

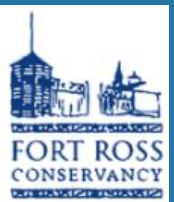
THE COASTAL ACADEMY

Fort Ross Conservancy



Community, Conservation & The Marine Ecology Program

*Immerse yourself in the natural world in
Metini - Fort Ross State Historic Park.*



Fort Ross Conservancy's **COASTAL ACADEMY**

A hub for environmental stewardship on the Sonoma Coast

EDUCATION

Empowering individuals with knowledge to care for coastal habitats.

COLLABORATION

Partnering with local communities, organizations, and government agencies.

SUSTAINABILITY

Promote the resilience of coastal environments

ACCESSIBILITY

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

RESEARCH

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

MISSION STATEMENT

To steward the coastal environment through education, collaboration, conservation, and community engagement



Photo: members of FRC's citizen science sea lion survey team

Contact or Follow us

Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and California State Park Cooperating Association.



Metini- Fort Ross State Historic Park (FRSHP)
19005 Highway One, Jenner, 95450



<http://www.fortross.org/the-coastal-academy>



Visitor center on (707) 847-3437 between 10 am - 4:30 pm



Programs/natural environment:
MEP lead: Dione Deaker
mep@fortross.org



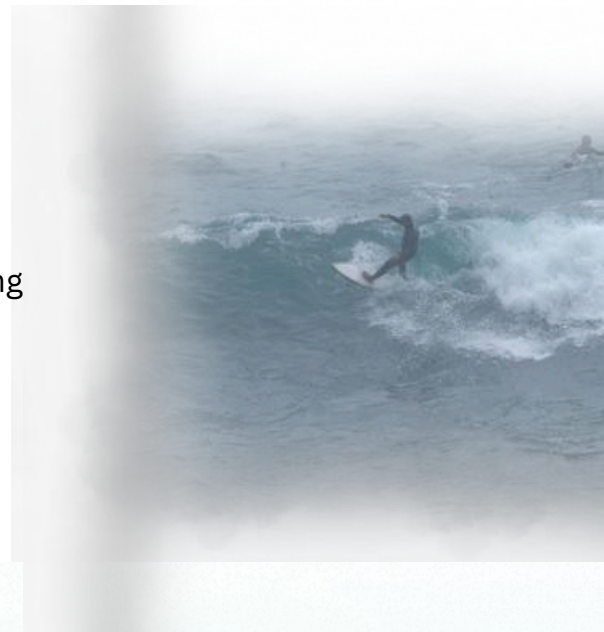
@fortrossconservancy



Fort Ross Conservancy

Fort Ross News

Sign up to our mailing list to stay up to date with upcoming events, citizen science projects, conservation initiatives, wildlife workshops, and special educational programs.



This booklet was written by Dr. Dione Deaker, Director of the Coastal Academy, Fort Ross Conservancy in August 2025 and made using CANVA. All photographs are taken by Dr. Deaker in Fort Ross State Historic Park unless specified.



Fort Ross Conservancy acknowledges that the lands on which we operate are the occupied ancestral land of the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, Metini.

Support FRC

FRC is a non-profit in a rural coastal community that specializes in environmental education, advocating for wildlife conservation, and coastal stewardship.

At Fort Ross, we are doing everything we can to support the local environment, community, families and schools from near and far. To achieve this, we heavily rely on you, our community, to support what we do.

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.

The Education Fund

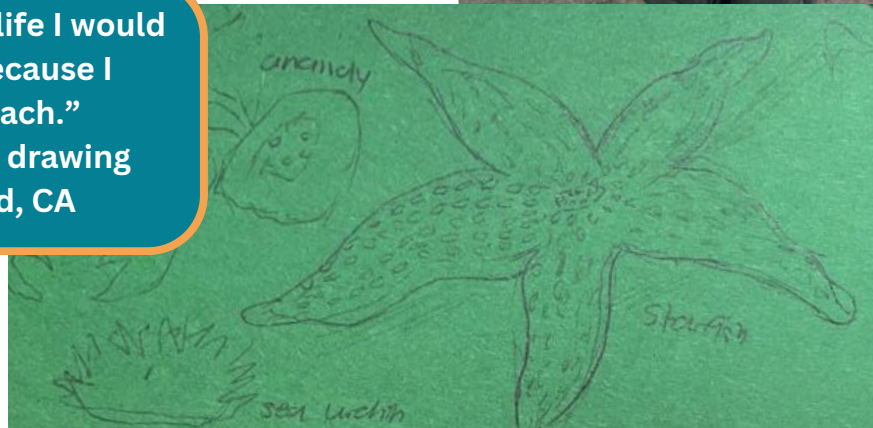
Our goal is for every school to have the opportunity to experience and learn about the spectacular California Coast.

