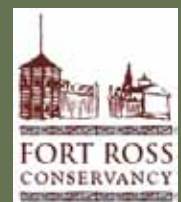


# Fort Ross State Historic Park

## VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETATION PROJECT PLAN



February 2014



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Cover: Fort Ross SHP Visitor Center, 2012

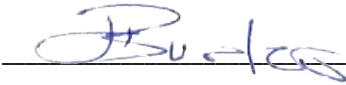
Section 1: Fort Ross SHP, *CSP 090-76796*

Section 2: Call House trail, *CSP 090-P76855*


Appendices: Fort Ross hillside, *CSP 090-P56294*

Visitor Center  
**Interpretation Project Plan**  
Fort Ross SHP

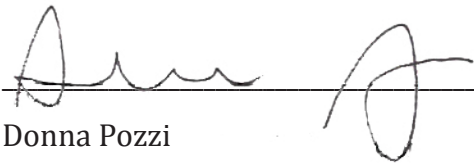
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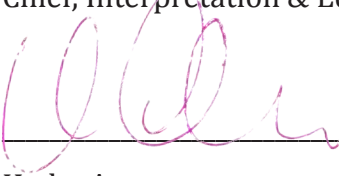
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP) visitor center first opened its doors to the public in 1985. The visitor center is the hub of operations and people receive most of their information about the park while in this building. It is an important educational and cultural resource for locals, visitors, researchers, students, and the Fort Ross community, which includes Americans and people internationally.

Over time, the visitor center's functions changed and interpretive services were limited due to building and operational constraints. After 30 years, it became evident that the visitor center needed to be updated to meet visitor, staff, and operational needs. The Russian River District requested an evaluation of the visitor center and the exhibits. An interpretive planning team was formed in November 2012. After a thorough analysis of the visitor center's functions, exhibits, and interpretive programs, the team held two stakeholder workshops to gather additional feedback. The analysis and workshops provided the direction needed to develop an updated interpretation project plan.

The planning process generated the following recommendations:

- Update interpretive content to reflect new research and ideas.
- Include more natural resource interpretation.
- Present information in a variety of methods and formats to reach people from different backgrounds and learning styles.
- Use technology to connect people with the park and to each other through online classrooms and programs.
- Provide access to updated park orientation, an overview of Fort Ross SHP cultural and natural history, and recreational opportunities during and after visitor center hours.
- Transition visitors seamlessly from the visitor center to the historic core and recreational areas.
- Update visitor center amenities to offer additional interpretive programs and special events, research and meeting space, encourage community use and spaces that can be rented out to generate revenue.
- Create a warm and inviting space to purchase and consume refreshments, relax, and gather.
- Design the building to be more energy efficient.
- Update museum lighting, exhibit cases, and museum collections storage to protect fragile museum objects.
- Expand the resource library.
- Expand storage for park operations, interpretation, and museum bookstore.
- Update administrative office areas to accommodate many different users.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For over 100 years, Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP) has been an important destination for tourists, students, researchers, and those with cultural and familial ties to the site. People are passionate about the site's history, its cultural legacy, and natural splendor; many have been coming here for generations. This same passion was evident during the interpretive planning process for updating the visitor center.

California State Park staff and volunteers, Fort Ross Conservancy members, and a diverse group of stakeholders formed the Interpretive Project Planning (IPP) team. Team members met over the course of ten months and examined the visitor center from the inside out. Stakeholders provided further information and input at two highly productive and energetic planning workshops. These meetings helped determine gaps in interpretive content, park orientation, community outreach, and ways to connect visitors to the park. The result of these efforts produced a plan that sets the direction for interpretive services and makes recommendations for improving the visitor experience.

The IPP was a success because of the hard work and perseverance from team members, stakeholders, volunteers, and community members. Stakeholders included representatives from the Kashia tribe, Call family, Russian Orthodox Church, Russian-Americans, historians, educators, and volunteers. Many will continue their involvement in the visitor center planning process.

Special thanks to the Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) staff, board members, and volunteers for their role as the essential members of the IPP team. Their financial assistance in supporting the stakeholder meetings is especially appreciated. The FRC is an important

partner to the park and to the future development of the visitor center.

Finally, a big thank you goes to California State Parks staff from Fort Ross SHP, Russian River, Mendocino, and Diablo Vista Districts. Their professionalism and enthusiasm to their work made the planning process a wonderful and enriching journey.





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## SECTION 1: PROJECT SETTING

*Project Setting summarizes Fort Ross State Historic Park's resources and documents the existing conditions that affect interpretive services and the visitor experience. The section ends with an analysis of existing conditions. Together, these provide the foundation for recommendations and the interpretive direction for the visitor center in Section 2.*



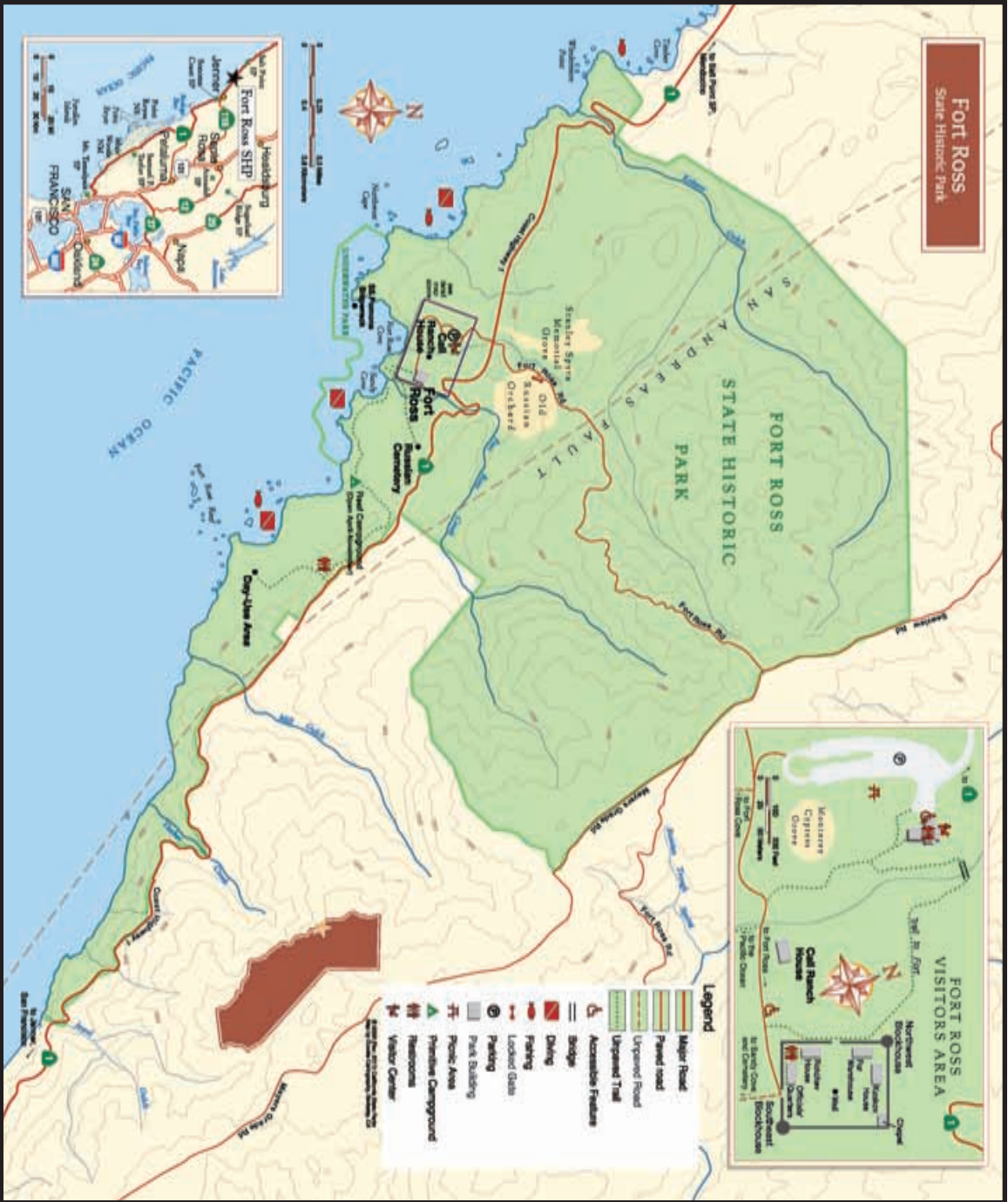


Figure 1. Regional map, CSP 2006

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Site Overview

Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP), established in 1906, is one of the oldest parks in the California State Park System. It is located on the Sonoma Coast, eleven miles northwest of Jenner on Highway 1 (figure 1).

Originally comprised of a few acres around the Russian-American Company's fort compound, the park has grown considerably as the state acquired additional land. The park consists of 3,386 acres, including 23,480 feet of waterfront. Ninety acres of tidelands are managed as an underwater park unit, which by law protects the cultural resources found in the Fort Ross Cove.<sup>1</sup>

The park was established to preserve and interpret North America's southernmost Russian-American Company (RAC) settlement. From 1812-1841, Fort Ross was a thriving international community. Kashia Pomo, Native Alaskans, and people from across the Russian empire lived and worked there.<sup>2,3</sup> The RAC left an indelible imprint on California's historic record and landscape. Today, the park interprets the many people and cultures that made Fort Ross their home. All the RAC structures except the Rotchev House have been reconstructed since Fort Ross became a State Park. The Call House and ranch buildings represent the American ranch era that followed the RAC settlement. Kashia, Russian-American, and the Russian Orthodox community members continue to observe their traditions there. Fort Ross SHP is a national and international treasure. People from the United States, Russia and around the world contribute to preserving and interpreting its many resources.

### 1.2 Project Overview and Plan Purpose

The Fort Ross SHP visitor center is the gateway to the park. It orients people to the park's cultural, natural, and recreational resources, and provides a staging area for groups and interpretive programs. Exhibits give an overview of the park's major cultural stories. The extensive research library and archives provide information to the researcher and student. A multi-purpose room accommodates changing exhibits, special events, and park films. The visitor center is an important destination; a place to hold special events, guided tours, and educational seminars. It is a valuable resource to the Fort Ross community, both locally and internationally.

The visitor center was constructed in the late 1970s and exhibits were installed in the mid-1980s. Since then, park staff and visitor needs for this space have changed. Newer interpretive panels and exhibit cases cover many of the original exhibits. Visitor circulation can be awkward and the focus of interpretation has evolved over time. Stakeholders, visitors, and park staff have expressed a desire to expand the cultural and natural interpretation to include new research and presentation methods.

The Russian River District chose to revise the IPP as the first step of a multi-phase project to update the visitor center. The district requested Interpretive Exhibit Program (IEP) funds from the Interpretation and Education Division. The district was awarded \$62,000 and the project began in January 2012. The scope of work included the following:

- The Northern Service Center and Russian River District Staff completed a museum collections inventory and training.

- A Scope of Collections Statement for Fort Ross SHP was written and approved.
- Two exhibit cases in the visitor center with Kashia cultural objects were updated with new artifact mounts; baskets were conserved and stabilized; LED lighting and environmental monitoring devices were added; and exhibit text labels and panels were updated.
- The interpretation project plan for the visitor center was updated.

The park's General Plan was published in 1975 and the original visitor center interpretive plan was developed in 1985. The Interpretive Project Plan (IPP) is intended to update and expand the 1985 Interpretive Plan.

The IPP will be used to guide the design development of exhibits and interpretive programming in the visitor center. It documents previous visitor center planning, updates and expands upon the original interpretive themes, and gives recommendations for enhancing the visitor experience at the center. The plan has a lifespan of up to 30 years, and it should be revisited as necessary to meet changing visitor and park needs.

### **1.3 Planning Process**

The interpretive planning process for the Fort Ross SHP visitor center began in November 2012 and included meetings, stakeholder workshops, and regular conference calls with the interpretive team. Most planning meetings occurred with California State Parks (CSP) and Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) team members. Two stakeholder meetings were held to present the project and receive feedback. The final draft was completed in July 2013.

#### **1.3.1 Major Milestone Meetings**

##### *November 2011*

Kick-off meeting for the IPP which established the planning team and project schedule.

##### *January 27 & 28, 2012*

Two stakeholder meetings held to introduce the project and gather ideas for 2013 interpretive themes for exhibits, interpretive goals, and visitor needs and expectations. The first meeting was held at the Fort Ross SHP visitor center. The second meeting was held at the Marin District Office in Petaluma. See Appendix D for detailed information about these meetings.

##### *March 5, 2013*

The interpretive team meeting to review and finalize the visitor center mission, vision, interpretive goals and objectives, and to present the preliminary draft of the IPP for the team to review.

##### *April 30, 2013*

The interpretive team meeting to discuss interpretive themes, goals, objectives, strategies and tasks.

##### *July & August 2013*

The final draft was distributed for review and comment.

##### *December 2013*

The final revised draft was distributed for review and comment.

##### *February 2014*

The document was produced and sent out for signatures.

##### *March 2014*

The document was published.

### 1.3.2 Participants

The interpretive planning team consisted of CSP staff from multiple disciplines, FRC staff, subject matter experts, park users, and community members.

#### Northern Service Center

Leslie Hartzell	Senior Park and Recreation Specialist
Katie Metraux	Regional Interpretive Specialist
Kathy Schulz	Regional Interpretive Specialist
Julie Reyes	Park Interpretive Specialist
Bill Bell	Exhibit Coordinator

#### Russian River District

Liz Burko	District Superintendent
Jenny Donovan	Public Safety Superintendent
Andrea Mapes	State Park and Recreation Specialist
Michael Wisheart	Regional Interpretive Specialist
Edward Parkman	State Park Archaeologist
Denise Alexander	Maintenance Supervisor

#### Fort Ross SHP

Robin Wellman	State Park Interpreter I
Lindsey Elliott	Park Interpretive Specialist
Todd Farcau	State Park Ranger
Brian Osborn	Park Maintenance Worker I

#### Interpretation and Education Division

Donna Pozzi	Chief
Carolyn Schimandle	State Park Interpreter III

#### Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC)

Sarah Sweedler	President and CEO
Sarjan Holt	Operations Manager
Hank Birnbaum	Program Manager
Lake Perry	Visitor center staff

**Stakeholders**

Amy Lemmer	Choctaw Nation and CSP Volunteer
Billyrene Pinola	Kashia tribal member
Zoya Gradov	Russian Orthodox community
Bowen Lee	Sea Otter Research and Conservation, Monterey Aquarium
Lynn Rudy	FRC volunteer
Susan Rudy	FRC volunteer
Irina Dyatlovskaya	FRC volunteer
Glenn Farris	FRC advisor, historian, former State Park Archaeologist

## Endnotes

1. Cultural resources in the cove include the *S.S. Pomona*.
2. *Kashia* is the spelling the tribe uses with government agencies. *Kashaya* is the preferred spelling by the Stewart's Point Rancheria tribe. For the purposes of this government document, the spelling *Kashia* will be used.
3. The RAC also employed Native Hawaiians, Africans, British, and Americans; though fewer in number than Native Alaskans and people from the Russian empire.





## CHAPTER 2: PARK RESOURCES SUMMARY

*This chapter summarizes the natural, cultural, and recreational resources at Fort Ross State Historic Park's (SHP), which form the foundation for interpretive services at the park. The visitor center provides an overview of these resources to orient visitors to the park. The information presented in this chapter can be used to develop orientation materials, brochures, exhibits, audio-visual media, educational programs, and other interpretive services.*

### 2.1 Natural Resources

People have lived along the Fort Ross coast for hundreds, possibly thousands of years. The Kashia village, *Metini*, was a thriving seasonal camp and ancestral home. Those that followed, the Russian-American Company (RAC) and American ranchers, chose this area for its natural resources and lay of the land. The Kashia found abundant fresh water from mountain springs and local creeks while woodlands, beaches, and sheltered coves provided many other resources. The RAC used the wide, level terraces to graze livestock and plant food crops to feed themselves and their Alaskan settlements.<sup>1</sup> Sandy Beach Cove provided a relatively safe harbor and a flat area at sea level where shipbuilding and other industry took place.

Higher elevation meadows (located away from the foggy coast) provided a good location for fruit orchards.<sup>2</sup> The coastal valleys from Fort Ross to Bodega Bay were used for ranching and agricultural activities.<sup>3</sup> These same attributes made the land desirable for logging and ranching.

Today the land is treasured from a different perspective. The broad, sweeping views across coastal plains appear pristine and uncluttered by development. People enjoy recreating along the park's beaches and exploring tide pools. The underwater

park is popular with divers and for fishing. Protected coves, coastal terraces, and wooded hills provide necessary habitat for native plants and animals.

#### 2.1.1 Esthetic Qualities

On a clear day, visitors are treated to breathtaking views of the Sonoma Coast (figure 2). Mist rises above bluffs where waves crash over the rocks below. Harbor seals and sea lions bask in the sun on beaches and on rocks offshore. The sea lions' bark can be heard beyond the Day Use parking lot and often into the hills and valleys. Further inland, forested mountains appear to rise out of the rocky shore. From these ridges, one may see as far as the Point Reyes peninsula to the south.



**Figure 2.** Sonoma Coast

The area around Fort Ross SHP is relatively undeveloped, which gives the historic compound a timeless feel. On weekdays, the fort may come alive with a school program where children dress in period clothing and participate in activities related to the RAC period. Sometimes the fort appears deserted, with few visitors wandering through. There are days when most visitors speak Russian and Spanish, akin to the days when the fort was a thriving international community.

Visitors can have completely different experiences at the park, depending on the time of year and location within the park. The redwood forests seem serene and quiet in contrast to the rugged and ever-changing coast. The historic areas

seem untouched and one feels a deep connection to the past. On days with special events, thousands of people descend upon the park, where they participate in Russian and Kashia cultural activities, dancing, enjoying food and crafts. Fort Ross SHP is the best of both worlds—a natural and cultural treasure.

### 2.1.2 Weather and Climate

The region’s weather can change radically throughout the day. The park is often shrouded in a dense fog that clings to the hillsides and drifts along the coastal terraces. Winds often dissipate the fog by the late afternoon, ending the day sunny and cool. On clear nights, the skies are ablaze with stars, as there is little light pollution.

The Western Regional Climate Center maintains a weather station at Fort Ross SHP.<sup>4</sup> According to the records, September is the average warmest month and January is the coolest month. On average, most precipitation occurs in January and the area receives an average of 38 inches of rain per year. Table 1 shows the average annual weather conditions spanning from 1948 to 2010.

**Table 1.** Temperature and Rainfall Averages

Average Weather Conditions at Fort Ross, California from 1948 to 2010 ( <i>Western Regional Climate Center 2013</i> )													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Max Temp (F)													
	57	58	59	61	63	66	66	67	68	66	62	57	63
Average Min. Temp (F)													
	41	43	43	43	45	47	49	49	49	47	44	42	45
Average Total Precipitation (in.)													
	7.65	6.195	5.275	2.63	1.25	0.4	0.075	0.18	0.475	2.29	5.08	7.28	38.79

Environmental conditions at Fort Ross are similar to most Northern California coastal areas. In the spring:

...prevailing winds are from the northwest, commonly 10 to 25 miles per hour, with gusts up to 50 to 60 miles per hour. These winds make it uncomfortably chilly. Along with winds come an almost daily migration of fog and low-lying clouds. Summer fog lies along the coast in the morning and late afternoon, usually moving inland only as far as the eastern edge of the redwood forest. Precipitation during the summer is very low and largely a result of fog drip. Moisture is also provided by frequent nighttime drizzle... [In contrast], winter storms frequently batter the coastline with gale force winds, which can severely damage vegetation and structures (California State Parks 1975, 30).

### 2.1.3 Geology

The Fort Ross SHP area has a high probability for a major earthquake.<sup>5</sup> According to the General Plan, there are three major seismic hazards at the park. These include surface rupture along the fault, shaking ground and earthquake vibrations, and landslides. There are also risks of a tsunami. According to the General Plan:

The San Andreas Fault Zone poses a significant factor in the planning and interpretive value of Fort Ross. The fault extends 650 miles between Shelter Cove in Humboldt County, to the Salton Sea in southern California. In the Fort Ross area, the major portion of the fault zone is about 1000 feet wide and evidence still exists of the great earthquake in 1906. During this quake, which rated 8.25 on the Richter scale, considerable ground shaking, landslides, and fault displacement of up to 12 feet occurred near Fort Ross.

Evidence of the tremendous power of the rupture was seen in the collapse of the Russian chapel (figure 3) and the conspicuous signs of faulting in the Redwood forest and hillsides northeast of the fort. The San Andreas Fault has been undergoing repeated horizontal movements for at least the past 25 million years. During that time, offsets of about 200 miles have occurred for points on the west side of the fault, moving northwest with respect to those on the east side. Today, it is estimated that the annual rate of movement is about 2 inches (California State Parks 1975, 20).



**Figure 3.** The RAC-era chapel collapsed during the 1906 earthquake, *CSP 090-4727*.

Dynamic natural forces such as earthquakes, wave action, and erosion created the coastal mountains, plains, and rugged coastline one sees today. The Pacific Plate and North American Plate meet along this part of the California coast, forming the San Andreas Fault. According to the General Plan:

Each [plate] exhibits distinctly different rock and soil types and have unique characteristics. On the east side of the San Andreas Fault is the Franciscan Formation, dominated by sandstone and shale, and commonly known for its extreme susceptibility to landslides and erosion. On the west side of the fault are tertiary marine

sediments. When the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate collided, these sediments were pushed upward to form the coastal terrace, coastal slope, ridge top, and San Andreas Fault Zone (California State Parks 1975, 20).

#### 2.1.4 Flora and Fauna<sup>6</sup>

##### *The Intertidal Zone and Open Ocean*

The Northern California rocky intertidal zone has a rich and diverse plant and animal life. (For a complete listing of common plants and animals found in the area, see Appendix A.) Intertidal vertebrates and plants include abalone, mussels, limpets, sea anemones, sea stars, and chitons. Large, offshore sea urchins are rare as they are heavily harvested, while smaller intertidal urchins are still plentiful (figure 4). Young fish can also be found in the tide pools.



**Figure 4.** Sea urchins and abalone, CSP 090-S20942.

For over a century, steelhead, coho salmon, surfperch, cabezon, lingcod, and many varieties of rockfish have been avidly sought by people fishing off the rocks or from small boats. Though still a rich area, the waters here have been greatly depleted.<sup>7</sup>

Marine plant colonies are especially productive on this part of the coast. Mats of bull kelp form each spring and summer just offshore, later to be broken up by winter storms and piled on the beaches. Sea palm covers many lower rocks where there is especially strong wave action. Feather boa kelp is very common. Low tides reveal bright green sea grass, and rocks encrusted with colorful pink coralline algae.

The Pacific waters off the Fort Ross coast are rich in bird life. Immature brown pelicans fly north each spring and head south again in the fall. Migrating flocks of geese, brant, and many shorebirds can be seen. Great blue herons hunt from rafts of kelp and are permanent residents along the shore, as are varieties of gulls and other nesting birds. Loons migrate through the area. The powerful osprey fish just offshore, and can be seen in spring and summer carrying their catch (or nest material) to their nests high in snags in the forest. Most of these fish hawks fly south for the winter, but occasionally will overwinter in the area.

Two kinds of sea lions make their home on islets off the coast. Both the large Stellar sea lion and sleek, dark California sea lion seasonally fish or loll in offshore waters. Smaller rocks host the nests of seabirds—chiefly gulls, murre, oystercatchers and cormorants. Low-lying rocks serve as hauling-out spots for harbor seals, especially in summer. A sizable colony inhabits the sandy mouth of the Russian River ten miles down the coast. Solitary young male elephant seals, part of a recovering population, can sometimes be found resting on the sandy beach at Fort Ross. The California sea otter, the mammal that brought the Russians to Fort Ross, can no longer be found here.<sup>8</sup>

Larger mammals, such as gray whales, migrate south from the Bering Sea to Baja California from December to April. The gray whales are closer to shore as they

migrate up the coast. The males return first, beginning around April, followed by the females and young. Occasionally a solitary gray whale will linger along the coast during the summer, feeding in the shallow water. Humpback whales make occasional appearances, as do fin, Minke and orca whales. Shy harbor porpoises sometimes can be seen.

### *The Coastal Terrace*

The Fort Ross terrace is over 80,000 years old. It is one of a series of ancient wave-cut structures lifted up from the ocean floor. In 1812, the terrace probably looked similar to today—covered with grasses. Humans modified the grasslands many times over several thousand years. Native Americans harvested seeds for food. In the fall, they burned the fields to keep them open and encourage their food plants to grow. In the Ranching era, sheep grazing and periodic field burning also helped keep these ancient grassy plains open.

Today coyote bush, bush lupine, bracken fern, and wax myrtle also dominate the terrace landscape.<sup>9</sup> The low-lying Pt. Reyes ceanothus with its dark blue flowers is found here, along with poison oak, the small native blackberry, and introduced Himalaya blackberry.<sup>10</sup> The Russians and other settlers of the nineteenth century tilled these same fields and planted wheat, barley and potatoes. They also introduced Old World annual grasses with their agriculture, which largely crowded out the native bunch grasses.

The prolific state flower, the California poppy, is often found in disturbed areas and road cuts. This poppy was named by Adelbert von Chamisso after his colleague Johann Friedrich Eschscholtz. Both scientists visited California in 1816 on a Russian scientific exploring expedition. Lupine, orange monkeyflower and Indian paintbrush prefer the cliffs and road cuts, while the purple Douglas iris forms mats on the hills and fields (figure 5).<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 5.** Douglas iris near the fort

It is beautiful to observe, but crowds out the pasture grasses and spoils fields for contemporary cattle grazing.

Small resident birds and mammals are numerous—blackbirds, rabbits, gophers, moles, mice, raccoons, and deer. Ring-tailed cats, small mammals once trapped along with foxes, raccoons and skunks, are also now more common.

Small herds of wild boars, introduced by the Russians and other European settlers, roam the foothills and grasslands. Boars root up plants, and are devastating to the native plant habitat in grasslands and oak woodlands. Other mammals include the black-tailed deer, brush rabbit, ground squirrel, pocket gopher, broad-handed mole, and black-tailed hare. Bobcats can be seen in the foothills during daylight hours, and a few mountain lions reside on the coast. Black bear are rare. Coyotes are more common inland, but are seen here on occasion.

Many songbirds can be found on the coastal terrace and include the house finch, blackbird, various species of sparrow, gold finches, and hummingbirds. Towhees and California quail nest in the brush. At least five kinds of swallows come

in the spring to nest, often raising two or three clutches apiece. In the winter, one may see robins and juncos. American egrets and great blue herons hunt in damp places on the terrace. White-tailed kites, American kestrels, and red-tailed hawks hunt overhead. Other large hawks are also found, such as harriers, red-shouldered hawks and an occasional golden eagle. There are several species of owls. The black raven is a predator and, like the turkey vulture, a scavenger. Both are year-round residents.

Small amphibians and reptiles also like the grassy terrace. Several kinds of lizards bask in the sun. There are no rattlesnakes on the cool coast, although they like the higher, warmer elevations. Garter snakes are common, however, and are welcomed in gardens. Rubber boas and gopher snakes occur more rarely. Noisy tree frogs are often heard at dusk.

Several varieties of wood tick are common. Lyme disease occurs here, however it is more prevalent on the east coast.<sup>12</sup> Honeybees find the coast climate too cool, but bumblebees (*Bombus voznescenskii*) thrive here. The latter was named for Russian scientist I. G. Voznesenskii, who visited Fort Ross while the Russian American Company was there.

### *Wooded Slopes*

Bishop pine grows close to the ocean and its shape is altered by the coast's strong winds. It is unpalatable to deer, and is a quick-growing opportunist. It fills in open fields easily after fires, or when lands are no longer grazed or farmed. Thus, bishop pines have become quite dominant on the coastal plain in the last few decades. Alder and willow flourish along the local streams, and redwoods venture quite close to the shore on the damper, protected slopes (*figure 6*). Two tree varieties introduced during the ranch era have become overly successful around the fort—the Monterey cypress and Australia's

eucalyptus.<sup>13</sup> Although invaluable as windbreaks, they do not reflect the true historical vegetation of the fort as it was when the Russians lived here.

Manzanita, buckeye, maple, madrone, California bay or pepperwood, salal and huckleberry seek out habitats.<sup>14</sup> Salmonberry and thimbleberries grow in sunny corners. Columbine, not eaten by deer, likes shady places. Oaks provide dark cover and a deep carpet of leaves on steep creek banks. The tan oak, valuable to the Kashia for its acorns and to the ranchers for its bark and wood, occurs from the lower slopes to the ridge tops. The silk tassel tree, Garrya, can also be seen.

The redwood forest community is an impressive and awe-inspiring one. The trees are immensely tall, long-lived, and self-renewing. These trees prefer the foggy coast, although redwoods can thrive farther inland even during hot, dry summers. In spite of heavy timber harvesting by the Russians for three decades, and by the Dixon and Call ranches later in the century, the trees regrew from the stumps. Since Fort Ross became a state park in 1906, the redwoods have been preserved and have started to grow quickly.

In the duff around the redwoods grow a variety of small interesting plants; among them several species of ferns, wood sorrel, trillium, and adder's tongue. Calypso orchids live under Douglas firs. The heavy duff and moist atmosphere create an ideal situation for mushrooms and other fungus. Wild azaleas seek out spots of light in the heavy tree cover.

Cone-bearing trees also exist on the edges of the redwoods. Douglas fir and grand fir are the major components of the mixed evergreen forest, which continues up onto the coastal ridge.<sup>15</sup> The less common California nutmeg, named for its nutmeg-like cone, is related to the yew, and can be found in the lower canyon of the Fort Ross Creek (located in the park).<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 6.** Hillside view to ocean, CSP 090-P769819.

Fort Ross SHP has several species of plants and animals that are considered threatened, endangered, or species of special concern. Table 2 lists these species, gathered from California Fish and Wildlife reports from 2012.<sup>17</sup> California State Parks is working to control invasive species like pampas grass, poison hemlock, French broom, Italian thistle, and ice plant, which rapidly spread and take over native plant habitat. Cattle and sheep grazing, and occasionally prescribed burns are used to maintain the coastal prairie. Other programs are in place to restore and conserve habitats for these and other protected species.

