

Fort Ross Conservancy Accomplishments

Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) is a public charity 501(c)(3) and California State Park Cooperating Association whose mission is to promote educational, environmental, and interpretive activities at Fort Ross State Historic Park and Salt Point State Park in Sonoma County. Incorporated in 1973, FRC is wholly independent but works in accordance with our California State Parks cooperating agreement pursuant to California State Public Resources Code 513.

Our two parks are spectacularly beautiful and rich with historic stories from three distinct eras: the indigenous tribes, followed by the Russian, and then the Ranch settlers. The people who have lived on these lands — Kashia, Alaska Native, Creole, Russian, and Ranch — all contribute to the remarkable spirit of this place.



Impact

- Stewards 9,400 acres -- from intertidal habitat to redwood groves
- Preserves 15 historic buildings and cultural features
- Engages 977,000 visitors over the last five years
- Staffs 2 Visitor Centers
- Maintains 30 miles of trails
- Maintains and monitors our www.fortross.org website, which receives over 300 hits per day
- Publishes dozens of high quality brochures, books, interpretive signage, and trail guides to improve our visitors' experience
- Supports 300 educational and interpretive programs in the last five years
- Contributed \$1.7 million dollars of infrastructure and interpretation



Milestones

In the last five years:

- FRC has assumed financial and management responsibility for Fort Ross' event calendar and we offer a wide ranging calendar which covers cultural and natural history, hands-on artist workshops, musical performances, and lecture series.
- Throughout the last several years of State Parks "services reductions," FRC has been able to raise funds for California State Parks to fund both State Parks staff and important infrastructure projects.
- Fort Ross Conservancy employs the only full time staff at Fort Ross State Historic Park.
- FRC has done extensive marketing and outreach for Fort Ross (Yelp, TripAdvisor, Facebook), something not done by California State Parks in the past.
- Since 2012, FRC has made \$71,000 in direct payments to California State Parks.
- The FRC website, fortross.org, is the online resource available to engage visitors.
- FRC maintains and updates the Fort Ross Library.
- FRC funded and implemented the Fort Ross Digital Library, making available online at no charge several hundred Fort Ross-related manuscripts in searchable digital PDF format.
- FRC Bookshop sales have grown 90% in the last three years.

"Fort Ross Conservancy has been and continues to be a driving factor in keeping Fort Ross alive and well."
Steve Pearce, descendant from the Ranch-era Call family

Historic Preservation

- FRC funded the restoration of the Rotchev House, the only original Russian-built structure at Fort Ross and a National Landmark Building.
- FRC funded the creation of the Rotchev House museum www.fortross.org/rotchev.htm.
- FRC provided funding to State Parks for future restoration work on the historic well in the fort compound.
- FRC funded lead abatement and painting of the ranch era Call House.



FRC Yearly Growth

2016

- FRC funded work to mitigate lead abatement and to paint the historic American ranch era Call House.
- Hosted first ever Bioblitz event at Fort Ross, in partnership with the San Francisco Academy of Sciences and iNaturalist.
- Sponsored four school classes (120 children) for the Environmental Living Program through our FRC ELP Scholarship fund.

2015

- Contributed \$7,000 for 2nd Annual Alaska Native Day celebration.
- Raised \$25,000 to support Fort Ross Festival.
- Raised \$150,000 for 4th annual Fort Ross Dialogue and Harvest Festival.
- Raised \$2,300 with an Earth Day Grant to improve the school program's garden site.
- Contributed \$6,300 to State Parks Fort Ross Interpreters for summer and weekend interpretation.
- Funded and coordinated Phase 3 restoration of the historic Fort Ross orchard, and coordinated work with local and National Parks experts to author the Fort Ross Historic Orchard Management Plan.
- Continued the Fort Ross Ambassador program and granted \$40,000 for support.
- Contributed \$5,000 to California State Parks to pay for State Parks interpreters at Salt Point State Park.

"Fort Ross Conservancy is absolutely critical to the well-being of Fort Ross. California State Parks has been unable to devote nearly the resources in terms of personnel and funding that Fort Ross deserves. Not only is Fort Ross an important site in itself, but it has become an invaluable diplomatic symbol of cooperation between Russia and the United States through good times and bad. The maintenance of these connections is largely undertaken by Fort Ross Conservancy. The recent experience of State Parks seeking to balance its budget with massive park closures highlighted the need for a staunch advocate that is the Fort Ross Conservancy."

