



NEWSLETTER

www.FortRoss.org

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Dear FRC Members,

Welcome to our annual hardcopy newsletter. As another year draws to a close we would like to share with you the year's successes and share our plans. It's a truism but nonetheless bears repeating: we wouldn't be where we are without our members and donors. Thank you!

This has been another year of growth for the FRC team. We are now running two thriving outdoor educational programs—the Marine Ecology Program along our shores, and the Environmental Living Program in and around the fort compound. The lens is different—focusing on humans in a particular environment, or instead on the organisms foremost in that environment—but you can't separate the cultural from the natural history. Fort Ross and Salt Point are ideal locations to understand this interplay, the more so because our remarkable stories span from the long-lived Kashia times through the Russians, Alaska Natives, and today. Our students narrow their focus to one small tide pool, or study the hard-working lives of the Alaska Native hunters, or experience

a hands-on “yes please do touch the exhibits” guided tour of the Magazin, the Russian-era warehouse. Fresh air and a wide landscape encourage learning and understanding.

We believe all students should have access to quality outdoor programming, regardless of income level, and with your past support, several hundred kids who otherwise couldn't afford the trip have joined us, thanks to donations to Fort Ross Conservancy's Education Fund. We plan to grow this fund and continue to bring students from around the greater Bay Area to our parks for this transformational experience.

As the pages of this newsletter attest, our wonderful FRC staffers continue to learn about our environment. The irony, of course, is that for many of us working at FRC, our success requires copious hours at a desk writing grants and managing the organization under the blue haze of artificial lights. A few of those tasks deserve mention.

We are just wrapping up our first-ever online voting effort and we certainly hope you voted! Our membership is geographically diverse and we made this change to encourage our members to stay engaged. We will use this secure voting service in the future to address any issues that require our members to vote. We are proud to write that of the 80+ California cooperating associations, FRC is the only co-op who has re-initiated a voting

membership, and we are the only coop that offers online voting. Your membership makes a difference and you have a voice.

Lastly, I acknowledge the difficulties so many of our community experienced with the catastrophic fires this last month. The intensity is incomprehensible, and we know all too well how easily we on the coast could have been swept up more directly into the devastation. FRC canceled Harvest Festival due to the fires and we apologize to everyone we inconvenienced. Most importantly, we thank all the people who keep a vigilant watch over our safety and who snuffed out the few local fires before they could even make the newspapers. And we thank Renova Fort Ross Foundation for spearheading a fundraiser for the Timber Cove and Fort Ross Fire Departments so we'll be that much better prepared for what might come. For the moment, what will come is rain, and for that too we are grateful.

Wishing you a winter season of warmth and peace,

Sarah Sweedler

FRC's Education Fund:

<http://www.fortross.org/youth-scholarships.htm>

New ELP website:

<http://programs.fortross.org/elp/>

New MEP pages:

<http://programs.fortross.org/mep/>

Digital library:

<http://www.fortross.org/library.htm>

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Viola Adunca



In Spring 2017, Fort Ross Conservancy teamed up with California State Parks' Natural Resource Management staff to protect the federally endangered Behren's and Myrtle Silverspot butterflies found only along the small section of our Sonoma coastline that ranges from the Russian River to Mendocino County. We called on our dedicated, local volunteers to survey for the butterflies' larval host plant, the *Viola adunca*, also known as the Western Dog Violet.

Seeds of the *Viola adunca* are viable for one hundred years but the flowers themselves are not a good competitor because of their small size. While the flowers rely on periodic disturbance to propagate, too much disturbance from heavy tilling in the 1940s to help provide food during WWII has led to a decline in the flower's population along our coastal terraces. Some native vegetation has recovered in the tilled areas, but most of the grasses are European annual grasses that out-compete the small violet.

The goal of the survey was to collect baseline data of the population densities of *Viola adunca* throughout the coastal terraces of Salt Point State Park and Fort Ross Historic State Park and create new sustainable land management plans for the Sonoma Coast.

Because of this data collection, California State Parks was awarded a Coastal Prairie Restoration Grant of \$100,000 from the US Fish and Wildlife to restore our grasslands and encourage more



Viola adunca to thrive along our coast. Since we started the survey, our district's natural resources team has designated future transect locations to survey for the butterflies themselves, determined locations for conservation efforts, and made decisions on conservation projects throughout the coastal prairie such

as the controlled burns in the Salt Point upper prairie planned for this winter. It's been a productive project and we are grateful to the volunteers who made it happen!

