



FORT ROSS - SALT POINT NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY THE FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

A CALIFORNIA STATE PARK COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2010

WWW.FORTROSSINTERPRETIVE.ORG

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

FRIA Endorses the California State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010

Fort Ross Historic State Park is operating under a state-imposed “service reduction” and is now open only three days a week—Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Many California parks are suffering this fate, while other parks and beaches (.. and, inexplicably, public bathrooms) are permanently padlocked until the budget crisis is resolved. These cutbacks are because State parks receives its funding from California’s contentious general fund, and over the past decade its budget has been sliced and shrunk like a cheap deli sandwich. But for some big-picture perspective, *funding for all state parks is, according to the California State Parks Foundation, less than one-tenth of one percent of the entire state budget.* So while California is not saving all that much money with these cutbacks, the consequences in decreased public stewardship of these lands are quite real.

Just when you think it can’t possibly get worse, along comes Governor Schwarzenegger’s 2010 budget. He proposes State Parks receive **no money** from the general fund, but instead ties funding to an offshore drilling tax. If oil drilling off Santa Barbara’s Tranquillon Ridge is approved in Sacramento, State Parks would be funded through a tax on the oil companies. But if the oil deal fails, Schwarzenegger would eliminate all State Parks funding.

That’s like paying for your green Sierra Club vacation by selling Hummers. Clearly the voters need a different choice.

That choice is the California State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010, or what’s known as the Access Pass. Environmental groups have successfully gathered signatures for this ballot initiative, slated for our November ballot, which would fund State Parks through a vehicle license fee. If the initiative succeeds, cars registered in California would be taxed an extra 18 dollars on their yearly DMV fee. The money could only be spent on State Parks and environmental programs. In exchange – and this is important – Californians can visit their State Parks – including horse and hiking trails, biking and beaches, and many museums and visitor centers – across the golden state for FREE.

The Fort Ross Interpretive Association board of directors formally endorses this ballot initiative, and we hope our membership will do the same. To learn about this campaign, go to www.savestateparks.org

With 278 parks covering some half million acres, California truly leads the nation in protecting its natural and cultural resources. We Californians have already purchased these lands. We own our parks, and their value, if that’s even the right word for it, cannot be underestimated. If the Access Pass initiative succeeds, we can remove the padlocks, get outside, and take in the landscape. Now that would be golden.

A COYOTE STORY OF THE FIRST ECLIPSE

By Otis Parrish

In the Kashaya culture, stories help children understand the environment around them. Stories explain to children why things are the way they are. Stories include land animals, plants, birds, amphibians, sea creatures and the human condition.

Storytellers relate stories to children during the nighttime and before bedtime. It is law these narratives are never conveyed during the day, a style that is unique to the Kashaya culture. Story narration is an ancient art form, and one has to have been taught the art from childhood to develop a character. A good narrator needs a good clear voice, to have a good memory and be able to recall the complete list of the stories he or she was taught. It took years to learn the art of storytelling.

Stories convey sadness, humor, how things got to be where they appeared on this earth, and for what reasons. A story passed down to us from the ancient past is of the first eclipse seen by the ancients. It's an explanation of an eclipse of the sun for children to understand natural phenomenon that occur in the universe.

In the time of the ancients there was a place known as the Before World Time when everything we have on earth were of one tribe. They spoke the language we speak today. In that Before World all those things we see here in this reality were together with humans. They lived in peace.

One day, people began to worry and began to gather together because something was happening they didn't understand. So those who had gathered decided to do something about it and called on Coyote--because he always bragged of himself that he could do anything. So the people asked him to go up to the sun and have a talk with him to make the sun shine again.

Coyote asked the others to go up to talk with the sun first. He waited and waited and finally he said, "I'll go up and talk to the sun and make him shine again."

So Coyote went up into the sky to talk with the sun. Everyone waited and waited and waited, after a long while Coyote returned but no one recognized him.

"What happened - it's still dark why didn't you make the sun shine?" The coyote answered, "I went up to talk with the sun but I only got halfway there. It was so hot and I couldn't get to him and he singed all of my fur off so I gave up."

When others saw Coyote didn't make it, they asked other animals if they would try. No one answered, so finally the fence lizard said,

"I can make the sun shine because I can withstand a lot of heat." So they agreed to have little lizard go up into the sky and talk to the sun. Finally when he came back, he told them he talked with the sun and sun agreed to shine again. A little while after lizard returned, the sun began to shine. Everyone began to jump up and down, waving their arms around, rolling on the ground making the dust fly all over the place because they were so happy. Finally, they asked the little lizard, how did you make sun shine again? She said, "I can stand lots of heat and won't be burned." And that is why these little fence lizards to this day when they're out to sun themselves do push-ups to show their blue underside to let us know she was the one who made the sun shine. This is the end.

