

FORT ROSS NEWS

June Newsletter | Fort Ross Conservancy



Foreword

IAN TAYLOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we experience the longest days of the year here on the Sonoma Coast, I want to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable growth we've experienced as an organization and to thank you for being such an essential part of it. With your support, Fort Ross Conservancy has expanded our educational offerings, deepened our community partnerships, and launched exciting new initiatives like the Coastal Academy, our emerging hub for coastal stewardship, youth engagement, and conservation learning.

This growth is only possible because of you, our volunteers, members, donors, and partners, who continue to invest your time, energy, and generosity in our shared mission. Whether you've



This issue

Updates and Events

PAGE 3-6

Upcoming classes and workshops | Bioblitz!

PAGE 7-8

Introducing The Coastal Academy | Homeschool programs

PAGE 9-11

Call for Board members

PAGE 12

Volunteer Opportunities


PAGE 13

Wildlife Sightings

PAGE 14



OPEN DAILY 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM



attended one of our events, supported our work behind the scenes, or helped spread the word, you are helping shape the future of Fort Ross Conservancy.

I'm especially looking forward to welcoming you all to the Arts and Ocean Festival on July 26th. It will be a joyful day celebrating creativity, community, and coastal conservation. It's the perfect reflection of what we're building together.

With gratitude,

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.

- Support conservation initiatives and help us inspire the next generation of ocean stewards by enriching our Marine Science Program with cutting-edge equipment and scholarships for underserved schools.
- 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.

Tours at FRC

Book a private tour of the Fort or Salt Point State Park!

- \$25/person/hour (\$100 minimum). Children 10 & under, free.
- Please call (707) 847-3437 to book a tour in advance

The historic Call House is open to the public on the first full weekend of every month with free docent-led tours (1-4 pm).

DONATE

Updates and Events

Summer on the coast

Escape the heat at the beach! The cool coast is refreshing and beautiful at this time of year. Sandy Cove is a quiet beach and often protected from the wind. It is a 20 minute walk from the Visitor Center parking lot and handicapped parking is available at the cove.

Reef featured on **HIPCAMP**

Reef Campground is now included on [HipCamp's website](#) and app!

Salt Point State Park Visitor Center

We have been working away to get the gorgeous Gerstle Cove visitor center reopened! Ian and Dione have done a thorough cleaning and a couple of volunteers will start opening it on weekends **this July**. Thank you for your support and if you would like to volunteer, please reach out!

Alaska Native Day

In May, the Alaska Native Community including Elders, Alaska Native friends and family as well as local community members came back to Fort Ross to remember and commemorate their ancestors who were brought to the Fort during the Russian Era. See photos of the ceremonies, dances, storytelling and activities from this special weekend on the following page.

Fort Ross Chapel Centenary

The Russian Orthodox Community are gathering on October 4th to celebrate 100 years of the Fort Ross Chapel!

Ocean and Art Festival July 26!



ALASKA NATIVE DAY



MAY 17 & 18, 2025
RETINI-FORT ROSS STATE PARK
ALASKANATIVEDAY.COM

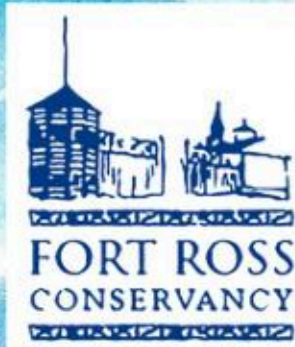
CLICK
HERE!