FRC is always striving to expand our work to include more natural history and we will be doing another round of surveys starting in March of 2018 and going through the second week of June. If you would like to join us for the training to participate in this year's *Viola* survey, or learn more about the many natural and cultural volunteer opportunities at Fort Ross and Salt Point, please contact melissam@fortross.org.

We are excited about building this relationship with State Parks and their natural resources team. Our collective effort, and the dedication of our volunteers, has made tangible and positive impact to the future of our coast.

Melissa McCarthy
Volunteer Coordinator



Beach Watch

Citizen Science Along Our Coast

People often focus on Fort Ross' cultural heritage, but for many of us, it's one of the most richly diverse and beautifully abundant natural history sites along the California coast. As such, we've been striving to strengthen our natural history education to better serve our visitors.

Beach Watch (BW) is a long-term shoreline monitoring project founded in 1993 by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency's Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. Run by the Greater Farallones Association, Beach Watch volunteers conduct twice-monthly surveys during which they gather data on both live and dead species of birds and marine mammals, collect oil or oiled species, and document how beach goers are using the beaches.



Beach Watch data is made available to many natural resource management agencies and is invaluable to understanding the long term health of this dynamic ecosystem. The data has been used by California Fish & Wildlife, Ocean Conservancy, National Parks Services, Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Watch among many others. It's also a strong legal tool to ensure oil spills can be tracked and oil companies held accountable. According to the Beach Watch website, "The Beach Watch baseline data helped to evaluate damages and determine settlements for five recent spills in the Greater Farallones Sanctuary."

While we only have a few months of this program under our belts, both of us are incredibly grateful and excited for the opportunity, in fact we've both taken to being birders so completely, you'll now find us just about everywhere with a pair of binoculars in hand and an ID book not far away.

During our first official survey, we spotted a species new to the Beach Watch database: a Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia*, and we couldn't have been more thrilled!



We continue to deepen our education, interpretation and involvement in the natural history of Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks. As of September, there are now five FRC team members who have gone through the extensive Beach Watch training and are currently conducting surveys along Fort Ross, Salt Point and the rest of the Sonoma County coastline.

If you are interested in joining us on one of our Beach Watch surveys or would like to join our Marine Mammal Monitoring program, please contact us!

Song (Sondra) Hunter
Director of Programs

Charon Vilnai
MEP & ELP Instructor



Russian-Kashia Early Relations: The 1817 Protocol

Looking back through time, primary documents and oral histories help us reassemble and better understand the realities of the complex multi-cultural relations at Metini-Fort Ross, including between the Russians and Kashia Pomo. Indirect testimony of Native Californians at the mission of San Rafael to Mariano Payeras, mission president, tell us that early on Metini was purchased by the Russians with “three blankets, three pairs of trousers, beads, two hatchets, and three hoes.” Five years after Fort Ross established in 1812, and two hundred years ago this autumn, a unique official protocol was signed and an exchange of gifts and tokens of goodwill took place on our shores.

“...on 22 September 1817 an official meeting was held between Captain-Lieutenant Leonty Hagemeister, who was soon to replace Baronov as governor of the colonies, and local Indian leaders...

...The significance of this protocol is unequivocally revealed in contemporary official documents, where it is stated that Hagemeister’s visit to Ross was made ‘in order to learn the disposition of the local native Indian residents to the Russians; and that Hagemeister, ‘being convinced of the truth of the good and loyal mutual relation’, awarded a medallion to the senior leader of the Indians ‘to commemorate the devotion of the native residents of this village to the Russians; and ‘to signify the time and circumstances of this event Hagemeister drafted a document’ (Document 55). Actually, this document was primarily intended to support the legality of the establishment of a Russian colony in California and to attest the loyalty of the Indians to the Russians and the mutually satisfactory nature of their relations. It was designed not for the participants in the meeting but for a third party - the Russian governmental authorities,



who accepted it as an argument in their dialogue with Spain and were able to satisfy themselves that, despite Spanish protests, the Russian-American Company owned Ross “lawfully” and, furthermore, had not offended the Indians. The position of the natives of Russian America greatly interested the government at this time.”

Russian California, 1806-1860, A History in Documents, Vol. I. - Ed. James R. Gibson and Alexei A. Istomin, with the assistance of Valery A. Tishkov, translated by James R. Gibson. Hakluyt Society, London, 2014. (Pages 117-118)

A Document about a Visit to Ross of Native Leaders to Attest their Friendship with Russians. Ross. 22 September 1817.