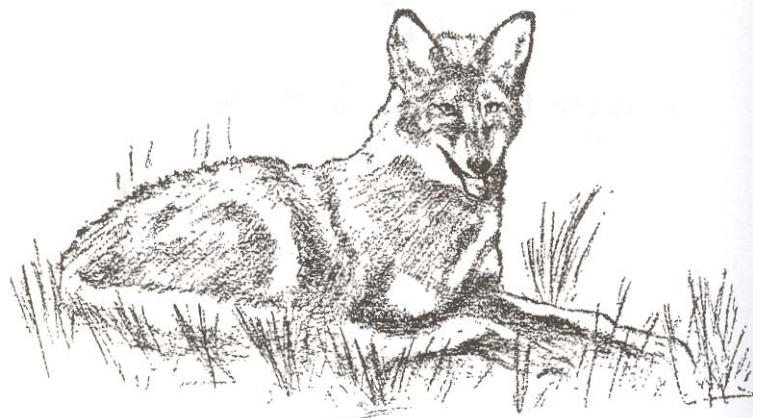


Illustration by Heister Dean Guie from *Coyote Stories*, University of Nebraska Press, 1990

EARLY OUTDOOR LIFE IN THE TOWNSHIP

By Lynn Rudy

HUNTING, FISHING, CAMPING...

Hunting and fishing began as necessities for sustenance and became popular sports as people became more affluent. But “meat hunting” never ceased to be a major part of the activity. Before European settlement, there were said to have been elk in the area; the Russians believed that “grizzlies” took their cattle. Black bears were definitely residents; settlers hunted them for their meat and as predators on cattle and hogs. Bear meat was eaten and sold as far away as Petaluma. It was also rumored to be a major secret ingredient in a certain local butcher’s sausage.

Deer and feral hogs are the primary object of today’s hunters. Turkeys (introduced) and grouse are the chief game birds. There were no wild turkeys a century ago when a Seaview Turkey Shoot involved a domestic turkey in a box with a hole on top. Shooters paid for each shot and waited for the turkey to poke its head out of the box. Maybe the money went for charity.

Visitors from inland have long come to the coastal hills for deer hunting; local men and boys with promising acreage sometimes acted as guides for city folks. In 1898, a party of eleven found “great sport” here; Wm. Peters shot a five point buck that year which dressed out at 102#. An old family photo shows Michael Sichel and his boys on a hunt. Hunting parties moved by foot or horseback until they were able to travel “by machine”.

When the state decided to require hunting licenses, wildlife agents asked local ranchers about the bucks’ habits, and determined the season (August) as the time the bucks began to hide in the woods. Today, a license is also required to shoot the clever and pesky feral hogs which swarm over the hills, but a hunter may shoot one every day of the year with enough (purchased) tags. (One must first of course find a willing landowner).

Predators were also hunted, and still are, within state game laws, of course. Bears, cougars (mountain lions), bobcats and more recently coyotes, once

“I hope I’m never so hungry I have to eat abalone”

G W Call

rarely seen, have become more plentiful as humans crowd their ancient hunting grounds. Today they prey upon family pets and small flocks of sheep and goats, and are enough “trouble” to keep a trapper employed at least part time. “Varmints”: raccoons and ringtailed cats; skunks—civet and striped; squirrels and gophers were all dispatched by gun or traps when they invaded family hen coops, animal enclosures and gardens. Eagles and ravens were considered predators on newborn lambs. Now extinct in our area, condors were still here in the 1850s: William Benitz shot at and missed one, hitting a bear instead.



Photo courtesy of Daniel Campbell

Commercial fishing is mentioned sporadically in the nineteenth century: Benitz noted some Neapolitans fishing near Fort Ross in 1855, and fishermen turn up occasionally in early censuses. Chinese roadbuilding crews gathered and dried abalone in the 1870s. George W Call was not impressed; Anglos were slow to learn how to cook and enjoy this delicacy. Commercial offshore fishing for crab, salmon and tuna may have existed, but is not mentioned. Sport fishing seemed to have been unregulated: one group took a “record” 125 abalone on a single tide in August, 1898. At Fort Ross in the 1890s, a Capt. Hanson ran a popular Sunday fishing excursions in the Ripple, a precursor of today’s party boats. “Boat rides on the bay” were in vogue there in 1898.