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



VINCE TUTIAKOFF, MAYOR OF UNALASKA, AK





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

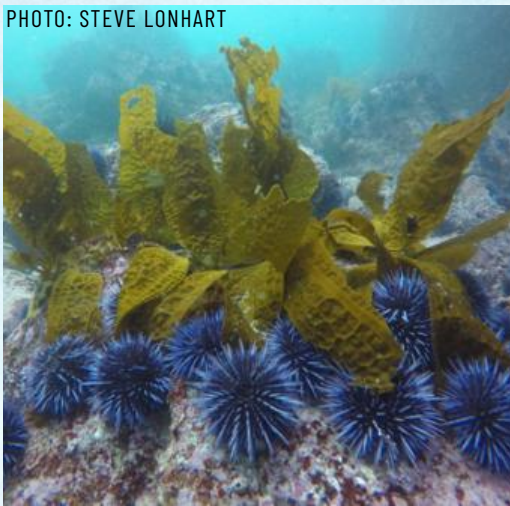
The Festival

THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- Local artists and demonstrations of their craft
 - Musicians and performers including the Sonoma County Pomo Dancers and a local band
 - Conservation groups
 - Tours and talks at Fort Ross
 - Local wines and other drinks
 - Activities for kids
 - Silent auction
- ...and more!



PHOTO: STEVE LONHART



HELPING KELP

Learn about kelp restoration on the Sonoma Coast!

- Meet NOAA's Kelp Restoration scientists and sea urchin removal divers
- See the equipment used to restore kelp
- Touch tank, microscopes and more..
- Uni tasting

See how sea urchins are being used as natural clothing dyes with Seelie Studios!

SEE YOU THERE!

KASHIA BAND OF POMO INDIANS
NOAA AND GREATER FARALLONES ASSOCIATION
SONOMA COUNTY WILDLIFE RESCUE
NORTH BAY BEAR COLLABORATIVE
MENDONOMA WHALE AND SEAL STUDY
CLEANER CALIFORNIA COAST

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA FOUNDATION
THE MARINE MAMMAL CENTER
LIVING WITH LIONS, AUDOBON CANYON RANCH
SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS
CALIFORNIA MARINE SANCTUARY FOUNDATION

Upcoming classes and workshops

Defensible Space and Biodiversity Workshop SUNDAY JUNE 29, 2025

Bridging the gap between reducing fire hazard
and keeping and restoring native plants.

11 AM - 1 PM

Central Sonoma Coast Firewise Community and The Fort Ross Conservancy
Present: Sonoma Ecology Center and University of Nevada's Fire and Dryland's
Ecosystem Lab experts to help property owners learn more about sustainably
reducing wildfire fuels in 5 to 100+ ft zone

At the entrance say you are attending the workshop for free parking



Residents Reducing Wildfire Risks



TIMBER COVE
FIRE PROTECTION
DISTRICT

Fork in the Path Sea Urchin Class

Save Kelp, Eat Urchin!

We are excited to announce that we are partnering with Fork in the Path for some sea urchin classes this summer and fall.

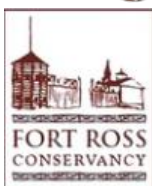
The classes will include:

- Intertidal ecology
- Sea urchin harvesting (and eating!)

The classes will be August 9th, 10th & more dates TBD, led by Ricardo Romero Gianoli. They are not yet open for registration, but you can be first to find out when they open by joining the waitlist [here](#).

AUGUST 9-10





Snapshot Cal Coast Bioblitz @ Fort Ross

FREE EVENT June 30 @10 am - 1 pm

(Monday) with Fort Ross' Marine Biologist Dr. Dione Deaker



Everyone welcome for an afternoon of tide pooling - fun for the whole family!

Help us look for marine invertebrates, algae and other species during low tide!

Where: Sandy Cove, Fort Ross
Meet in the Fort Ross Visitor Center

How: report observations using



For who: The California Academy of Sciences

Mission: to find and take photos of as many species as we can!

To sign up email mep@fortross.org



Note: Wear shoes that can get wet and be prepared to clamber over rocks!

How to get involved:

1. Create an account with [iNaturalist](#)
2. Download the phone app: iNaturalist or Seek (ideal for kids)
3. Join the Snapshot Cal Coast 2024 iNaturalist project
4. Bring your phone, family and friends down to Fort Ross or elsewhere on the coast
5. Take photos of all the coastal/intertidal species you find
6. Upload your photos to iNaturalist



CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES



The Coastal Academy

This summer, Fort Ross Conservancy is launching The Coastal Academy!

FRC is committed to conserving and preserving Fort Ross State Historic Park, Salt Point State Park, and the wider Sonoma Coast. The Coastal Academy will be a hub for coastal stewardship in Sonoma County, focusing on:

Education: Empowering individuals with knowledge to care for coastal habitats.

