

**Friends of the Elephant Seal
Board Meeting
January 18, 2017**

Board Members Present: Dave Bauer (President) Bill Goodger (Treasurer), Abby Adams (Secretary), Mary Forbes, Polly Tatton, Tim Bridwell, Lynette Harrison, Bob Grosse, Christel Chesney **Board Members Absent:** None **Also Present:** Michele Roest, Lisa Harper Henderson, Donovan Marley, Dawn Fiegel, Robyn Chase

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

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the December 21 Board Minutes.

REPORTS FROM COOPERATING GROUPS

History Project: Michele Roest 1. The second draft of the factual history of FES will be ready by February 10. 2. Michele distributed a list of nine people from the early days of FES who will be included in the interview phase of the project. 3. Michele will make a twenty-minute presentation at the February 11 Docent Appreciation Dinner about the history project.

State Parks: Ranger Robyn Chase 1. The San Simeon Cove Ambassador program (to alert beach-goers to the elephant seals on the beach) has 24 volunteers. The program will continue for two more months. 2. Recently there were three male elephant seals on the beach near the pier. This morning Cubby, who manages the kayak rentals, reported that eight males are now there. Cubby has been very helpful in reporting to State Parks about e-seal activity and using drift wood to show visitors how far they must stay away from the animals on the beach. 3. Robyn reported that nine Morro Bay High School students and their English as a 2nd Language teacher, will volunteer at the cove on Friday, February 3. Prior to coming to the cove, the group will come to Piedras Blancas Rookery at 10:30 for a 45-minute observation. Abby noted that school groups docents will be set-up for another group that arrives at 10:00. She will ask the School Groups Coordinator about the possibility of one docent guiding the high school group, including a table presentation (if it will be set-up). Dawn shared that if the students have cell phones, they could access the foreign language translation while on the bluff. 4. Today State Park Rangers are receiving training from The Marine Mammal Center on how to use boards to move seals. Bob Grosse commented on the seal on the highway yesterday and how TMMC and State Parks had responded. In emergency, life threatening cases such as this, Robyn said to call 911 for immediate support. 5. The final design for the new signs about not bothering wildlife and “no drones” is in process. 6. Robyn thanked FES, specifically Lisa and Dawn, for organizing and donating the small photo books for use with the Ambassador program and with State Parks Ranger education.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

National Monument: Donovan Marley

1. Donovan thanked the Board for its support on the campaign and shared seven documents regarding the January 12, 2017 Presidential Proclamation on California Coastal National Monument Expansion, adding six new areas, including Piedras Blancas. The immediate perceptible change to the public is from the name, *The Piedras Blancas Outstanding Natural Area* to *The Piedras Blancas Unit of the California Coastal National Monument*.
2. In the Now What document, advocates state “Currently, neither The Bureau of Land Management nor California Department of Parks and Recreation nor The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association nor Friends of the Elephant Seals have long-range plans for the management of Piedras Blancas--either jointly or separately. Such a plan is badly needed and should be developed jointly.”
3. Donovan advised that if asked questions by visitors or the Press regarding the President Trump

administration's view or possible action, docents and staff should state that we don't know the answer.

4. Tim Bridwell asked if President Trump had authority to rescind President Obama's proclamation. Donovan shared that the opinion of Department of Interior staff is that a new President cannot rescind; that such action would need to be done by Congress; and this would be unlikely.

5. When asked about the \$819 amount provided by FES, Donovan said that the Rousseau Foundation would transfer that amount to FES for our Intern program.

6. Mary Forbes asked about ADA accessibility of the new trail and was informed to the affirmative and that \$1.4 million will be provided by the California Coastal Trail Project for this. Polly would like information about the trail for the Docent Handbook.

7. Bill Goodger congratulated Donovan and distributed special treats to all in attendance.

Finance: Tim Bridwell

1. There was no meeting of the Finance Committee this month.

2. Tim and Bill Goodger had a conference call including Marcella and a CPA. FES tax forms will be submitted on time.

Treasurer/Finance: Bill Goodger

1. Bill reviewed the December 31, 2016 Balance Sheet showing a balanced budget.

2. When reviewing the New Profit and Loss sheets for 2016, he noted that instead of ending the year at the predicted deficit of \$9611, it was only \$805, much better than 2015.

3. Tim Bridwell noted one error in the 2017 budget that was approved at the last meeting. The \$4000 credit taken in 2016 was actually showing as another \$4000 credit in the 2017 budget, requiring correction and re-approval by the Board. A motion was made and approved to change the 2017 budget as so noted.

Publications: Mary Forbes

1. Mary reported that the Publications Committee is now planning content for upcoming issues of Among Friends.

2. The committee does not publish the Exploratory flyers or outreach cards.

3. Board members shared information about different local reporters and publications that feature information about FES and the rookery.

4. Dave reminded Mary that the Board and/or Mary as the Board liaison are to vet publications prior to them going to print.

5. Mary distributed copies of the Winter 2017 Carpenteria Magazine article, The Seal Watch Saga, about the volunteer efforts to keep humans from bothering harbor seals at the rookery in Carpenteria from January through May birthing season.

Research: Bill Goodger

1. Bill commented on the recent TV KSBY feature on birthing and the seal population. Some of the information reported was incorrect. He advised us, if involved in interviews, to give some written information to the reporters.

