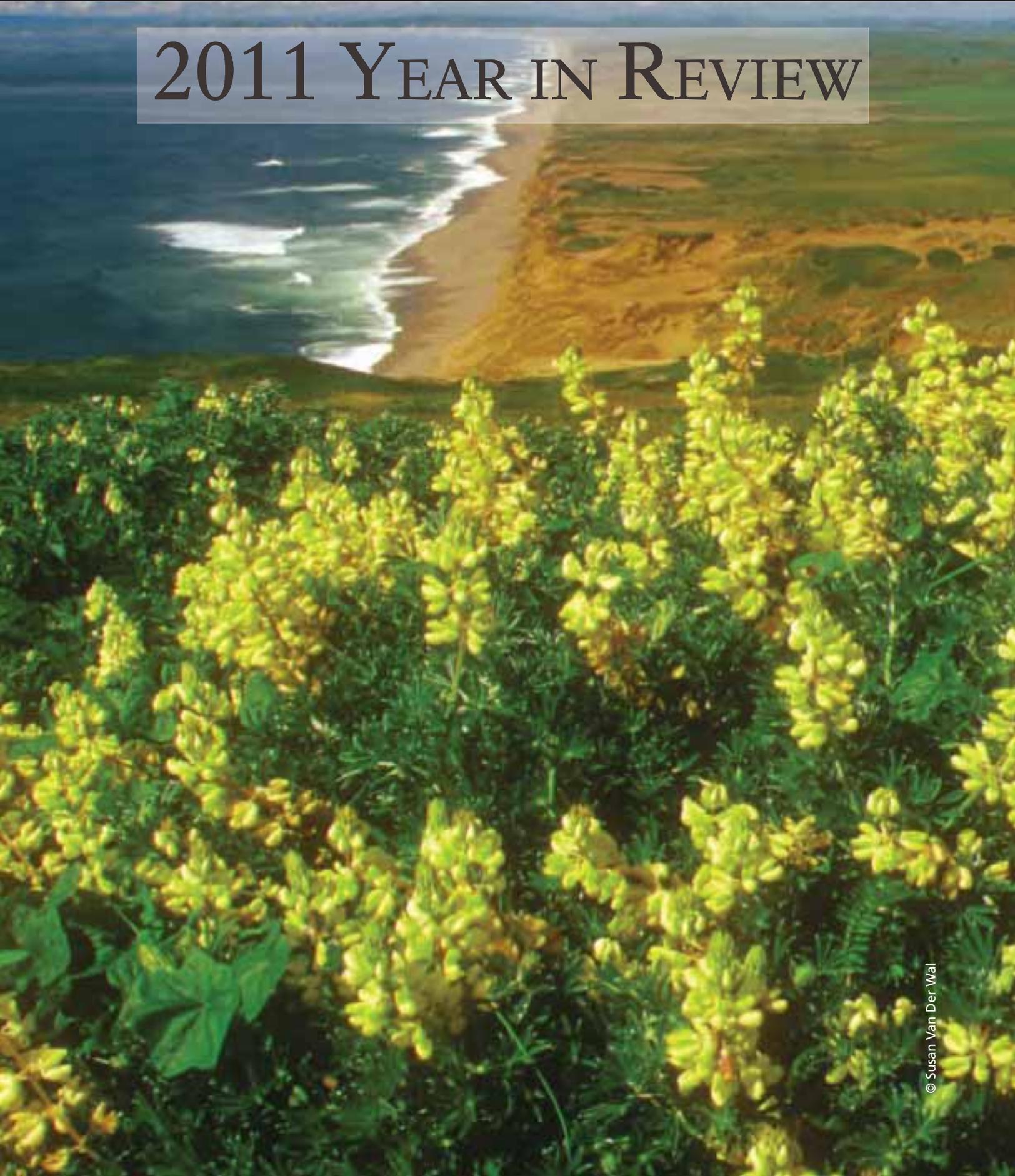




2011 YEAR IN REVIEW





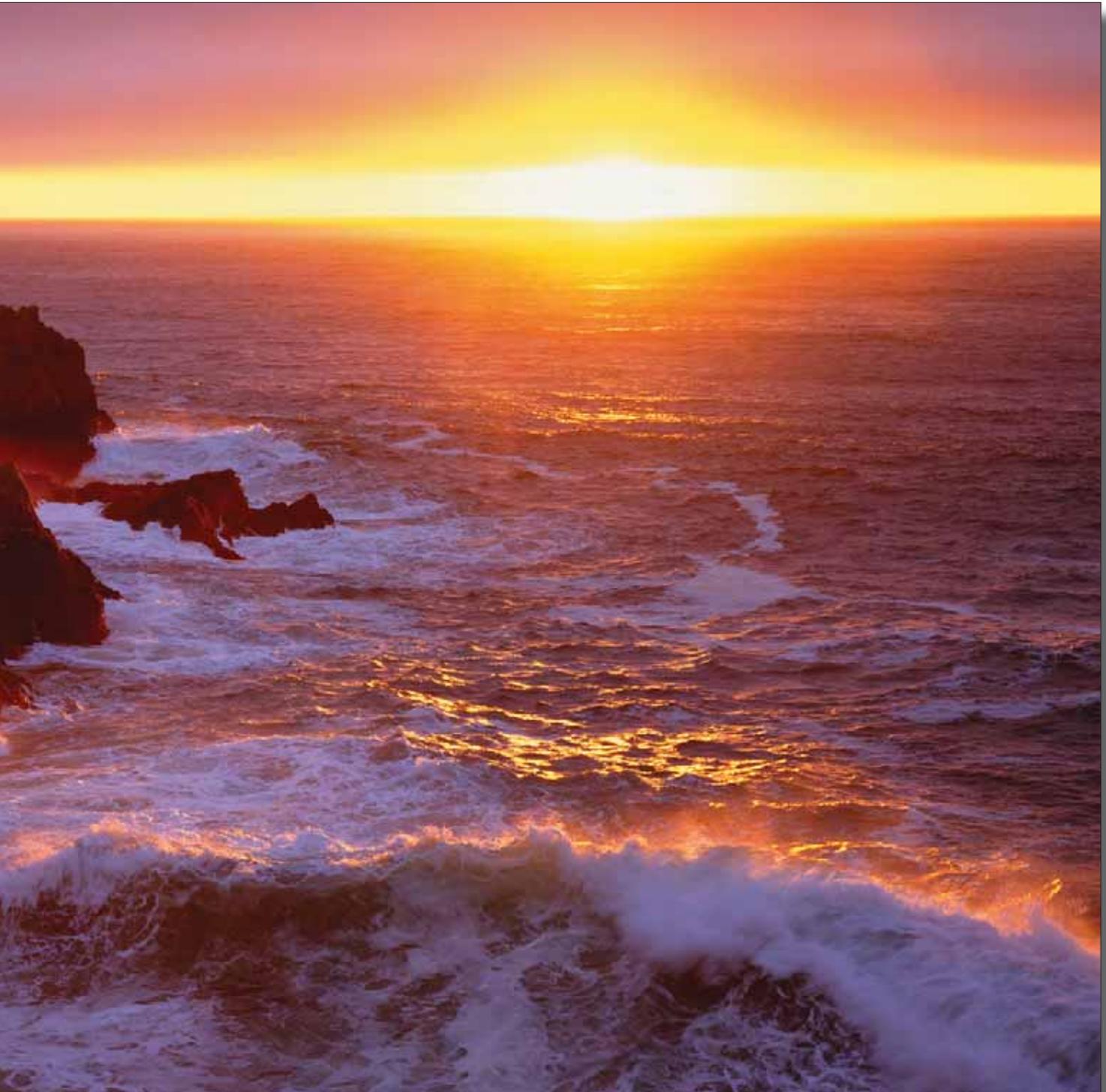
After signing the Point Reyes legislation, President Kennedy hands the pen to Congressman Clem Miller

“National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst.”