Collaboration: Partnering with local communities, organizations, and government agencies.

Conservation: Scientific studies that contribute to the conservation of important coastal habitats for wildlife and people.

Accessibility: Reduce physical, cultural, and socioeconomic barriers to coastal engagement.

Sustainability: Promote the resilience of coastal environments .

The Coastal Academy includes:

The Marine
Ecology Program



Citizen science projects and
marine mammal monitoring



JAMIE HALL

Lectures and
community
workshops



RYN SULLIVAN

NOAA's kelp
forest restoration



ABBEY DIAS

FRC's Silverspot Butterfly
habitat restoration



Guides to Local
plants and wildlife



[Click here to see the new Coastal Academy Webpage](#)

INVERT ALERT!

5 h PROGRAM:

Homeschools, families

Marine Ecology Program

The tidepools in Fort Ross State Historic Park are bursting with life. There are so many fish, crab, algae, sea star, and anemone species to find!

In this program, you will:

- Explore the intertidal and learn how to identify different tide pool species
- See the population boom of purple sea urchins
- Learn about the factors that led to the loss of over 90% of California's kelp forests and how they are being restored
- Use digital microscopes
- Measure intertidal invertebrates like marine biologists

JULY 16

Details

Program Price:

Student = \$50 (\$10/hour)

Adult: \$10. Adults will be encouraged to join in!

Please let the instructor know in advance if you plan to leave early.

Day Plan

9:30 am* - Introduction: intertidal zone and tide pool species

10:30 am - Tidepool treasure hunt!

12 pm - Lunch and beach time. Sandcastle Fort building!

1 pm - Kelp Forest and sea urchin class

2:30 pm - Program ends



*Start time may vary with tides

Fall Program: Winged wildlife!

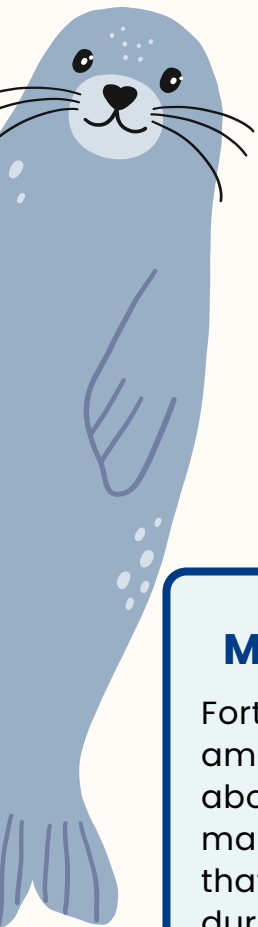
Search for mole crabs in the sand (shorebird diet) and learn about bats, birds and other pollinators

[Click here to apply!](#)

Email mep@fortross.org for questions or more information

If you are interested but not available this day or a homeschool, sign up to be updated when more programs are announced





AMAZING MARINE MAMMALS

**AUGUST
18***



SPECIAL 3.5 h PROGRAM: Homeschool families & groups

Marine Ecology Program

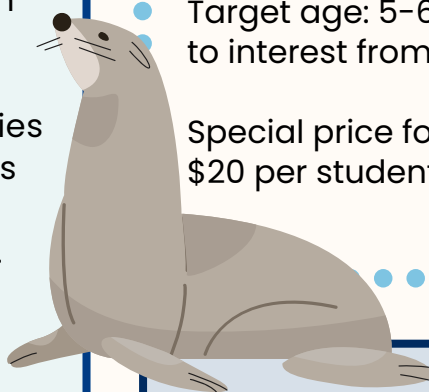
Fort Ross State Historic Park is an amazing place to see and learn about resident and migrating marine mammals and the species that were hunted in these waters during the 1800s Fur Trade that operated out of the historic Fort.