In the 20th century, residents began to take sport fishing seriously. Carlos Call maintained a power boat and a boathouse at Fort Ross; Frank Thomas of

FLEETING BEAUTY: SPRING WILDFLOWERS

By Susy Rudy

Southern California is known for its spectacular wildflower displays that follow good rains like the ones we've had recently. But our northern Californian coastline also has delightful native wildflowers that thrive with lots of water, and they can be seen blooming now and continuing into the early summer.

While these wildflowers are not massed in the exuberant shows displays seen in the desert areas, the subtle beauty of the plants growing along our coastline and on the forest floor are well worth seeking out. Even the road cuts along Highway 1 and country side roads can provide stunning wildflower displays!

Found now along the coastal bluffs at Fort Ross and Salt Point are Gold fields (*Lasthenia californica*) forming bright yellow mats along the cliffs, especially in areas that have been browsed by cattle, sheep, or deer. Large patches of the purple native Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) have a long blooming period and provide masses of bright color. Later, you'll find nestled into the coastal grasslands delicate Pussy ears, a Mariposa lily (*Calochortus tolmiei*) of pale gray and purple with a fuzzy throat, and the tiny scented poppy called

Creamcups (*Playstemon californicus*) with creamy petals splotted with yellow. The state flower has a beautiful coastal variety, lower growing than the inland type, with gray-green foliage and bright yellow petals surrounding a brilliant orange center: the Coastal California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica maritima*) is common along the coast, and easy to identify. To visit areas with these flowers, hike along the coastal bluffs at Fort Ross, Salt Point Park, and Stillwater Cove Regional Park.

Blooming now in the forests are Calypso orchids (*Calypso bulbosa*). Found under Douglas Fir trees, these lovely little flowers are borne on 3-4' stems with a fringed pink hood over a slipper-like lip mottled with yellow, orange and white. It is a joyful thing to see a group of these lovely plants blooming together. Other pink blossoms on the forest floor are Wood sorrel (*Oxalis oregana*), with five-petaled flowers that contrast nicely with their vibrant green clover-like leaves. A stunning pink forest flower, the Andrew's Clintonia (*Clintonia andrewsiana*) is on the verge of blooming throughout the area. This member of the lily family is lovely throughout; its glossy basal leaves, clusters of showy rose-purple flowers held on tall stems, and finally its bright blue seeds seen in the

continued from page 3...



Photo from Call Family Collection

Timber Cove built at least one boat and was known for his fishing expertise. The locals soon learned of the delectability of abalone steaks and chowder and began to pull the big mollusks off the rocks—for many years simply by wading at low tide. Trophy shells were proudly displayed at the Stewarts Point store.

Camping and “summer boarding” became popular by the end of the nineteenth century. The Andersons at Horseshoe Cove welcomed summer guests as did the Willig/Gotszches at Timber Cove. Fort Ross’s Sandy Beach was a natural place for organized tent camping.

This excerpt is from Lynn Rudy's *The Old Salt Point Township: Sonoma County, California 1841-1941*. Mrs. Rudy was recently honored with a Jean Thurlow Miller Award in recognition for her contributions to the study of Sonoma County history, and for the publication of this most excellent book
Congratulations!

summer months all make this plant worth seeking out. Fine areas to see woodland flowers are along the upland trails within Salt Point Park, and along Stochoff Creek at Stillwater Cove Regional Park.

Several local roads have significant wildflower shows that can be viewed from your car window. Along Pacific Highway 1 you will see Blue and Yellow Lupines (*Lupinus* sp.), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.), Monkey flower (*Mimulus* sp.), Red larkspur (*Delphinium nudicaule*) and Blue dicks (*Dichelostemma* sp.). Flowering shrubs such as Wild lilac (*Ceanothus* sp.), Wild currant (*Ribes* sp.) bloom along these roads as well.

Fort Ross Road, from Seaview Road to Bohan-Dillon Road, offers one of the most spectacular and sustained wildflower shows in the area. Driving slowly east you'll drop through beautiful stands of oak and grassland, where you'll likely see Shooting stars (*Dodecatheon hendersonii*), Red larkspur (*Delphinium nudicaule*), Indian warrior (*Pedicularis densiflora*), Western columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*) and Mission bells, a common but intriguing brown-green bell shaped lily (*Fritillarias affinis*).