**Table 2.** Potentially Occurring Species of Special Concern

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
coho salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>
California red-legged frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>
marbled murrelet	<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>
Behrens' and Myrtle's silverspot	<i>Speyeria zerene myrtleae</i>
Blasdale's bent grass	<i>Agrostis blasdalei</i>

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
Sonoma tree vole	<i>Arborimus pomo</i>
holly-leaved ceanothus	<i>Ceanothus purpureus</i>
Sonoma spineflower (endangered)	<i>Chorizanthe valida</i>
monarch butterfly	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>
Norris' beard moss	<i>Didymodon norrisii</i>
dark-eyed gilia	<i>Gilia mille foliata</i>
steelhead trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>
foothill yellow-legged frog	<i>Rana boylei</i>
purple-stemmed checkerbloom	<i>Sidalcea malviflora ssp. Purpurea</i>
northern spotted owl	<i>Strix occidentalis caurina</i>
long-beard lichen	<i>Dolichousnea longissima</i>

## 2.2 Cultural Resources

The Fort Ross SHP visitor center Interpretive Project Plan (IPP) highlights interpretive topics and periods relating to the Kashia, Russian-American Company (RAC), ranching, and state park uses of the land, and summarizes cultural resources that will be interpreted at the visitor center. The information below is excerpted from the official state park brochure, with additional research provided by the interpretive team.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.2.1 Kashia Pomo

The Kashia are one of seven groups who speak the Pomoan language. Many tribal members live in the area, and many are highly involved with the park. According to local native people, their name means “People from the Top of the Land”. Alternatively, author and Kashia tribal member Otis Parish writes, “the name Kashia, which means ‘expert gamblers’”, was given to them by a neighboring Pomo group”.<sup>19</sup>

Historically, *Metini* was one of many centuries-old Kashia villages that were located between the Gualala and Russian Rivers. Kashia moved their villages and camps according to the season and available resources. In the summer, people moved from their permanent winter villages on sheltered ridge tops to communities along the coast.<sup>20</sup> At the shore, they gathered abalone, mussels, fish, and a rich variety of sea plants. Sea salt was harvested for domestic use and trading and various plants, acorns, deer, and small mammals provided food inland.

The Kashia are highly regarded for their beautifully woven baskets. Historically, baskets were used in all facets of life: hunting (as traps for fish and animals), gathering, storing food, cooking, toys, cradles, and as gifts and in ceremonies. Baskets are often made from wooly edge grass and bulrush roots, redwood bark,

willow and redbud branches. Many have intricate designs made with shell, bone, beads, horn, fiber, and feathers.<sup>21</sup>

Historically, the Kashia traded with the neighboring Coast Miwok, who lived south of the Russian River near Bodega Bay.<sup>22</sup> Valuable resources from the coast, such as clamshell beads, foods, and raw materials were traded with inland tribes.

Today the Kashia people are known for their fluent language speakers, dance groups, deep ties to their cultural heritage and the local community. Many members participate in park interpretive programs and special events throughout the year. At the Fort Ross Festival and other seasonal events, Kashia dance groups perform traditional music, songs, and dances (figure 7). Tribal representatives consult with California State Parks (CSP) staff on a wide range of interpretive and cultural projects.



**Figure 7.** Kashia dancer, ©2012 Paul C. Miller, FRC



### 2.2.2 Russian-American Company in North America<sup>23</sup>

Beginning in 1742, *promyshlenniki* (Russian serfs or native Siberian contract workers) left the Siberian Russian mainland by ship to seek fur-bearing marine mammals on and near the many islands to the east. In 1784, Gregory Shelikov built the first permanent Russian settlement on Kodiak Island, in what is now Alaska. The organization became the Russian-American Company in 1799, when Tsar Paul granted the company a charter giving it monopoly over all Russian enterprises in North America. The RAC established colonies west to east, from the Aleutian Islands to Sitka in present-day Alaska.<sup>24</sup>

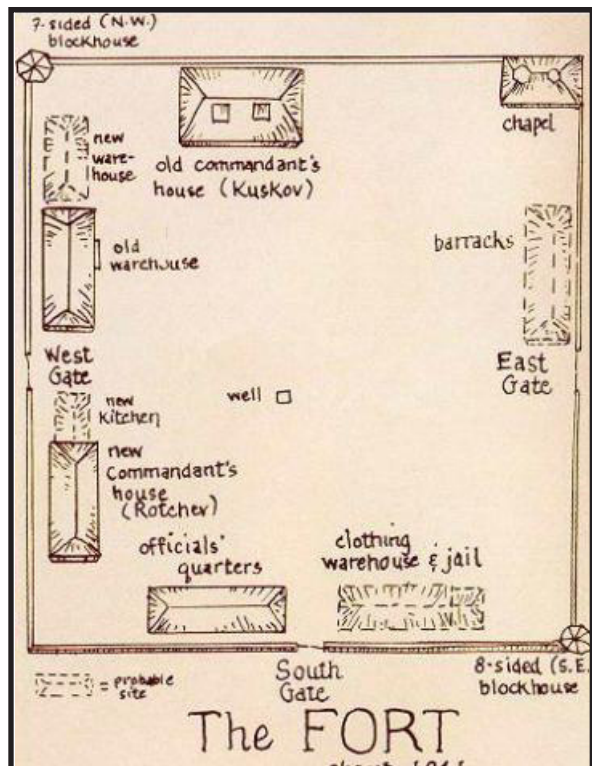
The operation expanded when American ship captains contracted with the Russian-American Company for joint ventures. Native Alaskans were employed to hunt sea otters along the coast of Alta and Baja California. Otter pelts were highly valued in trade with China, and large profits flowed to company shareholders, including members of Russian nobility.<sup>25</sup>

The RAC's chief manager, Alexander Baranov, sent his assistant, Ivan Kuskov, to locate a California site that could serve as a trading base with Spain in Alta California.<sup>26</sup> Kuskov arrived in Bodega Bay on the ship Kodiak in January of 1809 and remained until late August. He and his party of 40 Russians and 150 Native Alaskans explored the entire region, taking more than 2,000 sea otter pelts back to the Alaskan settlements (in present-day Alaska).

Kuskov returned to California to establish a Russian colony at *Metini*, 18 miles north of Bodega Bay. The site had plentiful water, land for planting crops and pastureland, and timber for construction. The village's relative inaccessibility from the Spanish-occupied territory to the south also gave the colonists a defensive advantage. In

1812, Kuskov brought 25 Russians and 80 Alaskans to build houses and a stockade. They established a settlement to grow wheat and other crops for Russians living in the Alaskan settlements, to hunt marine mammals, and to trade with Spanish Alta California.

The colony was formally dedicated and renamed "Ross" on August 13, 1812, to honor its connection with Imperial Russia, or *Rossia*. The colonists called their new home "Fortress Ross" or "Colony Ross" (figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Conceptual drawing of Fort Ross, FRC 1998.

#### 2.2.2a Life at Colony Ross

The newcomers built redwood structures and a wooden stockade with two cannon-fortified blockhouses on the southeast and northwest corners. The fort compound contained the manager's two-story house, the clerks' quarters, warehouses, artisans' workshops, and Russian officials' barracks. The chapel was built in the mid-

1820s and a well inside the fort grounds provided water.

Outside the stockade to the northwest, lower-ranking employees and people of mixed ancestry gradually established a village, or sloboda; and to the southwest, the Native Alaskans lived in a village on a bluff above a small cove. Only a small number of Russian men and one Russian woman, Elena Rotcheva, are believed to have lived at Colony Ross. The settlement was multicultural for at least thirty years, housing Native Siberians, Alaskans, Hawaiians, Californians, and individuals of mixed European and Native American ancestry.<sup>27</sup>

### 2.2.2b Occupations and Activities

Colony Ross operated like a small village; many industries that make a town viable were found here. Blacksmiths made metal items and repaired tools; a tannery processed hides into leather for clothing and other items; employees harvested trees from the surrounding hillsides to provide lumber for buildings, ships, barrels, and tools; pitch was extracted from pine and fir for use in shipbuilding; and bricks were made from local clay deposits.<sup>28</sup> RAC payrolls show Russians, Native Alaskans, and Native Americans employed as blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers (barrel makers), coppersmiths, and block-makers (brick makers).<sup>29</sup>

#### *Agriculture and Animal Husbandry*

The colony was expected to produce enough food for itself and its Alaskan settlements. Colonists planted their own gardens, that produced beans, peas, potatoes, mint, melon, pumpkin, watermelons, and roses.<sup>30</sup> They raised grapes and orchards of cherry, apple, pear, and peach trees.<sup>31</sup> RAC's farms spanned the land from Colony Ross to Bodega Bay. Staple crops were wheat and barley, but these grains did not grow well in the damp and foggy coastal conditions. The low crop

yield was not enough to meet the Alaskan settlements' needs, and so grain was obtained through trade with the Spanish Missions and American merchant ships.

The RAC had some success at raising livestock: cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, chickens, and geese were some of the animals raised and exported to the Alaskan settlements. However, the livestock supply was never enough to meet the overwhelming needs of all the settlements. Sea lion, elk, and deer meat filled the nutritional gap in the colonists' diets when domesticated livestock was not available.<sup>32 33</sup>

#### *Shipbuilding*

As the fur trade dwindled due to an increasing lack of resources, the RAC added shipbuilding as a viable industry. The missions needed sailing vessels, and the RAC was willing to meet their needs. Colony Ross produced four brigs: the Rumiantsev (1816), the Bulkadov (1819), the Volga (1821), and the Kiakhtha (1823). As payment, the RAC received supplies that were distributed to the Alaskan settlements and Fort Ross.<sup>34</sup> Though large-scale shipbuilding ceased after 1825, Khlebnikov mentions Colony Ross built other small boats, referred to as "barks", and sold them to the Spanish missions.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Trade and Commerce*

In the 1790s and early 1800s, the RAC supplied the Alaskan settlements with products from Russia. However, the long voyage and harsh conditions in the North Pacific often spoiled the cargo. At first, the Company found it cheaper and more effective to trade with British and American merchants that came to port in Alaska and Fort Ross. American and British merchants later contracted with RAC to provide a substantial amount of their provisions and shared in hunting expeditions. However, these merchants raised their prices and undercut the value of the pelts in trade, making it very

costly for the RAC to do business. The RAC depended on Colony Ross as the American and British traders became a less effective means to supplying basic food and provisions to the Alaskan settlements.

While Ivan Kuskov was the manager at Colony Ross from 1812-1822, his efforts afforded a profitable trade with Spanish officials and the missions. The Spanish government in Alta California built Mission San Rafael (1817) and Mission San Francisco Solano (1821) to keep the RAC in check. The RAC maintained a constant and lucrative trade with Alta California, keeping the missions well supplied with materials and equipment. In return, the RAC received foodstuffs and other agricultural products.<sup>36</sup>

After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, a major shift occurred in the way the region's government conducted business. The RAC suffered a sharp decrease in profits when Mexico opened California ports to foreign trade. To make matters worse, the Mexican government imposed high duties on goods, which the RAC had to pay in cash, not in fur pelts as in the past. Over the next decade, the RAC struggled to keep Colony Ross and the Company viable in California. The fur trade became less profitable as fur-bearing animals became overhunted and scarce.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.2.2c The RAC's Contributions to California

Russian-American Company employees recorded a great deal of cultural and scientific information about California and the American West Coast.

[The RAC] expanded the study of geography, cartography, ethnography, geology, meteorology, hydrography, botany, and biology. Results gained from the Company's voyages brought about many early charts of California's north coast. In 1840, Russian naturalist and artist Ilya Voznesenski spent a year at Ross, gathering specimens of California's flora and fauna (figure 9). He also collected native California artifacts, such as the acclaimed Kashia Pomo baskets. Many of these specimens are displayed today in the Peter the Great Kunskamera Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia (Fort Ross Interpretive Association 1998, 22-23).

### 2.2.2d The RAC Leaves Colony Ross

The Russian-American Company faced many challenges in sustaining the Alaskan settlements and soon found that maintaining Colony Ross was unrealistic and unprofitable. As the missions secularized in the early 1830s, trade and supply of food to the RAC colonies became less reliable.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 9.** "Fortress Ross, 1841" by Ilya Voznesenskii, *FRC*.

The RAC contracted with the Hudson Bay Company to provide grain and other foodstuffs to the colonies in Alaska.<sup>39</sup>

Mexico never granted clear title to the land that Colony Ross occupied. In December 1841, the RAC sold John Sutter only the buildings and other assets on the land. Employees such as John Bidwell and William Benitz oversaw the transition of the property. Much of Colony Ross's buildings, hardware, animals, and other assets were transported to the Sacramento Valley, where John Sutter had built his own fort.

### 2.2.2e Ft. Ross After the RAC Leaves

During the 1840s, the land around Colony Ross was part of a Mexican land grant owned by Manuel Torres.<sup>40</sup> Torres leased the land to William Benitz, who later purchased the rancho in 1849. Benitz, along with his partners and the local Kashia, successfully harvested timber, raised livestock, grew crops, and produced eggs and butter for local markets. Benitz and his large family lived in the Rotchev House (which he later expanded), and used many of the buildings within the stockade. William Benitz sold the rancho in parcels and moved to Argentina by 1867. James Dixon and Charles Fairfax purchased the land from Benitz and set up a substantial logging business, until selling the property in 1873.<sup>41</sup>

In 1873, George W. Call established the 8,000-acre Call Ranch and began the export of cordwood, railroad ties, fence posts, tanbark, apples, and dairy products. This practice continued well into the 20th century. Workers loaded cargo onto vessels anchored at the wharf in the sheltered cove below using a cargo chute. The buildings in the fort compound also underwent changes. The Rotchev House became the "Fort Ross Hotel", the warehouse was used as a dance hall (razed in the 1920s), and the Chapel was

used for many different purposes. The Call family (figure 10) built their home and a schoolhouse just outside the fort's walls. Older structures were repaired and expanded.<sup>42</sup>

The Call family owned the ranch property (figure 11) around the fort compound until 1973, and today, many family members participate in interpretive planning and programs.



**Figure 10.** the Call family, c. 1880-1890, CSP 090-5108.



**Figure 11.** Fort Ross c. 1934, CSP 090-5042.

### 2.2.3 Transition to a State Park

In 1903, the California Historical Landmarks Committee purchased the Ross stockade area from the Call family. Three years later, the State of California acquired the site and it was opened to the public. California State Parks (CSP) has done extensive restoration and reconstruction, while adding acreage to preserve the surrounding environment. The Rotchev House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>43</sup>

Significant archaeological excavations by CSP and local universities aided in the reconstruction of the Chapel, Officer’s Barracks, Kuskov House, and the Magasin within the original fort’s walls. CSP, in conjunction with FRC and other partners have raised money to restore and safeguard structures like the Rotchev House. Most recently, a replica of an original RAC windmill (figure 12) was erected in the southeast edge of the Day Use parking lot.



**Figure 12.** Reconstructed windmill, 2013.

Several times a year, this usually quiet park transforms into a thriving international settlement. Special events, such as the Fort Ross Festival and living history days attract thousands of people to watch and participate in historical activities, reenactments, and cultural programs.

The park is a popular destination, thanks in part to its Environmental Living Program and Environmental Living Day programs, where schoolchildren take on historical roles and characters, and perform tasks within the fort.

### 2.3 Recreational Resources

Recreational Resources describes the types of recreational activities and amenities at the park (figure 13).

Fort Ross SHP has a wealth of recreational opportunities. Situated on the Sonoma County Coast, there are spectacular views of the ocean and wooded hillsides. Visitors enjoy the view while hiking, surf fishing, tide pooling, diving, boating, beach combing, and picnicking along the coast.

#### *Picnicking*

Picnic tables are located near the visitor center, next to the Call Ranch House, in the fort compound, and at Sandy Cove.

#### *Restrooms*

Restrooms are at the visitor center and there are pit toilets at the fort compound.

#### *Trails*

- The Fort Ross Trail leads from the visitor center to the fort compound and Russian village site.
- The Call House trail leads from the visitor center to the Call House picnic area and main access road.

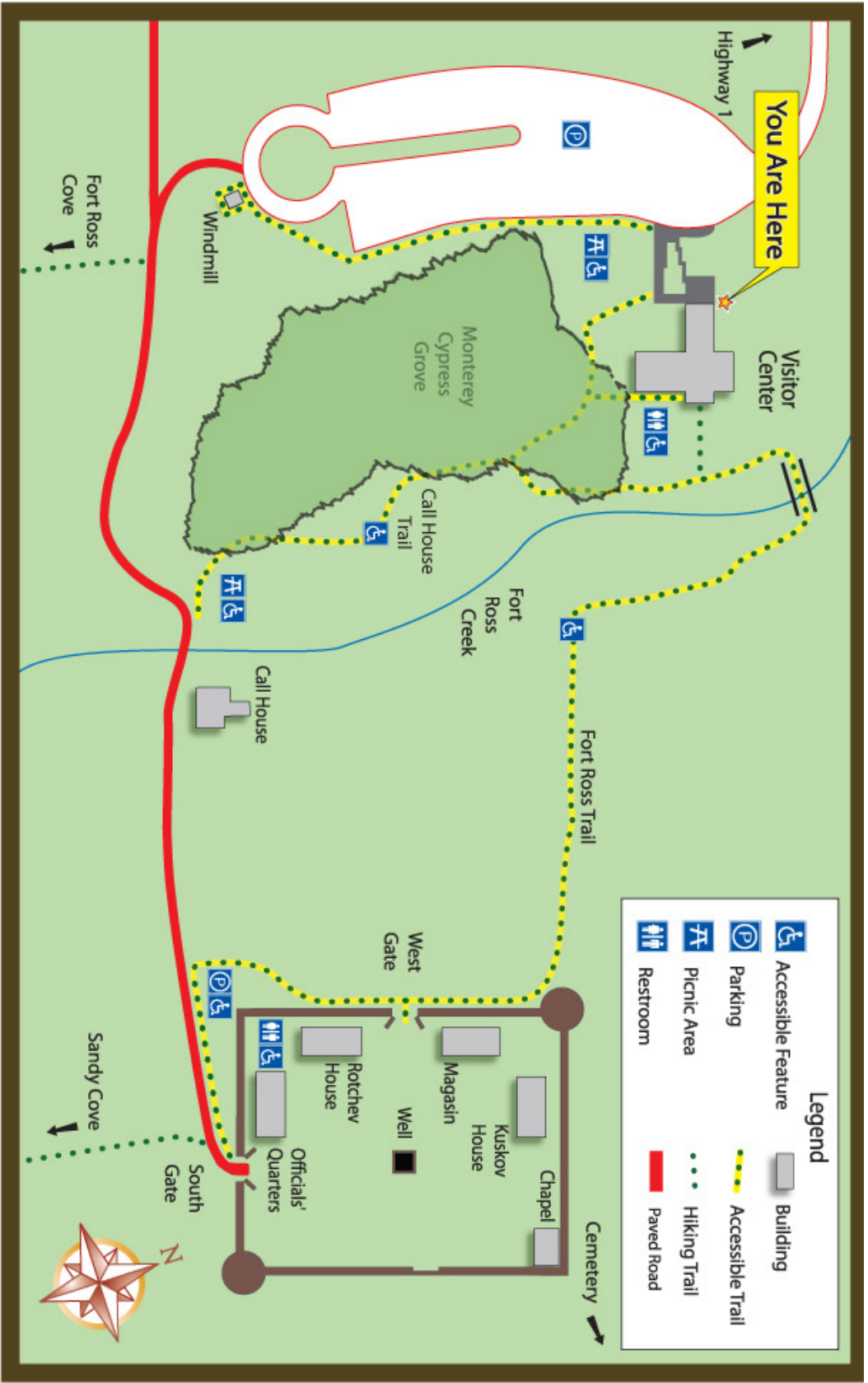


Figure 13. Fort Ross' visitor center, trails, and historic features.

- A dirt trail leads to the Russian Orthodox Cemetery and to Sandy Cove from the fort compound.
- The Reef Campground trail from the visitor center is three-four miles, round trip. It can be extended north along park bluffs and south along the coast. North or southbound hikers see views of the fort and a look at the earthquake action along the San Andreas Fault.

### *Beaches*

Sandy Cove and Fort Ross Cove have access to beaches and tide pools via pedestrian trails. Sandy Cove is a large sandy beach with plenty of space to roam. Some tide pooling is available. The Fort Ross Cove to the north of the fort compound is very rocky, and at low tide provides access to tide pooling.

### *Fishing*

When in season, visitors catch rockfish from the shore and in kayaks.

### *Abalone Diving*

Diving for red abalone is open at certain places off the park's coast when in season. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife regulates the abalone and other fisheries within the park.

### *Diving*

Certified scuba divers can explore the wreck of the *S.S. Pomona*, a ship that sank more than 100 years ago off Fort Ross Cove and now sits approximately 40 feet under water.

### *Camping*

The Reef Campground has 20 sites (first-come, first-served) with flush toilets but no showers. It is currently closed due to service reductions.

### *Accessible Features*

The Day Use parking lot, visitor center, the Fort Ross Interpretive Trail, and the Call House Trail are accessible. The fort compound has limited accessibility to all buildings. There are accessible restrooms at the visitor center and at the fort compound.

## **2.4 Collections**

Fort Ross SHP has over a thousand interpretive and museum objects in its collection. There are approximately 270 objects in the visitor center; most other objects are located in the fort compound, ranch buildings, and the Call House.

Objects in the visitor center relate to the park's primary interpretive themes and periods. Permanent and rotating exhibits illustrate stories relating to Kashia, Native Alaskan, and Russian cultural groups. Exhibits and films discuss themes relating to the Russian-American Company (RAC), the American ranching period, the transition of the property to California State Parks, and local maritime history. Archaeological objects recovered from scientific investigations tell the stories of how people lived at the fort over time. Kashia, Native Alaskan, and Russian art and other personal objects describe cultural beliefs and customs related to these groups.

The fort compound's house interpretive displays demonstrate how each structure was used during the RAC era (1812-1840). Visitors are encouraged to wander through the buildings on self-guided exploration. Many of the displays can be touched and used for interpretive programs and special events.

The Call House exhibits interpret the Call family ranch (1873-1908) and their lives there. Some objects are used for interpretive programs and special events.

### *Collections Categories*

Fort Ross SHP's collections reinforce interpretive messages and enhance the visitor experience. These objects fall under the following categories:

Items recovered from archaeological investigations (figure 14) include:

- Native Alaskan and Native American: glass, shell, and ceramic beads, bone and metal tools, earthenware fragments, shell fishhooks, projectile and spear points, and other hunting tools.
- Russian-American Company related items include metal tools and implements, personal items, religious items, beads, jewelry beads, glass and ceramic shards.



**Figure 14.** Items from archaeological investigations.

Ethnographic materials include:

- Native American material such as: Kashia, Pomo, and other Native California Indian cooking baskets, food processing items, a baby carrier, hunting tools and equipment, and clam shell beads (figure 15).



**Figure 15.** Kashia and other Native American objects.

- Native Alaskan materials such as clothing, personal items, and trade beads. Hunting tools and equipment like a baidarka and hunting spears. There are small models of Native Alaskan boats, such as an umiak and kayak, as well as figurines and baskets.
- Ethnic Russian clothing, personal items, textiles, religious art, books, tools, and equipment (figure 16).





**Figure 16.** Russian-American Company archaeological objects.

- Pelts and hides including sea otter, fur seal, mink, elk, rabbit, coyote, raccoon, beaver, sheep, deer, cattle, and fox.
- Plants and natural history specimens.

California State Parks memorabilia includes:

- Photographs, staff journals, brochures, and past exhibits.

Documentary (archival) materials include:

- Maps, letters, photographs and digital images, books, documents, and other research materials.

General artifacts include:

- Reproduction and period 19th century blacksmith, cooper, carpentry, scientific instruments, agricultural, and military-related tools and equipment.
- Reproduction and period 19th century furniture, textiles, cooking and eating utensils, clothing and personal items, , religious items and art, and warehouse-related trade goods.
- Call House and Ranch-related items include furniture, textiles, cooking and eating utensils, clothing and personal items, artwork, books, and farm and agricultural equipment.
- Items from the *S.S. Pomona* shipwreck include boat parts and items recovered from the shipwreck.

Natural history specimens include:

## Endnotes

1. E.A.P. Crownhart-Vaughan and Basil Dmytryshyn, *Colonial Russian America: Kyrill T. Khlebnikov's Reports, 1817-1832*. (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1976), 106.
2. Fort Ross Interpretive Association, *Fort Ross*, edited by Lyn Kalani, Lynn Rudy, and John Sperry (Jenner, CA: Fort Ross Interpretive Association, 1998), 13.
3. Crownhart-Vaughan and Dmytryshyn 1976, 117-121.
4. The Western Regional Climate Center (WRCC) is partners with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association and the US Department of the Interior. More information about WRCC can be found at <http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/>.
5. According to Figure 8.3 of the Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Fort Ross SHP is considered extremely vulnerable to damage if an earthquake occurs. (Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, 2011.)
6. Biotic Resources was summarized from the Fort Ross Conservancy's webpage, Fort Ross Conservancy, *The Natural Environment of Sonoma Coast*, 1998. <http://www.fortross.org/visitors.htm> (accessed 2/22/2013). Species noted here can be found in Appendix A.
7. Fishing and abalone diving is heavily regulated along the coast.
8. The California sea otter, once populous here, was hunted to near extinction in the 19th century. River otters can sometimes be seen off the coast.
9. Bishop pine is a common tree species found close to the coastline. Douglas firs are invading some of the terraces south of the fort.
10. Himalaya blackberry thrives in creeks and near seeps.
11. Bush lupine also prefers old beach deposits on top of the terrace. Other lupines are present on the terraces.
12. The deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) transmits the bacteria that causes Lyme disease (*Borrelia burgdorferi*) in eastern North America. For more information, see the University of California Integrated Pest Management website. <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7485.html>.
13. California State Parks introduced the Monterey cypress. These trees quickly grew to dominate the fort's view shed and only reflect one era of the cultural landscape (1906-2013).
14. Coniferous trees soon mixed with hardwoods in the upper elevations.
15. Grand fir is not as predominate at Fort Ross SHP as it is at the southern extent of its range.
16. Fort Ross Conservancy, 1998
17. California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "CNDDDB Maps & Data", accessed November 19, 2013. <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/about/data.html>.
18. CSP, *California Department of Parks and Recreation, Fort Ross SHP, Maps/ Brochures*, 2013. [http://www.parks.ca.gov/MediaGallery/?page\\_id=449&m=brochures](http://www.parks.ca.gov/MediaGallery/?page_id=449&m=brochures) (accessed 5/13/2013).
19. Fort Ross Interpretive Association 1998, 6.
20. Fort Ross Interpretive Association 1998, 6.
21. Fort Ross Interpretive Association 1998, 6.
22. The Coast Miwok were one of several tribes with whom the Kashia traded. Some Kashia became paid employees of the Russian-American Company.
23. CSP brochure, 2013.
24. The RAC established Fort Elizabeth on

- the Hawaiian island of Kauai.
25. The American ship captains hailed from Boston, MA. The RAC would often trade pelts for food with the Boston merchants.
  26. The Fort Ross site was also chosen for its agricultural potential to supply food for the Alaskan colonies.
  27. According to author James R. Gibson, the population of Russian California “rarely included 100 Russians, or 500 persons altogether” (Gibson 1976, 115). Historian Lydia Black noted that there were 26 Russian and 102 Native Alaskans living at Ross in 1818 (Black 2004, 181).
  28. Fort Ross was the site of the first shipyard on the West Coast (McGhie Allan III 2001, 40).
  29. Kiril Timofeevich Khlebnikov, *The Khlebinikov Archive: Unpublished Journal: 1800-1830 and Travel Notes (1820, 1822, and 1824)*, edited by Leonid Shur, translated by John Bisk, (The University of Alaska Press: 1990), 101.
  30. Khlebnikov 1990, 56.
  31. The RAC cherry and apple trees still exist at Fort Ross SHP.
  32. James R. Gibson, *Imperial Russia in Frontier America: the changing geography of supply of Russian America, 1784-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 124-125.
  33. Khlebnikov 1990, 58.
  34. Khlebnikov 1990, 116-117.
  35. Gibson 1976, 30.
  36. Gibson 1976, 187-188.
  37. Gibson 1976, 138.
  38. Khlebnikov 1990, 117.
  39. Gibson 1976, 51.
  40. Rancho Muniz, which included Fort Ross, was granted to Manuel Torres in 1845. J.P. Munro-Frasier, *History of Sonoma County [Cal.]: Including Its Geology, Topography, Mountains, Valleys and Streams; with a Full and Particular Record of the Spanish Grants; Its Early History and Settlement* (Alley, Bowen & Company, 1880, 374). Accessed 11/19/13.
  41. Fort Ross Interpretive Association 1998, 22-23.
  42. Fort Ross Interpretive Association 1998, 23-26.
  43. CSP brochure, 2013.



## CHAPTER 3: EXISTING CONDITIONS

*Chapter 3 documents the existing conditions at Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP) and vicinity. First, the chapter describes how visitors access the park and visitor center, including park orientation and circulation. Then, it presents visitation information and demographics to show how visitors use the park and interpretive offerings. Next, the chapter describes the existing interpretive and educational services, followed by the operational resources that affect these services. Finally, chapter 3 provides information about the partners and organizations that support and complement FRSHP's interpretive services. The information in this chapter is used to develop gap analysis and recommendations for improving and expanding interpretive services and exhibits for the visitor center.*

### 3.1 Access, Orientation, and Circulation

#### *Getting to the Park*

Fort Ross is a remote park located on the Sonoma County coast. Visitors access the park on a rural, two-lane stretch of State Highway 1. It is eleven miles north of Jenner, 84 miles north of San Francisco, and 27 miles south of the town of Gualala. Services such as gas stations, stores, and restaurants are scarce in the vicinity.

Approximate driving times from the following major cities:

Santa Rosa—1.5 hours

San Francisco—2 hours

Sacramento—3.5 hours

Fort Bragg—2 hours

#### *Park Access<sup>1</sup>*

The main park entrance is from Highway 1. Visitors drive to an entrance gate, pay the parking fee, and park in the main lot. For large groups and those with limited mobility, cars and buses may drive straight through the parking lot, past the replica windmill, and take the dirt road to the fort compound itself, unload passengers, and then drive back to the parking lot to park.

A pedestrian trail leads from the visitor center to the fort compound, Russian Village site, Russian Orthodox Cemetery, and to the Sandy Cove overlook.

The Fort Ross historic orchard is across the highway on Fort Ross Road about .25 miles east of Highway 1. To see the historic orchard, visitors either walk or drive up Fort Ross Road .5 miles and access the site on the right-hand side. There are picnic tables and interpretive signage at the orchard.

#### *Park Hours of Operation<sup>2</sup>*

Park grounds are open from sunrise to sunset. The fort compound, visitor center, and all other facilities are open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

#### *Accessible Features*

The main parking lot, restrooms, and the visitor center are fully accessible. The Fort Ross trail leading from the visitor center to the Fort and out to the Sandy Beach Cove overlook is accessible. The fort compound has limited accessibility. For more details, see Appendix F: Exhibit Accessibility Survey and Critique.

