

**Friends of the Elephant Seal
Board Meeting
February 17, 2016**

Board Members Present: Dave Bauer, Bill Goodger, Bob Grosse, Lynette Harrison, Kathy Hurrle, Mary Forbes, Polly Tatton, and Abby Adams

Also Present: Gwen Watkins, Dawn Fiegel, Lisa Harper Henderson, Donovan Marley

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

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the January 20 Board Minutes.

REPORTS

National Monument Initiative: Donovan Marley

1. On February 11 Donovan participated in a phone conference with the California Coastal National Monument advocacy team. He summarized the next steps he and his group will take to create a unified statewide campaign including the endorsements by the SLO Board of Supervisors and Governor Brown.
2. On February 12 President Obama protected 1.8 million acres of California desert by creating three national monuments: Castle Mountains, Mojave Trails, and Sand to Snow. President Obama has set aside more American lands and waters for conservation protection than any previous president.

Treasurer/Finance: Bill Goodger

1. When comparing the 2015 income to the same period (January 1--mid February) this year, the income is down \$14,122 due to less donations and merchandise sales.
2. In the ensuing discussion, the following ideas were generated:
 - • locate the south end donation tube in a more prominent location
 - • encourage more docents to become table volunteers
 - • have more regular hours for the FES Visitor Center, with docents scheduled in the center
 - • improve the on-line sales portion of the website.

Training: Polly Tatton

At this time there is one new trainee signed-up for the March 19 session. The advertisements are continuing in local papers.

School Groups: Gwen Watkins

1. The group has set the following goals for this year:
 - • Interpretation/observation of the seals is the most important activity for students
 - • More emphasis of stewardship of the ocean will be incorporated
 - • Address safety issues, particularly when students leave and return to the school buses in the parking lot.
2. The board members suggested a school bus drop-off zone near the south kiosk for drop-off and pick-up of students.
3. The purchase of an elephant seal pelt was added to the school group wish list. Pelt is different than the molt that we currently share with students.

Table Sales: Bob Grosse

Due to health concerns, Bob will require a partner and ride to complete his table-time schedule.

Research: Bill Goodger (in Brandt Kehoe's absence)

1. The Research Group continues to investigate elephant seal mortality at sea and will sponsor a meeting in April to share information.
2. A fourth paper written by interns has been submitted to Brandt.

Publications: Kathy Hurrle

The April edition of For Friends will be ready for mailing the week of April 4.

Membership: Bill Goodger

The January Exploratory session had 53 participants! Lisa Harper Henderson will make sure the upcoming Exploratory dates are publicized in the local papers.

Staff: Lisa Harper Henderson and Dawn Fiegel

1. Board members shared with Lisa that the January Docent Appreciation dinner went well. The April dinner will include presentations by the current interns.
2. Dawn shared concerns about the website shopping information. The Board members agreed that the consultant, Nancy McCarney, be involved in upgrading this area.
3. Dawn suggested and the Board agreed that we discontinue FES Costco membership, since members and staff who have Costco memberships have been using their accounts to make purchases.

President: Dave Bauer

1. Many Board members attended the State Parks EEO training. Dave commented that the FES formal policy covers the law requirements as long as we enforce the policy.
2. In a recent meeting with Parks staff, Dave reported:
 - there are not enough Parks staff nor FES volunteers to cover all the seal/people issues. The Parks staff agreed to the use of a padlock at Arroyo Laguna to keep people off the beach. FES volunteers were commended for the support of Parks and Marine Mammal Rescue during the "bull on the boardwalk" incident in late December.
 - Phase 1 and 2 of upcoming Parks projects were reviewed. Phase 1, during the next three years, will include two restroom structures at Piedras Blancas and trail work. Phase 2, during the following two years, will include upgrading the old motel, adding e-seal interpretation displays, a new campground, and parking for 50 + vehicles.

Website Redesign: Lynette Harrison

The new website is live now. Lynette asked that we continue to send suggested changes to Brandt Kehoe with a cc to Lynette and Marcella. Lynette volunteered to become a back-up website manager to Brandt.

Video Project: Lynette Harrison

1. Lynette reported that Mark Chiolis continues work on the video filming. He and his wife, Loretta, will return for more taping during May for the molting season.
2. Lynette has two additional copies of the dvds of the footage taken to date. Board members may contact Lynette to review the dvds.
3. The Board will plan a thank you gift of Mark and Loretta's services.

OLD BUSINESS

Shark Monitor Buoy: Bill Goodger

1. Bill reviewed the history of this project begun in 2013 with Hopkins Marine Station and Stanford University. This monitor is one of four being used to learn about shark aggregation sites (the others being in Ano Nuevo, Farallon Island, and Tomales Bay), predation, and loss of seals. The monitor near Ano Nuevo now electronically records 500 shark passings daily from September to February.
2. In the first year of data at Piedras Blancas, 2013, there were 5 total electronic hits, but by two sharks. In our second year, this year, there have been 2 hits.
3. NOAA has been involved in the permitting to make sure that the monitor is not disruptive to the gray whale mother/baby migration.
4. The Board hopes that the researchers will soon do more shark-tagging in our area.
5. The initial expense by FES for the monitor was \$15,000. Since then the FES budget has included \$3000 for possible maintenance. The monitor is now in what we hope is a permanent location. If it needs to be moved, the cost is \$6000.
6. The Board agreed that the data is important and support the continued project. Bill will continue to take the lead in monitoring that the buoy is staying in place.

NEW BUSINESS

Geocaching site near camera on boardwalk: Mary Forbes

Mary shared a geocache container that she removed from a location near the camera on the south boardwalk. She checked with State Parks and learned that it had not been approved to be there. State Parks will inform the person who placed it there.

Male Count Research with Cal Poly Interns: Bill Goodger

Bill shared comparative data on the number of elephant seal males by location this year compared to last year. Although some of beaches have had changes in numbers, the total numbers are almost identical: 246 males in 2015 and 244 in mid February 2016. The research will continue and be reported at the dinner in April.

Native Plant Restoration Project: Dave Bauer

Carol Adams and many volunteers continue their work on removing non-native plants and restoring native plants.

Need for Committee to Identify Docent Talents: Dave Bauer

Polly Tatton and Bob Grosse volunteered to meet to identify potential docents for such needs as:

- • Board Membership
- • AV support for presentations
- • Support of membership, fundraising, outreach, publicity, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectively Submitted,
Abby Adams, FES Board Secretary

The next FES Board Meeting will be on March 16 at 1:00.