

Friends of the Elephant Seal
Meeting Board of Directors
September 20, 2017
(Prepared 10/12/17)

Friends of the Elephant Seal is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating people about elephant seals and other marine life and to teaching stewardship of the central coast of California

Present: Tim Bridwell, Lynette Harrison, Polly Tatton, Bill Goodger, Stephen Beck, Sue King , Mary Forbes, Kathy Dowding, Bob Grosse, Staff Members- Lisa Harper Henderson and Wendy Sheridan Visitor-Robyn Chase, State Parks.

Absent: None

Open: 1:00 PM

Minutes of August 16: It was moved to approve the minutes of the August 16 Board meeting. Moved Lynette 2nd Sue. Approved.

Board Actions:

Committee Mission Statements: Lynette reported that Committee Mission Statements had been received to date from Polly and Stephen. She requested the Committee chairpersons who had not yet done so to submit Committee Mission Statements by e-mail within the next week.

Grant: Tim commented that, as he had announced at the FES Dinner Sept 16, a Grant of \$25,000 from had been received and deposited. The name of the grantor organization is not to be disclosed until permission is received from them.

Committee Reports:

Staff – Kathy. Kathy reported (**Appendix A**) on various items related to Staff. She provided a listing of Visitor Center Clicker Counts for May thru September. A general discussion arose over why the Visitor Counts provided by the Chamber-of-Commerce Office were higher than the FES Office.

Financial Committee/Treasurer's Report – Bill. Bill provided Financial Reports dated Sept 18, 2017. He commented that the Vanguard Fund amounted to \$47,383, close to the \$50,000 target. A general discussion arose on what impact the income from the grant would have on the 2017 budget. . He noted that with recent grants totaling \$30,000 and improvements in Membership, Tube Donations and Office Sales income offsetting the decrease in Table Sales/Donations income, it appears that we may achieve a balanced budget for the year. The Finance Committee will review the status in preparing the 2018 budget. The P&L Statement shows a current Net Income of \$32,036.43 with the grants included.

Publications-Mary. Mary provided a handout on plans for the Among Friends edition for the winter quarter. She also reported that an index for Among Friends by subject and date had been provided to the office.

Research-Bill. Bill provided a report (**Appendix B**) on research activities including a detailed report of a planned pilot research project by CalPoly professor Heather Liwang which is planned for the breeding season of 2018. The project involves tagging and weighing wieners at the Piedras Blancas colony. A lengthy discussion arose questioning how this study would be done and its impact on the e-seals during the breeding and mating season. It was agreed that questions on the project should be sent to Bill and that the subject would be revisited at the November Board meeting or at a specially called Board meeting if appropriate.

Schools-Stephen. Stephen reported (**Appendix C**) on School tour activity. He commented that State Park interpreters came and assisted at the first two school tours this month. Robyn Chase commented that she is working on a 'virtual field trip' to the e-seals for possible use by schools and other organizations at a distance from the area. She agreed to come to a Board meeting to explain the program when it is completed.

Training-Polly. Polly provided a report (**Appendix D**) on training plans. She commented that there are 17 docents in training this fall and that mentoring is currently undergoing. She reported that she has resigned as a FES Board member and as Chair of the Training Committee. Her final Board meeting will be October 2017.

Table-Sue. Sue provided a report on Table Activities (**Appendix E**). She commented that several Table people are traveling this month resulting in a number of vacant days. She is meeting with the office staff this week to discuss table merchandise and prices. She is heading up the FES display table at the Lopez Lake Outdoor Discovery Festival on October 7 and needs additional docents to assist her.

Development-Tim. Tim noted several activities in the Development area:

Outreach-The Outreach team is making a list of possible target activities and dates. They are preparing a catalog of photos available.

SSTA –Tim/ Lynette submitted a grant request for \$9366 to cover printing of FES rack cards, Among Friends newsletters, and invitations to the 20th Anniversary program. The grant was approved by SSTA in the full amount.

Membership-Wendy reported that the October Membership renewal letters will go out this week. The letter will include an envelope for making pledges and sending back membership checks. A draft of the end-of-the-year letter will be ready for review at the October Board meeting. Wendy also reported plans to have an open house at the office over Thanksgiving weekend to celebrate the 20th Anniversary.

A discussion ensued on possible FES participation at the Cambria Farmer's Market to promote FES. Lynette agreed to investigate the subject.

Old Business:

Docent Calls-Lynette. Lynette reviewed the Docent Calls by Board members and asked Board members to send Lisa any feedback from the calls. She suggested adding the Board member names to our "for Docents" section to our FES website.