#### *Visitor Center*

The visitor center was built in the 1976-1977 fiscal year, and the original exhibits were installed in 1985. Minor additions to exhibits and visitor amenities have been added since the visitor center opened.

### *Visitor Amenities*

The visitor center has restrooms, orientation information, formal exhibits, and a multi-purpose room for viewing park films. It also has a reference library, an outside deck patio with picnic tables, and a comfortable seating area. The park and cooperating association administrative offices are located within this building. All public space is accessible.

### *Circulation*

Visitors access the visitor center from a covered paved walkway leading from the parking lot. They enter through two sets of glass doors and into an entry vestibule. Restrooms are located in a hallway to the left of the front doors. Once inside the main hall, visitors first see the museum store, where they may receive information about the park from a Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) employee or from a park employee.

Visitors access the exhibit hall to the left of the front doors. The exhibits follow a circular route and end back at the main hall. From here, visitors exit the building through two sets of glass doors, which leads down a set of stairs or ramp to the main trail that leads to the Fort complex.

Visitors may also walk through the museum store and into the multi-purpose room (figure 17), where there are chairs set up to view park films. Overstuffed chairs and sofas surround the working fireplace at the other end of the room.<sup>3</sup> All the seating and exhibits are movable to provide maximum flexibility of the space.



**Figure 17.** Multi-purpose room, *FRC 2013*.

From the multi-purpose room, visitors may exit to a deck, where there are picnic tables in the patio. Visitors may access the reference library (figure 18) upon request or by appointment. Park and FRC offices are located at the front of the building. Visitors may exit the building from the rear of the building (opposite the entrance) to access the Fort Ross trail, which leads down to the Fort and to Sandy Beach Cove. The Call House trail leads from the visitor center to the Call picnic area. Both trails are accessible.



**Figure 18.** Reference library

## 3.2 Visitor Assessment

### 3.2.1 Visitor Profile<sup>4</sup>

Statistical information is currently not available on age or gender of visitors. Anecdotally, visitor ages range from infant to over 90 years old and visitation is evenly distributed by gender. Fort Ross SHP's terrain can be challenging for visitors with limited mobility; therefore, the visitor center is the most visited facility by this user group. One additional anecdotal observation was that most visitors were part of a group of family or friends, rather than singles.

### 3.2.2 Visitation Data

Table 3 shows the reported annual visitation to Fort Ross SHP as compiled from the California State Park System Statistical Reports.<sup>5</sup> It reflects attendance to all areas of the park (including sub-units such as the Reef Campground and Day Use area). In 2010, over 224,242 people visited this remote park, many of whom were international travelers.<sup>6</sup>

Fort Ross SHP tends to be either a destination or a brief respite point, depending on the visitor. This pattern lends itself to separating visitors into two primary categories:

- Intentional visitors: those who intended and planned to visit and who have allowed themselves time to spend at Fort Ross, no matter their motive for the visit.
- Accidental visitors: those who were simply driving, cycling or walking the coast highway or coastal trail and needed a place to stretch their legs, go to the bathroom, ask questions, etc.

Intentional visitors are further categorized below based on interest or motive for their planned visit (in no particular order):

- sport fishing & abalone diving
- historic site interest
- artistic (e.g., photography, painting)

Table 3. Fort Ross SHP Visitor Attendance								
Fiscal Year								
2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	Average
Paid Day Use								
66,472	61,109	64,242	80,505	70,521	66,349	47,176	45,222	62,700
Fee Day Use								
61,318	69,195	115,292	194,230	172,783	168,308	138,019	172,543	136,461
Camping								
6,414	5,292	5,367	9,339	7,669	8,546	6,641	6,477	7,038
Total								
134,204	135,596	184,901	284,074	250,973	243,203	191,836	224,242	206,129

- coastal access not related to fishing (e.g., beachcombing, tide pooling, kayaking)
- picnicking
- hiking
- camping<sup>7</sup>
- school groups<sup>8</sup>
- religious<sup>9</sup>
- cultural practice<sup>10</sup>

No formalized method for capturing attendance numbers to the visitor center existed prior to this document. Numbers were concluded to be approximately 62,700 visitors annually, based on the average number of paid Day Use visitors. Statistical information was also unavailable regarding visitors' addresses; anecdotally, it is estimated that the majority of visitors live in California.

Anecdotal evidence shows that the park draws a majority of its visitors from the greater Sacramento and San Francisco Bay region, including the nearest urban town, Santa Rosa. Since Fort Ross SHP is a unique site, it also attracts visitors nationwide, as well as internationally. Anecdotal evidence suggests that increasing numbers of Russian or Ukrainian-Americans visit the park. Fort Ross SHP maintains a high political profile, bringing in foreign and domestic dignitaries on a regular basis for visits, conferences, meetings, and events.

The California State Park Bilingual Survey results from 2010 and 2012 for the Russian River District revealed that a majority of visitors surveyed speak English as their primary language, with an average of 90%.<sup>11</sup> Other languages that averaged above 1% of visitors were Spanish and Vietnamese. Table 4 indicates the reported primary languages spoken by visitors surveyed in 2010 and 2012. It is noteworthy that the table reflects the entire Russian River District bilingual

survey. For 2012, the Fort Ross SHP bilingual survey tally sheet reflected that 459 visitors were surveyed, and 97.82% used English, .007% used American Sign Language, and .015% used Russian as their primary language. Anecdotal evidence by visitor center staff, however, indicates that Russian speakers represent 50% of overall visitors to the park.

**Table 4. 2010-2012 Visitor Language Survey**

Primary Language	% of Visitors 2010	% of Visitors 2012	Average
American Sign Language	-	00.09	00.05
Armenian	0.82	-	00.41
Cantonese/ Yue	01.54	-	00.77
Dutch	-	00.09	00.05
English	82.00	98.53	90.00
French	-	00.17	00.09
German	01.23	-	00.62
Hebrew	-	00.04	00.02
Ilocano	-	00.04	00.02
Japanese	-	00.17	00.09
Korean	01.23	00.09	00.66
Mandarin	-	00.09	00.05
Russian	00.10	00.13	00.12
Spanish	09.47	00.56	05.02
Vietnamese	03.60	-	01.80



### 3.2.3 Regional Data

Fort Ross SHP is located in Sonoma County and is part of the greater San Francisco Bay Area. The Bay Area is comprised of nine counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma counties (figure 19). The five most populous cities in these counties in 2010 were San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland, Fremont, and Santa Rosa.

The 2010 census estimates yielded the following demographic information about the Bay Area (Tables 5-10):

- California's population will increase by nearly one-third by 2040.
- 19% of California's population (7,165,778 people) lives in the Bay Area.
- Santa Clara County has the largest concentration of people, and will continue to have the largest population in the Bay Area in 2040.
- The largest age groups in the Bay Area were those aged 34-64. This is not expected to change in the next 30 years.
- In California and the Bay Area, the largest percentage of the population is age 20-64. While this will continue to be the same trend in 2040, the people age 55 and older will have the greatest increase (129%) by 2040.
- California's largest ethnic groups are Hispanic (39.70%) followed by White (38.10%) and Asian (13.6%).
- The Bay Area's ethnic group percentages were very different. Hispanic groups had much higher percentages on average, followed by Asian, then white. Marin and Sonoma had a higher percentage of Hispanics

to other ethnic groups.

- The Bay Area had smaller percentages of people living below the poverty line than California, and the nation as a whole.



Figure 19. Bay Area counties<sup>12</sup>

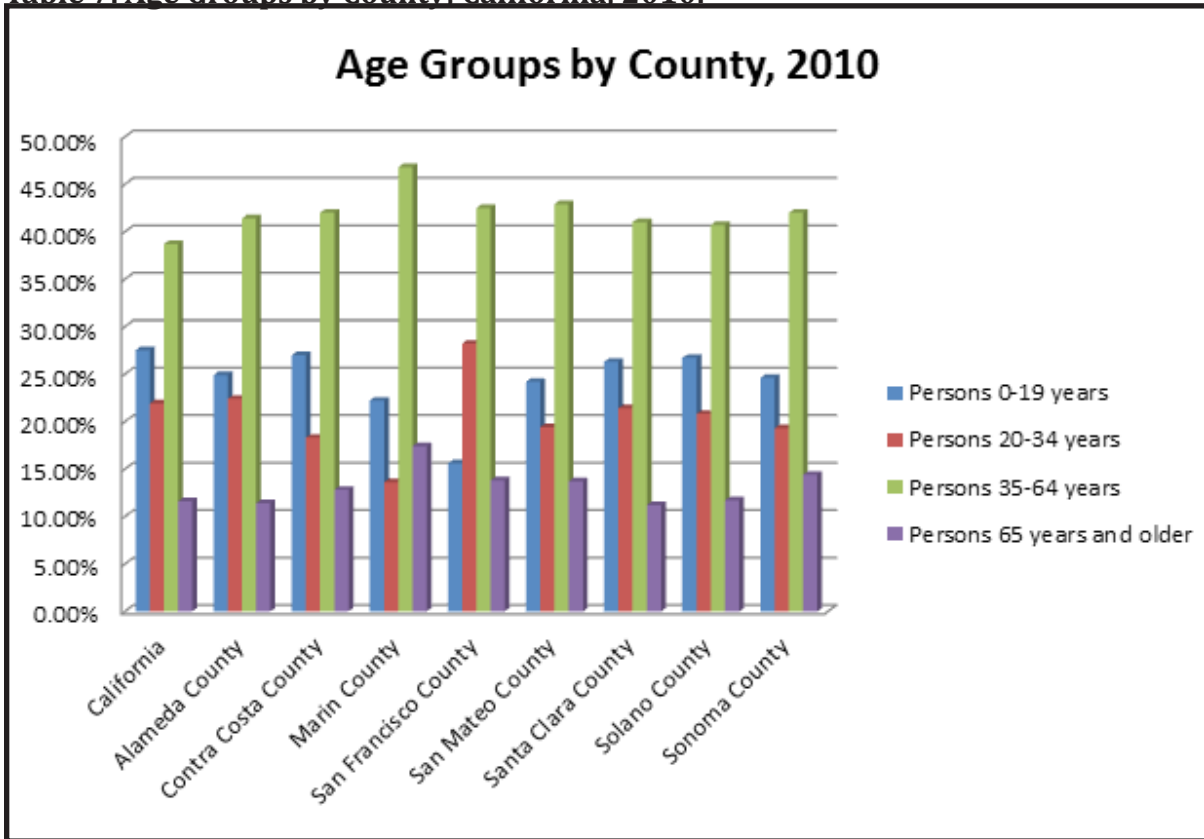
**Table 5.** 30-year Population Projections

<b>State and Bay Area Population Trends</b>	<b>Estimate 2010</b>	<b>Projections 2040</b>	<b>% Change</b>
California	37,312,510	47,983,659	29
Alameda County	1,513,251	1,705,642	13
Contra Costa County	1,052,024	1,381,576	31
Marin County	252,727	264,910	5
Napa County	136,659	171,625	26
San Francisco County	807,048	845,750	5
San Mateo County	719,467	791,781	10
Santa Clara County	1,787,267	2,164,936	21
Solano County	413,154	533,041	29
Sonoma County	484,181	574,347	19
Projections prepared by Demographic Research Unit, California Department of Finance, May 2012.			

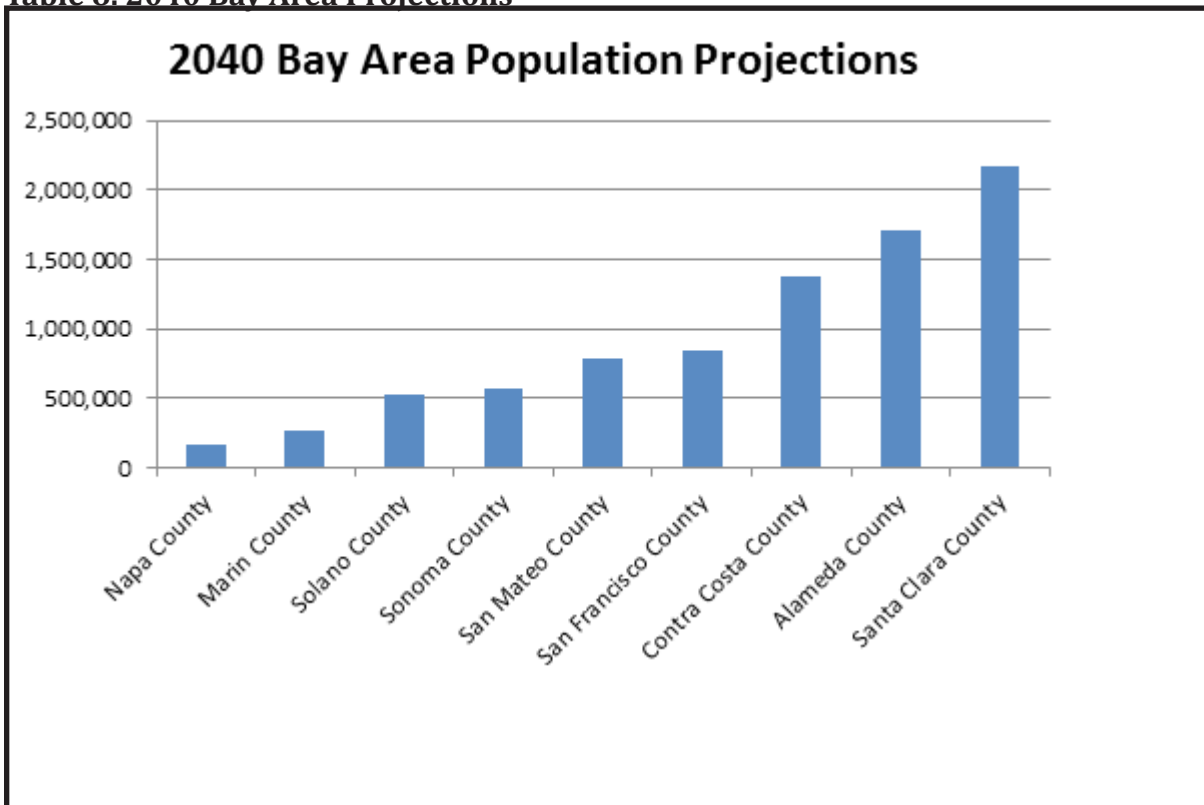
**Table 6.** California Age Group Projections, 2010-2040

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2010 % of Population</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>2040 % of Population</b>	<b>Total % of Change</b>
0-19	10,468,257	28.06	11,792,321.04	25	13
20-64	22,591,038	60.55	26,431,288	55	17
65+	4,253,215	11.40	9,760,050.54	20	129
Total	37,312,510	100.00	47,983,659.58	100	29

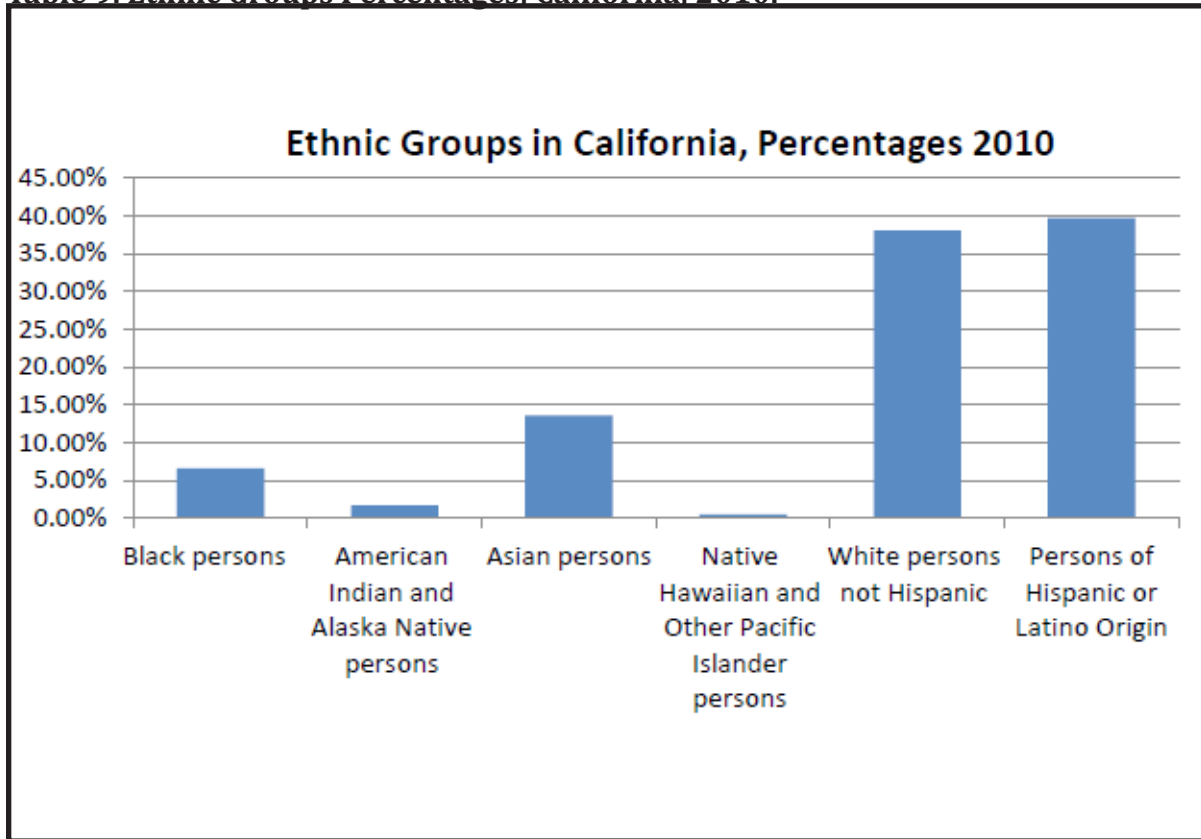
**Table 7. Age Groups by County; California, 2010.**



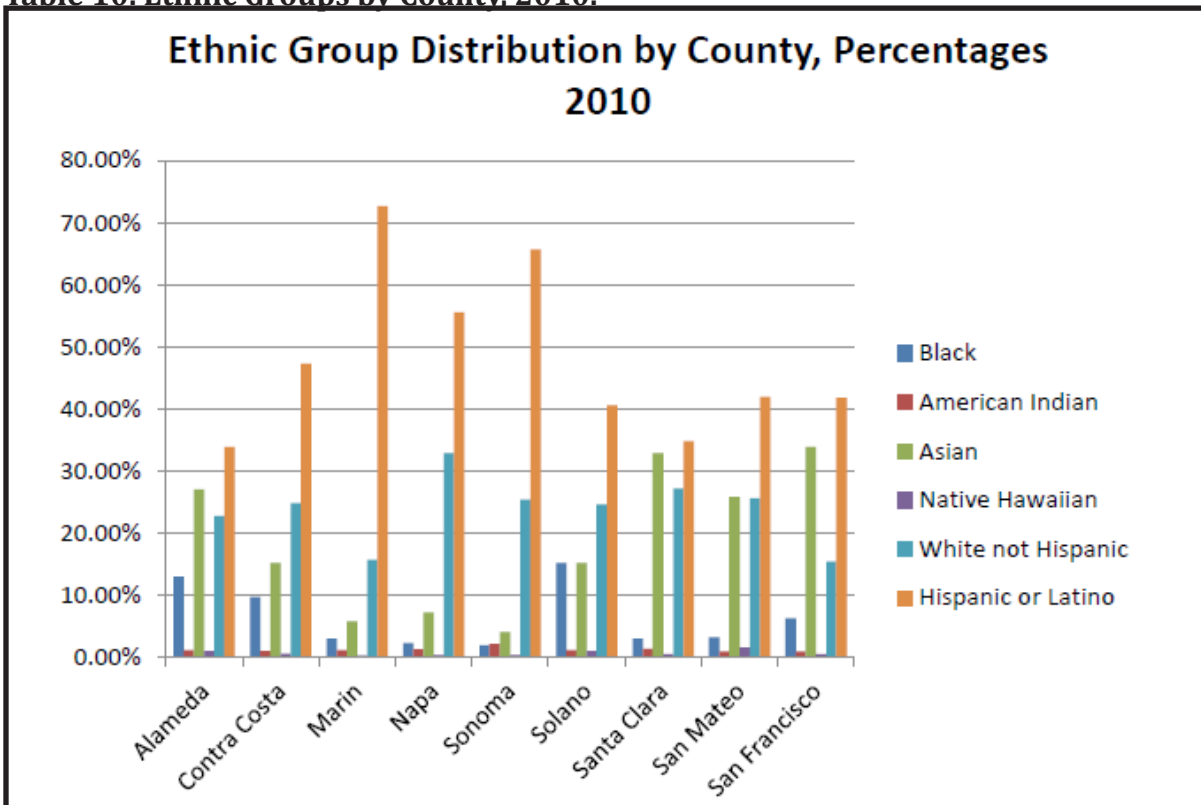
**Table 8. 2040 Bay Area Projections**



**Table 9. Ethnic Groups Percentages: California, 2010.**



**Table 10. Ethnic Groups by County, 2010.**



### 3.3 Existing Interpretation and Education

Though remote, Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP) is popular among tourists, locals, and school groups. The park offers a variety of educational programs and services, including cultural immersion programs for kids. Thousands of people attend cultural events held throughout the year, and many visitors are international travelers.

#### 3.3.1 Non-personal Interpretation

Non-personal interpretation is interpretive media and facilities available to visitors to use without the presence of staff. Non-personal services include brochures, exhibits, wayside panels, signs, videos, and audio programs. Fort Ross has the following facilities and media available for self-guided interpretation:

##### 3.3.1a Available at the Visitor Center

- Park brochure (available online and in print form)
- Interpretive program brochures and event flyers.
  - » The FRC provides walking tour brochures in English and Russian.
- Audio-Visual Programs<sup>13</sup>
  - » Historic overview of Fort Ross SHP video is shown at the visitor center, and can be purchased online, and from the sales area.
- Interpretive panels and museum displays in the visitor center provide an overview of the park's natural resources and cultural history.
- The FRC maintains an extensive research library at the visitor center. Some of these materials are available to view on the FRC website.<sup>14</sup>

##### 3.3.1b Available in the Park

- The historic fort complex has house museum exhibits in each building that depict life during the Russian-American Company era.
- The Call house has house museum exhibits that depict the ranching era and the Call family's life there. Tours are available the first two weekends each month.
- There are interpretive and orientation panels near the entrance kiosk, the visitor center entrance, and along the Fort Ross Trail. Topics for these panels include the Park overview and orientation, Russian windmill, Native Alaskan Village site, Russian Village site, Russian Orthodox Cemetery, the Call family ranch, Fort Ross industry and shipbuilding.

##### 3.3.1c Available Online

- CSP website (*www.parks.ca.gov/?page\_id=449*) provides park orientation information, interpretive and educational programs, event calendar, historic overview, cultural, natural, and recreational resource information, and links to the FRC's website and other resources.
- Fort Ross SHP interpretation and education website (*www.fortrossstatepark.org*) provides information for the Environmental Living Programs and the Environmental Living Day Programs. The site has some cultural and natural history and park orientation information.
- Facebook page "Friends of Fort Ross" event calendar and park information. The FRC maintains this page.

- Fort Ross Conservancy Facebook page highlights organizational news relating to Fort Ross.
- Fort Ross Conservancy's website ([www.fortross.org](http://www.fortross.org)) offers a virtual park tour in English and Russian languages, park orientation information, an overview of the park's natural and cultural history, event calendar, volunteer opportunities, FRC membership, the FRC digital library and catalog, and links to related resources.

### 3.3.2 Personal Interpretation

Personal interpretation involves an interpreter interacting with visitors through face-to-face contact. In 2011, 248 interpretive programs were held at Fort Ross SHP, including tours, presentations, demonstrations, roving interpretation, special events, and children's programs.

#### 3.3.2a Tours

##### *Call House*

The Call house is open for volunteer-led tours the first two weekends of each month.

##### *Group Tours*

Any group can schedule a private tour of the fort compound. The tour includes exploration time, and participants assist in firing the cannon. Colleges, elder hostel programs, and family reunions often make up these groups.

#### 3.3.2b Presentations and Demonstrations

##### *Interpreter-Led Presentations*

Interpretive presentations are offered in the fort compound during the day when the fort is open. There are two interpretive

talks or tours per day on the weekends. Interpreters discuss the park's natural and cultural history, which focuses on the Kashia, Russian-American Company (RAC), Ranching era, and the present day. The FRC also offers these tours in Russian.

##### *Volunteer-Led Presentations*

On occasion, volunteers demonstrate historic activities and/or represent people who were living at the Colony Ross. For example, a volunteer will work in the armory cleaning muskets and interact with visitors. Volunteers take on many tasks and roles, such as broom makers, Russian families, Kashia people, cooking demonstrations, and basket making.

##### *Cannon Firing Demonstration*

If crowds are big, by special request, or if tour groups are present, the fort's cannons can be fired with the help of adult audience participants.

##### *Roving Interpretation*

Interpreters interact with visitors to answer questions, and give impromptu talks and information about the natural and cultural history of the park.

#### 3.3.2c Special Events<sup>15</sup>

Special events in the winter and spring combine Russian and Kashia families, highlighting traditions and various aspects of Fort Ross before and after the Russian-American Company era.

##### *The Fort Ross Festival*

Previously known as Cultural Heritage Day, this is a one or two day event held in late July. This event highlights historic and contemporary traditions of Fort Ross. The Festival is the largest event of the year and includes exhibitors, vendors, sales, historic demonstrations, performances, and cultural presentations by the Russian and Kashia communities.

The Fort Ross Harvest Festival focuses on the Fort Ross colony's agricultural history, especially the orchard and windmill. The park interprets the harvest season through activities, harvesting fruit, juicing, baking, and performances.

#### *Cultural Heritage Days 2012<sup>18</sup>*

This special event commemorated the 200-year establishment of Fort Ross by the Russian-American Company. The event was well publicized and attended. CSP staff conducted a visitor intercept survey on both days of the Bicentennial event. Survey participants answered questions about their experience at the event, and topics that interested them for future exhibits. The results of the survey show that 40% of visitors had been to a previous CHD event at the park. Topic voting indicated that visitors were nearly evenly divided across topics. Results of the topic voting are close to the topics discussed and prioritized at the two stakeholder meetings.<sup>19</sup>

#### 3.3.3d Children's Programs

Fort Ross SHP hosts mostly 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students for all programs, because current interpretive programs are designed around the California State Standards and Framework standards for this age group. (For more on curriculum framework and standards, see Appendix B.) Many of the school participants come from the San Francisco bay area, Sacramento area, and Mendocino County.

An evaluation form is sent to all teachers who participate in the interpretive programs. General comments from teachers include:

- History presentations were lively and memorable for students.
- Students enjoyed getting into character.
- Students totally entranced by

experience, loved historical simulation and hands-on learning.

- Students will (and do) remember this for the rest of their lives.
- Most memorable activities included the night watch, cooking, sleeping in historic buildings, their role group, military protocol, cannon firing, and poke pole fishing.
- Interpreters are wonderful, helpful, thorough, and accessible. Parents were well informed.
- ELP curriculum manual and workshop was very helpful and complete in preparing teacher for trip.

Many schools book special programs for the fort compound. These programs last an hour, followed by free exploration, and a cannon-firing demonstration. Programs are tailored for each age group, school curriculum, and teachers' requests.

#### *Environmental Living Program (ELP)*

This program offers school-aged children a park experience that explores the interaction between humans and their environment. Students learn about the cultures and lifestyles of Russian-American Company employees at Colony Ross, and use this knowledge to recreate elements of the culture and era studied. This is an overnight program for children



**Figure 20.** ELP program, CSP 090-p77307

grades three to five. Children dress in period costumes and represent real people who lived and worked at the fort. During their stay, they perform tasks that portray the culture and profession of their historic character (figure 20).

The ELP incorporates demonstrations, hands on activities, and follow-up student assignments.

The Virtual Warehouse Program is a virtual tour and educational component developed for the ELP.

#### *ELP Curriculum*

Fort Ross SHP provides a curriculum binder (updated annually) to teachers who participate in the ELP and ELDP. The curriculum includes Russian, California Native, and Alaskan Native cultural crafts, recipes, projects and skills for children to practice at home, in class or on site at their field trip. Curriculum is based on California State Standards of Education for grades three to five.

#### *Environmental Living Day Program (ELDP)<sup>20</sup>*

The ELDP is an abbreviated version of the ELP, where students come for a full day instead of staying overnight.

#### *ELP and ELDP Workshop for Teachers*

Once a year, the park offers training for teachers new to the ELP and ELDP programs. Teachers receive the curriculum manual and information needed to prepare students for each program.

### 3.3.2e Educational Services

#### *Service Learning*

Occasionally, a Boy or Girl Scout troop comes to the fort for a service project. They work from four to six hours, stay overnight in the fort's blockhouses, and fire the cannon. The Fort Ross

Conservancy (FRC) offers community service projects to youth and adults who volunteer at the park.

#### *Archaeology Programs*

Local colleges and universities, such as the University of California, Berkeley and California State University, Sonoma conduct archeological digs and research of the *Metini* Kashia village, Russian Orthodox cemetery, and elsewhere.

#### *Volunteer Training Program*

Fort Ross SHP staff holds volunteer orientation and trainings annually. Select volunteers are trained in using the cannon and black powder.

The Fort Ross Conservancy offers a variety of different educational and interpretive programs for park visitors and volunteers, including Marine Mammal Monitoring, special lectures and workshops, tours, volunteer service projects, and Russian-language interpretive tours.

### 3.3.2f Program Attendance

Interpretive program data revealed in 2011 that 2,815 people attended the 153 one hour interpretive talks offered in the fort compound, and 3,002 people attended the 72 Environmental Living Program (ELP) and Environmental Studies Programs (ESP).<sup>16</sup> Table 11 shows reported on-site interpretive programs and attendance for Fort Ross SHP in 2011.<sup>17</sup>



**Table 11. Interpretive Program Attendance**

2011 Program	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
<b># of Interpretive Talks</b>													
	1	12	9	24	13	14	19	15	12	6	16	12	153
<b>Monthly Attendance for Interpretive Talks</b>													
	50	125	150	355	305	220	420	380	265	180	245	120	2815
<b># of ELP</b>													
	4	4	7	7	10	5	2	0	5	8	5	3	60
<b>Monthly Attendance: ELP</b>													
	160	190	275	290	360	200	50	0	210	340	210	120	2405
<b># of ELDP</b>													
	0	0	3	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	12
<b>Monthly Attendance: ELDP</b>													
	0	0	100	80	135	0	0	0	0	200	82	0	597
<b>Other On-site Interpretation</b>													
	0	1	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	1	1	0	19
<b>Monthly Attendance Other</b>													
	0	20	20	110	105	70	240	270	40	80	20	0	975
<b>Interpretive Special Events</b>													
	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4
<b>Monthly Attendance for Special Events</b>													
	40	0	0	0	60	0	2500	0	0	300	0	0	2900
<b>Total 2011 Program Attendance</b>													<b>9,692</b>

### 3.4 Operational Resources

Operational Resources describes interpretive staffing levels, facilities, and infrastructure that may be affected by a new visitor center project.