On average, we provide \$800 of discounts per Title 1 school to participate in an MEP and each program has between 10 and 120 students. FRC also provides transport support (\$1000 per school) and programs for children from low-income families through Point Arena's Action Network.

Hands-on outdoor learning provides invaluable experiences to bring textbooks to life and get students excited about and exploring the natural world. FRC strives to help children create a deep and meaningful connection to their coast and foster the next generation of environmental stewards and ocean protectors. For many students, this is the first time visiting the coast.

"I never thought in my life I would touch any sea life because I don't go to the beach."

**MEP student and her drawing
8th Grade, Oakland, CA**



A Community Space

Fort Ross State Historic Park are public lands for everyone. The visitor center and park lands are community space to hold workshops, events, classes, and meetings. The auditorium is equipped with tables and a projector.

Environmental and art workshops FRC has supported include:

- Coast Ridge Community Forest Wildlife Seminar
- Central Sonoma Coast Firewise Community
- MPA Collaborative training
- LiMPETS education program training
- Fork in the Path: Sea urchin classes
- Volunteer sea urchin collections
- Leather bag workshop
- Nature journalling

Call the Visitor Center (707) 847-3437 or email info@fortross.org to schedule an event, workshop or to book the auditorium.

Festivals

FRC's festivals are a celebration of the beauty and bounty of the coast as well as its history.

Every year we host two festivals in the Fort:

July: The Ocean and Art festival

October: The Harvest Festival

FRC welcomes artists, craftsmen, produce, musicians, dancers, wildlife conservation groups and researchers from the local community and beyond to join us at our festivals. You can table, run activities and workshops for over 500 visitors.

In 2025, the Sonoma County Pomo Dancers performed traditional song and dance in the Fort, on their ancestral homelands, at the Ocean and Art Festival.



Sea Urchin Class



Sonoma County Pomo Dancers,
Ocean and Art Festival



Collaborate with us!

At Fort Ross Conservancy, we believe that positive change and growth for the coastal environment, for both wildlife and people, is built on strong connections in the local community and beyond. We partner with other non-profits and organizations who share our values to lend each other support and work hand in hand.

If you are involved with environmental protection, scientific research, social justice, outdoor education, or community wellbeing, we are interested in working with you. For researchers, we can provide letters of support for projects in FRSHP, encourage wildlife observations by Citizen Scientists, and facilitate communications with California State Parks.

Who do we work with?

California State Parks
The Kashia Band of Pomo Indians
The Alaska Native Community
US Fish and Wildlife
The Marine Mammal Center
Cleaner California Coast

Fieldguides Outdoor Education
Greater Farallones Association
LiMPETS outdoor education
Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation
Point Arena's Action Network

Volunteering in the Park

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

Projects:

- Marine mammal surveys (sea lion and harbor seal)
- Citizen Science bioblitz events
- Garden volunteers: restoring native habitat
- Beach watch – Led by the Greater Farallones Association
- Festival volunteers and State Park docents

California State Park Volunteer benefits:

40 hours = a district day use pass for the next year.

200+ hours = a statewide day use pass for the next year.



Volunteer Alec Cowles at FRC's
Snapshot Cal Coast Citizen
Science bioblitz event

Research & Citizen Science

Fort Ross is home to a huge variety of wildlife! We lead and support a number of research and Citizen Science monitoring programs.

More benefits of Citizen Science:

- The community together can collect so much more data than the few scientists studying it could ever aspire to collect on their own
- The data is a resource not only for scientists, engineers, naturalists, and students, but the global community. This data is used to inform research, management, environmental protection, classes and even personal travel plans.

Throughout the year, FRC holds iNaturalist events called Bioblitz to support the California Academy of Sciences. Everyone is welcome to attend and take as many photos of different species as you can!

Sea Lion Survey (weekdays, monthly)



Started in 1997, this is a Fort Ross-led citizen scientist project where volunteers from the local community, across the Bay Area, and beyond meet and count the sea lions in Fort Ross State Historic Park through telescopes.



Harbor Seal Survey (March to July)



Bring a friend and walk along the coast to count adults and pups! Training is in February and surveys are fortnightly during the pupping season (mostly flexible dates). If you can only help with one survey- that's ok! Seal data is sent to Point Reyes National Seashore



Habitat Restoration Research



FRC is committed to planting native flowering plants to support the endangered Behren's and Myrtle's silverspot butterflies and other species. Get involved in our gardens, the greenhouse, or by joining our planting parties.