Glenn Farris, Retired Senior State Archaeologist

- Continued to fund and provide scholarships for the Marine Ecology Program.
- Contributed \$177,000 in FRC staff time for interpretation support.
- Created the Marine Ecology of Fort Ross project on the iNaturalist platform.

Fort Ross Conservancy Accomplishments

2014

- Self funded Fort Ross Festival with \$10,000 event budget.
- Working in partnership with the Russian Foreign Ministry, raised over \$35,000 to sponsor the local Kashia tribe's Su Nu Nu Shinal dance troupe to tour across Russia--including Moscow, St Petersburg, and Siberian performances.
- Contributed an additional \$8,500 to the FRC Environmental Living Scholarship fund.
- Raised \$150,000 for the 3rd annual Fort Ross Dialogue and the October Harvest Festival.
- Launched and began development of our Marine Ecology Program, an outdoor education program for middle- and high-school students.



- Contributed \$53,000 for Phase II of the orchard restoration project.
- Established the bilingual Russian/English Fort Ross Ambassador position and raised \$22,000 for support.
- Contributed \$1,700 for the first Alaska Native Day celebration.
- Contributed \$3,800 to California State Parks to pay for interpreters at Salt Point State Park.
- Contributed \$177,000 in FRC staff time to interpretation.



2013

- Contributed \$14,000 in outreach and marketing for Fort Ross State Historic Park and Salt Point State Park.
- Raised over \$113,000 for Fort Ross Festival.
- Raised \$150,000 for the 2nd annual Fort Ross Dialogue and the October Harvest Festival.
- Established the FRC ELP Scholarship fund to provide scholarships for children to attend the Environmental Living Program.
- Contributed \$4,900 to support California State Park's Fort Ross Interpreters summer and weekend interpretation.
- Established the Marine Mammal Monitoring program to collect and verify marine mammal populations on the Fort Ross coastline, including harbor seal and sea lion surveys.
- Contributed \$12,000 to the Ranch Era Call House; coordinated creation of ranch era video.
- Raised \$24,000 so California State Parks could restore the water well in the fort compound.
- Contributed \$167,000 in FRC staff time to interpretation.

"All the employees for the Conservancy are dedicated individuals that have a passion for promoting and telling the stories that make Metini/Fort Ross unique to the world."

Jerry Pinola, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria

2012

- Raised and contributed over \$150,000 for the 2012 bicentennial celebration of the founding of Fort Ross by the Russian American Company.
- Supported California State Parks staff by granting \$15,000 for salaries.
- Supported the annual Springfest at UC Berkeley, bringing Fort Ross to university campus.
- Contributed \$5,000 to support California State Park's Fort Ross Interpreters summer and weekend interpretation.
- Raised \$10,000 in support for the Russian Orthodox Con-Celebration.
- Held and funded the first Fort Ross Dialogue, bringing together dignitaries and diplomats from the US and Russia.



- Fundraised \$21,000 and coordinated Phase I of the orchard restoration project.
- Fundraised \$25,000 and coordinated design sessions and architectural plans for the proposed visitor center expansion.
- Fundraised \$14,000 and coordinated the creation of historically-appropriate and researched costumes for re-enactments for Fort Ross Festival.
- Funded, authored, and designed \$16,000 on new cemetery interpretive panels.
- Contributed \$167,000 in FRC staff time to interpretation.



2011

- Assumed responsibility for what is now Fort Ross Festival and contributed over \$13,000 in cash support and an equal amount in FRC staff time.
- Contributed \$2,800 to upgrade California State Park's Fort Ross Interpreters website.
- Contributed \$11,000 to support California State Park's Fort Ross Interpreters summer and weekend interpretation.
- Contributed \$151,000 in FRC staff time to interpretation.
- Funded and produced professional quality 18-minute Historic Introduction to Fort Ross video that plays in Fort Ross Visitor Center every day the park is open.

2010

- Negotiated partnership and memorandum of understanding between FRC and Renova Fort Ross Foundation to strengthen and formalize our relationship with one of our most generous donors.
- Contributed \$34,000 in FRC staff time to park interpretation.
- Brought together three Russian and one American company to coordinate efforts in supporting Fort Ross.

For more information, or to learn more about our programming, please call Sarah Sweedler, Fort Ross Conservancy CEO, at 415/203-7393.