#### *Fort Ross SHP Interpretive Staff*

The following positions are dedicated to providing interpretive services:

- One State Park Aid, seasonal
- One Park Interpretive Specialist, seasonal
- One State Park Interpreter I, Permanent Intermittent
- The Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) employs a program manager who develops and delivers interpretive services and designs special events.
- Over 100 volunteers

#### *Training and Evaluations*

- All interpretive staff undergoes RAPPORT evaluations (DOM Section 0900.3.2.1).<sup>21</sup>
- Environmental Living Program (ELP) teachers evaluate interpreters during the course of their program.
- Volunteers are required to attend an annual training and orientation briefing prior to event.

#### *Facilities that Support Interpretive Programs*

- California State Parks (CSP) and FRC interpretive staff has access to a computer in the visitor center and an office in the fort compound.
- Resource library in the visitor center.
- Office and interpretive supplies come out of the FRC budget.
- Storage closets for the ELP, Fort

Ross Festival, costumes, and miscellaneous interpretive supplies located in the fort compound, the visitor center, and offsite.

#### *Interpretive Facilities*

Facilities that are used in interpretive services and park orientation:

- Entrance kiosk
- Visitor center
- Replica windmill
- Call house
- Fort compound
  - » Officers Barracks
  - » Rotchev House
  - » Kuskov House
  - » Magazin
  - » Chapel
  - » Blockhouses
- Fort Ross Trail
  - » Interpretive panels
  - » Interpretive garden
- Historic orchard

### 3.5 Partnerships and Support

#### 3.5.1 Cooperating Associations

The Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) is a California State Parks (CSP) Cooperating Association and 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote educational and interpretive activities at Fort Ross SHP and Salt Point State Park (SP). The FRC has been in operation since 1976.<sup>22</sup>

#### FRC's Goals and Objectives

- Promoting public awareness and understanding of the natural and

cultural history of Fort Ross SHP and Salt Point SP.

- Supplementing, enhancing, and conserving educational and interpretive activities relating to the park.
- Producing and making available to park visitors, friends, and interested people, by sale or free distribution, suitable interpretive, educational and supportive materials and services, including, but not limited to, books, maps, pamphlets, visuals, and recordings, consistent with the stated purposes of this Conservancy.
- Supporting State Park volunteers in Parks programs.
- Supporting the development and maintenance of interpretive facilities, trails, and the research library.
- Preserving, conserving, enhancing, and restoring the biodiversity and the natural resources within the Park.
- Sponsoring, supporting, and assisting scientific research and investigations relating to Fort Ross SHP and Salt Point SP, and the dissemination of this information to the public.
- Raising funds to accomplish the Conservancy's mission and goals.

From 2011 through today, the FRC has donated over \$700,000 to Fort Ross SHP through funding infrastructural projects, subsidizing CSP staffing, underwriting events, and initiating research related to the park. For a complete listing of projects, visit [www.fortross.org](http://www.fortross.org).

### 3.5.2 Partners and Interpretive Providers

Partners provide funding and/or other interpretive support, educational programs, and community service programs. Interpretive providers in the region may also provide interpretive and educational programs that relate to Fort Ross SHP's interpretive themes. These organizations, as well as others not listed here, have the potential to offer expanded interpretive programs and services, such as orientation information and interpretive panels at their locations or on their websites (table 12).

**Table 12. Partners and Interpretive Providers**

Organization	Involvement	Category	Interpretive Provider	Interpretive Support	Fiscal Support
The Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of Stewarts Point Rancheria	Members participate in cultural interpretation, carry on cultural traditions at park, consultant in tribal matters and representation, and participate in archaeology programs. <sup>23</sup>	Tribal government	X	X	
California State University, Sonoma	Conducts archaeology investigations at Fort Ross SHP and provides research findings.	Educational institution		X	
University of California, Berkeley	Conducts archaeology investigations at Fort Ross SHP and provides research findings.	Educational institution		X	
University of Michigan	Conducts archaeology investigations at Fort Ross SHP and provides research findings.	Educational institution		X	
California State Parks Foundation (CSPF)	Helps enhance state parks with educational programs, capital projects, competitive grants, and fundraising. <sup>24</sup>	Non-profit		X	X
Russian House Kedry	Consultant on Russian culture and history. Provides support for interpretive programs, special events, and cultural activities. <sup>25</sup>	Non-profit		X	
Russian Center of San Francisco	This organization provides workshops and supports cultural events at Fort Ross SHP. <sup>26</sup>	Non-profit	X	X	

Organization	Involvement	Category	Interpretive Provider	Interpretive Support	Fiscal Support
Congress of Russian Americans, Inc.	Supports interpretive programs, workshops, special events, and publications at Fort Ross SHP. <sup>27</sup>	Non-profit	X	X	
Renova Fort Ross Foundation	According to their website, “promotes the preservation and to raise awareness of Fort Ross throughout the United States and Russia”. This organization provided funding for the windmill, the Rotchev House exhibits, and the 2012 Bicentennial Celebration. <sup>28</sup>	Non-profit		X	X
Chevron, Transneft and Sovcomflot	Chevron, Transneft and Sovcomflot helped sponsor Fort Ross Bicentennial projects. According to the FRC website, these companies contributed financial support for interpretive programs, workshops, special events, and audio-visual equipment, and creation of a Fort Ross documentary. <sup>29</sup>	For-profit		X	X
The Presidio Trust	Provides interpretive support, workshops, and programs related to Fort Ross SHP's natural and cultural history. <sup>30</sup>	Non-profit	X	X	X
Gualala Arts Center	Provides interpretive support, workshops, and programs related to Fort Ross SHP's natural and cultural history. <sup>31</sup>	Non-profit	X	X	X

### 3.5.3 Public Awareness and Community Involvement

Fort Ross SHP has strong ties to local, national, and international communities. The FRC receives financial support for preservation and interpretation programs at the park. Fort Ross SHP and the FRC have volunteer programs whose members support the park with interpretive programs and special events, research, service projects, and more. This section describes some of the programs and organizations involved in park preservation and interpretation at Fort Ross SHP.

Universities have conducted archeological investigations in the following areas of the park:

- Kashia village site (*Metini*)
- Russian Orthodox cemetery
- Sandy Cove, where the Russian-American Company built ships
- fort compound north wall
- windmill location
- *S.S. Pomona* ship wreck
- Native Alaskan village site

Volunteer program:

- Historic orchard preservation
- Call House preservation
- Preservation of the fort compound
- Marine ecology programs and monitoring

Major donors and donations:

- Renova Fort Ross Foundation (fiscal support for historic preservation programs).
- Chevron, Transneft and Sovcomflot (fiscal support for interpretation and interpretive services).

### 3.5.4 Stakeholders

A stakeholder is a person who has a stake in a place, program, issue, or process at Fort Ross SHP. Stakeholders may be park employees, user groups, volunteers, neighbors, concessionaires, cooperating associations, government agencies, local ethnic and cultural groups, and community decision-makers (DOM Section 0902.3.1). In many instances, stakeholders may be current or potential interpretive providers and partners (table 13).

**Table 13. Stakeholders**

<b>Stakeholder Organization</b>	<b>Relationship</b>
Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento	Federal agencies- archaeology
National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	Federal agencies- natural resources
California State Parks	State agencies
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	State- archaeology
California State University, Sonoma	State- colleges and universities
UC Davis Bodega Marine Lab	State- colleges and universities
University of California, Berkeley	State- colleges and universities
Michigan State University, Department of Anthropology	colleges and universities
Stewarts Point Rancheria Kashia Band of Pomo	State- Native American consultation
California Bay Area Schools	County- Bay Area public schools
Sonoma County Schools	County- Sonoma public schools
Rancho Bodega Historical Society	organization- cultural resources
Russian Kedry House	organization- cultural resources
Russian Center	organization- cultural resources
Russian Consulate	organization- cultural resources
Russian Orthodox Church	organization- cultural resources
Society for Living Traditions	organization- cultural resources
Sea Otter Rehabilitation and Conservation (SORAC)	organization- natural resources
Alice Birney School	educators- private, charter, home school
Mills College Children's School	educators- private, charter, home school
Reach School	educators- private, charter, home school
Santa Rosa Charter	educators- private, charter, home school
Sebastopol Independent Charter	educators- private, charter, home school
St. Catherine of Siena school	educators- private, charter, home school
Fort Ross Conservancy	organization- cooperating association
Call family representatives	subject matter experts
Fort Ross Conservancy volunteers	subject matter experts
retired park staff	subject matter experts
current park staff	subject matter experts

## Endnotes

1. For more information about hiking trails and overall park amenities, see the recreational resources section.
2. At date of publication, the visitor center was open to the public on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, except Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, the visitor center was open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays. Visitor center hours were subject to change.
3. The furnishings, A/V equipment, and park film were all donated to the park by Renova Fort Ross Foundation through Fort Ross Conservancy grants.
4. While the park has gathered anecdotal information about visitors and the visitor experience, more data is needed to construct a comprehensive visitor profile.
5. California State Parks, "California State Park Statistical Report 2010/2011 Fiscal Year" (State of California 2011).
6. The Department conducted a visitor study of Fort Ross in 1977, prepared under contract by Gerald M. Garth of California State University, Sacramento. Although the study is nearly 40 years old, many of the findings are still viable when researching visitor profiles, needs, and assessments. The study, "Fort Ross Visitors: Their Characteristics, Attitudes, and Management Preferences," is available in the Department's Unit Data File and Archives.
7. This category only applies when the Reef campground is open. The campground, which is part of Fort Ross, has been closed since November 2010. While there is other camping in the nearby area, it is not part of this unit). The Reef Campground is located two miles from the Visitor Center.
8. School groups are given their own category due to unique needs and volume.
9. Russian Orthodox Churches hold services at the Fort Ross Chapel each year.
10. Native California Tribal groups like the Kashia Pomo, and Russian cultural groups like Russian House Kedry, continue their cultural traditions at Fort Ross.
11. (State of California 2013).
12. Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments, Bay Area Census, n.d. <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/> (accessed February 25, 2013).
13. A ranch-era history video was in production in 2013.
14. For more information about the digital library, visit FRC's website, <http://www.Fortross.org/library.htm>.
15. While not an interpretive event, it is interesting to note that the Russian Orthodox Church holds services annually at St. Nicholas Fort Ross Chapel.
16. California State Park gathers data on visitation and interpretation on the CAMP (Computerized Asset Management Program) database.
17. 2011 was deliberately chosen due to 2012 being an "atypical" year for interpretive programming and visitation because of the Bicentennial events and further service reductions in 2012.
18. See Appendix D for the Bicentennial visitor survey conducted by CSP staff at the 2012 Cultural Heritage Days.
19. See Appendix E for information regarding the stakeholder meetings.
20. The ELDP is also referred to as the Environmental Studies Program.
21. RAPPORT is an acronym used to



convey the key elements of quality interpretation: Relevant, Accurate, Provocative, Programmatically accessible, Organized, Retained, and Thematic.

22. Previously the Fort Ross Interpretive Association.
23. Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria, Stewarts Point Rancheria, n.d., [www.stewartspoint.org](http://www.stewartspoint.org) (accessed June 24, 2013).
24. California State Park Foundation, California State Park Foundation What We Do, 2013, <http://calparks.org/programs/> (accessed June 24, 2013).
25. Russian House Kedry, 2009, [http://www.kedry.org/engl/about\\_engl.php](http://www.kedry.org/engl/about_engl.php) (accessed June 24, 2013).
26. Russian Center of San Francisco, 2001-2010, <http://www.russiancentersf.com/home> (accessed June 24, 2013).
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29. Fort Ross Conservancy, Fort Ross Bicentennial Celebration Partners, 2013, <http://www.fortross2012.org/partners.htm> (accessed June 24, 2013).
30. The Presidio-Presidio Trust, 2013, <http://www.presidio.gov/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed June 24, 2013).
31. Gualala Arts Center, 2013, <http://gualalaarts.org/index.html> (accessed June 24, 2013).



## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

*This chapter analyzes the existing interpretive and operational conditions for the Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP) visitor center. First, the chapter outlines user (staff and visitor) needs and expectations for the building. Then it looks at visitor center opportunities and constraints. Then, it provides an analysis of the existing orientation, information, and interpretive services offered. This analysis provides the basis for recommendations and the Interpretive Direction in Section 2 of this document.*

### 4.1 Visitor Needs and Expectations

Interpretive programs and exhibits at the visitor center should enhance the overall visitor experience. Visitors should be able to access park orientation and an overview of key stories and messages, even when the visitor center is closed. Expanding interpretive content, developing new programs, updating permanent exhibits and creating changing exhibits will help connect people to the park's significant resources. The visitor center is an important resource to locals. Stakeholders expressed an interest in expanding visitor center interpretive offerings and resources.

Interpretation can be used as a tool to:

- Promote stewardship and encourage people to lessen their impact on the park's cultural and natural resources.
- Increase visitation to the park and encourage repeat visitation.
- Reach visitors who cannot visit the park.

- Encourage partnerships and collaboration between interpretive providers and educational institutions.

### 4.2 Visitor Center Function and Role

The Interpretation Project Plan (IPP) evaluated the visitor center's function and role within the park. Information was collected at two stakeholder workshops, correspondence and conference calls, and in-person team meetings. Below are the findings, in order of importance:

Visitor centers should:

- Be welcoming, address visitor needs, and provide amenities.
- Orient and inspire people to explore the park's cultural and natural history, and recreational opportunities.
- Offer information in a variety of formats and methods.
- Offer diverse and relevant information.
- Be a community center.

Other visitor center qualities include:

- Accessible to a wide range of users.
- Available for different purposes.
- A place to build local support.
- Location to celebrate partnerships.
- Get people inspired to participate in stewardship.
- Explain where tax dollars are spent.
- Convenient to Highway 1.

### 4.2.1 Visitor Center Attributes and Opportunities

The building is centrally located and close to Highway 1, the park entrance, and Day Use parking lot.

It offers basic amenities such as public restrooms and picnic areas that are often hard to find in this remote stretch of Sonoma County.

The visitor center is the orientation hub of the park. Exhibits, research library, archives, multi-purpose room, films, and access to interpretive staff provide people with information they need.

People like the sheltered walkway, restrooms, and sales area conveniently located at the entrance, the large windows and open beam ceilings, large multi-purpose room, and overall visitor flow within the building, especially the loop format of the exhibit hall.

The visitor center is a valuable resource to the local community; it provides space for events and serves as a place to go during an emergency.

### 4.2.2 Visitor Center Constraints

- The visitor center is currently only open 3 days a week and people need access to orientation information when the visitor center is closed.
- The visitor center was constructed in the late 1970s, and exhibits were installed in the mid-1980s. Since then, park staff and visitor needs for this building have changed.
- Visitors have changed how they use exhibits and learn information since the exhibits were installed.
- Exhibits, content, and presentation styles are outdated.
- New exhibit cases and interpretive

panels cover older exhibits while changing exhibits crowd out fixed exhibits and overflow into common areas.

- Visitor circulation through the building can be awkward because of additional exhibits, sales area merchandise, and when there are programs held in the multi-purpose room.
- There is limited space in research library, sales area, and offices for people to meet, research, and conduct business.
- There is limited storage space for interpretive, museum, and park operation supplies.
- There is limited museum collections storage space, outdated exhibit cases, and poor exhibit lighting.
- The kitchen is too small to accommodate conferences and other large meetings.

### 4.2.3 Maintenance and Operational Considerations

The visitor center is the main operational hub of the park and houses many user groups. Additional storage and building improvements are needed to accommodate park administration, maintenance, interpretive, public safety, and visitor service needs. Desired improvements include:

- Janitorial closets, mechanical rooms, and other maintenance-dedicated rooms as necessary.
- Storage for museum objects, sales area, interpretive programs, and administrative offices.
- Building improvements are needed to become more energy efficient.
- The visitor center is an emergency

shelter for the community. The park would like to expand its storage and access to emergency supplies.

#### 4.2.3a Concessions

No concessions are planned to operate from the visitor center.

### 4.3 Interpretive Content

Exhibit text and content is outdated and narrowly focused. (For more information on the current visitor center exhibits and themes, see Appendix C.) Stakeholders requested more natural history content, especially about sea otters and other marine wildlife. In addition, stakeholders indicated that they wanted more interpretation about people at Fort Ross, especially Native American and Native Alaskans cultures.

The following suggestions were made to improve interpretive content:

- Expand stories to include more cause-and-effect relationships. For example:
  - » Far reaching effects that the Russian-American Company and Colony Ross had on trade, science, and society.
  - » How people changed the landscape over time, and their effects on the natural resources.
  - » How the landscape and resources affected people's ability to live there.
- Carry stories from the past into the present. For example:
  - » Present Kashia culture, involvement at Fort Ross SHP, and the community.
  - » The Russian and Russian diaspora's involvement at Fort

Ross SHP and the community.

- » Conservation and preservation efforts, both cultural and natural.
- Use of first-person stories and accounts.
- More comprehensive stories.
- Stories told in a broader context.
- Tell the hard stories and sensitive issues.
- Stewardship and conservation messages.

### 4.4 Interpretive Methods

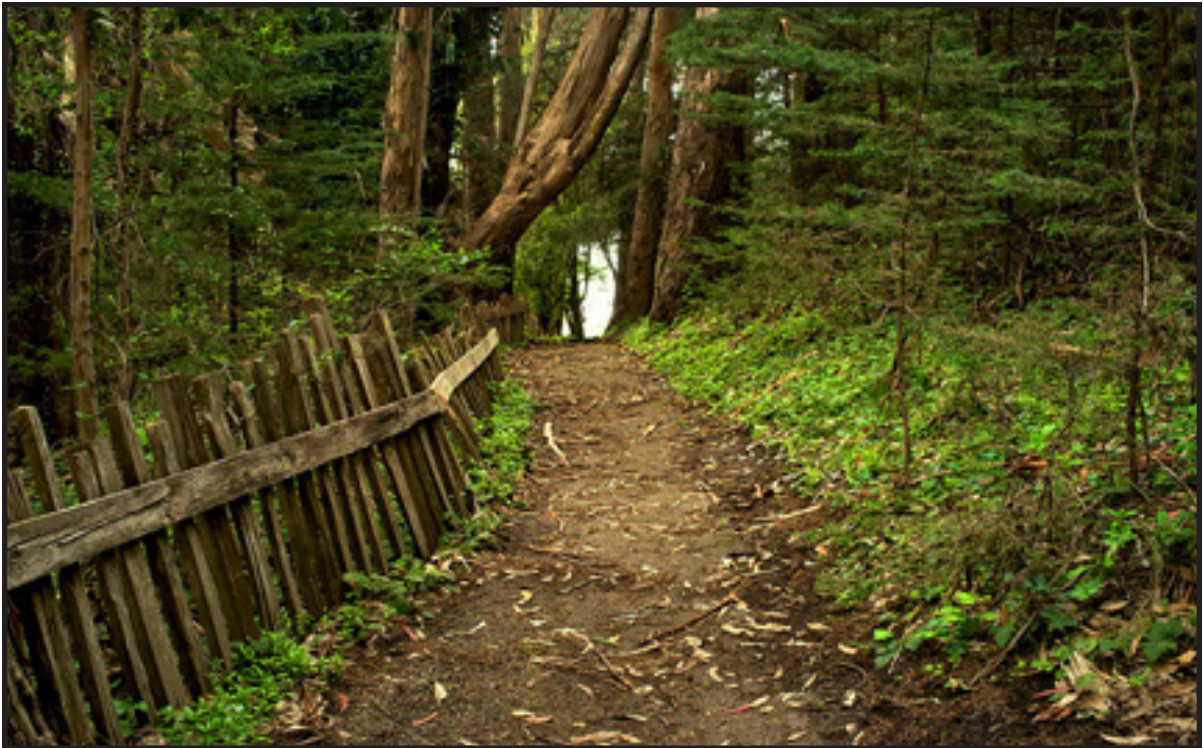
Information should be presented in a variety of formats to accommodate many learning styles and reach a broader audience. For example:

- Use both museum objects and hands-on objects to highlight stories.
- Engage the visitor by using interactive experiences and 'learning by doing' activities.
- Use multiple formats to present information: print, formal exhibits, audio-visual presentations, interpretive programs, special events, and web-based.
- Accessible for people with limited mobility.
- Accessible for people with small children and limited time.
- Provide a variety of information in varying depths, depending on visitor needs. The objective is to provide critical information without overwhelming people with too many concepts.
- Provide a comprehensive experience in case the visitor center is the only destination people visit.



## SECTION 2: INTERPRETIVE DIRECTION

*Interpretive Direction presents the guidelines for interpretation at the visitor center. It identifies the mission and vision for interpretation, interpretive periods and themes, and completed plans and statues. Then, it presents the recommendations for achieving the mission and vision. Finally, the section describes the proposed visitor experience and the next steps for implementing interpretive projects.*



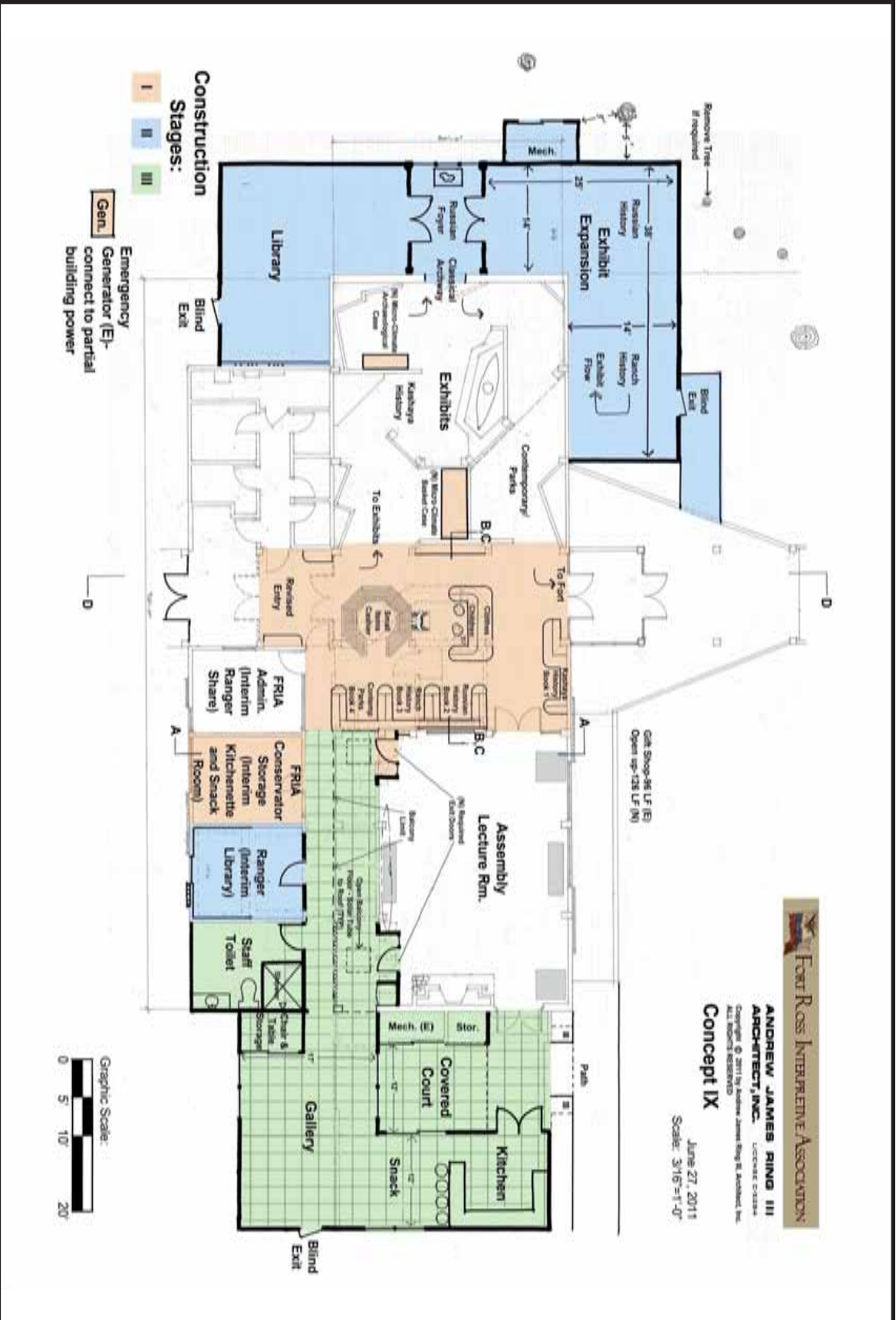


Figure 21. Visitor center design, FRC 2011.



## CHAPTER 5: PLANNING FRAMEWORK

*This chapter describes previous planning efforts and sets the direction of this project. It includes guidelines such as national, state, or local designations, as well as mission and vision statements. The Interpretive Project Plan (IPP) builds on the goals, objectives, strategies, and research of previous plans. Each planning document has an intent and purpose. The types of interpretive plans and associated policies are stated in the Department Operations Manual (DOM) section 0902.6.*

### 5.1 Existing Plans and Statutes

The General Plan (GP) is the primary management document for each unit of the California State Park System (CSP), defining a park's primary purpose and establishing a management direction for its future development and operation. By providing a clear purpose and vision, guidance on long and short-term goals and guidelines, the GP defines the broadest management framework possible for a unit's development, ongoing management, interpretive programming, and public use.

The 1975 Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP) General Plan is called the Resource Management Plan and General Development Plan. The GP was consulted for the development of the Interpretive Project Plan (IPP). The Resource Management Plan section of the GP describes the cultural and natural resources at the park, and CSP's policies for managing and interpreting these resources. The General Development Plan section of the GP lays out the goals and guidelines for interpreting the natural and cultural resources and sets the direction for interpretive services at the park.

After the GP, the second and third

levels of interpretive planning are the Interpretation Master Plan (IMP) and the Interpretation Action Plan (IAP). These documents expand upon the goals and guidelines in the GP and provide a long-range vision for interpretive services. Fort Ross SHP does not have an IMP or IAP, however much of the research and work that was done for the visitor center IPP can be used as the basis to complete a park-wide IMP and IAP.

The IPP is the fourth level of interpretive planning document for the park. It follows the overall recommendations made in the GP, but goes into the detail required to deliver the interpretive mission and vision for the visitor center and the park. This document is an update of the 1985 Visitor Center Interpretive Plan.

In the past, interpretive plans have been completed for the visitor center and for buildings within the fort compound. The Environmental Living Program handbook provides the educational curriculum and information for interpretive planning for the Russian-American Company era.

#### 5.1.1 Federal and State Recognition

Fort Ross is a California State Historical Landmark and a National Historic Landmark. The fort, as well as the Rotchev House, is on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5.1.2 Declaration of Purpose

The Declaration of Purpose statement for Fort Ross SHP identifies the unit's most important natural and cultural values and features, and indicates the Department's primary objectives in its management. The following Declaration of Purpose is from the 1975 General Plan:

The primary purpose of Fort Ross State Historic Park is to enable

modern Californians to know, enjoy, and understand the Russian adventure in California. The visitor's experience should center on his better comprehension of the role of Russia in California's exploration and settlement. The interpretive objective is to present Fort Ross' role in Russian fur trade imperialism and its effect on the local situation in terms of the Indians and Spanish/Mexicans, and ultimately, on modern society.

The primary theme of Fort Ross State Historic Park centers on Russian political and economic affairs during this era with special concern for relationships with Spain and Mexico. As background to this major theme, consideration will be given to Russian international affairs generally, colonization, territorial expansion, economic and material growth, and the development of agriculture. Russian religious affairs and multi-ethnic relations will also be included. The secondary 38 themes will include the Indian history and the effect of European contact on their development up to recent times and will include the American Era, stressing the economic, agricultural, shipping, and ranching activities.

The period of time covered will range from the earliest known Pomo Indian history (several thousand years ago) to recent times, but the prime period will be the time of Russian occupation (1812-1841), especially the last eleven years of the colony when it was at its height. Due consideration will be given to the American Era in the flow of history, particularly the American ranching activities.

The primary cultural resources consist of the archeological remains of the Pomo Indians, the Russian people and Aleuts; and, the reconstructed buildings and walls. Secondary cultural

resources are the American Era buildings and associated materials.

The Zone of Primary Cultural Interest is the area of Fort Ross itself and the village structures around the fort, as well as certain outlying locales. These outlying locations include the workshop area in the ravine to the east of the fort, the Russian cemetery, the rock pattern area in the grove of trees west of the fort, the warehouse area east of the ravine, and the remains of the Russian Road.

Although Fort Ross is an historical unit of the State Park System, it has tremendous natural and scenic value as well. In addition to the common species of plants and animals associated with the north coastal prairie, coastal sage scrub, redwood forest, and mixed evergreen forest biotic communities, two rare and endangered plant species (*Chorizanthe valida* and *Dichondra donnelliana*) are found here, and the brown pelican, an endangered bird, may be seen flying along the coast during the winter. Many interesting geologic features can be observed in the park, including part of the San Andreas Fault zone. The fault has drastically changed the course of Fort Ross Creek and modified the growth configurations of trees along its course. These natural resources and the outstanding views of mountains, coast, and ocean will enhance the visitor's experience at the state historic unit; also, their preservation is essential to the primary historical purpose of the unit inasmuch as the historical values are to be presented in their original, natural setting to the fullest extent possible (General Plan 1975, 38).

### 5.1.3 2011 Visitor Center Planning Process

In 2011, the FRC and CSP explored ideas to update the visitor center.<sup>1</sup> To develop concepts, architect Andrew James Ring III facilitated a series of meetings with the interpretive planning team and the architectural firm staff. The design concept (figure 21) aimed to meet interpretive goals within the confines of expanding the building footprint less than 35%.

The team inventoried the park’s existing needs and developed the following goals:

- Update the museum infrastructure to take advantage of technology and new museum design.
- Provide a catering kitchen to sell refreshments, rent out the visitor center and the kitchen for events, and offer programming that includes a kitchen for meal preparation and serving.
- Provide a place for visitors to eat and enjoy a warm spot inside.
- Increase office space and storage and add a staff coat rack.
- Increase the size of the reference library.
- Add a private staff bathroom.
- Add a Russian-focused exhibit room for artifacts and donor recognition.
- Update the sales area to include modern sales techniques and equipment.
- Create an integrated reception area with the sales area. Its functionality would ensure a single volunteer could easily assist visitors and provide security in the building.
- Expand the footprint of the museum to allow for broader coverage of the historic eras.