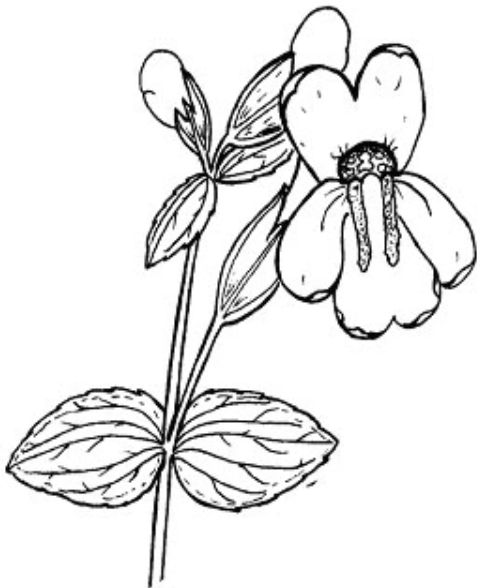


Calypso Orchid

At Kruse Rhododendron Reserve, the clusters of showy pink Pacific Rhododendrons (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*) buds are swelling, almost ready to open high up on the tops of their tall stems. They should peak in early May.

Many resources are available for those who want to identify and view wildflowers. Excellent wildflower guides are available at bookstores, your public library, and the Fort Ross Visitor Center Museum shop. Guides range in complexity from simply identifying flowers by color, to the extensive taxonomic keys of Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California

Chapters of the California Native Plant Society operate throughout the state and offer walks, classes, and the company of like-minded plant enthusiasts. Local to Fort Ross and Salt Point Park is the Dorothy King Young Chapter, which covers the coastal area of Mendocino County and the northern coast of Sonoma County; visit www.dkycnps.org. The Milo Baker Chapter covers Sonoma County: www.cnpsmb.org.



Yellow Monkey flower

Spring wildflowers are ephemeral. If you visit Salt Point or Fort Ross in the next few months, take a drive or hike to enjoy the local color that nature offers.

FR. SARRÍA'S DILEMMA: RUSSIAN ORTHODOX MEETS ROMAN CATHOLIC ON THE CALIFORNIA FRONTIER
By Glenn Farris

The story of St. Peter the Aleut, an apparent martyr to the Russian Orthodox faith, gives an impression of a bitter standoff between the Roman Catholic missionary priests and the adherents of the Russian Orthodox religion who came to California with the Russian American Company in the first half of the 19th century. However, there are also a number of instances in which Russians, Creoles and Native Alaskans deserted from the Russian America Company and voluntarily sought to live in Spanish/Mexican California. In such cases they were usually required to accept baptism in the Roman Catholic faith, but the priests found themselves faced with people who were already baptized Christians in a faith that was seen as more schismatic than heretical (unlike the Protestants). Fr. Vicente Francisco de Sarría was the ranking Franciscan in California in the early part of this period, first as Commissary Prefect from 1812 to 1818, and then as president of the California missions beginning in August 1823. As the missionary assigned to Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmel, Fr. Sarría found himself pastoral head of the California capital of Monterey and so was responsible for the spiritual well-being of the people there. In two particular instances Fr. Sarría was presented with the situation of an individual of the Orthodox faith wishing to marry a local Catholic woman. One of these was a Creole named José Bolcoff (Osip Volkov) and the other was a Kodiak man named Pedro.

Bolcoff sought to marry the daughter of a prominent local family named Candida Castro in 1822. Fr. Sarría sought to verify the validity of Bolcoff's Orthodox baptism by having Fr. Mariano Payeras raise the question on his visit to Fort Ross in October of 1822. Since there was no resident priest at the Russian settlement, Fr. Payeras posed the question to Fedor Svin'in who, although a layman, was authorized by the bishop of Kodiak to baptize and even marry people. Svin'in assured Payeras that these baptisms were legitimate and recognized throughout the Russian domains. When this information was reported back to Fr. Sarría, he was apparently satisfied, as he went on to perform the marriage of Bolcoff and Candida Castro in December of 1822.

In the case of the Kodiak native named Pedro, Fr. Sarría had baptized six Kodiak natives at Mission San Carlos on June 29, 1819, the first of which was given the name Pedro. He was described as being a native of the island of Kodiak, from the place called "Misoscoi" (Mysovskoe) and was said to be about 40 years old. His Russian name was Valentin. Fr. Sarría commented in the record that

all of the Kodiaks had been previously baptized "in the form which the Russians used" and he expressed himself to be "content" with that. It is interesting, however, that even though these men all had Christian names from their Orthodox baptisms, the Spanish priest felt it necessary to give them new names for their Catholic baptism.

Ten years later, in January 1829, Pedro petitioned Fr. Sarría to marry. In this case, there seemed to be a question of whether Pedro was already married back in his homeland. Once again, Fr. Sarría sought help, this time from Kirill Khlebnikov, to determine the facts of the situation. We don't know whether Khlebnikov answered this query, but it is clear that Fr. Sarría was keen to keep everything on the up and up.