On 22 September one thousand eight hundred and seventeen the Indian leaders Chu-gu-an, Amat-tan, Gem-le-le, and others appeared at Fort Ross by invitation. Their greetings included thanks for the invitation.

Captain Lieutenant Hagemeister thanked them on behalf of the Russian-American Company for cession of the land for a fort, buildings, and facilities - a site belonging to Chu-gu-an and called Med-zhy-ny by the inhabitants - and stated that he hoped they have no reason to regret the proximity of the Russians.

After listening to the translation, Chu-gu-an, as well as Amat-tan, whose residence was also not distant, answered, "that they are very pleased with the occupation of the site by the Russians, that they now live in security against other Indians, who formerly attacked them, and that this security began only from the time of the settlement".

Following this agreeable response, the chiefs and others presented gifts, and the foremost of them, Chu-gu-an, was presented with a silver medallion adorned with the Russian imperial coat of arms and the inscription 'Allies of Russia', and it was stated that this gave him the right to respect from the Russians because without it they need not come to (help) him, and that it imposed upon him the obligation of solidarity and assistance, should the occasion require it; both he and the others declared their willingness and expressed their thanks for the reception.

After refreshments, upon their departure from the fort, one cannon was fired in honor of the foremost chief.

We, the undersigned, testify that in our presence such was exactly the response of the chiefs.

Fort Ross. 22 September 1817.

[Signed by]
Navy Captain-Lieutenant and Cavalier Hagemeister
Staff Doctor and Court Councillor Kerner
Commercial Councillor in charge of Fort Ross, Ivan Kuskov
Assistant Navigator of the 14th class [Ivan] Kislakovsky
Company Agent Kirill Khlebnikov
Commercial Navigator Prokopy Tumanin
[Verified by the Chief Clerk of the] Office.

Highlights of Upcoming Events

2017

November 24
Redwood Friday

December 9
Community Potluck

2018

January 1
First Day Hike

February 17
Annual Members' Meeting

May 19
Alaska Native Day

June 11-23
Snapchat Cal Coast

July 28
Fort Ross Festival

October 13
Harvest Festival

October 15
Fort Ross Dialogue

December 8
Community Potluck

Our website is updated daily.
For details go to:

www.fortross.org/events.htm



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Fort Ross Dialogue

Fort Ross Conservancy, in partnership with the Kennan Institute, organized our sixth annual **Fort Ross Dialogue** on Monday, October 16th, 2017, at the Golden Gate Club in the Presidio of San Francisco. Fort Ross Dialogue is an independent forum where Americans and Russians meet in a constructive atmosphere to encourage conversation and collaboration. This year's event, generously sponsored by Chevron, Renova Fort Ross Foundation, Transneft, and Sovcomflot, included the following speakers:

- Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.
- Governor Kuvshinnikov from Vologda Oblast, Russia
- Denis Gonchar, Deputy Chief of Mission, Russian Federation
- Oleg Stepanov, Director of Policy Planning Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Young American and Russian professionals from SURF (Stanford US Russia Forum)
- Dr. Kent Lightfoot, Professor of Anthropology, University of California Berkeley
- Dr. Sara Gonzales, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Washington-Seattle
- Margarita Meniailenko, Chief Archivist, Museum of Russian Culture, San Francisco
- Larisa Alexandrovna Rogovaya, Director of the State Archives of the Russian Federation



The day concluded with a closing reception and preview of *A Most Beautiful Country*, an art photography exhibit of vast expanses of Russia. The exhibition, sponsored and organized by Renova Fort Ross Foundation, features winners and runners-up of the Russian Geographical Society's international competition, devoted to the conservation of Russian nature and the development of responsible attitudes toward the environment.



**FORT ROSS
CONSERVANCY**

19005 Coast Highway One
Jenner, CA 95450
www.FortRoss.org

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Contact Information

Fort Ross Conservancy
19005 Coast Highway One
Jenner, CA 95450, USA

www.FortRoss.org
info@fortross.org
(707) 847-3437

Highlights of Upcoming Events:

SAVE THE DATE!!

February 17 - Annual Meeting

May 19 - Alaska Native Day

July 28 - Fort Ross Festival

October 13 - Harvest Festival

**Please check the entire list of
Events at
www.fortross.org/events.htm.**