

FORT ROSS NEWS

May Newsletter | Fort Ross Conservancy



Foreword

IAN TAYLOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Spring is in full bloom along the Sonoma Coast, and with it comes a renewed sense of energy and connection to this special place we all cherish. At Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC), we're embracing the season with a full calendar of programs that celebrate the heritage and nature at Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks. From marine mammal walks to cultural celebrations, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

We're also hard at work preparing for our summer events, including the Art and Ocean Festival in July. This unique gathering brings together artists, conservationists, and community members in celebration of our coastal environment. Stay tuned for details!



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OPEN DAILY 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Thank you for your continued support of Fort Ross Conservancy. Whether you join us on the trails, in the orchard, or at one of our upcoming events, we look forward to welcoming you soon.

Warmly,

Ian Taylor
Executive Director,
Fort Ross Conservancy

Support FRC while grocery shopping at Oliver's!

Ask for a FREE community card at [Oliver's Market](#) in Santa Rosa, Windsor, and Cotati and Oliver's will donate 3% of your purchase to FRC! During registration, select Fort Ross Conservancy as your chosen non-profit.

Your gift will help us to:

- Inspire the next generation of ocean stewards by enriching our Marine Science Program with cutting-edge equipment and scholarships for underserved schools.
- Support conservation initiatives in FRSHP
- Expand accessibility across trails and facilities, so everyone can experience the beauty and history of Fort Ross.
- Foster partnerships with diverse communities to amplify the stories, cultures, and voices that make Fort Ross truly unique.



Updates and Events

Spring has arrived!

The wildlife flowers are blooming, birds are nesting and whales are swimming by. The bluffs are covered in a carpet of goldfields, blue-eyed grass, Douglas iris and so many more beautiful natives.

Fort Closed for Fumigation

The Fort and Visitor Center will be closed this week from Monday the 12th May to Thursday the 15th.

Spring Events

Did you meet us at The North Bay Science Discovery Day in Santa Rosa, the Fisherman's Festival in Bodega Bay or the Fort Ross School Sunday Markets? If so, welcome and thank you for signing up for the newsletter!

Reef Campground is OPEN

Camp among the redwoods on the Sonoma coast!

Reef Campground has reopened after a wet winter. Campsites are available by walk-in bookings only. The campground is \$40 per night with one vehicle included. It is \$10 for an additional vehicle.

The campground is a 30 min walk to Sandy Cove and is a great place for hiking, tide pooling and surfing at Mystos surf break.

Please note: there is no running water. There is potable water at the Fort Ross Visitor Center.

For more information, [click here.](#)



Cayla Kalani



Reef Campground



Spring in Fort Ross State Historic Park & Visitor Center

MPA Collaborative

Marine Protected Area Training

With representatives from the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, California State Parks, US Coast Guard, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sonoma County District Attorney's Office, The Marine Mammal Center, Stewards of the Coast Redwoods, Sea Ranch and Fort Ross Conservancy.



Harbor Seal Pups!

It is peak pupping season at Fort Ross!

Please be mindful while visiting Fort Ross Cove at this critical time of year. Moms may not return if humans are too close to the pup onshore. [NOAA](#) recommends that you and your pets maintain a distance of **100 yards** (about the length of a football field) from seals..

Fort Ross Visitor Center is a community center and space. If you like to hold a training, workshop, or community event, email info@fortross.org or call the visitor center (10 am-4:30 pm) at (707)847-3437

Alaska Native Day

May 16-17, 9 am - 4 pm

Bringing Alaska Natives together to honor the past, acknowledge the present and prepare for the future

The Alaska Native Community at Metini-Fort Ross welcomes all to Alaska Native Day May 17 & 18, 2025. Please join us as we continue to honor our Alaska Native history in the California lands of the Kashia Pomo. We will be celebrating our cultural practices through the sharing of our traditional foods and stories from our elders.

Alaska Natives have a long history of relationship to Metini through the Russian hunting expeditions in the 1800's. Alaska Natives were forcefully brought from their homelands by the Russian American Company to build Fort Ross and hunt sea otters for the benefit of the Russian American Company and at great cost to the Alaska Natives.



