

**Friends of the Elephant Seal
Board of Directors Meeting
April 15, 2015**

Board Members Present: Dave Bauer, Bill Goodger, Polly Tatton, Kathy Hurrele, Abby Adams
Also Present: Donovan Marley, Kathy Dowding, Marcella Boteilho, Gwen Watkins

Dave Bauer called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the March 18 Board Minutes.

School Groups Report: Gwen Watkins

1. Dave shared that **Gwen would be assuming Judy Thompson's leadership role** due to Judy's health concerns.
2. Gwen reviewed the **school group data** from this year compared to last year. In January 2015, we had 11 schools and 687 students who visited the bluff compared to 2014 when we had 7 schools and 462 students.
3. **Need for more trained docents:** We currently have 45 school group docents, of that number 32 have signed up for school groups this year. During this year's breeding season we definitely needed additional school docents. In the future we may include school group training as part of the new docent training; and include ongoing training for current docents as part of a dinner gathering.
4. **May plans:** Gwen reported that 5 (now 6) school groups are scheduled for May, including a group of 75 students from Pennsylvania who have alopecia. Donovan will confer further with Gwen about the possible provision of a seminar on molting for this special group.
5. **Highlights from the school group discussion session on March 30:**
 - Diana Barnhart is updating the school standards, teasing out which ones to stress on the bluff.
 - We are exploring having five docents trained as captains with one assigned to each school visit. Another idea is to have the captain not have other responsibilities, so as to be free to direct the school visit and float between stations.
 - The large spiral-bound photo books will be re-done into three-ring binders.
 - Gwen has been coordinating the special FES-supported school visits to the bluff with Carolyn Skinder to include visits to the Discovery Center. Kathy asked if the same arrangement might be made with the light house.
 - Dave recommended that we use FES funds to purchase additional demonstration items (e.g. squid, plastic kelp, shark jaw).

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to purchase the additional school group demonstration items (not to exceed \$500).

Membership Report: Donovan Marley

1. By the end of this quarter, there were 248 renewals, grossing \$24,621. Compared to 2014, we are up 50 members and \$7863. Larger donations have been received than in the past.
2. **Donovan proposed a new membership campaign** with items on the merchandise table at the bluff, including a compelling seal photo that says "My Friends get...free gifts and a 20% discount on all purchases"; membership envelopes; and the gifts there to give when folks sign-up. We discussed the logistics. Currently the FES office staff sends the gifts to new members by mail. We referred this matter to Bob Grosse and the Table Committee for further review.

Training Committee Report: Polly Tatton

1. The two spring docents have successfully completed mentoring and are scheduled on the bluff.
2. Peer reviews are being completed for the 2014 fall docents.
3. The fall training may include a 50 minute school training presentation.
4. With the **goal of increasing our docent cadre**, we will consider increasing our newspaper ads (June and July?), more free ads in newspapers, and attempt to get radio spots. Historically the New Times ads have brought the most response. We need to remind docents to pass-out the Docent Recruitment Cards to visitors on the bluff who appear interested. Kathy suggested the possible use of Twitter and Facebook.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Goodger

The profit and loss statement Bill presented covers 28 % of the year. It appears that we are doing fine meaning using a very robust method we have currently cut our cash flow deficit by approximately \$8000 and donations and membership categories are close. This doesn't mean that this is actually going to happen BUT it appears we are going in the right direction. Although more has been spent on docent dinners than was budgeted, we agreed that these expenses are worthwhile. In future budgets this category will need to be increased.

Old Business

1. **Fence Report: Bill Goodger**—Bill and state officials have completed a quality assessment of the new fence installation. Some defects have been found and will be corrected over the following weeks, to include replacement of the wire at the top of the fence with a stiffer gauge wire and adding additional boards to the top of the fencing, particularly at the south end.
2. **Internship Report: Bill Goodger**—The three interns: Craig Brown, Shawn Hannah, and Kayla Wolfer, are ready for their presentations at the April docent dinner. Dave reported that Lisa Remington, CA State Parks Supervising Ranger and Brooke Gutierrez, Acting District Superintendent, are planning to attend.
3. **New state standards on sexual harassment** will be included on our website and future training sessions.

Office Report: Dave Bauer, Marcella Boteilho, and Kathy Dowding

1. **Marcella** will soon be moving from the Cambria area. She will continue to perform specific tasks and attend the Board and other meetings as available. Marcella recommended that Dawn Fiegel become the new office manager which was supported.
2. **The office staff supports the idea of using docents in the office.** We will attempt to identify volunteers for this in the future.
3. We continue the **quest for a bigger office** with more display space. Dave will discuss the availability, and, if available, the price of the Brookes Gallery space with Mike Hanchett.
4. **April 18 dinner:** Kathy estimated that 70-80 docents and guests were expected. Board members were requested to arrive at 4:00 to help with set-up.
5. **C-shifts:** Due to some shift coverage shortages, Kathy may not schedule any C shifts this spring/summer.
6. **The yearly interviews of docents** have been positive and are continuing. Kathy reported a 40% response to her interview requests. When completed, Kathy will summarize the information gleaned for the Board and in the Docent Newsletter.
7. Dave shared that a **History Committee** is being formed.

President's Report: Dave Bauer

1. Dave was the speaker for the SLO Kiwanis this week and was well received. The group may

- fund a school group bus in the future.
2. CalTrans and State Parks are continuing to plan for either porta potties or permanent restrooms at the bluff.
 3. The permit for the trail is progressing.
 4. We agreed to have a Board retreat in July or August.

New Business

2015 Count data: Bill will look into the population graph in the office using the Lowry paper – Abundance, Distribution, and Population growth of the Northern Elephant Seal in the United States from 1991-2010. Aquatic Mammals 2014, 40(1), pp 20-31 to ascertain the methodology for calculating the rookery population from the number of births per year. He will also contact either Brian Hatfield or Phil Adams to get information on how the yearly population graph is calculated. There has been some concern that the bar graph in the office is not accurate.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:28, followed by an executive session.

Respectively submitted,
Abby Adams, FES Board Secretary