

FORT ROSS NEWS

June 2024 Newsletter | Fort Ross Conservancy



Foreword

IAN TAYLOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we welcome the coming days of summer, I am filled with excitement and optimism about the season ahead. Our team has been hard at work preparing programs and events designed to connect you with diverse cultures and stunning landscapes. This time of year brings a unique energy to the Sonoma coast. Longer days allow for more opportunities to explore the natural beauty that make Metini/Fort Ross and Salt Point so special. From immersive historical tours to guided nature walks and talks, there is something for everyone to enjoy. We are thrilled to see families, history enthusiasts, and nature lovers come together to experience these remarkable parks.



OPEN DAILY 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

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In addition to our summer activities, I am particularly excited to announce several new partnership opportunities that will enhance our educational efforts and expand our reach into the Sonoma/Mendocino communities. These collaborations will allow us to expand our outreach, bringing the stories and lessons of the coast to a broader audience. Some of these partnerships are covered in this newsletter with more to be announced as plans are solidified.

As we embark on this exciting journey, I invite you to join us in celebrating the summer season by joining us at Metini/Fort Ross and Salt Point State Park. Whether you're a longtime supporter or a first-time visitor, there are countless ways to get involved and make a difference.

Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm! Together, we can ensure that this section of the Sonoma coast remains a treasured resource for generations to come.

With warm regards,

Ian Taylor
Executive Director
Fort Ross Conservancy



Updates

The Visitor Center Bookshop

The Visitor Center is restocked with books, toys, jewelry, and more!

Harbor Seals

This year, our volunteers have counted 10 pups along the shoreline in Fort Ross State Historic Park (FRSHP)! They are growing up quickly! A number have already been weaned and are learning to hunt without help from mom.

Happenings in FRSHP

Alaska Native Day Weekend

We were honored to welcome the Alaska Native Community back to Fort Ross for a very memorable weekend sharing Alaska Native culture, blessings, stories, and commemorating their ancestors who were brought to the Fort during the Russian Era (1812–1842). We ate cultural foods and learned Unangaŋ values, crafts, and the history of Alaska Native people here at Metini-Fort Ross.

Alaska Native Day is an annual event that started 10 years ago in 2014. This event pays tribute to the Alaskans who were brought to Fort Ross against their will and to highlight their importance to the operation of the Fort as craftsmen and skilled hunters.

Thank you to the Elders, those who flew in from Alaska, and all the Alaska Native and local community members who came and helped organize the weekend.



KelpFest, Mendocino

Kelp Forest Recovery Day on Big River Beach was fantastic! This event was part of KelpFest in Mendocino running from May 18 to June 16. Fort Ross had a stall with different marine mammals and invertebrates that live in kelp forests, coloring in pages, and games.

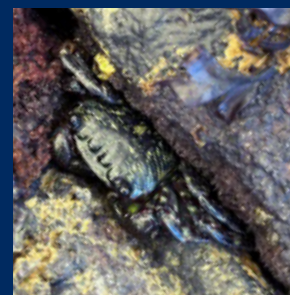
More than 90% of California's Kelp Forests have been lost over the past 10 years due to an outbreak of purple sea urchins. Fort Ross has partnered with Greater Farallones Association and NOAA to support their Kelp Forest restoration work on the Sonoma Coast. We will be sharing their work with the community and creating a kelp curriculum for students – stay tuned.

Photos (top 3) by Patrick Webster

Snapshot Cal Coast

A big thank you to everyone who came to help photograph coastal species for our Snapshot Cal Coast bioblitz event!! We had a wonderful time searching the coast and it was very rewarding. Our citizen science volunteers made 263 observations and documented 127 different species. We found some awesome marine invertebrates in the tidepools such as this gumboot chiton and striped shore crab as well as very strange looking peanut worms!

Are you still keen to contribute? We hold a number of bioblitz events throughout the year. It is a great way for both kids and adults to contribute to science and take notice of the natural world. Many people use the iNaturalist database for fun and for work including teachers, scientists and engineers.



CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES



California State Parks Events

SUNDAY JUNE 30

Fort Ross State Historic Park

Sea Otter Table

Drop in anytime from 11 am to 1 pm outside the Fort Ross Visitor Center to learn about sea otters and play a quick game to learn about their importance as keystone species!



Salt Point State Park

Wave Worn Wonders Walk

Join us at Gerstle Cove parking lot near the Salt Point trailhead at 1 pm for an easy 1-mile walk to explore coastal geology and learn about what lies beneath the surface!





Call for summer program support

CAMP FUNDRAISER

Will you help us with our goal to raise \$2000 to host the Action Network summer holiday camp for local children?

Coastal Connections Day Camp

The Action Network is partnering with FRC and Arena Elementary to provide a no-cost day camp program that prioritizes local low-income and ESL families.

The day camp will give students the opportunity to explore and learn about the beautiful Sonoma Coast and its wildlife in a hands-on, unforgettable experience that combines art, science, and history in fun coastal activities!

The 6 week series of biweekly day camps will run from July to August for students in Kindergarten to 6th grade.

We hope to bring more students to the coast to foster their love and stewardship of our state parks by providing meaningful, enriching, and exciting experiences. The more we raise, the more financial assistance and no-cost programs we can offer to local school kids!



Creating community wellness and strengthening families

We practice the whole community wellness approach to support thriving, resilient, connected communities along the Redwood Coast From Timber Cove to Elk.

[Click here or scan](#) →
to help us raise \$2000!



Marine Ecology Program (MEP)

Apply now for Fall 2024!

