

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

Board Members Present: Bill Goodger, Lynette Harrison, Christel Chesney, Mary Forbes, Polly Tatton, and Abby Adams

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

Mary Forbes called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the June 15 Board Minutes.

REPORTS FROM COOPERATING GROUPS

San Simeon Tourism Alliance: Lynette Harrison

At the June 28 meeting of the SSTA, Lynette reported that our new website was well received by the members. The group had provided a grant of \$3052 in support of the website re-design. One request made after viewing the website was to add the San Simeon logo to the information featured on the "Plan Your Visit" page. Brandt has now added that. FES is grateful for the support provided by the SSTA.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

National Monument Initiative: Donovan Marley

1. The plans for the upcoming media launch of the National Monument Initiative include:
 - a 4-page brochure
 - four op-ed pieces written by notable individuals
 - a gathering at the Hearst Castle Theatre (date TBD). Donovan shared his hope that the FES Board members and other docents will attend in our blue jackets.
2. As part of the retirement tours being planned by both Representative Capps and Senator Boxer, the Piedras Blancas Light Station may be included.

Treasurer/Finance: Bill Goodger

Bill reported that profits are climbing due to increased merchandise sales. The only area of concern is costs of contract labor, especially the costs of trash collection. Dawn shared that the costs included two months from last year. A discussion ensued on concerns about the amount of trash at Piedras Blancas lately in the parking lots, viewing areas, and on the beach. Dawn will update Dave Bauer that State Parks be made aware about the amount we spend on trash collection; need for trash receptacles provided by State Parks; and the need for more frequent trash pick-up on the beach (knowing that only State Parks personnel are allowed to do this). Office staff will contact the contracted service about the need to improve the pick-up; docents will be reminded about taking trash bags/gloves out to help with trash pick-up. The trash concerns need to be re-visited at upcoming meetings.

Training: Polly Tatton

At this time there have been 7--9 new docents selected, with heavy advertising and recruitment now underway. The goal is to have 20 docents in our fall class. The Board discussed the cost of continuing to invite mentors to the graduation luncheon. The cost per person is \$30. The Board agreed to continue to support this practice.

School Groups: Abby Adams

1. Marcella and Abby have been double checking the invoices from school districts for our payment for some school buses after some discrepancies and high charges were received. A final report on costs this year will be made to the Board in August.
2. Later this month Diana Barnhart and Abby will be meeting with a group of environmental educators from the non profit, One Cool Earth.
3. The School Groups Committee will meet on August 2 to finalize plans for the upcoming school year.

Table: Christel Chesney

1. Four new docents were trained on how to operate the sales table.
2. Credit cards are rarely used on the bluff. Most people appear to have enough cash. Since there is a monthly charge for credit card sales, the Board will re-visit this in the future.

Research: Bill Goodger

1. Bill has been trying to arrange a meeting with Barbara Block (Stanford, Hopkins Marine Center) about the shark research: since NOAA required us to remove the shark buoy, might a submerged buoy be a better option?; and a request for tagging of white sharks in our area.
2. Jenni Rind, a Scottish university student, is now here completing her research study working with Tim Postiff and Bill.
3. Bill shared a summary chart on tagged seals reporting from 2011 to mid June 2016. The data for this year showed a significant increase in yellow tags (San Miguel), green (Ano Nuevo), and orange (rehab). He was surprised by the high number of "undetermined" sex and age. Based on the overall low numbers of seals reported with tags that have readable numbers, Brian and Bill have implemented the new system of reporting all tagged seals, not just those with identifiable numbers.

Publications: Lisa Harper Henderson and Dawn Fiegel

Among Friends (with the National Monument brochure included) will be mailed next week. The Docent Newsletter is in the process of being written.

Staff: Dawn Fiegel

1. Recently there have been increased docent concerns about unsupervised children on the bluff.
2. The operation of the new camera is still being completed with State Parks. As in the past, if there are few elephant seals on the south beach, instead of showing live footage from the camera, there may be a video of elephant seals on the beach (with a notation that it is video footage).
3. The door-locking problems seem to stem from the fact that the door is rotting. Dawn will notify the Cavalier staff.
4. Dawn contacted docents about the Pinedorado Parade and no one volunteered, so she will contact the parade officials that FES will not be involved this year.

Staff: Lisa Harper Henderson

1. There continues to be a shortage of docents for the B-shift. Board members suggested that she alert the docents to this problem. Bill commended Lisa on the use of yellow highlights of docent shortages on the draft schedule.
2. The "Best View" sign is still missing. If it is not located by August, a new sign will be ordered.
3. Lisa shared information about a July 27 hike to the light station. She will send the notice out to all docents.

President's: Mary Forbes for Dave Bauer

1. State Parks will be hiring an Interpretive Ranger 1 who will be available to monitor trouble spots for traffic and any seal issues.
2. State Parks is initiating an intern program and has asked FES to provide an elephant seal overview training session. If there is no other volunteer, Dave will provide the presentation.
3. Dave discussed the issue of squirrel encounters on the bluff. Parks shared that there has been a huge crop of young squirrels at all Central Coast locations. No real solutions were proposed.
4. State Parks Ranger Rob Chambers has placed traffic direction guiding cones/pylons at the parking entrance which seem to be reasonably effective in getting cars off Highway 1 more quickly. Mary noted that last week she witnessed a near traffic/pedestrian crash on Highway 1 at the parking lot entrance.
5. Parks plans to move the large rocks near the south beach boardwalk with a backhoe. Rob Chambers will coordinate with Carol Adams or Mike Walberg to direct the placement of the rocks.
6. Parks has drafted the documents for August public review that will include an e-seal control fence at Laguna de la Corral; and restrooms (designed by Zanella and Craig).
7. New signage has been developed for the Outstanding Natural Area trail.
8. Ranger Harris is organizing a Junior Ranger litter control project.
9. Rob Chambers will set-up a laser car counter at the parking lot entrance and then complete periodic counts.
10. Dave has been asked to share with Sharkey that the Board does not wish to enlist docents as poll monitors, since we continue to have shortages in filling our docent shifts.

Old Business

Abby shared a recent docent concern after the money in the south tube was stolen. Brandt has agreed to design a new tube placement post in the south walkway near the kiosk, but will probably not have it done until December or January.

New Business

Two docents have requested a new high chair to use on the bluff (the previous one has fallen apart). Dawn checked but has not found a portable one for a good price. No action will be taken at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 with an executive session to follow.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 17 at 1:00.

Respectively Submitted,
Abby Adams
Board Member and Secretary