2. The committee is reviewing Keith Mueller's paper, The Dive, a very well researched, technical review.

3. Bill is now working with two Cal Poly interns on the male seal counts. He has added two new beaches, Arroyo Tortuga and Arroyo de la Cruz.

4. Scottish researcher, Jenni Rind, will soon submit her thesis based on observational studies last summer of apnea in e-seals at Piedras Blancas. He noted that her methods were sound and the results raised some new questions. He suggested we invite her to present her paper at an upcoming docent dinner.

School Groups: Tim Bridwell

1. From September 1 to December 31 eleven schools, 717 students participated in our programs plus a group of 27 parolees.

Training: Polly Tatton

1. At this time there is one potential spring trainee.

2. The January 7 luncheon/feedback session for the 2016 class was very positive.
3. Because of upcoming travel plans for two of the Training Committee members (Abby and Rusty), two new members have joined: Brenda Prince and Judy May.
4. At the January 25 meeting of the Sierra Club, Lisa will attend to share information on the rookery and our docent program.

Table Sales: Christel Chesney and Bob Grosse

Christel shared that the rainy weather has been limiting table sales.

Membership/Marketing: Christel Chesney and Dawn Fiegel

Christel will host the meeting of the Membership Committee at her house on January 24.

STAFF REPORTS

Staff: Lisa Harper Henderson

1. Lisa showed us the thank you card that will be used this year at the February Docent Appreciation Dinner. She reminded each Board member to submit to her a thank you note to be included in the card.
2. This week she sent docents an on-line feedback questionnaire. She has already received 52 responses. At an upcoming meeting she will present the results.

Staff: Dawn Fiegel

1. For the year-end letter/membership request, Dawn went back two years on the mailing list. She thanked Mary for her help including signing each letter.
2. So far the donations' amounts have increased, but the total memberships have decreased somewhat.
3. The orders from the SSTA grant have been submitted.
4. Due to a leak in the roof, the ceiling collapsed in the office, causing some disruption. The repairs and tile replacements are being made.
5. The new Whale Trail website information is causing much confusion on the location of the Piedras Blancas Rookery and the visitor center. Dawn is working on having the information corrected.
6. Dawn inquired about the location of some presentation equipment purchased for the National Monument project. Dave will follow-up.
7. There are many concerns about the rookery parking lot pot holes. The Board members suggested that CalTrans be informed of the need to grade the parking lot after every storm.

SPECIFIC ITEMS/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Drones: Dave Bauer

Dave reported that the federal government seems to consider drones as a new educational opportunity. State Parks will only intervene on drones if they impact wildlife or are flown over people.

Docent of the Year: Dave Bauer

Dave stated that this would be discussed during Executive session.

By Laws: Tim Bridwell and Dave Bauer

1. Dave shared written comments about the National Council of Nonprofits Annual Board Tune-up Checklist that was distributed on line to Board members by Abby.
2. Tim distributed a list of Board members' term dates now that the terms are three years instead of two. A few corrections were noted.
3. The By Laws Review Committee has been updating the by laws in two meetings, with many additional hours by Tim. Tim will send the revisions to Board members via e-mail. Highlights include:
 - the March meeting will be the officer elections and annual meeting
 - committee chairs are to be Board members
 - the Board secretary is to keep (or cause to be kept) minutes from all committee meetings

-every three years, there should be a 3rd party financial review.

4. The Committee recommends that in addition to the By Laws, there be an Operations Manual to cover conduct and activities of FES.

5. The By Laws and Operations Manual should be reviewed and acknowledged yearly by the Board members.

6. Action on the revised By Laws will be taken at the February Board meeting.

Employee Sick Leave: Tim Bridwell

This item will be discussed during executive session.

Selection and Appointment of Vice President, Vice Treasurer, and Secretary: Dave Bauer

1. It was moved, seconded and passed that Lynette Harrison is Vice President.

2. The choice of the other officers including vice officers will be made in March.

3. Abby noted that she will be traveling for many months starting in September, so her secretary role and director position will need to be replaced soon.

Speakers' List and Scheduling: Dave Bauer

1. Dave will be the speaker for the first 2017 Exploratory on Birthing and Nursing on January 21. He explained that the slides and presentation have been shortened to last 20--30 minutes followed by a visit to the rookery. He envisions having at least five FES "speakers", who have been vetted to be such. Exploratories and presentations to other groups will have an office gate keeper to assign the speakers and record the engagements.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Dave Bauer

Rogue Docents Policy

Occasionally a person wearing an FES blue jacket will be at the bluff or other seal beaches when not officially scheduled. This has caused confusion for other scheduled docents and State Parks Rangers. The Board agreed that only docents who have officially been scheduled by the Docent Coordinator are authorized to wear the blue jackets and represent FES as docents. When not on assigned duties, the FES docents should not wear their blue jackets (but are encouraged to visit the bluff and share their knowledge of the seals with their friends, etc.).

SSTA: Lynette Harrison

1. Lynette met with the group on January 17.

2. She provided the Board with an update on the Whale Trail event. FES is providing hats for those participating in the event.

3. The local hotels and motels are interested in which countries foreign visitors are from. Docents will be encouraged to add this information to the log books at the end of each shift.

4. The SSTA members are very complimentary of FES efforts. Lynette noted that SSTA has been very helpful financially to FES mission.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm with an executive session thereafter.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 15 at 1:00 pm.

Respectively Submitted,

Abby Adams Board Member and Secretary