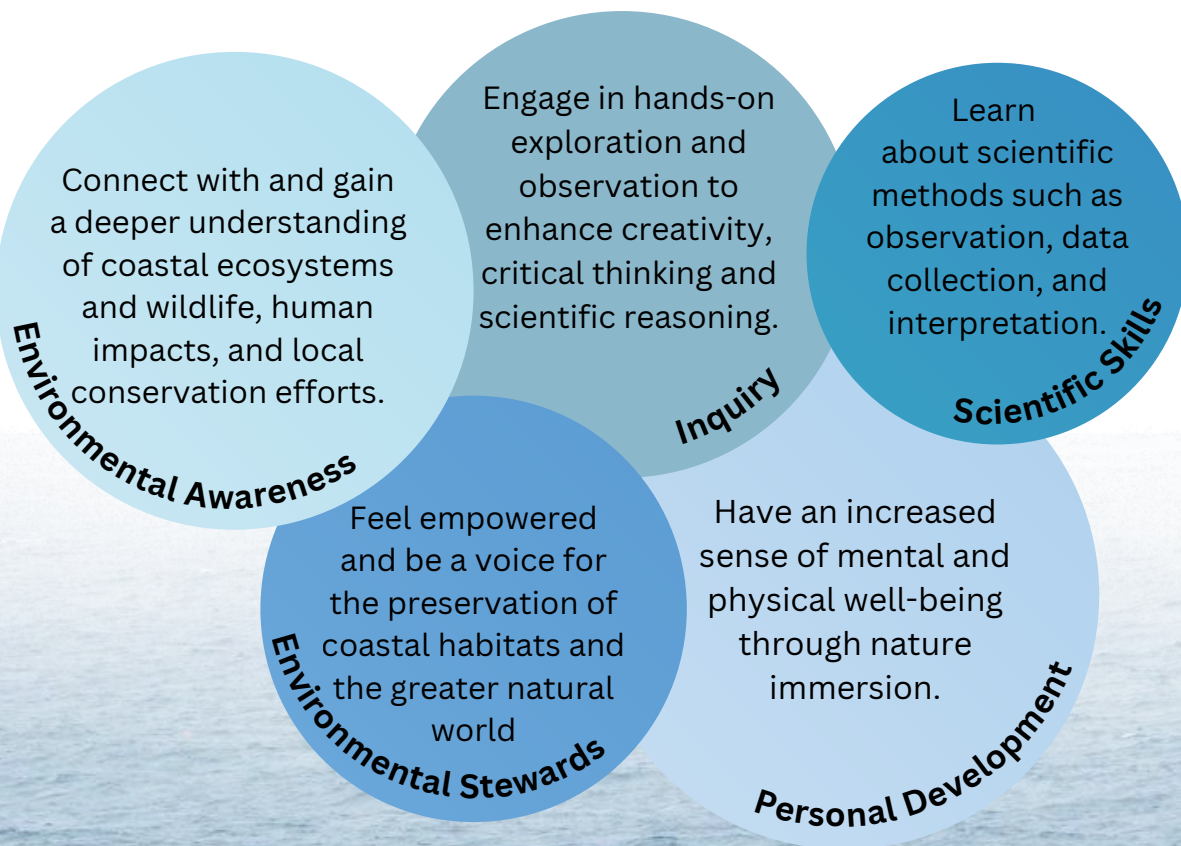
The Coastal Academy's

Marine Ecology Program

Dive into marine science and explore coastal ecosystems!

The Marine Ecology Program (MEP) is an incredible way to experience and enrich your knowledge of the Sonoma Coast and its diverse fauna and flora.

This STEM program taught through outdoor experiential learning is designed to inspire passion for the natural world and marine environment.





An outdoor education program on coastal wildlife and ecosystems!

Experience the wonder of the spectacular Sonoma Coast – See marine mammals, learn about kelp forests and the 1800s sea otter fur trade, go tide pooling, and more hands-on activities!

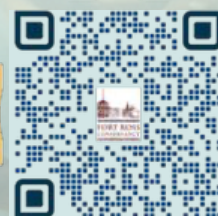
Ever since I first visited Fort Ross, I have been captivated by its beauty, the diversity and richness of the ocean and abundance of wildlife. Every day there is something new to see, from wildflowers and bobcats on the prowl to migrating whales.

With such an accessible coastline and as a key outpost during the 1800s fur trade, Fort Ross is an ideal location to explore the coast, witness how history has shaped the environment we see today and see restoration efforts by scientists and the wider community.

The MEP is for anyone interested in seeing and learning about the coast and marine life. It is suitable for school students, youth groups, summer camps, university classes, and adult groups both social and corporate. Join us during the day or stay overnight in the historic, restored fortress.

We look forward to welcoming you to Fort Ross State Historic Park!

Dr. Dione Deaker
Director of the Coastal Academy
Fort Ross Conservancy



Visit our website



Kelp Photo by Steve Lonhart, NOAA

Scan the QR code to visit our website or email mep@fortross.org for more information and to book today!