Mole Crabs

Beach time is always a hit during our MEPs and now students can learn more about the beach ecosystem thanks to a new curriculum provided by the LiMPETS program!

LiMPETS= Long-term Monitoring Program and Experiential Training for Students.

This program has two components: an in-class lesson to learn background on mole crabs and the sampling technique for the second part, a field experiment on the beach in Sandy Cove.

Why mole crabs?

Mole crabs live in the sand in the wash zone. They are filter feeders using feathery antennae to collect and then eat plankton from the water.

Mole crabs are:

- One of the most important herbivores on the beach
- A food source for birds, mammals, and humans
- Bait for recreational fishing
- Indicator species for toxins such as domoic acid that is a neurotoxin produced by a type of plankton they eat.

Monitoring data real-life application

All the data collected by students will be used by scientists to monitor mole crabs!

Enquiries

If you are interested in bringing your class to Fort Ross, email mep@fortross.org or click [here](#) to apply

For other activities and information about the MEP, click [here](#)

Photographs on mole crabs and sampling methods sourced from LiMPETS



An MEP in
Sandy Cove



Mole Crab
Sampling



Tours

Explore the natural and cultural history both inside and outside the fort compound walls under the guidance of a knowledgeable tour guide.

Public Tours

Fort Tours

Tours start at the visitor center
Cost = \$15/person
Children 10 and under are free.

Call or email us ahead of time to verify availability and timing.

Private Tours

Book a tour to suit your schedule

Available in Fort Ross State Historic Park (FRSHP) or at Salt Point State Park (SPSP).
Tell us what you're most interested to see and we'll customize your tour.


Cost: \$25/person per hour (\$100 minimum)
Children 10 and under are free.


Call House Tours

Free to the public. Donations appreciated!

The first Saturday and Sunday of every month from 1 pm-4 pm.

Contact us to book:

 707-847-3437

 info@fortross.org

Visitor Center:

19005 Coast Highway One,
Jenner, CA 95450
Open 10 am – 4:30 pm daily



Job Openings

PART TIME HOURLY

Visitor Services Associate

Would you like to work on the Sonoma Coast? We are looking for a new Visitor Services Associate at Fort Ross to join our team! The role of this person will be to welcome and assist visitors to the Fort Ross State Historic Park in a warm and professional manner, provide information about the park's history, exhibits, and activities, as well as operate the bookstore and handle fees and admissions. Additionally, they may facilitate educational programs/tours, offer guidance on trails and points of interest, and ensure visitors have a fulfilling experience while adhering to park rules and regulations. All of these are done while demonstrating exemplary customer service.

Responsibilities

- Recount information pertinent to Metini/Fort Ross
 - Cultural and Natural History
 - Local flora & fauna
 - Park sites, pathways, parking rules, payment process
- Campground Procedures
- Visitor Center Procedures
 - Visitor Center opening and closing procedures
 - Fort Compound opening & closing Procedures
 - Kiosk operation procedures
 - Restock and face Inventory
 - Answer phone, take messages
 - General FRC office tasks
- Utilize the Shopify Point of Sale System
- Utilize the State Park R2S2 System

Minimum Qualifications:

- Possession of a valid CA Driver's License, driving is required.
- Ability to read, write and speak English.
- Ability to follow written or verbal directions.
- Weekend availability.

Desired Qualifications:

- Bilingual Spanish/English.
- Flexible schedule.

To apply, please submit your resume, cover letter, and three professional references to info@fortross.org. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Volunteer Opportunities

Fort Ross State Historic Park

Volunteering is a great excuse to get outdoors and come down to the coast. If you are a bird nerd, love hiking the coast, interested in marine mammals, or enjoy tidepooling and gardening, we have a number of opportunities to get involved with.

The perks | Log your hours as a California State Parks Volunteer
 40 hours = a district day use pass for the next year.
 200+ hours = a statewide day use pass for the next year.

DOCENTS

Help with hands-on activities in our education programs, lead tours, or to interact with visitors inside the Fort or within the park. Volunteers help inspire our visitors and students to appreciate the cultural and natural history of the spectacular Sonoma Coast.



VISITOR CENTER GARDEN

Help us create a Pollinator Education Garden in front of the Visitor Center! The garden is the first thing visitors see when they arrive at Fort Ross. Our goal is to promote native plant and pollinator conservation.



SEA LION SURVEYS

Sea lions are so entertaining to watch! Every month, our volunteers meet to count the Steller and California sea lions in FRSHP in a 1.5 h survey (adding to a 10 year dataset) followed by lunch.



Email dioned@fortross.org for more information and to sign up!



Pictured in FRSHP

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS ON THE COAST

Coastal naturalist, Dr. Dione Deaker

>>> RACCOON

May 27

A bold raccoon in front of the visitor center sniffing around the picnic tables at the end of the Memorial Day weekend. A good reminder to dispose of your trash appropriately!



>>> BRITTLE STAR

April 30

While tidepooling during an MEP, a student found this brittlestar under a rock!

Genus *Ophiopholis*

YOUR PHOTO IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER?

Send in a photo of wildlife (plant, animal, fungi etc) or a nice photo you took in FRSHP, Salt Point, or nearby. We will select a few of the submitted photos or photos posted to iNaturalist from the area to be in the next newsletter

Send to mep@fortross.org with the subject "photo submission for newsletter"



>>> TOLMIE'S STAR TULIP

Photo by Hank Birnbaum

June 2

This beautiful flower also known as "Cat's Ears" (*Calochortus tolmiei*) was flowering just outside the visitor center.