Many recommendations and design concepts from the 2011 visitor center planning process were considered and incorporated into this IPP.

### 5.1.4 Primary Sources and Interpretation Planning Documents

California State Parks publications, planning documents, and primary source materials that were consulted for this plan are listed below. See References for a complete list of works cited in this document.

California State Parks. “California Department of Parks and Recreation”. Fort Ross SHP, Maps/ Brochures. 2013. [http://www.parks.ca.gov/MediaGallery/?page\\_id=449&m=brochures](http://www.parks.ca.gov/MediaGallery/?page_id=449&m=brochures) (accessed June 13, 2013).

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## 5.2 Mission and Vision Statements

### *CSP Mission*<sup>3</sup>

The mission of the California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

### *CSP Interpretation Mission Statement*<sup>4</sup>

Interpretation is a special form of communication that helps people understand, appreciate, and emotionally connect with the rich natural and cultural heritage preserved in parks. It is the mission of interpretation in CSP to convey messages that initially will help visitors value their experience, and that ultimately will foster a conservation ethic and promote a dedicated park constituency.

### *CSP Education Mission Statement*<sup>5</sup>

The most powerful forms of education involve students in meaningful experiences that promote critical thinking and appeal to different learning styles. Our mission is to provide educational opportunities both in CSP and in the classroom, assisting educators with curriculum needs and offering activities that enable students to investigate, research, and participate in interactive learning.

### *Fort Ross Vision of Interpretation*

The vision for interpretation at Fort Ross SHP is to increase visitors' knowledge and appreciation of the park's significant resources, expand their understanding of ecological and cultural relationships, and to inspire conservation and preservation of these precious resources.

### *Fort Ross Mission for Interpretation*

The mission of interpretation at Fort Ross SHP is to provide visitors with enjoyable and high quality interpretive services, give them tools to make personal connections to the site, and inspire their participation in protecting and conserving these resources.

### *Visitor Center Mission*

The center's mission is to educate visitors about the Russian-American Company's experience on the Sonoma Coast and its long-lasting effect to the land and the culture of California.

### *Visitor Center Mission of Interpretation*

The mission of interpretation is to inform and engage visitors with innovative exhibits and programs that inspire visitors to explore the park and learn more about the Russian-American Company's experience in California.

### 5.3 General Plan Interpretive Period

The primary interpretive period is that of the Russian occupation (1812-1841), for which the historic unit is named. The years 1830 to 1841 are believed to be the most active and influential of the Russian occupation.

### 5.4 Visitor Center Interpretive Periods

The period of significance for the park remains that of the Russian-American Company (RAC) occupation, 1812-1841, as stated in the General Plan.

Secondary interpretive periods for the Fort Ross SHP visitor center (created during the interpretive planning process):

Holocene Epoch to present	Past, present, and future trends
Pre-contact to present	Native American
1830-1842	Most active period of RAC occupation
1842-1873	American occupation
1873-1908	Call family ranch
1906-present	Fort Ross SHP

## Endnotes

1. The FRC funded this project through a grant received from the Renova Fort Ross Foundation.
2. Fort Ross and the Rotchev House were listed on the Historic Landmark Program on 5/15/70. National Landmark Program report.
3. CSP 2013.
4. DOM section 0900.1.1
5. DOM section 0900.1.2

## CHAPTER 6: THEMES AND STORYLINES

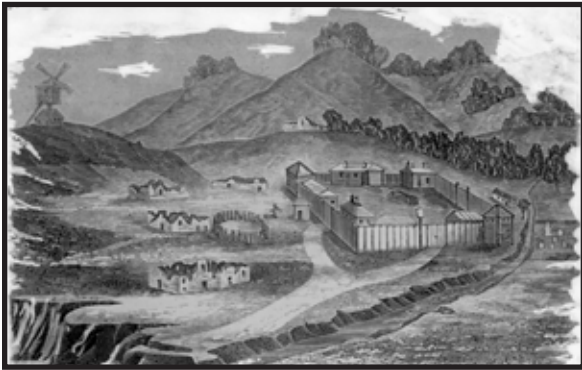
*This chapter presents the interpretive themes and storylines developed as part of this planning effort. They provide the foundation for interpretive services at Fort Ross SHP.*

### 6.1 General Plan Interpretive Themes

The interpretive themes are summarized from Fort Ross State Historic Park's (SHP) 1975 General Plan (GP), which guides the long-range development of interpretation at the park. These themes were written more than thirty years ago and are now considered general topics.

The Russians explored and settled the North Pacific coast contemporary with the development of Spanish and Mexican California. This idea is not widely discussed with the Hispanic Era of California History.

Fort Ross was the primary Russian coastal development in Alta California and headquarters of its operation (figure 22). It oversaw the operation of outlying Russian farms and the harbor at Bodega Bay.



**Figure 22.** Lithograph of Fort Ross, c.1845 by Harry C. Peterson, CSP 080-11-4801.4

#### *Primary Theme*

1. Russian-American Company Era (RAC)
  - Colonization
  - Territorial Expansion
  - Economic and Material Growth
2. RAC Influence on California History
  - RAC Political and Religious Affairs
3. Multi-Ethnic Relations
  - Russian
  - Native Alaskan
  - Native American
  - Spanish
  - Mexican
  - American
4. RAC Technology and Industry

#### *Secondary Themes*

5. Indian History: Ethnography of the Pomo Indians and Coast Miwok
  - European contact
  - Recent Indian history
6. American Era: Economics and Material Growth
  - Transition period: Seitz, Fairfax and Dixon
  - Agriculture
  - Water transportation
  - Call ranching activities, feeding the gold rush
7. The State Park Era—Fort Ross as a Historical Park
8. The Natural Environment

## 6.2 Visitor Center Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes for the visitor center were expanded through the interpretive project planning process, and build upon the General Plan (1975) and Visitor Center Interpretive Plan (1985). See Appendix D for additional topics generated at stakeholder meetings.

### *Park Unifying Theme*

Fort Ross is a meeting place where the ocean meets the land, and where people have interacted, married, and traded over centuries. The place continues to awe, enlighten, and inspire visitors.

### *Park Primary Themes*

- The often-treacherous waters, fog-shrouded coastline, and rugged terrain produced by the San Andreas Fault create habitats that support diverse populations of plants and animals.
- The Pacific Ocean has been a lifeline to people for thousands of years, providing food, transport, and other essential ingredients for life.
- In an effort to expand its mercantile enterprises and gain a strategic foothold in the Americas, the Russian-American Company established settlements in the North Pacific, including at their southernmost, Colony Ross, in Alta California.
- The agricultural and industrial pursuits that were insufficient to sustain the Russian-American Company's larger operational goals for Colony Ross in the long term were more successful for the family businesses that followed.
- Fort Ross SHP preservation efforts began over a century ago and

continue today through the efforts of concerned citizens, volunteers, organizations, and governments.

- Fort Ross SHP is a spiritual and cultural center that connects people to their homeland.

## 6.3 Storylines

Storylines were developed during the visitor center interpretive project planning process. These stories can be used as a starting point for developing exhibits and programs for the visitor center.

### 6.3.1 Natural History

Natural history storylines will illustrate the dynamic and changing Fort Ross coast, focusing on the interaction and relationship between plants, animals, topography, climate, and geology. Coastal geology, topography, the biotic zones, and endemic plants and animal species will be important topics for interpretation. Storylines will highlight some of the many ways that coastal environment has supported plants, animals, and human activity over time. They convey the message that coastal biotic zones are a sanctuary for protected plants and animals, but also a treasured resource for people. Supporting storylines are shown as indented bullets.

- The rugged and mountainous topography of the Fort Ross coastline was formed through the collision of two continental plates and millions of years of waves shaping the land around you.
- Fort Ross SHP's dramatic and varied landscapes, from crashing waves in coves, fog-shrouded coastal terraces, to the sunny and steep wooded hillsides provide the perfect habitat to support many native plants and animals.



- There's a whole lot of shaking going on around here.
- Native plant and animal communities have adapted to survive the harsh intertidal zone environment such as changing tide levels, exposure to wind and sun, and crashing waves.
- Several state and federally protected plant and animal species make their home at Fort Ross SHP and you can help them survive and prosper here.
- Numerous plants and animals thrive in complex and delicate ecosystems under the crashing waves and turbulent waters off the Fort Ross coast.
- Coastal erosion caused by wind, weather, human activities, and rising oceans dramatically changes the landscape; so much, that the land you see now may be very different for the next generation.

### 6.3.1a People's Relationship with the Land

People have used the Fort Ross lands for thousands of years. Europeans and Americans made the most dramatic changes to the landscape and resources. The introduction of exotic species, agriculture, timber harvesting, the construction of buildings, and even today's visitors affect the delicate ecosystems within the park and the Pacific Ocean. This storyline will demonstrate the relationship between people's activities and their impact on the natural resources in the area. It will discuss how humans have affected the land over time and include recent restoration and preservation efforts.

- The Kashia Pomo are the people most closely associated with this coastal area. However, many other

tribes, like the Coast Miwok, traveled the coast extensively, traded, and interacted with the Kashia here.

- The Russian-American Company chose to locate Colony Ross here for its many natural resources and potential for growing crops along the coastal terraces and hillsides.
  - » Many of the plants and animals you see at Fort Ross SHP today were brought here over 200 years ago and from other continents.
  - » The apple you ate was from a tree planted long ago.
  - » The majestic redwood, oak, madrone, and other trees which hug the hillsides were used to construct Fortress Ross and the first ships built in California.
  - » Although the coastal terraces and dense green landscape at Fort Ross SHP appeared perfect for growing crops, the foggy and damp coastal climate made it very hard to grow the food Europeans were accustomed to eating.
- European fur traders and companies hunted sea otters, fur seals, and other marine animals for their thick, soft fur.
  - » Not long ago, you could see sea otters playing in the kelp beds off Sandy Beach Cove and salmon swimming up Fort Ross Creek.
- Native plants thrive in the park, although their habitats are threatened by aggressive growth of invasive, non-native species.
- Protecting and restoring habitat for native plant and animal communities requires ongoing research and

restoration work by scientists, park personnel, volunteers, and you.

### 6.3.2 Cultural History

Fort Ross SHP has a vibrant and rich cultural history that spans thousands of years. Cultural history storylines relate to the many people who lived, worked, and visited here. People and cultures include, but are not limited to Kashia Pomo, the Russian-American Company, employees and associated people, ranchers like the Benitz and Call families, and those who have worked to preserve Fort Ross as a California State Park.

- Fort Ross represents the nexus of Russian, Spanish, and American frontiers in early 19th century California.
  - » RAC located its commercial enterprise on Spanish borderlands in Alta California, which pushed Spain to reaffirm its borders and take diplomatic measures to ensure the Russian empire should go no further.
  - » The success of the RAC at Colony Ross depended on the skills and knowledge of employees and indigenous people to carry out its fur trading, agricultural, and industrial enterprises.
  - » Kashia, Native Alaskan, and European colonists at Colony Ross often intermarried and set up homesteads outside the fort walls, creating a diverse society with blended customs and traditions.
  - » Colony Ross operated as a small village whose inhabitants produced most of the food, goods, and services they needed.
  - » The RAC did not limit their trade
- and political concerns with their Spanish and Mexican neighbors. American and European ships often traded with Colony Ross, making it a small, but significant international trade center.
- » Many scientists, artists, and explorers from Imperial Russia conducted research and provided valuable insights about 19th century California that are highly valued to this day.
- Colony Ross, and later ranches, raised animals and produced agricultural products and industrial goods that were essential to people living up and down the California coast.
- Until automobiles motored up the coast in the early 1900s, the ocean was the main lifeline that connected people living around Fort Ross to the outside world.
  - » The RAC, the Call family ranch, and others provided essential services to the local community and became a lifeline to the outside world on this stretch of the rural Northern California coast.
  - » Though the landscape is breathtaking and resources seem plentiful, people have always depended on each other to live on this remote stretch of rugged coast.
- Ships and other watercraft were the main mode of transportation up and down the West Coast. However, shipwrecks off the Fort Ross coast are testament to the dangers of maritime travel.
- Not long after the RAC left California, ranch managers and property

- owners ran businesses and farms on the former Colony Ross lands, and employed many local people.
- » Kashia people continued to live and work on the land after the RAC left Colony Ross, though under the auspices of the new American government.
  - » The ranch home, barns, and other buildings outside the fort's walls were built to support large ranching and timber industries here.
  - » The Call family used and converted many of the original RAC buildings, some of which became a hotel, saloon, chapel, and school for the thriving Fort Ross community.
  - » The Call family, Russian Orthodox church, and concerned citizens worked to preserve the old Russian fort which became one of the first California State Parks.
- For over 100 years, California State Parks, scientists, researchers, organizations, and volunteers have worked to preserve and learn about Fort Ross's rich history.
    - » Organizations like the Russian Orthodox Church and Fort Ross Conservancy have long collaborated with California State Parks in preserving, restoring, and interpreting the Fort Ross Story to the public.
    - » Since Fort Ross became a California State Park, archaeologists, scientists, and students have uncovered much information about the many people and cultures that have called this area home.
    - » Many people from the Kashia and
- Russian Orthodox communities share their knowledge and traditions with visitors at Fort Ross SHP.
- » Your help is needed to protect and interpret the many resources at Fort Ross SHP.



## CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

*Chapter 7 presents recommendations to enhance and expand interpretive services at the visitor center. Recommendations were developed from the analysis of existing interpretive conditions, past planning efforts, and data collection from stakeholder and interpretive planning meetings. Presented as goals, objectives, strategies, and tasks, these elements provide the road map that will guide the development of future interpretive programs and services. Refer to this section when developing interpretive programs, exhibits, and other services for the visitor center.*

### *Goals*

Goals are broad, general concepts that describe the ultimate purpose, aim, or intent of interpretation at the park. Interpretive goals support California State Park's (CSP) and FRSHP's mission and vision and provide direction for interpretive projects.

The team identified six goals for the visitor center. These include: (1) making the building and exhibits more welcoming and accessible; (2) improving orientation to the park and promoting interpretive services; (3) expanding interpretive content (4) serving as a community resource; (5) increase park stewardship and support of interpretive services; and (6) inspiring people to make physical and emotional connections. Each goal has introductions that describe their intent.

### *Objectives, Strategies, and Tasks*

Objectives provide the realistic and measurable details about how interpretation will achieve interpretive goals. The objectives describe the result interpretive services or elements will have on visitors, volunteers, and staff. Strategies are the approaches used to accomplish

one or more objectives. Strategies are measurable.

Tasks are the specific steps needed to carry out the strategies. Each Task can be completed as a stand-alone project or program. It may be funded in its entirety by a grant, a designated capital campaign, or a state bond-funded program. Some tasks may be completed at no or low cost with the support of volunteers and staff. They may be combined and accomplished in phases, depending on available staffing and funding capabilities in a fiscal year. They may also be completed individually as time and funding permit. Not all strategies in this section may have associated tasks. All tasks should be reviewed, changed, and expanded upon as necessary, especially as funding and priorities change.

## Goal 1: Welcome and Accessible

The visitor center (figure 23) will be a welcoming place that serves visitors' immediate needs, provides information to a diverse audience in a variety of ways, encourages exploration and preservation of resources, and inspires repeat visitation.

### *Intent*

The visitor center will be the main location for people to get park information and the many things they can do there. It will provide engaging exhibits and programs that give an overview of the park's cultural and natural resources. Information will be given in different languages and formats to encourage people to ask questions and explore the park. In addition, people will have a place to relax and enjoy refreshments.



**Figure 23.** Ft. Ross visitor center, CSP 090-p56217

<b>Objective 1.1.</b> Provide amenities that meet visitors' immediate needs and encourage them to stay, or return at another time to explore the visitor center and park.	
<i>Strategy 1.1.1:</i> Visitors will easily find information about the park and the region, even when the visitor center is closed.	
Task 1.1.1.a	Develop promotional and interpretive materials that can be placed in the restrooms and at the entrance of the visitor center.
Task 1.1.1.b	Develop promotional materials to display in various locations in the park.
Task 1.1.1.a	Provide brochures, maps, and other park information at the sales area and prominent locations in the visitor center.
Task 1.1.1.b	Provide an information kiosk, bulletin board, or equivalent media, outside the visitor center and post updated park orientation, visitor center and fort hours, park regulatory information, events calendar, and park brochures there.
Task 1.1.1.c	Regularly update park hours, regulatory information, and events calendar on the park website, state approved social media sites, and the FRC website.
Task 1.1.1.d	Collaborate with FRC, partners, regional chambers of commerce, and visitor bureaus to provide updated park information on their websites and business locations.

<i>Strategy 1.1.2:</i> Friendly and knowledgeable staff and volunteers will be available to answer visitors' questions and provide information about the park and region.	
Task 1.1.1.a	On a regular basis, provide visitor center staff with customer service and interpretation skills training and updated park and regulatory information.
<i>Strategy 1.1.3:</i> Day visitors, families, and groups will have access to a welcoming and comfortable space to relax and reflect upon their experience, refreshments for sale, and clean restrooms.	
Task 1.1.3.a	Provide a dedicated space inside and outside the visitor center with comfortable seating that does not interrupt programs and events.
Task 1.1.3.b	Provide clean bathrooms that are open during park hours and when the visitor center is closed.
Task 1.1.3.c	Provide refreshments for sale and a location to consume them that do not interfere with or affect the museum collections. <sup>1</sup>
Task 1.1.3.d	Offer refreshments for sale that reflect the cultures and periods interpreted at the park (e.g. Russian, Spanish, Kashia, and American foods and drink).
<i>Strategy 1.1.4:</i> Develop exhibits, displays, media, and promotional materials that attract visitors' attention and encourage them to explore the visitor center and park.	
Task 1.1.4.a	Develop attractive, multisensory displays that are visible from the sales area and entrance.
Task 1.1.4.b	Host traveling exhibits that relate to the park's interpretive themes and periods.
Task 1.1.4.c	Develop changing exhibits for the visitor center and rotate them regularly to encourage repeat visitation.
<i>Strategy 1.1.5:</i> Provide a dedicated space for changing exhibits with provocative topics that pique visitors' interest and encourage them to return to investigate.	
Task 1.1.5.a	Provide secure and environmentally regulated cases and location within the visitor center to display museum objects for changing exhibits.
Task 1.1.5.b	Collaborate with local artists, cultural organizations, and museums to develop changing exhibits based on Fort Ross SHP interpretive themes.
Task 1.1.5.c	Host changing exhibits that relate to Fort Ross SHP interpretive themes and periods.
Task 1.1.5.d	Determine which topics and/or themes are the best to present in a changing exhibit or program.
<b>Objective 1.2.</b> Provide an immersive and inviting interpretive experience for visitors of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.	
<i>Strategy 1.2.1:</i> Develop accessible exhibits, activities, and programs that engage visitors with a variety of learning and physical abilities.	

Task 1.2.1.a	Consult with special education teachers and education consultants when developing exhibits and programs.
<i>Strategy 1.2.2:</i> International visitors and those who do not speak English will understand exhibit content and information in the visitor center.	
Task: 1.2.2.a	Develop exhibits and interpretive materials in multiple languages.
Task 1.2.2.b	Provide a visitor center and park brochure in multiple languages.
Task 1.2.2.c	Develop an audio tour of the visitor center and exhibits in multiple languages.
Task 1.2.2.d	Give interpretive and educational programs in at least one other language.
Task 1.2.2.e	Offer closed captioning in multiple languages for audio programs.
Task 1.2.2.f	Have bilingual staff or volunteers available to assist international travelers with interpretation and park information.
<i>Strategy 1.2.3:</i> Self-guided interpretation, exhibits, and other hands-on and interactive tools will be designed to be intuitive, easy to use and navigate.	
Task 1.2.3.a	Develop a survey or questionnaire for visitors, teachers, and other user groups to determine how people would like to receive information and interact with exhibits.
Task 1.2.3.b	Conduct front-end and formative evaluations when developing interpretive tools and materials. Conduct periodic evaluations to determine effectiveness.
<i>Strategy 1.2.4:</i> Develop engaging hands-on experiences that encourage visitors to participate through exploration.	
Task 1.2.4.a	Use reproduction, period-appropriate, and easily replaceable objects for hands-on exhibits, programs, and activities.
Task 1.2.4.b	Offer interpretive programs that involve audience participation.
Task 1.2.4.c	Develop interpretive kits, kiosks, or stations that get people involved by trying a new skill craft, language, etc.
<b>Objective 1.3.</b> Visitor will provide positive feedback and indicate that they felt that exhibits are not biased in favor of one cultural group, event, or activity.	
<i>Strategy 1.3.1:</i> Exhibits will be balanced, non-judgmental, and non-defensive regarding cultural groups and events that occurred at Fort Ross.	
Task 1.3.1.a	Consult and collaborate with (group, tribe, organization, experts) when developing interpretive programs and exhibits regarding their culture.
<i>Strategy 1.3.2:</i> Encourage visitors to leave comments and provide them with easy ways for them to do so (e.g. comment book or link to online feedback).	



Task 1.3.2.a	Encourage visitors to complete visitor satisfaction surveys.
Task 1.3.2.b	Provide a comment/suggestion box in the visitor center.
Task 1.3.2.c	Provide a link to email and phone numbers for visitors to contact with comments and suggestions. Place the link in a visible location on the CSP website and the FRC websites, newsletters, and social media sites.
Task 1.3.2.d	Develop an online survey and provide a link to the survey on the CSP and the FRC websites, newsletters, and social media sites.
Task 1.3.2.e	Encourage visitors provide feedback at the close of each interpretive program and special events.
Task 1.3.2.f	Respond to comments in a timely manner.
Task 1.3.2.g	Provide an information bulletin board outside the visitor center and at the Reef campground.
Task 1.3.2.h	Provide information on websites, newsletters, and social media sites.

## Goal 2: Promote and Orient

The visitor center will orient visitors and promote Fort Ross’s significant resources and the park’s recreational and interpretive opportunities (figure 24).

### *Intent*

The visitor center will provide visitors with trip planning information and help them easily locate the park’s services, facilities, and amenities. It will highlight Fort Ross SHP’s interpretive and recreational opportunities, and provide accurate and updated park hours and schedules.



**Figure 24.** Environmental Living Program, CSP 090-S14211

<b>Objective 2.1.</b> Visitors will identify places and sources to find updated and accurate trip planning information, hours of operation, and an events calendar.	
<i>Strategy 2.1.1:</i> Ensure updated park information is available online and placed in visible locations around the park and visitor center.	
Task 2.1.1.a	Provide clear, updated information about Fort Ross SHP, its interpretive services, and recreational opportunities online and in the visitor center.
Task 2.1.1.b	Develop an information kiosk or display that includes park orientation, hours of operation, programs, special events, and recreational opportunities. Locate the kiosk or display near the visitor center entrance and at key gathering areas in the park.
Task 2.1.1.c	Conduct a visitor survey and research how people get their information about the park.
<i>Strategy 2.1.2:</i> Collaborate with partners to provide links about Fort Ross SHP on their websites. Ensure park brochures, event calendars, and other printed information on display is updated and accurate.	
Task 2.1.2.a	Provide clear, updated information about Fort Ross SHP, its interpretive services, and recreational opportunities to interpretive partners, interpretive providers, social media sites, and tourism boards.
Task 2.1.2.b	Collaborate with partners and interpretive providers to promote each other's interpretive services and offerings.
<i>Strategy 2.1.3:</i> Promote Fort Ross SHP’s interpretive and recreational opportunities.	
Task 2.1.3.a	Ensure there is ample staff or volunteers scheduled to work when visitor attendance is high.

Task 2.1.3.b	Highlight Fort Ross SHP's interpretive and recreational opportunities on CSP approved social media and travel planning sites online. Update information to ensure accuracy.
Task 2.1.3.c	Increase roving interpretation at the visitor center and in the park to offer information to visitors.
<b>Objective 2.2.</b> Visitor will identify the visitor center as the main place to find information while at the park.	
<i>Strategy 2.2.1:</i> Fort Ross SHP will designate the visitor center as the main point of contact for visitors seeking information.	
Task 2.2.1.a	Ensure directional signage to the visitor center is clear and easy to see from the parking lot.
Task 2.2.1.b	Ensure the information and sales area is staffed during visitor center hours.
Task 2.2.1.c	Indicate on brochures, park maps, and online trip planning that the visitor center is the main point of contact for visitors.
<i>Strategy: 2.2.2:</i> Provide staff and volunteers with regular training and tools to provide good customer service.	
Task 2.2.2.a	Develop or update a handbook for park staff and volunteers that includes park orientation information, events calendar, interpretive and recreational opportunities, local and regional information. Keep a copy of this handbook at the sales area for easy access.
Task 2.2.2.b	Hold regular trainings with park staff and volunteers that includes updated park information and customer service training.
Task 2.2.2.c	Evaluate park staff and volunteers who staff the visitor center to ensure they have the tools needed to provide accurate information and good customer service.
<b>Objective 2.3.</b> Visitors will be able to describe the park's major interpretive, recreational opportunities, and special events.	
<i>Strategy 2.3.1:</i> Ensure that park information, events calendars, and hours of operation are easy to read, are updated frequently, and are placed in highly visible locations inside and outside the visitor center.	
Task 2.3.1.a	Develop an information kiosk or display that can be placed inside and outside the visitor center.
<i>Strategy 2.3.2:</i> Promote Fort Ross SHP's interpretive and recreational opportunities within the park.	
Task 2.3.2.a	Include information about the park's interpretive and recreational opportunities at interpretive programs and special events.
<i>Strategy 2.3.3:</i> Promote Fort Ross SHP's interpretive and recreational offerings at other CSP units and at regional venues.	

Task 2.3.3.a	Set up information tables at regional special events, county and state fairs.
Task 2.3.3.b	Display Fort Ross SHP park brochures at other CSP units. Collaborate with other CSP units to promote each other's parks and opportunities.
<i>Strategy 2.3.4: Provide clear and updated trail, seasonal fishing and diving regulations and conditions, and other park information.</i>	
Task 2.3.4.a	Regularly review and update information on the CSP website and approved social media sites.
Task 2.3.4.b	Collaborate with California Fish and Wildlife Department, Salt Point State Park, and other local recreational venues to provide accurate information about seasonal diving regulations and conditions at Fort Ross SHP.
<b>Objective 2.4.</b> Visitors will identify the location of park amenities, recreational, and interpretive opportunities once they leave the visitor center.	
<i>Strategy 2.4.1: Place park orientation maps in highly visible locations inside and outside the visitor center.</i>	
Task 2.4.1.a	Ensure that park information, event calendars, and hours of operation are easy to read, updated frequently, and placed in highly visible locations inside and outside the visitor center.
<b>Objective 2.5.</b> Visitors will be able to purchase mementos, keepsakes and other interpretive and educational items to remind them of their visit and promote visitation to the park.	
<i>Strategy 2.5.1: Offer items for sale in the visitor center and online that relate to the park's interpretive themes and periods, exhibits, and special events.</i>	
Task 2.5.1.a	Identify appropriate items for sale in the visitor center.
Task 2.5.1.b	Develop a program to sell artwork and handcrafted goods made by local Kashia and Russian artists.
Task 2.5.1.c	Sell items that relate to the park's special events and interpretive programs.
Task 2.5.1.d	Collaborate with local artisans and food producers to sell items with a special Fort Ross label and connection to the site. (e.g., sell food and other products produced historically at Fort Ross).

### Goal 3: Understanding the Fort Ross Story

Visitors will know the park’s significant natural and cultural resources and understand how humans interacted with and used these resources over time (figure 25).

*Intent*

The visitor center will provide an overview of Fort Ross’s significant plants, animals, and geological resources. Interpretation will illustrate the inter-relationships between people, the landscape, and the natural environment. The visitor center will describe the cultural landscape -- how people used the land and its resources over time.



**Figure 25.** Kashia dancer, ©2012 Paul C. Miller, FRC

Note: Goal 3 tasks are expected to be developed during the design development phase for the visitor center exhibits.

<p><b>Objective 3.1.</b> Visitors will identify Fort Ross’s key individuals and groups.</p>
<p><i>Strategy 3.1.1:</i> Be inclusive and interpret the many people who have lived and used the land at Fort Ross. These include, but are not limited to Kashia, Native Alaskan, Creole, the Russian-American Company (RAC) and related individuals, Ranch Families, and CSP.</p>
<p><i>Strategy 3.1.2:</i> Illustrate each group’s relationship and connection to the land and the park.</p>
<p><i>Strategy 3.1.3:</i> Ensure stories carry from the past to the present in exhibits and interpretive programs.</p>
<p><i>Strategy 3.1.4:</i> Use art, music, artifacts, and other elements when interpreting cultural groups.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3.2.</b> Visitors will discuss two ways humans used and changed the landscape over time.</p>
<p><i>Strategy 3.2.1:</i> Use historic and contemporary art and drawings to compare to contrast changes to the landscape.</p>
<p><i>Strategy 3.2.2:</i> Use naturalist data from the RAC to present to contrast changes to the landscape.</p>
<p><i>Strategy 3.2.3:</i> Use questions to encourage visitors to think and discuss this topic.</p>
<p><i>Strategy 3.2.4:</i> Use interactive and layered maps to indicate changes to the landscape over time.</p>

<i>Strategy 3.2.5:</i> Use historic images, first person stories, and objects to describe changes to the landscape over time (e.g. pictures of ranching activities and logging, use scale models, oral histories from Call family members and CSP staff).
<b>Objective 3.3.</b> Visitors will describe significant contributions the Kashia, the RAC and related individuals, the Call Family, and CSP have made to the community and beyond.
<i>Strategy 3.3.1:</i> Use primary source materials, journals, illustrations, and oral histories to interpret past events, people, and cultural groups at Fort Ross.
<i>Strategy 3.3.2:</i> Use first-person accounts, documentation, and media when describing contemporary stories.
<i>Strategy 3.3.3:</i> Use art, music, artifacts, and other elements when interpreting cultural groups.
<b>Objective 3.4.</b> Visitors will identify at least three significant marine and terrestrial organisms and how humans have utilized them over time.
<i>Strategy 3.4.1:</i> Identify Fort Ross SHP's key marine and terrestrial plants and animals.
<i>Strategy 3.4.2:</i> Use hands-on activities and objects to interpret marine and terrestrial plants and animals.
<i>Strategy 3.4.3:</i> Interpret the importance of plants and animals to the Kashia, RAC, and other people at Fort Ross.
<i>Strategy 3.4.4:</i> Use key or iconic species to illustrate how plant and animal health and populations have changed over time (e.g. sea otter, salmon, redwood and oak trees, and other sensitive threatened or endangered species).
<i>Strategy 3.4.5:</i> Interpret how non-native species were introduced to Fort Ross SHP. Interpret the effects to the environment, native species, and to resource management efforts (e.g. effects of introduced pigs, rats, grasses and other plants raised as crops).
<b>Objective 3.5.</b> Visitors will describe the major geologic processes that have shaped the Fort Ross Coast.
<i>Strategy 3.5.1:</i> Identify major geologic processes that have shaped this part of the coast (e.g. San Andreas Fault, wave action, winds, and so on).
<i>Strategy 3.5.2:</i> Use hands-on activities and interactive exhibit elements to describe how wind, the ocean, earthquakes, and other processes shaped the landscape.
<i>Strategy 3.5.3:</i> Use historic images, topographic maps, and first-person accounts to interpret effects of earthquakes at Fort Ross.