Pinedorado Parade-Kathy: Kathy reported on the Pinedorado Parade participation and float design. The FES entry received First Prize in its category.

History Project/20th Anniversary-Lynette. Lynette reported that there will be a table at the November Dinner with materials from the history project. Printing of invitations to the 20th Anniversary program and for a 20th Anniversary booklet will be covered by a grant from SSTA. A question was asked if there would be t-shirts or pins made up for the 20th Anniversary and several people recalled hearing that 20th Anniversary pins had been designed. Wendy agreed to check on possible status.

Presidents Report:

ESAG Meeting-Lynette. Lynette reported on the most recent ESAG meeting. Signage for drone restriction appears to be stalled; no completion date is available. It was suggested that a special tour of the bluffs be arranged for the Hearst Castle Docents in return for their support of FES. Tim reported that storage space at the State Parks-owned Piedras Blancas motel is available and has been offered to us by State Parks at n charge. Tim agreed to plan our possible use of the space.

Planning Retreat –Tim. Tim commented that felt that it would be appropriate to schedule a long-range planning retreat in the near future.

New Business:

20th Anniversary Publicity-Lynette. Lynette reported that docent Cam Arnold had agreed to produce publicity for the 20th Anniversary program. Her effort will be voluntary at no charge to FES.

Mark & Loretta Chiolis-Lynette. Lynette recommended that an FES Lifetime Membership be presented to Mark and Loretta Chiolis in recognize for Mark's contributions of videoing the e-seals. Lynette will make the presentation on behalf of he FES Board.

Replacement for Exploratories-Tim. Tim commented that the Exploratory programs held recently were unsatisfactory and attracted few people. He proposed as a replacement, holding special tours at the bluffs covering much of the material of the Exploratories while viewing the animals.

Grant Application Review-Tim. Tim reflected that grant submissions that are other than routine be submitted to the FES Board for review and approval before being sent. This should avoid misunderstands as to the intended use of the grant and ensure that the designated action funded by the grant is planned and accomplished.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 3:31 to Executive Session.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 18 at 1:00 pm.

Submitted:

Bob Grosse
Secretary

APPENDIX A

FES Staff Update – September Board Meeting – 2017

- See attached report for “traffic” and associated receipts in the Visitor Center during office hours for August and MTD for September. August was the best month to date for the Visitor Center.
- Just when we think we have finalized the Staff job descriptions, something new is identified that needs some clarification. We will finalize them soon and distribute to the Board.
- Performance Reviews for Staff are in progress and on track for the following commitments. Thanks to the Board for their input.
 - By August 1st – Docent Coordinator - Completed
 - By August 18th – Bookkeeper - Completed
 - By September 1st – Office Coordinator – In progress
- Computer/Email resolution – Office 365 has been ordered; currently waiting for receipt. Michael Harrison(Growth & Technology, Inc.) is following up.
- Docent Newsletter – Kathy and Lisa met by phone with Michael (Growth & Technology, Inc.) to review possible changes to the software used for the newsletter. Lisa is currently reviewing a program called “Campaign Monitor “ which looks promising.

APPENDIX B

9-20-2017

Research committee report:

1. Keith Mueller is still working with the committee on his paper for the docent website "Dives of elephant seals".
2. The committee has begun to finish the last edits of a student from Scotland, Jenni Rind's paper on "Effects of Age on Apnea and Eupnoea in Subadult and Adult male northern elephant seals". She spent 5 weeks last summer working with the committee on this project collecting the data. We would like to put her paper on Apnea in the docent only website.
3. The paper written by the interns is now up on the docent only website entitled "10 New Insights about male NES based on results of 3- year survey during molting/breeding seasons".
4. A committee meeting is scheduled on October 2, 2017 at the blue sky cafe in San Luis Obispo at noon to plan the next docent dinner. Tim Bridwell has graciously consented to be the MC.
5. During the board meeting I will update the board on the plans for research during the breeding season by Heather Liwanig, Cal Poly professor tagging and weighing weaners. Here is what I will be talking about.

Heather gave a presentation last April which is on the docent only portion of the website:

Objectives of a pilot study breeding season 2018:

mark, tag, and weigh weaners

by marking with hair dye initially

then flipper tag them later and weight them

Questions I have asked since between May and when she left for Antarctica Sept 10

1. Won't marking the neonates with the Lanugo coat be problematic because the hair coat usually is lost after 2-6wks?

We will mark the pups during the nursing period so they can be resighted from a distance. by doing this we will know if pup still with mother and can estimate weaning date. If a docent or intern tells us they have seen a marked pup without mom that allows us to find it and tag and wgt it before the mark is shed. So we need to resight regularly so we can catch weaners before the mark is no longer visible. We will also tag and weigh unmarked weaner when the opportunity arises-this provides seals for future tracking and resights. Key point-she will mark pups before weaning to track weaning dates.