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

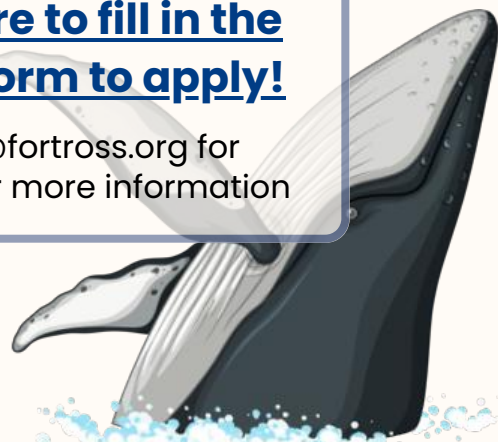
12:45 pm - Sea otter fur trade in the Fort and harbor seals

2 pm - Program ends

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

Email mep@fortross.org for questions or more information

*if you are interested but not available this day, sign up to be updated when more programs are announced



Open Call: Join the Fort Ross Conservancy Board of Directors

Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) is currently seeking passionate and dedicated individuals to join our Board of Directors. This is an exciting opportunity to help steward the historic and natural legacy of Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks, supporting our mission of education, preservation, and community engagement.

About Fort Ross Conservancy

FRC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works in partnership with California State Parks to promote ecological and cultural stewardship of the lands and heritage associated with Fort Ross and Salt Point. We offer educational programs, community festivals, volunteer opportunities, and preservation initiatives that celebrate the rich culture and biodiversity of this unique stretch of the Northern California coast.

What We're Looking For in a board member:

- Passionate about the preservation of public lands
- Excited to collaborate with a diverse group of board members and staff
- Eager to contribute time, talent, and resources to support FRC's growth and sustainability
- Experienced in one or more of the following areas:
 - Nonprofit governance or law
 - Fundraising
 - Marketing and communications
 - Financial oversight
 - Education
 - Environmental science
 - Cultural preservation
 - Community engagement

Board Member Responsibilities Include:

- Attending quarterly board meetings (on site, weather dependent)
- Serving on at least one committee or working group
- Participating in fundraising and outreach efforts
- Acting as an ambassador for FRC in the broader community
- Contributing to strategic planning and organizational development

How to Apply

Please visit <https://www.fortross.org/frc/boardoutreach> to fill out an application. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Join us in protecting and sharing one of California's most treasured places.

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.

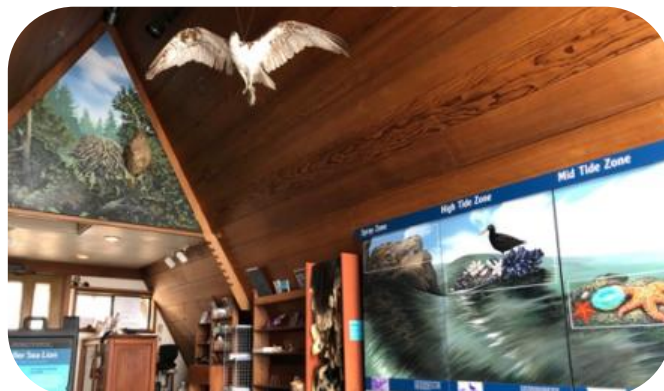
GERSTLE COVE VISITOR CENTER

We will be reopening the visitor center overlooking Gerstle Cove in Salt Point State Park in July! Thank you to those who have signed up so far. We are still looking for more 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.



CHARON VILNAI

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



WILDLIFE

SPOTTED ON THE COAST

>>> TADPOLES

April 21

Hundreds of tadpoles have been seen in freshwater pools in Fort Ross State Historic Park throughout the spring. Maybe they will grow up to be Pacific chorus frogs that we see regularly in the park.



>>> CALIFORNIA SLENDER SALAMANDER

March 22

This coiled salamander was found by symbiitica (iNaturalist). This species reaches 13 cm in length, is endemic to California and south-west Oregon and has four toes on each foot.

NORTHERN CLINGFISH



May 19

A student from West Side School 4th grade spotted this cool little fish in the Sandy Cove tide pools.



SEE YOUR PHOTO HERE

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



>>> WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW

March 4, 2025

Although many white crowned sparrows migrate between Canada and most of the US, the birds along the Pacific Coast do not migrate

DONATE

PHOTOS IN THIS ISSUE BY
DIONE DEAKER UNLESS
OTHERWISE STATED