## Goal 4: Community Resource and Visitor Outreach

The visitor center will serve as a resource for the Fort Ross community, and programs will be developed for those who cannot visit the park (figure 26).

### Intent

The Fort Ross visitor center has long been a resource for locals. Over time, the park has become an important resource to researchers and educators, cultural groups, and the International community. This goal defines the Fort Ross community to include those who wish to utilize the park, as well as those who feel a connection to the land and the park's history. The community includes, but is not limited to educational groups, Kashia, Russian, Native Alaskan, and other cultural groups, service groups, and recreational users. This goal also works to expand the community and provide access to the park's interpretive services for visitors who cannot visit.

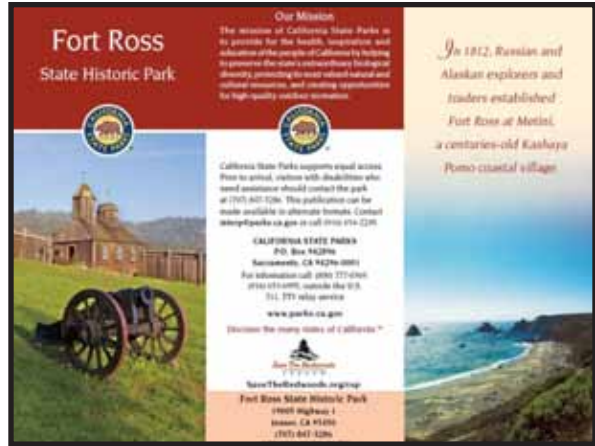


Figure 26. Fort Ross SHP brochure, ©CSP 2006

<b>Objective 4.1.</b> Community groups will use the multi-purpose room for meetings, programs, special events, and other activities.	
<i>Strategy 4.1.1:</i> Promote the visitor center’s multi-purpose space and amenities to the community.	
Task 4.1.1.a	Advertise the visitor center’s amenities online, at local chambers of commerce, schools, and organizations.
<i>Strategy 4.1.2:</i> Make every effort to provide meeting space at no cost to community groups.	
Task 4.1.2.a	Identify locations in and around the visitor center for different types of gatherings. Set up a reservation schedule for the community to use.
<i>Strategy 4.1.3:</i> Provide a location to host community events, gatherings, and other activities.	
Task 4.1.3.a	Provide access to community groups during hours of operation when the visitor center is open and staffed.
Task 4.1.3.b	Promote the use of the visitor center as a location to host events.

<i>Strategy 4.1.4:</i> Collaborate with community organizations to host programs relating to regional natural and cultural history (e.g. history of wine and cheese making on the Sonoma Coast, contemporary Kashia, and Russian art).	
Task 4.1.4.a	Determine the types of local and regional events that could be hosted at Fort Ross SHP.
Task 4.1.4.b	Reach out to cultural organizations to help organize cultural events at the Fort Ross SHP that relate to the park's interpretive themes and periods.
<b>Objective 4.2.</b> Visitors, community groups, researchers, and schoolchildren outside the Bay Area will access interpretive resources and programs offered by the visitor center and park.	
<i>Strategy 4.2.1:</i> Expand interpretive services to include programs, kits, media, online programs, and other methods that are easily accessible to the educational community and other groups.	
Task 4.2.1.a	Develop interpretive kits containing a self-guided program and resources that can be checked out by educators or groups.
Task 4.2.1.b	Develop interpretive kits that can be taken to schools or organizations to be presented by a park representative.
Task 4.2.1.c	Develop traveling exhibits that can be displayed at locations within Sonoma County and in the greater Bay Area.
<i>Strategy 4.2.2:</i> Develop a virtual classroom for interpretive programs where visitors from around the world participate in discussions.	
Task 4.2.1.a	Develop a P.O.R.T.S. program that connects the Fort Ross SHP visitor center and its resources to schools who cannot visit the park. <sup>2</sup>
Task 4.2.1.b	Develop programs that can be delivered online or via teleconferencing that connect the Fort Ross SHP visitor center and its resources to local community and international groups.
<i>Strategy 4.2.3:</i> Develop a relationship with schools in Russia or Alaska to share resources and programs.	
Task 4.2.3.a	Consult with the Russian Consulate and Russian cultural organizations to explore a "sister school" relationship.
<i>Strategy 4.2.4:</i> Provide online access to Fort Ross SHP research, historical documentation, images, and video.	
<i>Strategy 4.2.5:</i> Explore ways to develop virtual tours and online programs.	
Task 4.2.5.a	Consult with design firms, educational organizations, and museums to determine effective media and platforms to develop virtual tours and programs.
Task 4.2.5.a	Develop content for online programs and virtual tours.
<b>Objective 4.3.</b> Increase the number of educational institutions and students from Sonoma County and the region who use the visitor center.	



<i>Strategy 4.3.1:</i> Exhibits and programming will address key California State Science and Social Science academic content standards.	
Task 4.3.1.a	Consult with teachers when developing interpretive programs to ensure the content meets current standards.
Task 4.3.1.b	Consult with the Sonoma County education office when developing program content.
Task 4.3.1.c	Develop downloadable or printed curriculum and content tied to California academic standards for K-12 graders.
Task 4.3.1.d	Develop interpretive programs for college and graduate level students.
<i>Strategy 4.3.2:</i> Provide internship and study opportunities for students from local colleges and universities to develop interpretive programs and exhibits for the visitor center based on their studies of Fort Ross.	
Task 4.3.2.a	Work with high school and college history and physical anthropology departments to develop internship opportunities at Fort Ross SHP for credit.
<i>Strategy 4.3.3:</i> Provide a location for high schools and colleges to hold classes and programs and offer internship opportunities.	
Task 4.3.3.a	Work with high school and college history and physical anthropology departments to explore ways to use Fort Ross SHP as a classroom.

## Goal 5: Inspire Stewardship and Protect Resources

Local community members and organizations will take an active role in park stewardship and support interpretive services (figure 27).

### Intent

Interpretation is an excellent way to inform visitors about the park’s resource management issues. Environmental education programs, park service programs and clean-up events, and historic preservation programs are ways interpretation can be used to educate the public about cultural and natural resource protection. It can also be used as a tool to change visitors’ behavior in the park. The visitor center is a good place to present information about these issues and is a staging and training location for these programs.



**Figure 27.** School program at the old Russian orchard, CSP 090-P77306

<b>Objective 5.1.</b> Increase community financial support of interpretive programs and services.	
<i>Strategy 5.1.1:</i> Provide easy ways for visitors to donate to park preservation and interpretive programs.	
Task 5.1.1.a	Make sure the FRC donation box is clearly visible and in multiple locations.
Task 5.1.1.b	Develop special fee-based interpretive programs as a way to raise money.
Task 5.1.1.c	Make it easy for people to donate to interpretive programs online.
Task 5.1.1.d	Seek out businesses and organizations whose mission is similar to Fort Ross SHP. Encourage them to support interpretive services and special events as a way to promote their business while supporting the park.
<b>Objective 5.2.</b> Increase the number of volunteers to support interpretive services at the visitor center.	
<i>Strategy 5.2.1:</i> Recruit and train volunteers to lead interpretive programs from the visitor center.	
Task 5.2.1.a	Seek out businesses and organizations whose mission, interpretive periods, and themes are similar to Fort Ross SHP. Collaborate to share resources, training, and volunteer opportunities.

Task 5.2.1.b	Increase the number of historic and environmental conservation trainings for volunteers.
Task 5.2.1.c	Offer a variety of training opportunities and content throughout the year as a way to recruit new volunteers.
Task 5.2.1.d	Promote volunteerism at Fort Ross SHP and regional special events (e.g. set up a booth at the Sonoma County Fair and the Fort Ross Festival to promote the volunteer program).
<b>Objective 5.3.</b> Visitors will know about and support the park's resource protection programs.	
<i>Strategy 5.3.1:</i> Provide timely information to the public about the park habitat and historic preservation programs.	
Task 5.3.1.a	Provide information about park restoration and historic programs on social media sites and the CSP website. Show before and after images and results.
Task 5.3.1.b	Provide interpretive information about conservation and restoration programs in the visitor center.
Task 5.3.1.c	Include information about the park's resource protection efforts at interpretive programs.
<i>Strategy 5.3.2:</i> Provide opportunities for visitors to participate and learn about resource protection at the park.	
Task 5.3.2.a	Hold service projects at the visitor center where people work with park professionals to preserve a resource, such as working on the native plant garden outside the visitor center.
Task 5.3.2.b	Get the local community involved in resource preservation projects (volunteer opportunities) at the park and hold programs in the visitor center.
<b>Objective 5.5.</b> People will discuss why it is important to follow rules and regulations and how their behaviors positively and negatively affect the park's resources.	
<i>Strategy 5.5.1:</i> Ensure regulatory and safety information is easily accessible to the public.	
Task 5.5.1.a	Post regulatory and safety materials with park orientation information in prominent locations in and around the visitor center.
Task 5.5.1.b	Regulations should be presented in written and graphic formats so that they are easily understood by visitors of differing abilities.
Task 5.5.1.c	Include trail safety and resource protection messaging when leading walks from the visitor center.
Task 5.5.1.d	Repeat resource protection messages throughout visitor center exhibits.

<i>Strategy 5.5.2:</i> Regulations should be presented in a positive, authoritative, consistent, and respectful tone. The rationale behind regulations should be adequately described for the visitor.	
Task 5.5.2.a:	Ensure park staff and volunteers clearly understand park regulations and have access to updated information for visitors. For example, park staff and volunteers should be up to date on abalone diving regulations at Fort Ross and Salt Point to address visitor questions.
<b>Objective 5.6.</b> People will support resource protection programs at Fort Ross SHP.	
<i>Strategy 5.6.1:</i> Get the local community involved in resource preservation projects at the park.	
Task 5.6.1.a	Hold historic preservation and resource protection programs in the visitor center.
Task 5.6.1.b	Stage park service programs at the visitor center.
Task 5.6.1.c	Advertise these programs at the visitor center.
<b>Objective 5.7.</b> Increase the number of interpretive programs available at the visitor center using partnerships.	
<i>Strategy 5.7.1:</i> Seek out regional interpretive providers and organizations whose programs fit with the park's interpretive periods and themes.	
Task 5.7.1.a	Collaborate with these organizations to develop interpretive content, share resources, and give programs.
Task 5.7.1.b	Seek grants and funding opportunities from partner organizations to develop interpretive programs for the visitor center.

## Goal 6: Making Connections

Visitor center interpretation (figure 28) will inspire visitors to make physical and emotional connections to Fort Ross SHP.

### *Intent*

One of the primary goals of interpretation is to encourage people to make personal connections to the park and its many resources and stories. This goal ensures that information is accurate, nonbiased, inclusive, and accessible so that people can make informed decisions about the subject matter. Visitor center exhibits and programs will present information in a variety of formats and methods and make content accessible to many learning styles. Changing exhibits and interpretive programs will cover many subjects to pique people’s interests. Attractive and engaging exhibits will inform visitors of key messages and ideas.



**Figure 28.** Main exhibit hall, CSP 090-5137

<b>Objective 6.1.</b> Visitors and community members will regard the visitor center as a place where they can learn all about Fort Ross’s history and its resources.	
<i>Strategy 6.1.1:</i> Information will be well researched and presented in a clear and comprehensible manner.	
Task 6.1.1.a	Consult with subject matter experts and cultural groups when developing interpretive material, and submit to non-specialists to review for comprehensibility.
Task 6.1.1.b	Review programs and content on an annual basis to ensure continued relevancy and presentation methods.
Task 6.1.1.c	Update exhibits and interpretive content to include new information, accommodate learning styles, and ensure content is relevant to visitors.
Task 6.1.1.d	Provide links to current research, theses, and organizations that offer programs that complement the park’s interpretive goals and themes.
Task 6.1.1.e	Ensure interpretive themes in the exhibits carry through to other exhibits and programs in the park.
<b>Objective 6.2.</b> Visitors can purchase items in the sales area that expand their knowledge of the subject matter and inspire an association with Fort Ross.	
<i>Strategy 6.2.1:</i> Offer items for sale in the visitor center and online that relate to the park’s interpretive themes and periods, exhibits, and special events.	

Task 6.2.1.a	Offer a variety of items for sale in the visitor center that target age groups, recreational activities, multiple languages, and price ranges.
Task 6.2.1.b	Develop interpretive and educational kits for sale that relate to programs and special events.
Task 6.2.1.c	Develop exclusive books, materials, or media for sale that relate to changing exhibits at the visitor center.
<b>Objective 6.3.</b> Visitors, scholars, and students will regard the visitor center as a place to conduct research and learn about their connection to past events and people.	
<i>Strategy 6.3.1:</i> Provide access to research, historic documentation, and genealogy information.	
Task 6.3.1.a	Promote the research library on the CSP and the FRC websites, to academic institutions, and professional organizations.
Task 6.3.1.b	Develop a database of people who lived and worked at Fort Ross from 1812 to 1906. Provide a computer kiosk in the visitor center or online information that visitors can access.
Task 6.3.1.c	Promote Fort Ross SHP as an outdoor classroom for (CSP-approved) archaeological study.
Task 6.3.1.d	Provide links to relevant research materials on the CSP and the FRC websites.
Task 6.3.1.e	Provide access to non-sensitive archaeological research conducted at Fort Ross SHP.

## Endnotes

1. If food is to be sold at the visitor center, the Department must make a “good faith effort” to have a concession sell food before a cooperating association can sell food. For more information, see the “California Department of Parks and Recreation PRC 513 Implementation Guidelines”, <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/735/files/513%20implementation%20guidelines%209-10-09.pdf>.
2. Parks Online Resource for Teachers and Students (PORTS) is a free distance-learning program that uses the power of California’s K to 12 High-Speed Networks (HSN) and the educational potential of live video conferencing to help schools teach academic content standards in the context of California State Parks. For more information, visit <http://www.ports.parks.ca.gov/>, or contact the PORTS program manager.





## CHAPTER 8: PROPOSED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

*This chapter presents a narrative of the desired visitor experience for the Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP) visitor center. It shows how many of these ideas will be achieved through exhibits, interpretive programs, and visitor services. This information is presented to help guide exhibit and interpretive program development.*

### 8.1 Visit Planning

It is anticipated that the majority of park visitors will be from the greater Sacramento and San Francisco Bay region. Increased marketing of park interpretive services and events to these regions and demographics should help draw more visitors. In addition, the park has seen an increase in Russian and Ukrainian-American visitors. Fort Ross SHP should benefit from having interpretive materials and trip planning information in additional languages, such as Russian.

Many visitors access information on the internet and social media sites, thus it is an important part of trip planning. Making sure that information on the internet is up-to-date is an important step to help visitors plan a trip to the visitor center. Visitors should benefit from expanded trip planning information online, and information posted at visitor bureaus and tourist venues.

Visitors should easily be able to find out the visitor center hours, the type of exhibits and/or activities they can expect, and any accessibility issues or opportunities. Visitor center hours and interpretive services should be posted on the door or outside bulletin board, on the California State Parks (CSP) and the Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) websites, and at local state and county parks. This information should be shared with local

hotels such as the Fort Ross Lodge and the Timber Cove Inn (a partner to Fort Ross SHP), and other nearby tourist destinations.

School groups currently participate in the Environmental Living Programs and Environmental Living Day Programs. These day and overnight programs are held mostly at the park. The team anticipates that new exhibits in the visitor center will accommodate additional school programs and youth-gear activities. The park should market new exhibits, programs, and corresponding curriculum to local schools, libraries, and other youth programs that should benefit from using the visitor center.

### 8.2 Site Approach

A new (2012) large park sign greets visitors as they enter the park. If driving, visitors stop at a kiosk to pay the Day Use fee. The entrance kiosk is not staffed during weekdays. Limited park information is posted on the kiosk. There is ample parking on most days in the Day Use lot (figure 29). Visitors access the center from the Day Use parking lot and connecting trails leading from the Reef Campground.



**Figure 29.** Day Use parking lot

Stakeholders, CSP, and FRC staff commented that Monterey cypress trees obscure the visitor center building from the parking lot (figure 30). It was suggested to thin the cypress trees around the visitor center to improve the building's visibility.



**Figure 30.** Overgrown cypress trees obscure the building.

### 8.3 Outdoor Experience

The visitor center is located adjacent to the Day Use parking lot. Visitors follow a paved path from the parking lot to a covered walkway that connects to the main entrance. A container garden with native plants lines the walkway to the main entrance. In the future, additional landscaping in the green area and around the center should provide an opportunity to interpret native plants, those grown by Fort Ross colonists and later, ranching families.

To the left of the walkway entrance is a low-profile orientation panel. The panel provides an overview of the park's history, accessible trails, and amenities, the fort and Call ranch complex, and recreational areas.

When the visitor center is closed, people will still be able to walk around it and receive interpretation about the park. There is space for interpretive panels in front of the building, on the side deck, and in the adjacent picnic area (figure 31).

An attractive, durable, and easily updated



**Figure 31.** Little-noticed picnic area adjacent to the multi-purpose room.

bulletin board should be placed outside the visitor center. Panels should interpret the key themes and any critical park orientation. The bulletin board should alert visitors to safety and/or resource protection information.

### 8.4 Indoor Experience

The entrance should be welcoming and encourage visitors to come in and explore. It should be designed so that people can move around the space freely and not have to follow a route of travel for the interpretive experience to make sense.

#### 8.4.1 Entrance

Visitors enter through glass doors into an entry vestibule. To the left are the public restrooms, and to the right is a sliding visitor contact window that looks into the FRC office. A park map is hung on the wall in a locking glass case next to the window. The entry vestibule is locked when the center is closed. This contact window is an important element as long as there is staff present during regular business hours to answer questions.

The vestibule is another location to consider placing an information bulletin board and park orientation if its placement does not hinder visitor flow. Exhibits and unrelated material currently

in this space should be relocated to another part of the center.

Upon entering the center, visitors should be able to identify the park's unifying and primary themes. Themes can be condensed into a motto that could go on an interior or exterior wall, the information desk, or the door. Park orientation information and events calendar should be easily found.

### 8.4.2 Sales Area

The sales area is the primary visitor contact area and is the first thing visitors see as they enter the center (figure 32).



**Figure 32.** Crowded main hall and museum entrance, *CSP*.

A long, 'L' shaped counter is on the right side of the entrance hall. Behind the counter are bookshelves. Park brochures and information is on the counter near the register. On the left side of the entrance hall are additional bookshelves and sales racks. The park and the FRC run the sales area and staff the counter.

The sales area is an ideal place for people to seek additional information on topics addressed in the visitor center. Sales items support and expand upon the park's interpretive themes. Stakeholders, the FRC, and park staff indicated they would like to expand refreshments for sale and add a dedicated area to consume them.

Over the years, the sales area outgrew its footprint and sales items cover older exhibits in the entrance hall (figure 33). On busy days, the sales area may become crowded and impede visitor flow through the exhibits. The team should consider a design that allows better visitor flow while accommodating activities such as sales, refreshments, park orientation, and answering questions.



**Figure 33.** The sales area covers older exhibits in the entrance hall.

### 8.4.3 Exhibits

Visitor centers should have multiple opportunities for hands-on engagement. These include places where children can safely explore while adults peruse exhibits and learn about topics that interest them. Graphics and other media should convey the park's historic and recreational opportunities. Even if people do not explore the visitor center, they will still have an understanding of what they can see and do at the park.

Exhibit subject matter should be organized around the park's primary and secondary interpretive themes. Exhibit storylines will be expanded to:

- Connect historic events to current events and people.
- Interpret the diverse groups of people who lived and worked the land (that is now Fort Ross SHP),

their cultural backgrounds, and how people engaged and interacted with each other.

- Discuss the lasting effects Colony Ross had on the wider society.
- Explore the park's natural resources and geologic processes that shaped the land.
- Interpret Sonoma Coast's plants and animals, with an emphasis on why humans valued and sought them out.
- Consider the cause and effect of overhunting and use of these precious resources.
- Illuminate the 100 plus-year history of Fort Ross as a California State Park.
- Highlight Fort Ross SHP's historic preservation and natural resource restoration efforts.
- Recognize Fort Ross SHP's lasting ties to the local and international communities, especially their role in interpreting the park's history and protecting its resources.
- Include information about Fort Ross SHP recreational opportunities.

Exhibits will:

- Use illustrations, artwork, photographs, historic objects, and tactile elements to tell stories associated with each theme.
- Feature first person accounts, oral histories, and primary source materials to make personal connections and bring stories to life.
- Use hands-on, interactive elements and media.
- Have a dedicated changing exhibit space to further explore storylines and themes.

- Make creative use of the high ceilings for large graphics or other exhibit elements.
- Improve environmental conditions and exhibit case design to protect museum objects and make the cases easier to clean and maintain.
- Park and FRC staff indicate that the current visitor flow through the exhibit hall works well.

#### 8.4.4 Multi-purpose Room

The multi-purpose room (figure 34) serves many important functions within the visitor center. This is where interpretive and school programs, special events, and community gatherings take place.



**Figure 34.** Presentation in the multi-purpose room of the visitor center, *FRC 2013*.

The room has a comfortable seating area around the fireplace and large windows that let in natural light. It doubles as a theater to show park films, presentations, and changing exhibits. Improvements to this room should consider the following:

- Improve functionality to better accommodate the many uses.
- Add storage for supplies, tables, and chairs.
- Expand the kitchen to accommodate catered events.
- Keep this space flexible in its design and layout.

- Relocate the changing exhibit space to a dedicated area within the visitor center and near the main exhibit hall.

### 8.4.5 Reference Library and Research Area

Fort Ross SHP is known for its expansive reference library. Park staff would like to expand the library to accommodate larger archives and space for researchers. A computer workstation should aid library use.

## 8.5 User Groups

The interpretive planning process analyzed current and potential user groups to Fort Ross SHP. The exhibits will be developed in consultation with these groups.

### *Students and Teachers (K-12)*

These groups make up a large percentage of users to the park. Park staff would like to expand the interpretive offerings at the visitor center to reach more students of different grade levels. Exhibits and programs should model California core curriculum framework and standards, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education (STEM).<sup>1</sup> Programs and the virtual classroom should be held in the multi-purpose room. There should be ample room to hold programs for at least 40 children and adults per class.

### *Families*

Exhibits and interpretive programs should be designed to engage both adults and children. Families should most likely experience the building at their own pace.

### *Local Community/Park Neighbors*

The visitor center is an important community resource. Locals make up a

majority of park volunteers. Local groups and organizations may rent the multi-purpose room for meetings, events, and gatherings. As an emergency shelter, locals depend on the visitor center during natural disasters and other events. The visitor center will need additional storage for the park's emergency supplies and visitor safety equipment.

### *Day Use Visitors and Small Groups*

Day use visitors and small group visitors are not part of a large tour group and do not necessarily require as much guidance as they circulate through the building and park. Their needs are primarily exploration of the park, information on the park's history, and possibly shelter. They should be allowed to experience the building at their own pace, but may require some level of orientation and assistance by staff.

### *Special-Purpose Visitors*

A special-purpose visitor comes to the park for a specific reason. These visitors tend to be researchers, scholars, and those who attend special events. Scholars and researchers should focus their time in the research library and may need a computer terminal or internet access, and a dedicated space to work. Special event attendees should primarily use the multi-purpose room for programs. Both groups should use amenities, exhibits, and the sales area.

### *Staff and Volunteers*

CSP staff, volunteers, and FRC staff give interpretive programs, staff the visitor center, and provide support for the day-to-day operations at the park. The visitor center is the central hub of operations for this group. It provides much needed office space and administrative functions, storage space, basic amenities, and a staging area for programs.

### *Recreational Users*

Recreational Users come to the park for activities such as hiking, fishing, and diving. This group will benefit from improved park orientation information, recreational programs with an interpretive element, and basic visitor amenities. The multi-purpose room could act as a staging area for recreational programs.

### *People with Familial or Cultural Ties to Fort Ross's Cultural History*

The visitor center will be a place where people learn about their cultural and familial ties to Fort Ross. For example, Call family members may wish to learn more about their family's ranching history there; Kashia, Native Alaskan, and Russian descendants of Fort Ross Colonists may want to learn more about how their ancestors lived and worked there. These groups may benefit from an improved museum collections research area, a searchable database of people who lived and worked at Fort Ross, or an oral history project to collect stories from Kashia and Call family members.

## **8.6 Interpretive Recommendations**

The following interpretive approaches should be considered when developing exhibits for the visitor center:

- Where possible, informational and interpretive media should rely on non-verbal approaches to communication.
- Strong repeat visitation patterns suggest that a changing series of programs and/or exhibits should be an asset.
- When discussing regulations, language should be consistent, positive, and authoritative. Rules should be accompanied by a brief explanation that helps visitors

understand how compliance contributes to the visitor experience as well as to preservation of historic and natural resource.

- Messages should be arranged to reflect the 3-30-3 rule, which allows visitors to understand the essential message in 3 seconds, acquire a few more details in 30 seconds, or get a thorough overview of the topic within three minutes.
- Theme-based titles, provocative sub-titles, and clearly written body text that uses metaphors, analogies, and familiar terms, accompanied by illustrations will help interpret at these various levels.
- Incorporate first-person voice wherever possible, especially for Kashia, Native Alaskan, Russian American Company Employees, and Ranchers.

## **8.7 Accessibility Improvements**

To meet the recreational needs of all the people of California and to provide an accessible environment in which all visitors to the State Park System are given the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and participate in the state's cultural, historical and natural heritage. (California Department of Parks and Recreation policy, *All Visitors Welcome*, 2003.)

California State Parks (CSP) is committed to making park facilities and experiences—including interpretive experiences—accessible to all the people of California. The exhibits for the Fort Ross visitor center will follow current best practices and meet California State Parks Accessibility Standards.

At a minimum, this will involve using appropriate font styles and sizes, colors, materials, and contrast between the text and the background. All panels will include graphics that interpret park resources and supplement the text. CSP will maintain readability by avoiding unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon. If conveying the interpretive message requires such terms, CSP will provide definitions and pronunciation aids. A hard copy of large font text and images will be available at the information desk. Audio-visual programs will be open-captioned and have audio-descriptions available as well.

Concept Design phases. The placement and design of this feature will comply with Department Notice 2006-04, found on the California State Parks intranet page, and the California State Parks Donor & Sponsorship Recognition Guidelines. The latter is found on the “Programs and Policies” page of the California State Parks website , [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=25529](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25529).

Universal design concepts for exhibit products go beyond meeting the minimum requirements for accessibility. Such products are intended to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design. Exhibits should incorporate elements of universal design through which they will be accessible to elderly visitors, small children, non-English speakers/readers, as well as people with limited mobility, vision, and/or hearing.

## 8.8 Longevity

The exhibits at Fort Ross will be designed to have a minimum lifespan of 30 years. Design elements should therefore be classic, not trendy, and exhibit features designed to be durable. To prolong the life and usability of the exhibits, electronic media shall be used sparingly. However, certain elements such as video touch screens may need to be replaced within this period.

## 8.9 Donor and Sponsor Recognition

The visitor center will have a space dedicated for donor recognition. Planning for donor and sponsor recognition should be included in the Exhibit Planning and

1. For more information, see the California Department of Education website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/sc/stemintrod.asp> (California Department of Education, 2013).



## CHAPTER 9: NEXT STEPS

*The next steps for interpretive project planning involve developing exhibit programming, concept designs, design development, fabrication, and installation of exhibits, and project closeout. This chapter describes the processes involved and points to consider along the way.*

### 9.1 Visitor Center Improvements Project

The interpretive planning process makes clear that the Fort Ross visitor center is accommodating a wider range of uses and activities than was originally designed. This project proposes to replace existing exhibits and improve the functionality of the over 30-year old visitor center.

Future improvements to exhibits and functional space within and around the building may require changes to the existing building footprint and infrastructure. Before exhibit programming and concept designs can be developed, it will be necessary to determine which facility improvements will best meet future visitor center needs. Any significant changes may require new electrical, plumbing, heating and air system, a lighting plan, CEQA reviews and Coastal Commission permits, and a public works contract. The Service Center's specialists will work with the district to review plans and accessibility requirements, provide cost estimates, and oversee construction contracts.

#### 9.1.1 Securing Funding

The visitor center improvements project qualifies as a capital outlay project. As such, it would be eligible for future bond funding. The project must first be added to the Park Infrastructure Database (PID), and prioritized by the District and

Department executive staff. Monies may also be available through a combination of grants and capital campaigns. Partners and cooperating associations are needed to help procure funding for the facility improvements, including exhibits. This project can be addressed in phases, as funding is available.

#### 9.1.2 Project Programming

Plans for facility improvements will be developed in tandem with exhibit design development. The interpretive project team will work closely with architects, engineers, and resource specialists in developing architectural and exhibit programming. The multidisciplinary team will review all program and construction documents to ensure building modifications will provide the necessary support for the proposed exhibits.

Exhibit plans will be developed using a services contract for an exhibit design and build firm. The consultant works with the interpretive team to transform ideas into design development plans for fabrication. Depending on the type of programming and exhibits, the consultant may be able to produce all of the plans and construction drawings for the fabrication and installation. The interpretive planning team, however, should be prepared to be heavily involved in the design process, especially as subject matter experts, writers, and to provide images and museum objects available in Department holdings. Partners, stakeholders, and subject matter experts will also be coordinated through the interpretive project team.

The interpretive program statements will include a project schedule and scope of work, which contain the tasks and anticipated duration of the project. The exhibit and architectural work will be phased together to ensure the necessary facility improvements are done in tandem with new exhibits.

Table 14 can be used to estimate the schedule and scope of work from start-up through closeout for a typical visitor center project. It is also useful when developing the services contract for the exhibit firm.

**Table 14.** Scope of Work and Schedule

Phase	Task	# Calendar Days
Project start-up	Project start-up and site meetings Workshops (if needed) Exhibit program description	120
Concept design	Draft concept design Final concept design	120
Design development	Draft design development Final design development	120
Fabrication	Final artwork Shop drawings	60
Installation		30
Project closeout		14
<b>Total calendar days to complete work</b>		<b>464</b>

### 9.1.3 Concept Design

Once the initial exhibit and architectural programming is complete and the consultant is on-board, the project moves into Concept Design. During this phase, the consultant will produce conceptual layouts of the visitor center. These plans will show exhibit locations, floor plans, elevations, circulation, and a description of exhibit content and visitor experience. Plans of exterior exhibits or landscaping will be included, if it is part of the exhibit program.