2. If a docent or intern tells us there is a marked pup without a mother then that allows us to plan for tagging and weighing. In this case this might be at VP-3 how will you weigh the weaner when you said weighing would only happen at remote beaches and with as crowded as either the north or south beach will be thus maybe safety or harrassment issues which would be challenging at best.

I was hoping to have the interns survey the remote beaches daily so that we can note the weaning dates. If however, we end up with marked animals at VP-3 we would plan to perform the tagging and weighing at dawn to avoid public traffic as much as possible.

when you said you would also tag and weigh unmarked weaners when the opportunity arises. Do you mean that this will occur at remote beaches or do you plan to do this on unmarked weaners at VP-3.

We would likely only target unmarked animals for tagging and weighing at the remote beaches.

Bill-My plan has been from the beginning to train both interns and docents to do the daily resights on the marked pups during January and February. This hopefully would reduce the potential harrassment issues(people on the beach) that the public might be exposed to. All i need is probably 5 docents and with the interns and myself hopefully covering each day. I would train both the docents(citizen scientists)and interns to resight at the beaches chosen. I have taken heather to a number of remote beaches-arroyo del corral;middle beach;arroyo tartuga, etc. I am meeting with her graduate students and her research assistants to plan the research that will probably start in January 2018.

Appendix C

School Committee Report To The Board - September 2107

Lisa and I sent out letters to the six schools that we are offering sponsorship to this 2017/2018 school year. Two of the schools have contacted us on our offer.

Other schools are also contacting us to schedule visits. Lisa is working with the school contacts to get their visits scheduled, get our school materials out to them and the outings posted on SignUp. We now have a number school outings posted on SignUp and docents are signing up to work them.

Since our last Board meeting we have had our first two outings for this 2017/2018 school year. On August 29th Dunn School from the Santa Ynez Valley brought out 70 middle school students to the bluff. This past Saturday the John Adams Middle School from Santa Monica came to the bluff with 175 students with 60 to 75 parents! The number of 175 students was a late and unexpected huge increase from the 95 that were scheduled. Peter was scheduled to be the lead for the outing. As the number of students began to soar, Peter and I discussed alternative ways to run this particular outing. We did not want our docents to have an unpleasant experience trying take responsibility for very large groups of students. This may have been the first time we did not put the students into groups and assign the groups to individual docents. We told the teacher that she and her parents would have full responsibility for the students. We placed 9 docents on the bluff to talk with visiting students about the elephant seals and used four docents to run our science table presentations. Despite the overwhelming number of students, initial reports suggest that the day went very well for all concerned. We will be evaluating this outing further and deciding how we might deal with any future school groups that should go over 100 students. (In the past the Grizzly Academy had been the one exception to our 100 student limit.)

At our next new docent training session, Peter and I plan to give our new docents an introduction to our school program and invite them to consider working on our program. Finally, below is a copy of the email note I received from the appreciate teacher for this school year's first outing.

Stephen Beck

Wow, Stephen we cannot thank you enough for your wonderful crew and the engaging activities you set up for our students.

We had a fantastic time and hope to do another trip sometime in the future. Keep spreading the scientific love!

Very sincerely,

Meg West

STEM Teacher - Environmental Sustainability Coordinator - [Dunn School](#)

APPENDIX D

9.20.2107 Training Committee Report to Board.

Fall Training Classes are in progress.

Sept 9, Sept 23, Oct 7, Oct 21

We are training 17 new docents

7 Spring Docents

10 Fall Docents (includes Wendy, Office Coordinator)

Mentoring has begun and will be completed October 20.

Graduation is October 21- Board members welcome, please RSVP

Home Address of 2017 docents:

Cambria 5

Morro Bay 4

1 each-

Los Osos

Atascadero

Cambria

Cayucos

SLO

Grover Beach

Santa Margarita

Pittsburg

Appendix E

TABLE REPORT

Sorry not all September days are covered (still working on it!). Three regular table docents are on vacations this month - part of those "holes" have been filled by are three new docents who are scheduling the table for a couple days each month.

New stuffy items have generated more foot traffic interest for the table.

Lopez Lake Saturday October 7

Noon - 4 Pm

6th - Annual

Outdoor Discovery Festival

Still need docents to help in the afternoon.

And another docent to help set up in the morning.

We will have a pop-up, table, new banner, e-Seal skull, newsletters, and our large e-seal stuffies.