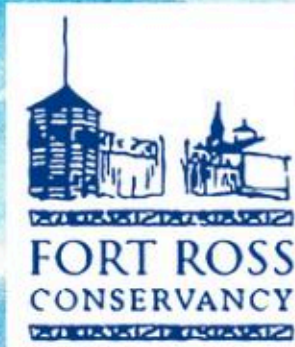
The Alaska Native community is grateful to the Kashia Pomo for welcoming us on their lands so we may pay tribute to our ancestors and continue to strengthen our community. Please join us to learn more of our Alaska Native history and continuing cultural practices.

A special thank you to The Aleut Foundation, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Pacific Northwest Aleut Council, Ounalashka Corporation, and Fort Ross Conservancy for their generous support of past events.

Saturday: 9: 30 am - Welcome, **10 am** - Ceremony at the Beach, **12 pm** - Lunch at the Fort, **1 pm** - History/Current Day Alaska Native Presentation at the Fort and kids craft, **2 pm** Dancers and/or Craft, **4 pm** - Clean up.

Sunday: 9:30 am - Walk to the Cemetery & Ceremony, **12 pm** - Lunch, **1 pm** - History/Current Day Alaska Native Presentation, **2 pm** - Craft, **4 pm** - Wrap up.

For accessibility information, email info@fortross.org



Ocean & Art Festival

AT FORT ROSS STATE HISTORIC PARK

Celebrate creativity, culture, and coastal beauty

LOCAL ART | MUSIC | ARTISAN CRAFTS
FOOD VENDORS | PERFORMANCES

Engage with local artists and conservation groups in a historic setting against the breathtaking backdrop of the Sonoma Coast. Fun for all ages, this unique summer event brings together the spirit of the ocean and the richness of artistic expression.

Bring your friends and family for a day of inspiration, community, and coastal magic!

Proceeds benefit the interpretive and educational programs of the Fort Ross Conservancy

**SATURDAY
JULY 26,
10 AM - 4 PM**

MADE USING CANVA

Top three trails in FRSHP this spring!

1

FORT ROSS COVE TO CLAM BEACH

Wind along the coastal bluffs through fields of wildflowers.



2

REEF TRAIL

The trail starts at the beach below the Fort (Sandy Cove). It is ~30 minutes to reef campground



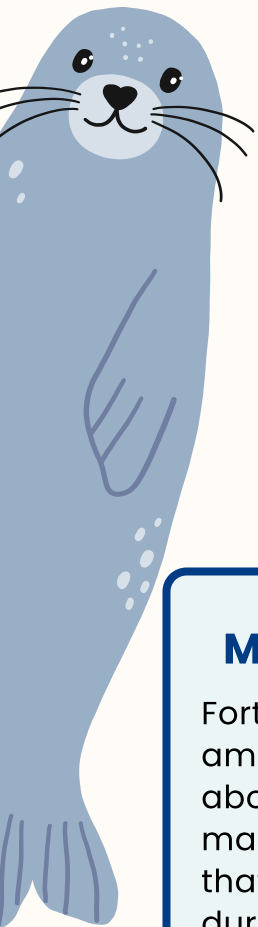
3

STANLEY S. SPYRA REDWOOD GROVE

The trail starts 0.5 mi up Fort Ross Road opposite the Historic Orchard where you can enjoy views over FRSHP.



Look for the Saint Andreas fault line marked on the road



AMAZING MARINE MAMMALS



SPECIAL 3.5 h PROGRAM: Homeschool families & groups

Marine Ecology Program

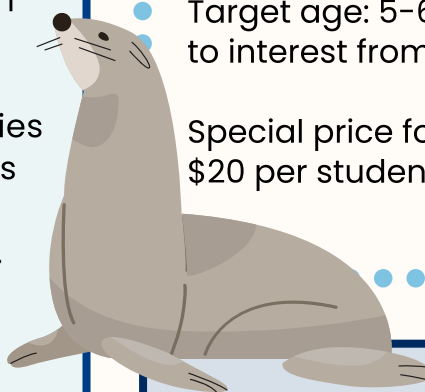
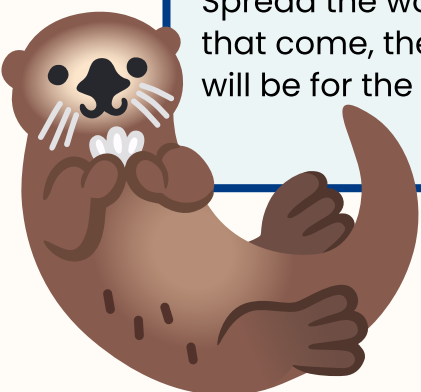
Fort Ross State Historic Park is an amazing place to see and learn about resident and migrating marine mammals and the species that were hunted in these waters during the 1800s Fur Trade that operated out of the historic Fort.