The concept design plans will have a detailed narrative of the overall exhibit, overarching themes and storylines, proposed building modifications, recommended project scope, and cost estimates. For each exhibit area, it will describe the goals and objectives that are met, proposed images, museum

objects, and/or reproductions, and the media or method of delivery. Concept design plans will undergo several drafts and refinements. The final product will have preliminary graphic layouts with a color and font palate, proposed exhibit materials, layout, and technology, draft text and images, and general lighting and electrical plans.

### 9.1.4 Design Development

The Design Development phase takes the plans and develops them into shop drawings and construction documents. The planning team will refine the final exhibit text images and confirm a myriad of details including overall design and layout, objects, artwork, color and font palates, and finishes.

Shop drawings will be produced that show exhibit components, furniture, cases, platforms, artifact mounts, and interactive components. Construction drawings will show detailed building modifications, lighting, and electrical plans.

All construction and shop drawings will be reviewed by the Service Center to ensure all building codes, and state requirements are met. Once the plans are approved and signed off by the appropriate State Fire Marshal and Accessibility Section, the project moves into Fabrication.

### **9.1.5 Site Considerations before Exhibit Installation**

It will be important to inform the public about the proposed project and visitor center closure. At a minimum, the California State Park website should be updated with the latest project information and posted at the park entrance kiosk. Another effective tool is to place temporary interpretive project panels at the site that describe the project, funding sources, and anticipated closure dates.

During the exhibit fabrication, the park will prepare the visitor center for exhibit installation. Significant and fragile museum collections and archival materials will need to be safely packed and moved out of the building before facility improvements and exhibit installation occurs. A curator and staff trained in handling museum collections will need to re-inventory the collections, update museum records, and pack and move objects to a secure and environmentally safe facility.

The visitor center, in whole or part, may need to be closed during the general contractor's work on the facility improvements. The park should develop a plan to move visitor services and operations to another location, if that is required. Park interpretive staff offices

and supplies for interpretive programs are located in the Officers' Barracks of the fort compound. Moderate adjustments to interpretive programs should be made to accommodate programs that do not regularly occur in the visitor center.

Three Native American exhibit cases were modified with new exhibit mounts, lighting, and humidity stabilizers to protect and support the fragile baskets and weaving materials, cooking and hunting tools, and other cultural objects. Exhibit labels and text were also produced. These cases were intended to have a 30-year life span and should be incorporated into new exhibits. Other museum objects on display may need similar conservation treatment and new exhibit mounts before being reincorporated into new exhibits.

### **9.1.6 Installation**

The general contractor doing facility improvements will remove existing exhibits structures and cases; however, park staff may also be involved in the demolition and removal of the old exhibits. After the general contractor completes their work, the exhibit consultant firm will install the new exhibits. The consultant will provide park staff with training on its operation, maintenance, and warranty upon completion of the project.

### **9.1.7 Project Closeout**

At the conclusion of the project, the park and Service Center team will consolidate all project files, scan documents, and upload new reports to the Unit Data File. Project produced artwork, photography, and illustrations should be inventoried and kept in retrievable format for future access. Digital and hard copies of project files will be prepared for the Department's archives and Central Records office. All budget-related documents will be filed and ready for audit purposes.

## 9.2 Conclusion

Over the years, the park and its partners have developed solid relationships with California tribal groups, Russian scholars and cultural groups, as well as national and international government entities. The park's strong relationships are evident with events like the 2012 Bicentennial Celebration and annual Cultural Heritage Days, where people from around the world and from diverse backgrounds participate. Recently, the Magasin and Windmill reconstruction projects have garnered much positive publicity and raised awareness about the park. It will be important to keep the momentum going to expand support of partners and raise funds for interpretive projects.

Going forward, the park should consider updating the General Plan to reflect recent reconstruction projects, land acquisitions, conservation programs, and changes to how the park is used. A study of the General Plan will help determine if its 40-year old projects and guidelines are still viable. In addition, the park should develop an Interpretation Master Plan (IMP). The IMP will determine how the entire park will be interpreted and help direct the development of exhibits in the visitor center. Much of the research and work presented in Chapters 5-8 of this IPP can be used in writing the IMP and General Plan amendment.

It will be important to update Fort Ross State Historic Park's (SHP) Annual Interpretation Implementation Plan to include the tasks that can be accomplished in the Chapter 7, Recommendations. Many of these tasks, such as updating orientation and park information and visitor outreach programs may not require significant additional funding and will dramatically improve the visitor experience. Marketing and trip planning tools identified in the tasks will bring more attention to the park and attract potential funders.

The Fort Ross SHP Visitor Center Interpretive Project Plan (IPP) is a vital tool to communicate interpretive concepts, prioritize work, generate revenue, and hire consultants. The Mission and Vision for Interpretation, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies provide the foundation for exhibit development, defining building functions, and creating new interpretive programs. The IPP is a highly effective tool to pursue funding. It shows potential funders that interpretive programs and projects are well developed and organized. Much of the information needed to receive funding internally and with grant programs is found in the IPP.

Finally, the IPP shows how the Department is actively working towards fulfilling its mission to the public here at Fort Ross SHP.

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# APPENDICES







## APPENDIX A: 2012 BICENTENNIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE DAYS VISITOR SURVEY

The 2012 Bicentennial Cultural Heritage Days event commemorated the 200-year establishment of Fort Ross by the Russian-American Company. Table A shows the results of a visitor intercept survey that was conducted by CSP staff at the event. Results of the topic voting are close to the topics discussed and prioritized at the two stakeholder meetings.

**Table A1.** Bicentennial Cultural Heritage Days Visitor Intercept Survey, 2012

	First time	Been before			
Is this your first visit to the park or have you been here before?	55	136			
	First time	Attended before			
Is this your first visit to Cultural Heritage Days or have you attended before?	131	65			
	Sat	Sun	Both		
Saturday or Sunday or both?	65	93	11		
	Yes	No			
Have you interacted with a CSP staff person in uniform today?	154	25			
	Very helpful	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all	No opinion
Would you rate the interaction as:	143	16	1	1	22

	Ft. Ross— many cultures	Kashia Pomo prior to Russians	Russians brought new tech & science	Ft. Ross & Russia remain connected	
Please let us know if you learned about any of the following (check all that apply):	158	139	126	142	
To help with future exhibits, how interested would you be in learning about the following?	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all	Don't know
<i>Fort Ross and fur trade</i>	103	62	5	2	3
<i>Local Native American history/culture</i>	128	40	6	3	1
<i>History/culture of Alaskan Natives at Ft. Ross</i>	127	38	6	1	2
<i>Ranching/agricultural period after Russia left</i>	92	57	16	5	2
<i>Marine ecology and sea otter history</i>	122	42	7	2	1

## APPENDIX B: COMMON PLANTS AND ANIMALS<sup>1</sup>

**Table B1.** Common Marine Plants and Animals

	Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
Plants and Intertidal Animals	abalone	<i>Haliotis sp.</i>
	bull kelp	<i>Nereocystis luetkeana</i>
	California mussel	<i>Mytilus californianus</i>
	feather boa kelp	<i>Egregia menziesi</i>
	limpet	<i>Patellogastropoda</i>
	postelsia	<i>Postelsia palmaeformis</i>
	sea anemone	<i>Anemonia sulcata</i>
	sea star	<i>Asteroidea sp.</i>
	sea urchin	<i>Echinoidea sp.</i>
Fish	cabezon	<i>Scorpaenichthys marmoratus</i>
	coho salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>
	lingcod	<i>Ophiodon elongatus</i>
	rockfish	<i>Sebastes sp.</i>
	surfperch	<i>Embiotocidae</i>
	steelhead trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>
Mammals	blue whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>
	California sea lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>
	common minke whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>
	northern elephant seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>
	gray whale	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>
	harbor porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>
	harbor seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>
	humpback whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>
	killer whale (orca)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>
	Steller's sea lion	<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>
short-beaked common dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	

**Table B2.** Trees

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
big leaf maple	<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>
bishop pine	<i>Pinus muricata</i>

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
buckeye	<i>Aesculus californica</i>
California bay	<i>Umbellularia californica</i>
California nutmeg	<i>Torreya californica</i>
coast live oak	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i> var. <i>agrifolia</i>
coast redwood	<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>
eucalyptus*	<i>Eucalyptus cinerea</i>
grand fir	<i>Abies grandis</i>
Monterey cypress	<i>Hesperocyparis macrocarpa</i>
Pacific madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>
tanbark oak	<i>Northolithocarpus densiflorus</i>
white alder	<i>Alnus rhombifolia</i>
willow	<i>Salix</i> sp.

**Table B3.** Shrubs and Woody Vines

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
adder's tongue	<i>Ophioglossum</i> sp.
berry	<i>Rubus</i> sp.
bedstraw	<i>Galium</i> sp.
California hazelnut	<i>Corylus cornuta</i> ssp. <i>californica</i>
California manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos</i> sp.
coffee berry	<i>Frangula californica</i>
coyote brush	<i>Baccharis pilularis</i> var. <i>consanguinea</i>
currant	<i>Ribes</i> sp.
elderberry	<i>Sambucus</i> sp.
Himalayan blackberry*	<i>Rubus armeniacus</i>
honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera</i> sp.
huckleberry	<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i>
Pacific wax myrtle	<i>Morella californica</i>
yellow bush lupine	<i>Lupinus arboreus</i>

**Table B4.** Herbaceous Flowering Plants

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
bush monkey flower	<i>Mimulus aurantiacus</i>
buttercup	<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.
California azalea	<i>Rhododendron occidentale</i>
California blackberry	<i>Rubus ursinus</i>

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
California evening primrose	<i>Oenothera avita</i>
California lilac	<i>Ceanothus sp.</i>
California poppy	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>
chickweed	<i>Stellaria sp.</i>
clover	<i>Trifolium sp.</i>
columbine	<i>Aquilegia sp.</i>
Douglas iris	<i>Iris douglasiana</i>
fairy bells	<i>Prosartes sp.</i>
fairy slipper	<i>Calypso bulbosa</i>
fetid adder's tongue	<i>Scoliopus bigelovii</i>
woodland forget-me-not*	<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>
grasses	<i>various genera</i>
Indian paintbrush	<i>Castilleja sp.</i>
lupine	<i>Lupinus sp.</i>
man-root	<i>Marah sp.</i>
milk thistle*	<i>Silybum marianum</i>
milk maids	<i>Cardamine californica</i>
miner's lettuce	<i>Claytonia perfoliata</i>
mugwort	<i>Artemisia douglasiana</i>
nettle	<i>Urtica sp.</i>
poison oak	<i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i>
salmonberry	<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>
silk tassel bush	<i>Garrya sp.</i>
slim Solomon's seal	<i>Maianthemum stellatum</i>
spotted coralroot	<i>Corallorhiza maculata</i>
strawberry	<i>Fragaria sp.</i>
thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>
trillium	<i>Trillium sp.</i>
violet	<i>Viola sp.</i>
Western sweet coltsfoot	<i>Petasites frigidus var. palmatus</i>
Western wild ginger	<i>Asarum caudatum</i>
wood-sorrel	<i>Oxalis sp.</i>
yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>

**Table B5.** Ferns, Fern Allies and Lower Plants

Common Name	Scientific Name
bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum var. pubescens</i>
five-finger fern	<i>Adiantum aleuticum</i>
polypody	<i>Polypodium sp.</i>
sword fern	<i>Polystichum sp.</i>
wood fern	<i>Dryopteris sp.</i>

**Table B6.** Birds

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
American crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
American kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
American robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
black oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>
Brewer's blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>
brown pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
California gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>
California towhee	<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>
Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
common raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
dark-eyed junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
common murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>
cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax spp.</i>
great egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
great blue heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
house finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>
osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
red-shouldered hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
red-tailed hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
spotted towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
turkey vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
white-tailed kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>

**Table B7. Mammals**

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
American black bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>
black-tailed deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus columbianus</i>
black-tailed jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>
bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>
brush rabbit	<i>Sylvilagus bachmani</i>
California ground squirrel	<i>Otospermophilus beecheyi</i>
coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>
gray fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>
mountain lion	<i>Puma concolor</i>
pocket gopher	<i>Thomomys sp.</i>
ringtail cat	<i>Bassariscus astutus</i>
river otter	<i>Lontra canadensis</i>
striped skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>
western spotted skunk	<i>Spilogale gracilis</i>
wild boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>

**Table B8. Reptiles and Amphibians**

Common Name	Taxonomic Designation
gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis sp.</i>
Pacific gopher snake	<i>Pituophis catenifer catenifer</i>
rubber boa	<i>Charina bottae</i>
Sierran treefrog	<i>Pseudacris sierra</i>

## Endnotes

1. Non-native species are denoted with an asterisk \*



## APPENDIX C: EXHIBIT ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY AND CRITIQUE

*Appendix C presents a summary of the overall findings first by area within the building followed by a review of the exhibits with recommendations in table format. Finally, the results of the accessibility survey are shown in a series of tables with the original survey questions. Details presented here are intended to be used when developing future exhibit concept designs.*

In February 2012, California State Park (CSP) District Interpretive Coordinators from around the state met at Fort Ross State Historic Park (SHP) to participate in several interpretive training activities. As part of the training, participants were tasked with examining and evaluating the nearly 30-year old visitor center and exhibits. They assessed the overall visitor experience, whether exhibits were still relevant and effective, and if exhibits met accessibility compliancy. The survey would kick off the interpretive planning process that occurred later that year.

Approximately 30 people including instructors and park staff, split up into small groups to survey the visitor center and exhibits. Their responses were recorded on worksheets and in note form. The data was used to make recommendations for future exhibits and improve the visitor center's function.

### Visitor Center Entrance

When entering the visitor center, the training participants felt there was no clear indication they were in a state park facility. There was a lack of state park branding and identity. Recommendations included creating an introductory exhibit panel at the start of the exhibit, adding more "interchange" of Native American words, and using different materials to

separate exhibit areas instead of the wood panel walls.

### Information Counter and Sales Area

The counter should be strategically placed to organize the flow of visitors through the exhibit hall. The area behind the counter has more space than visitors have in front of the counter. There appears to be a lot of storage for the sales area behind the counter. "For sale" items should relate directly to interpretive themes, programs, and special events. Videos could be integrated into the exhibit alcove or exhibit hall instead of the multi-purpose room.

### Multi-purpose Room

There were several changing exhibits in this room with little explanation of their contents, and no clear indication of how this room is used.

### Main Exhibit Hall

Exhibit panels have too much text and are too cumbersome to read. New exhibit panels have different fonts and designs from the original exhibit panels. New exhibit cases and panels are interspersed with older exhibit panels and often do not reinforce the panel text. The overall effect can be jarring with no smooth transition between sections, themes, and periods. Some participants noted that the exhibits are dimly lit.

### Exit Vestibule

An exhibit of the shipwrecked *S.S. Pomona* is treated as an afterthought since they are placed in the exit vestibule.

### Overall Exhibit Recommendations

When developing new exhibits, participants recommended using hands-

on displays, mounting exhibit cases on the wall, and ensuring the objects on display enhance the content presented.

**Table C1.** Exhibit Area Comments and Recommendations

Exhibit Name/Area	Review and Recommendations
People from the Top of the Land	Exhibit title is too subtle; not clear of the Native American language being presented. Not clear if the Pomo are the “People from the Top of the Land”.
	Need to clarify if all the groups shown are “People from the Top of the Land”.
	There seems to be three layers of info being presented: Tribal group, Traditional territory, and modern geographic locations.
	Need to reference trade towards the beginning of the exhibit.
	Tribal Map Panel
	Not in correct location for eye appeal.
	Difficult to differentiate color bands, place names of tribe near number location.
	The band of green makes it seem that the Pomo dominates other tribes.
	No distance symbol on the map with text reference.
	Does this map show what we are seeing in the distance of 30 x 50 miles?
More engaging if topographic map is used. Use the park’s geographic location in the larger context of the region and world.	
The Russians Arrive at May-tee-nee	Identify Russian Crest – perhaps use a flag. Why is this used there?
	Include a map from Aleutians to Fort Ross.
The Lure of Fur	Missing native people.
	Why do we want fur?
	Why is Fort Ross the key place?
	Include fur pelt.
	Duplicate maps.
	Illustration of otter
Born in a Baidarka	Need to label artifacts in display case.

Exhibit Name/Area	Review and Recommendations
Archaeology Display Case	Instead of labels, use number with silhouette.
	Organize projectile points and shell beads by period.
	Missing labels for household items (thimble, etc.).
	Identify natural materials
	Whalebone – label body part.
	Abalone shell- missing label
	Metal spear point, or knife?
Windmill	Cool model!!! Show human scale
Trade and Exploration Map	Should be enhanced by modern overlay.
A Final Home	Cemetery artifacts should be close to panel.
	Don't understand where the artifacts came from in the case under "Orthodox Population".
	Cross or other graphic could be mounted higher on the wall.
Too Few Profits	What's a ruble? Can we see one?
	Can you help us understand an equivalent value?
	Took excessively long to understand that the years/annual increases/income/net loss all went together horizontally. Thought they were two separate panels.
Natural Curiosities	Good idea, poorly executed.
	Could show actual botanical specimens.
	Is the bear covering up a typo?
The Emigrant's Guide to California	Looks like it came from another park.
	Exhibit panel looks totally out of place.
The People of California	Seems discordant with chronology.

### Accessibility Survey

Each group surveyed one of three exhibit areas. Group 1 surveyed the Native Peoples area, Group 2 surveyed the Russian area, and Group 3 surveyed the Ranching area.

The results coincide with the findings noted earlier. New and old exhibits have inconsistent fonts and styles. There is too much exhibit text and the some fonts do not meet the minimum recommended size. Some text is set too far from the exhibit

railing and other text is set too low. Exhibit finishes and lighting create a glare that makes text difficult to read. Artifact labels have inconsistent sizes and fonts.

Recommendations include updating exhibit panels and cases to present information in a clear, organized, and consistent manner. Content should be offered in multiple formats to accommodate visitors with varying abilities. Hands-on and tactile components would also enhance the visitor experience.

**Table C2.** Learning and Language (Native People’s Area)

NATIVE PEOPLES—GROUP 1				
ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXHIBITS	Yes	No	N/A	Comment
<b>A. SITE PLAN</b>				
Have the site drawings or floor plans been submitted, showing compliant exhibit locations, panel dimensions, mounting heights and angled, viewing distances and turning space?			x	
Are the paths of travel through the exhibit barrier-free, allowing compliant approaches, views and departures?	x			
Are the hands-on and interactive components within prescribed reach ranges, not requiring tight pinching, twisting or grasping?			x	<i>None</i>
<b>B. DESIGN ELEMENTS</b>				
Have panel designs been submitted on hard copy (minimum of 40% of actual size), or electronically in Photoshop or Illustrator?			x	
Is the layout of each panel visually logical and easy to understand?		x		<i>Original exhibits consistent. New (Russian mariners) not consistent</i>
Are videos captioned for sound and key visuals?			x	<i>No videos</i>

NATIVE PEOPLES—GROUP 1				
ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXHIBITS	Yes	No	N/A	Comment
Are audio components captioned and include adjustable volume?		x		
Are all caption text font styles and sizes legible? (24-point front is the recommended minimum for captions.)		x		<i>Original—yes</i> <i>New—no</i>
Are alternate format resources materials, including all text and short descriptions of media and key graphics, available upon request?		x		
C. LIGHTING AND CONTRAST				
Exhibit finishes and lighting are free of shadows and glare?		x		
Is the contrast between text and background at or near 70%?		x		<i>varies</i>
Are graphics and text shown against a visually uncluttered background?		x		<i>Intro/ map no</i>
D. TYPEFACES AND TEXT				
Are text and graphics well balanced, including text content that is clear, concise, and germane to the exhibit graphics?	x			
Is the text layout, including the size of text blocks and the space between lines and columns, appropriately spaced and visually balanced?	x			
Are exhibit typefaces and font styles easy to read, meeting legibility standards, with italics only used for foreign terms or short quotes?	x			<i>New</i>
Do the main body text heights meet the minimums for viewing distances? Remember that minimum uppercase "X-height" at a distance of 40" is %" or at least 40 to 48 point.		x		<i>Map text and quotation from "Larger Family"</i>

NATIVE PEOPLES—GROUP 1				
ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXHIBITS	Yes	No	N/A	Comment
Are all labels for graphics or object created in legible sizes and styles, placed consistently and, if on horizontal shelves, are at readable heights and angles?			x	

**Table C3.** Learning and Language (Russian Area)

RUSSIAN—GROUP 2				
ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXHIBITS	Yes	No	N/A	Comment
<b>A. SITE PLAN</b>				
Have the site drawings or floor plans been submitted, showing compliant exhibit locations, panel dimensions, mounting heights and angled, viewing distances and turning space?			x	
Are the paths of travel through the exhibit barrier-free, allowing compliant approaches, views and departures?		x		<i>One Exhibit text is 80 inches from view location. Step up to exhibit</i>
Are the hands-on and interactive components within prescribed reach ranges, not requiring tight pinching, twisting or grasping?			x	<i>Some text is too low for ADA</i>
<b>B. DESIGN ELEMENTS</b>				
Have panel designs been submitted on hard copy (minimum of 40% of actual size), or electronically in Photoshop or Illustrator?			x	<i>48 inches from floor railing. Too high? Blocks artifact case</i>
Is the layout of each panel visually logical and easy to understand?				<i>Too much going on in panel spaces. Some text in "Born in a Baidarka" is obscured by exhibit case from a wheel chair height.</i>
Are videos captioned for sound and key visuals?			x	
Are audio components captioned and include adjustable volume?			x	

RUSSIAN—GROUP 2				
ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXHIBITS	Yes	No	N/A	Comment
Are all caption text font styles and sizes legible? (24-point front is the recommended minimum for captions.)				<i>5/8 inch tall main text, 1/4" caption text</i>
Are alternate format resources materials, including all text and short descriptions of media and key graphics, available upon request?		x		<i>dark corner, shadows</i>
C. LIGHTING AND CONTRAST				
Exhibit finishes and lighting are free of shadows and glare?		x		<i>poor lighting effects contrast of text</i>
Is the contrast between text and background at or near 70%?		x		
Are graphics and text shown against a visually uncluttered background?		x		
D. TYPEFACES AND TEXT				
Are text and graphics well balanced, including text content that is clear, concise, and germane to the exhibit graphics?		x		<i>Too much text</i>
Is the text layout, including the size of text blocks and the space between lines and columns, appropriately spaced and visually balanced?		x		<i>Not enough space for text</i>
Are exhibit typefaces and font styles easy to read, meeting legibility standards, with italics only used for foreign terms or short quotes?		x		<i>Different font styles over time</i>
Do the main body text heights meet the minimums for viewing distances? Remember that minimum uppercase "X-height" at a distance of 40" is %" or at least 40 to 48 point.	x			<i>5/8" main text</i>
Are all labels for graphics or object created in legible sizes and styles, placed consistently and, if on horizontal shelves, are at readable heights and angles?		x		<i>Some labels in cases are too small for being so low</i>

**Table C4. Learning and Language (Ranching Area)**

<b>RANCHING- GROUP 3</b>				
<b>ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXHIBITS</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>A. SITE PLAN</b>				
Have the site drawings or floor plans been submitted, showing compliant exhibit locations, panel dimensions, mounting heights and angled, viewing distances and turning space?				<i>no answer</i>
Are the paths of travel through the exhibit barrier-free, allowing compliant approaches, views and departures?		x		<i>measured at 36"</i>
Are the hands-on and interactive components within prescribed reach ranges, not requiring tight pinching, twisting or grasping?			x	
<b>B. DESIGN ELEMENTS</b>				
Have panel designs been submitted on hard copy (minimum of 40% of actual size), or electronically in Photoshop or Illustrator?				<i>no answer</i>
Is the layout of each panel visually logical and easy to understand?		x		
Are videos captioned for sound and key visuals?			x	
Are audio components captioned and include adjustable volume?			x	
Are all caption text font styles and sizes legible? (24-point font is the recommended minimum for captions.)		x		
Are alternate format resources materials, including all text and short descriptions of media and key graphics, available upon request?				<i>no answer</i>
<b>C. LIGHTING AND CONTRAST</b>				
Exhibit finishes and lighting are free of shadows and glare?		x		



RANCHING- GROUP 3				
ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXHIBITS	Yes	No	N/A	Comment
Is the contrast between text and background at or near 70%?		x		<i>unlikely</i>
Are graphics and text shown against a visually uncluttered background?		x		
D. TYPEFACES AND TEXT				
Are text and graphics well balanced, including text content that is clear, concise, and germane to the exhibit graphics?		x		
Is the text layout, including the size of text blocks and the space between lines and columns, appropriately spaced and visually balanced?		x		
Are exhibit typefaces and font styles easy to read, meeting legibility standards, with italics only used for foreign terms or short quotes?		x		
Do the main body text heights meet the minimums for viewing distances? Remember that minimum uppercase "X-height" at a distance of 40" is 9/16" or at least 40 to 48 point.		x		
Are all labels for graphics or object created in legible sizes and styles, placed consistently and, if on horizontal shelves, are at readable heights and angles?		x		



## APPENDIX D: CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS

*Appendix D includes an outline of the California State Curriculum Framework and Standards and the Environmental Education Initiative principles. Only framework and standards that relate directly to the park's significant resources, interpretive periods, and themes are noted. However, all framework and principles should be taken into consideration.<sup>1</sup> Exhibits and programs should align with the most current standards.*

This appendix is a useful reference when brainstorming ways to expand interpretive content for exhibits, tours, programs, special events, and other interpretive services. The State Board of Education is in the process of updating the curriculum framework. The reader should consult the most current and complete framework and curriculum content standards when developing content for interpretive services and exhibits.

### History and Social Science Framework and Standards<sup>2</sup>

Kindergarten—Learning and Working Now and Long Ago

K.3 Students match simple descriptions of work that people do and the names of related jobs at the school, in the local community, and from historical accounts. (Professions of people who lived and worked at Fort Ross from 1812 to present).

K.4 Students compare and contrast the locations of people, places, and environments and describe their characteristics. (People who lived at Fort Ross over time and where they came from, if not indigenous).

Grade One—A Child's Place in Time and Space

1.2 Students compare and contrast the absolute and relative locations of places and people and describe the physical and/or human characteristics of places. (Historical locations of people who lived, worked, and traveled to and from Fort Ross).

1.4 Students compare and contrast everyday life in different times and places around the world and recognize that some aspects of people, places, and things change over time while others stay the same. (People who lived at Fort Ross over time and where they came from, if not indigenous).

1.5 Students describe the human characteristics of familiar places and the varied backgrounds of American citizens and residents in those places. (People who lived at Fort Ross over time and where they came from, if not indigenous).

Grade Two—People Who Make a Difference

2.1 Students differentiate between things that happened long ago and things that happened yesterday. (Compare and contrast events at Fort Ross and events that occur today at Fort Ross SHP).

2.2 Students demonstrate map skills by describing the absolute and relative locations of people, places, and environments. (Map the locations of trade routes, where people lived before coming to Fort Ross, where they went after they left here).

2.3 Students explain governmental institutions and practices in the United States and other countries. (American-Russian relationship in regards to Fort Ross SHP).

2.4 Students understand basic

economic concepts and their roles in the economy and demonstrate basic economic reasoning skills. (*What jobs did Russian American Company employees perform? Did their ethnic background make a difference in what they did? Compare and contrast Ranchers and State Park Employees with the Russian American Company employees. How different were the professions from today's?*).

2.5 Students understand the importance of individual action and character and explain how heroes from long ago and the recent past have made a difference in others' lives. (*Historic figures from the area and Fort Ross*).

### Grade Three—Continuity and Change

3.1 Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context. (Historical locations of people who lived, worked, and traveled to and from Fort Ross).

3.2 Students describe the American Indian nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past. (Kashia and Coast Miwok Tribes).

3.3 Students draw from historical and community resources to organize the sequence of local historical events and describe how each period of settlement left its mark on the land. (Cultural history of Fort Ross and effects on the land (e.g. fur trade, construction, timber industry, farming, ranching)).

### Grade Four—California: A Changing State

4.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places

and regions in California. (Why people settled at Fort Ross (e.g. fresh water, timber resources, fur-bearing animals, protected cove, land to grow food and raise animals and so on)).

4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods. (Kashia, Coast Miwok, Russian-American Company (RAC), Native Alaskans, interaction with Spanish and Mexican Alta California).

4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood. (RAC sale of Fort Ross, Ranching at Fort Ross).

4.4 Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power, tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850s. (Call family ranch to becoming a California State Park).

### Grade Five—United States History and Geography: Making a New Nation

5.1 Students describe the major pre-Columbian settlements, including the cliff dwellers and pueblo people of the desert southwest, the American Indians of the Pacific Northwest, the nomadic nations of the Great Plains, and the woodland peoples east of the Mississippi River. (Native Californians, especially Kashia and Coast Miwok).

5.2 Students trace the routes of early explorers and describe the early explorations of the Americas. (Early explorers to the Sonoma County Coast).

5.3 Students describe the cooperation and conflict that existed among the American Indians and between the Indian nations and the new settlers. (Interaction between Kashia and RAC, Spanish, Mexican and American settlers).

5.4 Students understand the political, religious, social, and economic institutions that evolved in the colonial era. (Relationship between RAC, American Colonies, Spanish and Mexican Alta California).

5.8 Students trace the colonization, immigration, and settlement patterns of the American people from 1789 to the mid-1800s, with emphasis on the role of economic incentives, effects of the physical and political geography, and transportation systems. (Americans in Alta California, Boston merchants and the RAC).

#### Grade Six—World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations

6.1 Students describe what is known through archaeological studies of the early physical and cultural development of humankind from the Paleolithic era to the agricultural revolution. (Kashia, Coast Miwok, and those who came before them).

#### Grade Eight—United States History and Geography: Growth and Conflict

8.5 Students analyze U.S. foreign policy in the early Republic. (US Relationship to Russians, Spanish and Mexican Alta California).

8.8 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced. (RAC, Sale of Fort Ross, Early Ranching).

8.12 Students analyze the

transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution. (Ranching, timber harvesting, farming at Fort Ross).

## Science Content Standards

The California State Board of Education adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for public schools in September 2013 for grades K-12. Fort Ross programs and exhibits should align with the NGSS. The science content standards shown here were developed prior to 2013, but may be used for reference. For more information about NGSS, visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/sc/ngssintrod.asp>.

