

**Friends of the Elephant Seal
Board Meeting
April 20, 2016**

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

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

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

After noting three small corrections, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the March 16 Board Minutes.

CONFIRMATION OF RETURNING BOARD MEMBER

Dave Bauer announced that Christel Chesney has agreed to return as a Board member.

REPORTS

Advisory Member/Grants Update: Dave Bauer for Michele Roest

Dave asked Board members to submit a wish list to Dawn of items and projects for possible grant funding or gift moneys that become available. The San Simeon Tourist Alliance has been generous in the past funding items up to \$6000 that will help with tourism. Board members began the list with the following needs:

- • a seal hide for School Groups
- • another lap top for office staff
- • a projector for training and presentations
- • the printing of flyers and e-seal news

National Monument Initiative: Donovan Marley

Donovan shared highlights from a detailed written report:

1. Senator Boxer's legislative aide, Kyle Chapman, visited the rookery and light house on March 24 and met with key representatives for both sites.
2. On April 6-7 a video team from The Wilderness Society filmed in our area for posting on the Conservation Lands Foundation website.
3. The initiative has now been supported by a resolution from the SLO County Board of Supervisors; and endorsements from 77 local entities. The Pew Charitable Trust has selected the project as one of its 16 goals for 2016.
4. Donovan and his group will continue to gather letters of support and make presentations with the continued hope of a Presidential designation by late fall.

Website: Lynette Harrison

1. Lynette shared how to locate the "Dramatic Battle on the Beach" video under the "View the Seals" section below the Live Cam. Based on suggestions, it will also be placed in the "Photos and Videos" section.
2. The new on-line shopping section with Pay Pal is now operating and the first week brought good sales.
3. Lynette will soon train with Brandt Kehoe to be a back-up person for submitting/changing information of the website.

Treasurer/Finance: Bill Goodger

1. Bill gave highlights and answered questions about his three reports. When comparing the 2015

income to the same period this year, the income is down \$17,716 due to less donations, less merchandise sales, and a bit less membership.

2. In the discussion, the following ideas were generated:

- • share more information with docents about our financial problems
- • only mail Among Friends and other mailings to those who request this option; otherwise send via e-mail

3. On a positive note, the Visitor Center has more ongoing volunteers; our on-line store is now operating; more docents are helping with table sales; we are saving on planned costs for docent dinners with pot lucks and Dave's cooking donations.

Training: Polly Tatton

1. Three spring docents completed their mentoring and are now active on the bluff. Besides these three attending the training session on March 19, 19 other docents attended, as well as one intern and her friend.

2. The peer reviews of our fall docents is still underway and is going well.

3. In a discussion of our success in attracting new docents (compared to other local agencies seeking volunteer help), we applauded our outreach efforts. Some new ideas included:

- • expand our seminars ("mind walks north")
- • when researchers come for our docent evening presentations, have them also do an afternoon presentation for the public.

Membership Task Force: Bill Goodger and Dawn Fiegel

1. There will be another meeting of the task force next month.

2. In the membership renewal campaign, Dawn is sharing specific needs of FES.

3. It was suggested that our Facebook site also include more about our funding needs.

School Groups: Abby Adams for Gwen Watkins

School Groups leadership is in transition since Gwen is resigning from her Coordinator role. Gwen and Abby will be meeting with Peter Frith about his interest in taking over the scheduling responsibilities (as a volunteer position). Abby will be the board liaison and looks forward to working with Peter and the other leaders in the school groups committee.

Table Sales: Bob Grosse

At a recent meeting for table volunteers, the following action items were generated to increase table support and revenue:

1. Invite docents to sign-up with Lisa for a partner tour with a table person.

2. Amend the requirement that new docents not man the table until having a year as a docent.

3. Emphasize that table people are docents first, sales people second, and that manning the table makes them highly visible for questions and discussions with visitors. There are lots more conversations about e-seals than actual sales.

4. At the April 30 dinner, Bob and Christel Chesney will make a presentation on the benefits of serving on the table.

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

1. The Research Group and Dave met to continue to investigate elephant seal mortality at sea, reviewing the current published research and Dave's theoretical paper on the subject. Pat Robinson, head of research at Ano Nuevo, will be invited to attend the August docent dinner, to share information and continue the dialog about this topic.

2. Bill reported that the interns are preparing for their upcoming presentations at the April docent dinner.

3. Bill is looking forward to working with a Scottish Masters intern in zoology, who wishes to

conduct a three-month research project.

Publications: Kathy Hurre

When Kathy meets with the Committee in May, she will explore with the group the print vs. digital sharing of the publications (noting the costs of mailing, etc.)

Marketing Ideas and Needs: Dave Bauer

Dave suggested that in July and August, FES sponsors “Mind Walks North” presentations on elephant seals and to help get new docents.

Staff: Lisa Harper Henderson and Dawn Fiegel

1. Lisa noted some problems with docent scheduling. Certain days need more people, especially for the B shifts. In the ensuing discussion, ideas included:

- • require every docent to do at least one B-shift monthly
- • share with all the docents the schedule problems and possible solutions, and ask for feedback.

2. Dawn is ready to post that the Visitor Center is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11:00--2:00. She has docents who have volunteered for these slots. She hopes that Board members might fill-in if there is a substitute needed so that we are consistent on our open hours.

3. Dawn is pleased with the volunteers who are now helping with the mailings and other tasks.

4. Some docents do not know who is serving on the Board. It was suggested that Board members and our FES staff send a face photo to Dawn for a display in the Visitor Center.

5. Dawn shared some of the new merchandise available for visitors to purchase either at the Table, from the Visitor Center, or on-line. She then shared the generous gift from one of our docents: an I-pad set-up for credit card processing (on the bluff) and a year of on-line service.

President: Dave Bauer

1. In his monthly meetings with the Seals Cooperative Groups, much is accomplished and addressed such as: getting the parking lot ruts filled; plans for more interpretive signs; awareness of seal/people problems on other beaches; etc.

2. If tour buses or specific groups request a special presentation from FES, there is a list of designated speakers. So such requests should always go through the FES office for assignment.

OLD BUSINESS

Video Project: Lynette Harrison

Mark and Loretta Chiolis will return on April 24 for more filming. Lynette and Dave Bauer are planning a thank you dinner for them some time in the summer.

NEW BUSINESS

Volunteers in State Parks Cards

Lisa announced that State Parks has just sent the 2016 cards for docents who have met the yearly hour requirement. She is now distributing them. The cards entitle holders to free state parks day use and some discounts on merchandise.

Honor Brian Hatfield

Bill Goodger announced that Brian Hatfield, Biologist for the US Geological Survey, will be honored for his significant work focused on the Northern Elephant Seals. Brian was the first biologist to note that they were migrating to the beach below the Piedras Blancas Light Station. Since 1993 he has conducted the yearly count of seals and pups; and has also authored scientific

research reports on e-seals. Bill will schedule with Brian his availability to receive the commendation at a FES Docent dinner.

Upcoming Potential Traffic Issues

Mary Forbes shared that the Big Sur Marathon (April) and AMGEN Bicycle Tour (May 18) may cause traffic delays on Highway 1. Lisa will check the dates and alert the docents.

Drones

We discussed a number of recent incidences of drones being flown along the seal beaches, even though they are not allowed. Dave will notify State Parks of our continued concerns.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectively Submitted,
Abby Adams, FES Board Secretary

The next FES Board Meeting will be on May 18 at 1:00.