one person ready to start a project. The motion was seconded and passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Bill reviewed the current cash flow; he projected the flow to the end of the year to be about \$16,000 net income (budget currently shows about -\$1000) which means we can go ahead and implement a number of the bluff projects that Donovan put forth. The list that Donovan prepared of potential improvements to VP3 and the area around it will be discussed on an item by item basis. (See attachment at the end of the minutes.)

Bill also mentioned that we have now funded two interns in the winter and spring quarter for the last two years at \$1000 per quarter per intern; this project has been successful. Bill proposed the expansion of the current program to 1 intern for the summer quarter (\$1,000) and 1 intern in the fall quarter (\$1,000) for 2014 [see first motion below]. This internship program covering all 4 quarters would be automatically funded each year unless at the end of the year the board votes to not fund the next year [see second motion below].

Bill moved to approve \$2,000 for two interns: one with TMMC from Cal Poly in the summer quarter for \$1,000 and one with TMMC from Cal Poly in the fall quarter for \$1,000. The motion was seconded, discussed, and passed.

Donovan moved to make the internships renewable annually until the board decides to stop the program. There will be a total of six interns: two in the winter quarter and two in the spring quarter, one in the summer quarter and one in the fall quarter. The motion was seconded and passed. Note: the quarter time frame is used because this coordinates the program with Cal Poly.

Donovan said that the Community Foundation could hold and invest funds for us for a long range project. Donovan's vision is a full blown education center at VP3. This would be a way to invest money at more than the current CD interest; it should be a full board discussion.

From the list of improvements attached to these minutes, the board agreed to begin implementation of items #1 & 2. #1 (removing trash from the beaches) will probably have to be postponed until summer when there are very few seals on the beach. For #2 (removing dirt, weeds, and trash from the boardwalks and between the fence and bluff) it was proposed declaring a "Salute to Ray Hopkins Day" and inviting all docents to participate. This should be twice a year; once end of spring and once just before the winter breeding season.

#3 (Trash receptacles) probably will not be done, since they would have to be serviced on a daily basis in the summer, RVers would be dumping into them, and finding a place to put them so that they can be serviced would be problematical. This item has not yet been proposed to state parks. A commercial trash hauler indicated to Donovan a charge of \$279/month for a weekly pickup, which would not be often enough particularly in the summer.

#4 (replace chain link fencing with black) Donovan said that no company warrants black chain link within five miles of the ocean. Instead, he will look at what portions of the existing fence need replacing and will revise the estimate and number of feet needed.

#5 (gravel for the pathways) and #7 (parking lot maintenance) were discussed. These items have not yet been proposed to state parks. Kathy stated she understood the problem for Caltrans in maintaining the VP3 parking lot is needing to move its heavy equipment to the site since they don't station such nearby. Marcella said that she just submitted a request to Cal Trans for the parking lot to be regraded. It would be nice to get a car counter to try to prove that our parking lot gets more cars than Hearst Castle.

#6 and #8 have been forwarded on to Phil and Carole Adams. Donovan will work on #9 ("Best Viewing" signs).

We will move ahead with #1, 2; postpone #3, 4, 5, 7; Donovan will work on preparation for #6, 8, 9. The signs for #8 and 9 need to be done soon, before the summer season starts.

The Board agreed that there should be a target date of September 1 for completing all items on the list except #3.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

Donovan indicated that there are 244 members year-to-date donating \$19,400. FES saved \$7,000 by having the membership information on the e-seal news instead of separate flyers, but the trade-off is that the renewal to acquisitions ratio is about 80/20 instead of 75/25 where it should be. The average acquisition is higher than the average renewal, however. He is working with Christel to develop a membership envelope to have at the table.

Marcella indicated that the membership/contribution page on the website is not intuitive, and is not easy to find.

SCHOOL GROUP REPORT:

Kathy distributed the letter and questionnaire that was sent to the school docents asking for feedback. The deadline for submitting it was the 24th. So far, only three have been returned.

Kathy discussed limiting the grades to 4th & 5th instead of 3-5, and rotating which schools are invited each year. Only one of the 6 that we offered to fund this year did not take us up on the offer. The information went to the schools in the spring, but that was not good timing; this time she will start the process in the fall when the schools start up again. The size of the groups should also be limited. It was suggested that just one grade (5th) from each school come every year; that way the same teacher from each school is involved each time which over the next couple years should improve the experience for the students.

OFFICE REPORT:

Marcella mentioned that we received the \$6,000 from CBID. She mentioned that there was an email from Robyn Chase, the interpretive specialist for State Parks, requesting docents to make presentations for the San Simeon Campground campfire series. Ellen will email the docents looking for volunteers.

DOCENT COORDINATOR REPORT:

Ellen indicated that she is polling the docents about the quarterly diners/speakers during the current round of individual interviews, and will present the results at the next board meeting. She also indicated that several docents have asked for better communication of board decisions, and as a result she will be reporting the basics of board discussions/actions in the docent newsletters. Please read the February and April notes in the current draft newsletter which will be sent to the docents on April 23rd.

OLD BUSINESS

The issue of having both folded and unfolded newsletters that the docents will be taking out was discussed. The problem is that on the south end of VP3 the docents have to walk quite a way to determine if more are needed in the holders. Marcella's suggestion is to have a large receptacle out there that can be used to restock the displays. To take a bunch to restock or not to take a bunch to restock has been a problem from the beginning of time. The decision was to wait until the new displays are up to see how it is working and then discuss the issue again.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Ellen Stoner, FES Docent Coordinator

From the February 2014 FES Board Retreat
2014 VP3 Improvement Projects
TASK TO BE ACHIEVED

1. Obtain permission for FES to remove all man-made objects from rookery beaches. Labor and trash disposal provided by FES docents. (No cost item.)
2. Remove dirt and weeds from boardwalk areas and remove trash between fences and bluff. Labor and trash disposal provided by FES docents. (No cost item.)
3. Place trash receptacles at VP3. Trash service by State Parks with attendant costs paid by FES. No cost estimate available. Needs discussion prior to contacting State Parks.)
4. Replace about 1,200 feet of chain link fence at VP3. Install 4' chain link using existing posts. Purchase of materials and installation by an independent contractor paid by FES. (Estimated installed cost \$9,000. This item should have written specifications and be put out to bid.)
5. Add gravel or decomposed granite in low spots along the metal fences at VP3 to eliminate mud-puddles after rain events. Gravel provided and installed by an independent contractor paid by FES. (Still seeking cost estimates.)
6. Replace plexi-glass in the VP3 kiosk (with a medium that blocks ultra-violet rays) and up-size and replace faded displays. Plexi-glass replacement by independent contractor paid by FES. Displays by Phil and Carole Adams with costs paid by FES. (Still seeking cost estimates.)
7. Draw an agreement with Caltrans for annual maintenance of the parking lot at VP3 with FES purchasing the gravel and Caltrans providing labor and equipment. State Parks to provide contact and approval with CalTrans. (Needs discussion prior to contacting State Parks.)
8. Design, fabricate and install multi-lingual signage on the ocean side of the VP3 parking lot directing visitors to each boardwalk. (4 metal signs 24" X 30" @ \$100 each = \$400.)
9. Design, fabricate and install new "Today's Best View" sign to be placed by the entrance to the parking lot when needed. (1 Best View Parking Lot sign @ \$220.00)