Priests at other missions, especially San Rafael, the one closest to the Russian colonies, also made a point of re-baptizing individuals who had been previously baptized in the Orthodox faith and renaming them in the process. Often the baptism would be noted as being sub-condicione or "under condition," referring to the fact that the priest accepted the fact that the person was a Christian and therefore did not need to go through the lessons usually required of Indian neophytes before they were baptized. In a particular case, there was an Indian woman from Bodega Bay who had married a Kodiak man and even followed him back to Sitka, but upon his death she returned to California and eventually married one of her countrymen and entered the mission of San Rafael along with her daughter. The baptismal record includes fascinating information detailing her previous life as a way to explain the action of her re-baptism.

All in all, it appeared the Catholic priests of California honored the Russian Orthodox baptisms, even if they had to put their own stamp on those now entering the Roman Catholic Church. However, Fr. Sarría seemed particularly punctilious about his efforts to determine the legitimacy of the Orthodox rites. Ultimately, he seemed satisfied that they were adequate. So, what are we to think about the instance of St. Peter, the Aleut? Whereas, the individuals that came to Fr. Sarría were actually asking to be baptized as Roman Catholics, whereas St. Peter is said to have resisted having to change from Orthodox to Roman Catholic. Even so, if the story of St. Peter's martyrdom is accurate, it would most likely have been at the hands of an overzealous cleric, unlike the agonizingly meticulous Fr. Sarría. It is ironic that the Kodiak of concern to Fr. Sarría was baptized with the same name that was bestowed on the martyr.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association, Incorporated, is to promote for the benefit of the public the interpretive and educational activities of the Russian River Sector of California State Parks at Fort Ross State Historic Park and Salt Point State Park.

- To enhance and conserve the cultural and natural historic, interpretive and educational resources of Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks.
- To sponsor, publish, distribute, and sell appropriate items which increase visitor understanding and appreciation of this area.
- To acquire materials and equipment to assist in the educational and interpretive programs at Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks.
- To develop and maintain a library.
- To preserve and archive historical material associated with Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks, and to provide and maintain adequate and secure storage facilities.
- To sponsor, support, and assist scientific research and investigations relating to Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks, and presentation of these studies to the public.
- To promote interpretation that reflects current research.
- To plan, organize, and implement fund raising programs to support interpretive and educational activities at Fort Ross and Salt Point.

Board of Directors:

Officers: Sarah Sweedler, President; Susan Rudy, Vice President; Glenn Farris, Corresponding and Recording Secretary; Tom Wright, Treasurer; Directors: Manoushan Azam; Ludmila Ershov; Konstantin Kudryavtsev; Marion MacDonald; Otis Parrish. Directors Emeritus: Kent Lightfoot, John Sperry.

Staff: Sarjan Holt, Administrator; Lake Perry, Administrative Assistant; Susanna Barlow, Membership Secretary.

SALT POINT SHORELINE WALKS WITH KEITH NELSON

Meet at Salt Point Visitor Center, Gerstle Cove.
Walk the bluff, explore tides, wildflowers and geology. One and a half miles roundtrip, about 2 hours.

Sunday May 2, 9-11 am
Sunday May 16, 9-11 am
Monday May 31, 9-11 am (Memorial weekend)
Sunday June 13, 8-10 am
Sunday June 27, 8-10 am

FRIA MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BECOME STATE PARK VOLUNTEERS

There are many exciting programs to choose from. Please contact the FRIA staff at 707 847-3437 or fria@mcn.org if you are interested in activities such as volunteering in the Museum Bookstore, the Fort Ross Library and Archive, or in greeting visitors in the Call House.

Volunteer programs are ongoing in the fort compound as well. Call the Fort Ross interpretive office at 707 847-4777, the ranger office at 847-3286, or look at www.fortrossstatepark.org for more information.

Regular FRIA Board Meetings are scheduled for the second Saturday of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Membership participation is welcome.

Membership Application

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

_____ \$15.00 Senior/Student _____ \$20.00 Regular _____ \$25.00 Family _____ \$30.00 Organization \$_____ Donation

Please make checks payable to
Fort Ross Interpretive Association
19005 Coast Highway One
Jenner, CA 95450

The next FRIA board meeting is on Saturday, June 12, 2010 at 10:30 AM.

FRIA website: www.fortrossinterpretive.org

Fort Ross State Park web site: www.fortrossstatepark.org

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