### Kindergarten

#### *Standard Set 1: Physical science*

1. Properties of materials can be observed, measured, and predicted.

- a. Students know objects can be described in terms of the materials they are made of (e.g., clay, cloth, paper) and their physical properties (e.g., color, size, shape, weight, texture, flexibility, attraction to magnets, floating, sinking). (Tactile exhibits, hands-on activities).

#### *Standard Set 2: Life sciences*

2. Different types of plants and animals inhabit the earth.

- a. Students know how to observe and describe similarities and differences in the appearance and behavior of plants and animals (e.g., seed-bearing plants, birds, fish, and insects) (Plants and animals at Fort Ross SHP).

#### *Standard Set 3: Earth Sciences*

3. Earth is composed of land, air, and water.

- a. Students know characteristics of mountains, rivers, oceans, valleys, deserts, and local landforms. (Geography of Fort Ross SHP.)
- b. Students know changes in weather occur from day to day and across seasons, affecting Earth and its inhabitants. (Fort Ross SHP weather, historical accounts of weather.)
- c. Students know how to identify resources from Earth that are used in everyday life, and understand that many resources can be conserved. (Resources at Fort Ross SHP.)

## Grade One

### *Standard Set 2: Life Sciences*

2. Plants and animals meet their needs in different ways.

- a. Students know different plants and animals inhabit different kinds of environments and have external features that help them thrive in different kinds of places. (Plants and animals at Fort Ross SHP.)

### *Standard Set 3: Earth Sciences*

3. Weather can be observed, measured, and described.

- a. Students know how to use simple tools (e.g., thermometer, wind vane) to measure weather conditions and record changes from day to day and across the seasons. (Use tools to measure weather at Fort Ross SHP, weather station).

## Grade Two

### *Standard Set 3: Earth Sciences*

3. Earth is made of materials that have distinct properties and provide resources for human activities.

- a. Students know rock, water, plants, and soil provide many resources, including food, fuel, and building materials, that humans use. (Uses of resources at Fort Ross over time).

## Grade Three

### *Standard Set 3: Earth Sciences*

3. Adaptations in physical structure or behavior may improve an organism's chance for survival.

- b. Students know examples of diverse life forms in different environments, such as oceans, deserts, tundra, forests, grasslands, and wetlands. (Environments at Fort Ross SHP.)

## Grade Four

### *Standard Set 2: Life sciences*

3. Living organisms depend on one another and on their environment for survival.

- a. Students know that in any environment, some kinds of plants and animals survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all. (Plants and Animals at Fort Ross SHP and changes over time.)

### *Standard Set 5: Earth Sciences (Waves, Wind, Water, and Ice)*

5. Waves, wind, water, and ice shape and reshape Earth's land surface.

- a. Students know some changes in the earth are due to slow processes, such as erosion, and some changes are due to rapid processes, such as landslides, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes. (Earthquakes, coastal erosion at Fort Ross SHP.)
- b. Students know moving water erodes landforms, reshaping the land

by taking it away from some places and depositing it as pebbles, sand, silt, and mud in other places (weathering, transport, and deposition). (Wave action, transfer of sediment from local streams to the ocean).

## Grade Five

### *Standard Set 3: Earth Sciences (Earth's Water)*

3. Water on Earth moves between the oceans and land through the processes of evaporation and condensation.

- a. Students know most of Earth's water is present as salt water in the oceans, which cover most of Earth's surface. (Weather, ocean-caused weather at Fort Ross SHP.)
- b. Students know water vapor in the air moves from one place to another and can form fog or clouds, which are tiny droplets of water or ice, and can fall to Earth as rain, hail, sleet, or snow. (Fog, rain, and other natural processes in the area).
- e. Students know the origin of the water used by their local communities. (Water resources at Fort Ross).

### *Standard Set 4: Earth Sciences (Weather)*

4. Energy from the Sun heats Earth unevenly, causing air movements that result in changing weather patterns.

- b. Students know the influence that the ocean has on the weather and the role that the water cycle plays in weather patterns. (Ocean-caused weather at Fort Ross SHP.)

## Grade Six

### *Standard Set 1: Plate Tectonics and Earth's Structure*

1. Plate tectonics accounts for important features of Earth's surface and major geologic events.

- a. Students know evidence of plate tectonics is derived from the fit of the continents; the location of earthquakes, volcanoes, and mid-ocean ridges; and the distribution of fossils, rock types, and ancient climatic zones. (San Andreas Fault and Fort Ross SHP.)
- b. Students know that earthquakes are sudden motions along breaks in the crust called faults and that volcano and fissures are locations where magma reaches the surface. (San Andreas Fault and Fort Ross SHP.)
- c. Students know major geologic events, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and mountain building, result from plate motions. (San Andreas Fault and Fort Ross SHP.)
- d. Students know how to explain major features of California geology (including mountains, faults, volcanoes) in terms of plate tectonics. (San Andreas Fault and Fort Ross SHP.)
- e. Students know how to determine the epicenter of an earthquake and know that the effects of an earthquake on any region vary, depending on the size of the earthquake, the distance of the region from the epicenter, the local geology, and the construction in the region. (San Andreas Fault and Fort Ross SHP.)

### *Standard Set 2: Shaping Earth's Surface*

2. Topography is reshaped by the weathering of rock and soil and by the transportation and deposition of sediment. As a basis for understanding this concept:

- a. Students know water running downhill is the dominant process in shaping the landscape, including

California's landscape. (Effects of rivers and streams near Fort Ross SHP.)

b. Students know rivers and streams are dynamic systems that erode, transport sediment, change course, and flood their banks in natural and recurring patterns. (Effects of rivers and streams near Fort Ross SHP.)

c. Students know beaches are dynamic systems in which the sand is supplied by rivers and moved along the coast by the action of waves. (Effects of rivers and streams near the coast).

d. Students know earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, and floods change human and wildlife habitats. (Effects of earthquakes at Fort Ross).

#### *Standard Set 6: Resources*

6. Sources of energy and materials differ in amounts, distribution, usefulness, and the time required for their formation.

a. Students know different natural energy and material resources, including air, soil, rocks, minerals, petroleum, fresh water, wildlife, and forests, and know how to classify them as renewable or nonrenewable. (Resources at Fort Ross SHP.)

b. Students know the natural origin of the materials used to make common objects. (Historic Kashia and RAC tools and technology and uses of resources to make them, ranching and farming at Fort Ross).

#### Grades Nine through Twelve

#### *Standard Set 6: Ecology*

6. Stability in an ecosystem is a balance between competing effects. As a basis for understanding this concept:

a. Students know biodiversity is the sum total of different kinds of organisms and is affected by alterations of habitats. (Habitats and biodiversity at Fort Ross SHP.)

b. Students know how to analyze changes in an ecosystem resulting from changes in climate, human activity, introduction of nonnative species, or changes in population size. (Changes to the ecosystems, plants and animals, and the effects of human activity).

c. Students know how fluctuations in population size in an ecosystem are determined by the relative rates of birth, immigration, emigration, and death. (As this relates to plants, animals, and people at Fort Ross).

#### *Standard Set 3: Dynamic Earth Processes*

3. Plate tectonics operating over geologic time have changed the patterns of land, sea, and mountains on Earth's surface.

d. Students know why and how earthquakes occur and the scales used to measure their intensity and magnitude. (San Andreas Fault at Fort Ross SHP.)

#### *Standard Set 9: California Geology*

9. The geology of California underlies the state's wealth of natural resources as well as its natural hazards.

a. Students know the resources of major economic importance in California and their relation to California's geology. (Historic uses of natural resources at Fort Ross SHP.)

b. Students know the principal natural hazards in different California regions and the geologic basis of those hazards. (Earthquakes, forest fires, landslides, tsunamis at Fort Ross SHP.)

c. Students know the importance



of water to society, the origins of California's fresh water, and the relationship between supply and need. (Importance of fresh water at Fort Ross, conservation programs today).

our economies and cultures.

- Concept c. Students need to know that the quality, quantity, and reliability of the goods and ecosystem services provided by natural systems are directly affected by the health of those systems.

## Education and the Environmental Initiative

In 2009, the state of California unveiled its Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI). The curriculum was created to bring education about the environment into the primary and secondary classrooms serving over 6 million students throughout California. The EEI curriculum examines the interactions and interdependence of human societies and natural systems using a unique set of California Environmental Principles.<sup>3</sup> When developing content for interpretive programs and services, the reader should consult the most current and complete version of this initiative. Only the most relevant EEI principles were included here.

### Principle I: People Depend on Natural Systems

The continuation and health of human lives and of human communities and societies depend on the health of the natural systems that provide essential goods and ecosystem services.

As a basis for understanding this principle:

- Concept a. Students need to know that the goods produced by natural systems are essential to human life and to the functioning of our economies and cultures.
- Concept b. Students need to know that the ecosystem services provided by natural systems are essential to human life and to the functioning of

### Principle II: People Influence Natural Systems

The long-term functioning and health of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems are influenced by their relationships with human societies.

As a basis for understanding this principle:

- Concept a. Students need to know that direct and indirect changes to natural systems due to the growth of human populations and their consumption rates influence the geographic extent, composition, biological diversity, and viability of natural systems.
- Concept b. Students need to know that methods used to extract, harvest, transport, and consume natural resources influence the geographic extent, composition, biological diversity, and viability of natural systems.
- Concept c. Students need to know that the expansion and operation of human communities influences the geographic extent, composition, biological diversity, and viability of natural systems.
- Concept d. Students need to know that the legal, economic, and political systems that govern the use and management of natural systems directly influence the geographic extent, composition, biological diversity, and viability of natural

systems.

### Principle III: Natural Systems Change in Ways that People Benefit from and can Influence

Natural systems proceed through cycles that humans depend upon, benefit from, and can alter.

As a basis for understanding this principle:

- Concept a. Students need to know that natural systems proceed through cycles and processes that are required for their functioning.
- Concept b. Students need to know that human practices depend upon and benefit from the cycles and processes that operate within natural systems.
- Concept c. Students need to know that human practices can alter the cycles and processes that operate within natural systems.

### Principle IV: There is no Permanent or Impermeable Boundaries that Prevent Matter from Flowing between Systems

The exchange of matter between natural systems and human societies affects the long-term functioning of both.

As a basis for understanding this principle:

- Concept a. Students need to know that the effects of human activities on natural systems are directly related to the quantities of resources consumed and to the quantity and characteristics of the resulting byproducts.
- Concept b. Students need to know that the byproducts of human activity are not readily prevented from entering natural systems

and may be beneficial, neutral, or detrimental in their effect.

- Concept c. Students need to know that the capacity of natural systems to adjust to human-caused alterations depends on the nature of the system as well as the scope, scale, and duration of the activity and the nature of its byproducts.

### Principle V: Decisions Affecting Resources and Natural Systems are Complex and Involve Many Factors

Decisions affecting resources and natural systems are based on a wide range of considerations and decision-making processes

As a basis for understanding this principle:

- Concept a. Students need to know the spectrum of what is considered in making decisions about resources and natural systems and how those factors influence decisions.
- Concept b. Students need to know the process of making decisions about resources and natural systems, and how the assessment of social, economic, political, and environmental factors has changed over time.

## Endnotes

1. Suggested topics for Fort Ross SHP are italicized and in parentheses after each standard. For the sake of brevity, the term “Fort Ross” is used to refer to the location and may refer to any period.
2. California State Board of Education, *All Curriculum Frameworks* (California Department of Education: June 10, 2013). <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/histsocsciframe.pdf>. Accessed 6/24/13.



## APPENDIX E: STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

Two stakeholder workshops were held on January 27 and 28, 2013. Approximately 20 people combined attended the workshops for the Fort Ross SHP visitor center Interpretive Project Plan (IPP).

Appendix E describes the data that was generated from the workshops and how the comments fell into two categories: “People” and “Natural Resources”. This information is intended for use in developing future exhibits and interpretive programs.

Stakeholders were invited to attend one of two workshops in January 2013. One workshop was held on Sunday, January 27, at the Fort Ross State Historic Park Visitor Center from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Another workshop was held on Monday, January 28, at the Diablo Vista and Marin District Office in Petaluma, CA, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Participants included members of the community, California State Park staff, and Fort Ross Conservancy staff and members. Group discussions and activities gave people the opportunity to talk with one another and record their thoughts and responses to several topics.

Participants (Table E1) provided input to update existing interpretive topics, exhibits, programs, special events, and the visitor center’s role and function within the park. Information gathered from these meetings helped the team develop topics (Chapter 6), recommendations for exhibits and programs (Chapter 7), and the proposed visitor experience (Chapter 9). Many workshop participants also provided comments on the final draft of this plan. In the future, some may be interpretive planning team members when developing visitor center exhibits and programs.

At each workshop, participants were divided into smaller groups to discuss identified interpretive periods (Table E2). Groups were rotated around to comment on each period. Each group wrote down topics, questions, and stories of interest for each period. Over 330 comments were generated and ranked by order of importance.

**Table E1.** Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Bowen Lee	Interpretive team volunteer	Sea Otter Research and Conservation, Monterey Bay Aquarium
Amy Lemmer	Tribal representative and Native American volunteer	Choctaw Nation
Zoya Gradov	Representative	Russian Orthodox Community
Billyrene Pinola	Tribal representative and Native American volunteer	Kashia Tribal Representative
<b>Fort Ross Conservancy</b>		
Sarah Sweedler	President and CEO	Fort Ross Conservancy Staff and Board of Directors
Sarjan Holt	Operations manager	Fort Ross Conservancy Staff
Hank Birnbaum	Program manager	Fort Ross Conservancy Staff
Susanna Barlow	Interpreter, Fort Ross SHP and Salt Point SP	Fort Ross Conservancy Staff
Glenn Farris	Secretary	Fort Ross Conservancy Board of Directors
Irina Dyatlovskaya	Volunteer, Russian language translator	Fort Ross Conservancy Advisory Committee
Lynn Rudy	Volunteer, Call family representative	Fort Ross Conservancy Advisory Committee
Susan Rudy	Volunteer, Call family representative	Fort Ross Conservancy Advisory Committee
<b>California State Parks</b>		
Liz Burko	State Park Superintendent IV	Russian River District
Jenny Donovan	State Park Superintendent I, Public Safety	Russian River District
Denise Alexander	Park Maintenance Supervisor	Russian River District
Andrea Mapes	Park and Recreation Specialist	Russian River District
Michael Wisehart	State Park Interpreter II	Russian River District
Edward Parkman	Senior State Archaeologist	Diablo Vista and Russian River Districts
Todd Farcau	State Park Peace Officer	Fort Ross SHP, Russian River District
Brian Osborn	Park Maintenance Worker I	Fort Ross SHP, Russian River District
Robin Wellman	State Park Interpreter I	Fort Ross SHP, Russian River District

Name	Title	Organization
Carolyn Schimandle	State Park Interpreter III	Interpretation and Education Division
Kathy Schulz	Regional Interpreter Specialist	Acquisition and Development Division
Katie Metraux	Regional Interpreter Specialist	Acquisition and Development Division

**Table E2.** Interpretive Periods and People

Category	Pre-1812	1812-1841	1842-1906	1907-Present
Settlement	<i>Metini</i> village			
Kashia	Colony Ross			
Russian-American Company (RAC)	Ranching			
Benitz and Call	California State Park			
People	Kashia, Southern Pomo, Coast Miwok	Kashia, Russians, RAC employees, Native Alaskans, visitors	Kashia, Benitz and Call family, Community members, Ranch workers, visitors and tourists	State employees, visitors, partners, researchers, Kashia, Russian, Call family and descendants

### Category 1: People

Participants were most interested in learning about the cultures and individuals who lived and worked at Fort Ross over time. They wanted to learn about topics, events, historic figures, and different cultures from an individual's perspective using first person accounts, historic images, with contemporary viewpoints. Participants asked questions like "what was daily life at Fort Ross like; what was it like to be a Kashia worker, a Russian worker, or the wife of a Commandant?"

Participants also were interested in how people and places changed over time. For example, a popular topic from the workshop was how the landscape and resources changed over time. This

includes how people used the land and its resources and long-term impact to these uses. In addition, participants wanted to learn how people’s relationships and perceptions of each other changed, especially interactions between social classes and cultures. Finally, they wanted to know how people’s worldviews and ways of doing things changed. For instance, common questions were “how did people use the Russian buildings after the RAC left? When and why did people decide to preserve them?”

Table E3 lists the topics, questions, and stories of interest generated from the workshop that relates to people. The data is organized by cultural group and in chronological order, when possible.

**Bold-faced** topics received the most interest (ten or more votes).

**Table E3.** People

	<b>TOPICS, QUESTIONS, AND STORIES</b>
<b>OVERALL</b> (applies to all cultural groups)	<b>How did people live? Leisure and lifestyle activities.</b>
	<b>Intermarriage, raising families, relationships, what was it like to be Creole (of mixed ancestry)?</b>
	women’s stories
	ceremonial traditions, including birth and death
	neighborhoods-Sloboda, Native Alaskan village, Kashia village
	health/disease/small pox outbreak of 1837
	Who went back to Alaska and Russia and who stayed in California?
	We are still here (Kashia, Russian, and ranchers)
	contemporary cultures and traditions
	What was the workers' perspective?



KASHIA	New information about Bering Land bridge theories
	Kashia traditional structures
	Historic population size, trade routes, tribal territory
	<i>Metini</i> village—what did it look like?
	Politics and tribal leadership
	Seasonal uses of the land
	Economics—wealth and basketry
	Crafts and arts—traditions continue over time, especially beautiful basketry.
	Uses and meanings behind cultural objects
	Indigenous trade prior to European contact
	Relationship with Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok
	What did the landscape look like pre-Russian? Was there diversity and/or abundance of resources?
	What were their lives like before the Russians arrived?
	Kashia origin stories—native and Western perspectives
	Family and interpersonal relationships between Kashia and Europeans
	What was the native reaction to Russians—both Coast Miwok/Kashia history vs. mythology of each culture?
	Kashia-Russian relationships—past and present
	Kashia culture and experiences during RAC era, Ranching era, and today
	Kashia oral traditions about Russians at Fort Ross
	Kashia language—usage and understanding, language school, what does the language sound like?
Kashia resistance to Russian and American settlements	
Cultural adaptation amidst great change	
NATIVE ALASKANS	Unangan, Kenai, Kodiak, Tlingit, Tanaina tribes
	Native Alaskan experience at Fort Ross
	Alaskan hunters—traditions, methods of hunting, tools and equipment
	Baidarkas—how used and constructed
	Sea otter hunting
	Farallon Island station
	Russian-Alaskan Native relationship
	Priests and Native Alaskan relationship to religion

<b>RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY</b>	<b>POLITICS AND EVENTS</b>
	Creation of the Russian American Company
	Russian expansion across Siberia and the Bering Expedition
	Long journey from Siberia to California
	Transportation by sea and land
	Etiquette for conducting trade(1812-1841)
	World trade routes
	Fur trade with China
	Expansion into America
	The importance of fur in Russian life
	Southern Sea Otter – hunting and overhunting
	Why here? Defensible space around the Fort, access to natural resources, land for ranching and farming, access to water
	Fort construction and neighborhoods
	Industry and trade at Fort Ross: shipbuilding, brickworks, tannery, metal works, soap works, and coopering
	Bodega Bay harbor and warehouse
	Company agriculture (wheat, rye, barley), orchards (apple, pear, peach), and family gardens
	Russian inventions
	Food production- farming practices, windmills, ranching
	Farallon Islands station
	Relationship and trade between Spanish and Mexican California and the Missions
	Building of Sonoma and San Rafael missions
	RAC windmills- location and reasons windmills were not successful
	Shipbuilding
	Getting supplies from the Hudson Bay Company to run the colonies
Sale to John Sutter (why did he want it?)	
The abandonment of Alaskan colonies in 1867	

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY	<b>OFFICIALS, EMPLOYEES, AND IMPORTANT VISITORS</b>
	<b>People- Kestzomitinou, Tikhanov, Voznesenski, Commandants Resanov, Rotchev and their wives.</b>
	Women’s stories: E. Kuskova, E. Gagarina, and Konchita
	Naturalists, scientists, artists, and visiting sea captains
	<b>Russian visitors to California and their journals about California (Khlebnikov and others)</b>
	What did the Russians learned from the Kashia?
	Russian cultural arts- folk music, dancing, artwork, traditions
	Russian society at Fort Ross
	Daily life of RAC officials and <i>promyshlenniki</i> (employees)
	Russian love story
	Story of defectors from FAC and assimilation into Alta California (Joseph Balcoff).
	Rotchev and the California Gold Rush
	What happened to the Russian Fort employees after it was sold to Sutter?
	Orthodox Russians consider Fort Ross as holy land
	Russian Cemetery and Chapel use over time. Chapel function during Russian era.
	Relationship of Russian and Kashia today with each other and the park.
	<b>Who are the descendants of the Russian and local peoples? Are they still there? Where did they go after Fort Ross was sold to John Sutter?</b>
	Role of Russian community today
	Fort Ross and New Russian Relations
	Where is the Old Russian road?
RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY	<b>RANCHERS</b>
	Ranch families, their lives and stories- William O. Benitz, George and Laura Call, Mrs. Fairfax, James Dixon (Irish).
	How does this ranch compare to other California ranches?
	Kashia laborers
	What changed physically (after Sutter purchased Ross)
	Adaptive uses of the Russian buildings, orchard, and infrastructure.
	Ranchers at Fort Ross during the Gold Rush and American Civil War.
	Boom years

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY

Industry and commerce—farming, orchard, cattle ranching, dairying, lumber, shipping.
1876 roads
Ranch Era deterioration of Russian buildings
Hotel and tourism
Dog hole ports
Shipwrecks and salvage- <i>S.S. Pomona</i> , barns, other structures
Monterey Rock and <i>S.S. Pomona</i>
From private to public ownership
Story of road and trails linking Fort Ross and the rest of California. Link between Chinese workers and Black Bart.
Highway 1 runs through Fort Ross
Rural school and community life
1906 earthquake—what happened to the buildings? How were they documented?
Park history—How did Fort Ross become a California State Park? Who were the people and organizations that made it happen?
What part did history buffs play in getting the Fort as a park?
Historic preservation and reconstruction efforts. The rebuilding of compound buildings through the park era- how they have changed.
Decades of restoration (is there funding for all?)
Chapel restoration in 1915 and 1970 and others. Why did the Chapel burn?
Road through Fort Ross (Highway 1) and closure. Why was the road moved?
Info about fur warehouse (Magazin), Kuskov house, Officials' barracks, Rotchev house, garden fences.
Conservation and restoration programs- elimination of non-native species (feral pigs, cypress and eucalyptus trees, non-native grasses like pampas grass.
Partnerships—cooperating associations, Russian partnerships, significant donors (FRIA, FRC, Renova, VIP contributions).
Park stewardship and public support
Role of the Russian Orthodox bishops/priests at Fort Ross SHP.
Ties with Russian historical collections, scholars, and international governments.
Programs and events—ELP, living history programs, Bicentennial, trip to Russia 2012, picnics, weddings, Call family reunions.
Picnics, weddings, reunions

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY	Fort Ross Archaeology projects 1987-2008 (UC Berkeley, Sonoma State University, and others.) Cemetery studies, excavation of Russian, Native Alaskan, and Native American neighborhoods.
	Threats to archaeology (sites)
	Oral tradition- is this still the way, or is it being captured on paper?
	Written history on Fort Ross (e.g. Russian journals, letters, and reports).
	abalone season
	Other recreational uses: birding, fishing, birding, whale watching, photography, kayak, hiking.
	What is the future of Fort Ross?

Category 2: Natural Resources

Workshop participants wanted to learn more about Fort Ross’s natural resources, such as natural and geologic processes, marine and terrestrial plants and animals, and changes to them over time (table E4). Sea otters, abalone, and fur seals were mentioned quite often and many people suggested using the sea otter’s history at Fort Ross as a lens in which to tell larger stories. Other suggestions included using hands-on activities that reinforced exhibits on this topic.

As noted in Category 1, participants were interested in learning about how people’s activities have affected Fort Ross’s plants and animals. Participants posed questions such as, “What changes did the Kashia, RAC, Ranchers, and CSP make to the land and resources? How have people’s attitudes towards natural resources differed between cultures and over time? What are we doing now to protect or restore these resources?”

**Table E4.** Natural Resources

TOPICS, QUESTIONS, AND STORIES		
	<b>Terrestrial and marine ecosystems and habitats</b>	
	<b>Terrestrial and marine flora and fauna</b>	
	Watershed	
	Topography	
	Natural and geologic processes (weather, climate, ocean influences)	
	Geology and the San Andreas Fault (Fort Ross SHP has a historic fence that shows effect of 1906 earthquake).	
	<b>Fur seal, abalone, sea urchin, salmon, condors, and grizzly bears; their natural habitat and effects from human activities.</b>	
	<b>Sea otter natural history, adaptations to marine environment, importance to ecosystem, sentinel species for near shore environment, still threatened species and why and how people can help them make a comeback.</b>	
	Health of land and the ocean	
	<b>Changes to the terrestrial and marine environment, landscape, plants and animals, ecosystems, and habitat.</b>	
	<b>How are abalone, sea urchins, and sea otter connected? How do changes to one affect the other?</b>	
	<b>Human induced change to Natural Resources</b>	<b>How people have used the land, landscape, plants and animals, and buildings.</b>
		<b>Changes in people's attitudes to the land and resources.</b>
<b>Exploitation and extirpation -- how natural resources have been exploited (fur trade, lumber industry, agriculture, fishing, sport diving).</b>		
Food sources- native and introduced plants and animals grown and raised for food.		
Climate change and affects to Fort Ross		
<b>Resource Management</b>	Conservation programs–Elimination of non-native species (cypress, eucalyptus, and pampas grass) and native restoration programs.	
	Sensitive and protected species–butterfly	
	Expansion of sanctuary FMLPA's (Federal Marine Life Protection Act)	

## APPENDIX F: VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITS AND THEMES, 1985-PRESENT

*Appendix F highlights the interpretive themes and layout of the first visitor center exhibits, installed in the mid-1980s and documents the changes made to exhibits over time. In 2002-2003, the cooperating association, park, and district staff developed new interpretive content for the exhibit hall and audio-visual room. Interpretive panels were placed over several older interpretive panels and several exhibit cases were added.*

### 1985 Interpretive Themes for Exhibit Hall

Unifying Theme: Fort Ross Responds to Changing Human Needs

Subtheme I: The Kashia Occupation of *Metini*

A. Defining the Kashia Pomo

1. Tribal territory
2. Population size and movements
3. *Metini* village

B. Meaning of the Ross site for the Kashia

1. Using shelter resources
2. Using food resources
  - a. ocean and cove plants and animals
  - b. plant and animal life on land
3. Using clothing resources

C. Selected elements of Kashia culture

1. Politics—tribal leadership
2. Society--family relationships
3. Economics--wealth and basketry
4. The oral tradition

Subtheme II: The Russian Occupation of Ross

A. Why They Came

1. Russian account of the founding, 1812
  - a. Those who arrived
  - b. Initial Fort construction
2. Fur
  - a. Russian expansion across Siberia
  - b. The *promyshlenniki*
  - c. The importance of fur in Russian life
  - d. Fur trade with China
3. Expansion into America
  - a. Bering expedition
  - b. Exploitation by private companies
  - c. Creation of the Russian-American Company
  - d. early hunting of California otter
4. Food

- a. The problems of Alaskan supply
- b. Rezanov at San Francisco, 1806
5. Locating a base in California
  - a. Seeking shelter and security
  - b. A harboring at Bodega Bay
  - c. The natural advantages of Ross

B. What They Did

1. Fur hunting
  - a. The Aleuts
  - b. Sea otter hunting
  - c. The Farallon Islands station
  - d. Extermination of the otter
2. Industry
  - a. Shipbuilding
  - b. Other manufacturing
3. Food production
  - a. Stock raising
  - b. Gardens and orchard
  - c. Wheat growing and agricultural expansion

- d. Flour and bread
- e. The Kashia agricultural labor force
- 4. Trade with the *Californios*
- 5. Russian Society at Fort Ross
  - a. The Commandant's Kuskov
  - b. The *promyshlenniki*
  - c. Selected elements of the Russian Period lifestyle
    - i. the population profile
    - ii. Kashia-Russian relationship
    - iii. Leisure
    - iv. Cemetery
- C. Why They Left
  - 1. External Forces
    - a. rivalry with the Hispanics
    - b. rivalry with the British Empire
    - c. pressure from the Americans
  - 2. Internal Forces
    - a. balance sheet imperialism
    - b. lack of government commitment
    - c. social factors
  - 3. Selling Out
    - a. supplies from the Hudson Bay Company
    - b. sale to John Sutter
    - c. spare parts for New Helvetia
    - d. the abandonment of Alaska, 1867

### Subtheme III: The Ranch Era

- A. Resources for American use
  - 1. Owners of Ross in the post-Russian era
  - 2. Farming
  - 3. Lumber and wood products
  - 4. Cattle and dairying
  - 5. Orchard
  - 6. The Kashia in the ranch era
  - 7. Commerce and shipping
  - 8. Prosperity out of disappointment:

- a. Comparing Russian and American experiences at Ross
- B. The Fort in the post-Russian era
  - 1. Owners in residence
    - a. William O. Benitz
    - b. George W. Call
  - 2. Salvage
  - 3. Adaptive uses
  - 4. The road through Ross

## Interpretive Themes for the Multi-purpose Room

Unifying Theme: Fort Ross Responds to Changing Human Needs

### Subtheme IV. The Park Era

- A. The Restoration of Fort Ross
  - 1. Ranch Era deterioration
  - 2. from private to public ownership
  - 3. Decades of restoration
    - a. Blockhouses
    - b. Walls
    - c. Chapel
    - d. Rotchev House
    - e. Officials' barracks
    - f. Kuskov House
    - g. Road closing
- B. Serving the Needs of the Present
  - 1. Kashia celebrations
  - 2. Chapel use
  - 3. Living history
  - 4. Other special events: picnics
  - 5. Public associations and Fort Ross SHP



## 2004 Exhibits

California State Park and Fort Ross Conservancy staff installed new interpretive panels and exhibit cases in the main exhibit hall and multi-purpose room in 2004 (figures F1 and F2).

Additional exhibits in the main hall revealed new information from archaeological investigations of the Russian Orthodox Cemetery and the Native Alaskan Village sites. Interpretive panels expanded upon the Russian-American Company, colonial trade, and lives of people who lived and worked at Colony Ross, windmill technology, and transition to ranchlands.

Changing exhibits in the multi-purpose room describe Native Alaskans, especially hunting technology and cultural traditions. Museum objects include models that describe hunting gear, clothing, watercraft, and basketry. Other changing exhibits have highlighted Russian culture and traditions.



**Figure F1.** Multi-purpose room exhibit, CSP 090-P76906



**Figure F2.** Main exhibit hall, CSP 090-24419