Students will discover:

- How many harbor seals call Fort Ross home? Count seals like a marine biologist!
- How to tell the difference between pinniped species
- Check out that spout: whales of California
- What happened to the Sonoma Coast sea otters?

We will offer more programs for homeschools if there is interest from families.

Spread the word!! The more families that come, the better the program will be for the kids (for games!).



Details

Target age: 5-6th grade (open to interest from other grade)

Special price for first program: \$20 per student, \$5 per adult

Day Plan

10:30 am - welcome to Fort Ross State Historic Park + whales! 🐳

11 am - Sea lion hike

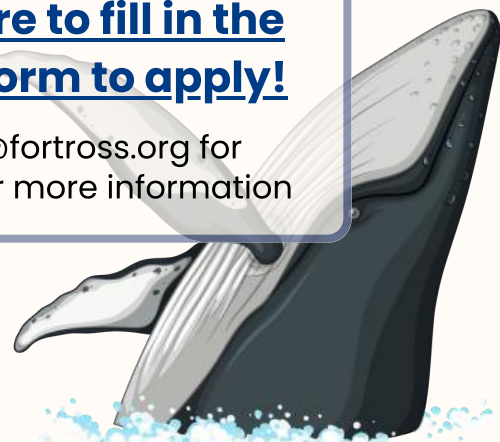
12:15 pm - lunch

12:45 pm - Sea otter fur trade in the Fort and harbor seals

2 pm - Program ends

[Click here to fill in the google form to apply!](#)

Email mep@fortross.org for questions or more information



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, teaching, interested in marine mammals, or enjoy tide pooling 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.

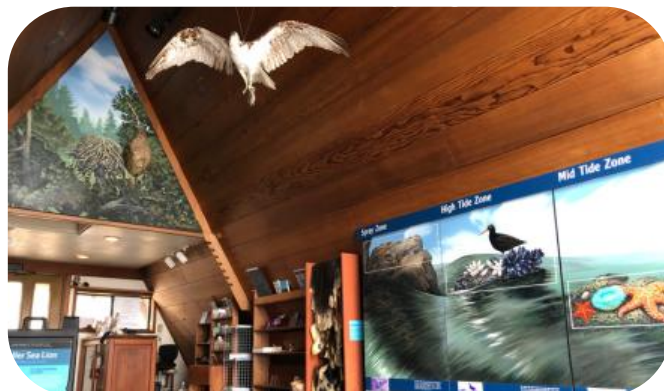
GERSTLE COVE VISITOR CENTER

We are hoping to reopen the visitor center overlooking Gerstle Cove in Salt Point State Park but to do so we need your support! We are looking for volunteers to interact with campers and visitors to the park. The inside has beautiful murals of local wildlife and taxidermy.



DOCENTS

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



SURVEYS AND NURSERY

Help us survey, grow, and plant blue violets to restore habitat for endangered silverspot butterflies. In spring, surveys will start in the spring and we will be setting up a greenhouse to grow plants! We are also looking for people interested in surveying butterflies in summer.



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

Spotted by Heartwood
Charter 4th graders!



Spotted by: Cayla Kalani, FRC



Spotted by: Amanda Stephens



WILDLIFE

SPOTTED IN FORT ROSS SHP

>>> SPOTTED LEOPARD DORID

May 6

This nudibranch was found in the Sandy Cove tide pools! They have fluffy-looking gills on their back and two other protrusions called rhinophores that look like eyes but are more like a nose used to smell and sense water movement.

>>> CEANOTHUS SILK MOTH COCOON

April 4

This cocoon was found next to the Kiosk as you enter the State Historic Park. It measured approximately two inches long. The wingspan of these incredible moths ranges from 3.5 to up to 5 inches!

BLOODWORM <<<

April 7, 2025

Arena Elementary 7th graders spotted this amazing bloodworm at Sandy Beach!

Bloodworms are venomous and their bite feels like a bee sting and can cause pain and swelling.

>>> RIVER OTTER

April 15, 2025

This river otter enjoyed a tasty fish on the rocky shore looking out to the sea lion islands.



SEE YOUR PHOTO HERE

Post photos taken in Salt Point or Fort Ross on iNaturalist or email them to mep@fortross.org

DONATE