Wallace Stegner, 1983



A Natural Sanctuary, A Human Haven



A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends of Point Reyes,

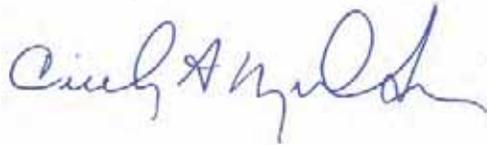
This past year marked another successful year preserving the coastal wilderness and irreplaceable resources at Point Reyes National Seashore while providing an exceptional experience to visitors by park staff, partners and volunteers.

As we begin to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Point Reyes, together we will chart the course for the next half century of preservation and protection of this piece of coastal California that many people have worked very hard to take care of.

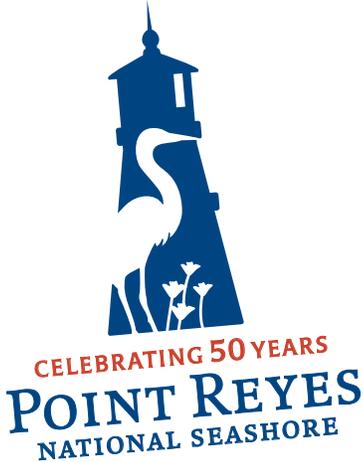
As you read on, many of the past year's highlights are illustrated in this document. The park served over 2.2 million visitors this year and continues to be one of the top thirty most visited parks in the nation. The park staff are some of the most dedicated public servants in the national park system.

We hope you will continue to join us in working to save this coastal sanctuary as a legacy for future generations.

Sincerely,



Cicely A. Muldoon
Superintendent



© Susan Van Der Wal



© Alexandra Kruse



© Bruce Farnsworth



One of America's greatest coastlines, Point Reyes National Seashore comprises over 71,000 acres, including 32,000 acres of Congressionally-designated wilderness area. Estuaries, windswept beaches, coastal grasslands, salt marshes, and coniferous forests create a haven of 80 miles of unspoiled and undeveloped coastline. Located just an hour's drive from an urban area populated by eight million people, the park receives over two million visitors annually. Abundant recreational opportunities include 147 miles of hiking trails, backcountry campgrounds, and many beautiful beaches.

Geologically, Point Reyes National Seashore is a land in motion. The great San Andreas Fault separates the Point Reyes Peninsula from the rest of the North American continent. Granite bedrock found here matches the bedrock in the Southern Sierra Nevada range.

This indicates the peninsula has moved over 300 miles northwest over a period of 30 million years.

As wildland habitat is lost elsewhere in California, the relevance of the Point Reyes Peninsula as a protected area with a notably rich biological diversity increases. Over 45% of North American avian species and nearly 18% of California's plant species are found here due to the variety of habitat and uniqueness of the geology. Twenty-seven threatened and endangered species exist within the Seashore.

Point Reyes contains examples of the world's major ecosystem types. For this reason it was internationally recognized in 1988 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere program and included as part of the Central California Coast Biosphere Reserve.

The cultural history of Point Reyes dates back some 5,000 years ago to the Coast Miwok Indians, the first human inhabitants of the peninsula. Over 120 known Coast Miwok village sites exist within the park. According to many experts, Sir Francis Drake landed here in 1579, the first European to do so. In response to the many shipwrecks on the treacherous coastal waters, key lighthouse and lifesaving stations were established by the United States Government in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In the early 1800s, Mexican land grantees established ranchos. These were followed by a wave of American agricultural operations which continue to this day in the Seashore's pastoral zone.



© Alexandra Kruse

Second Annual Citizenship Ceremony



The Seashore hosted the second annual Naturalization Ceremony on September 19, 2011 where 19 candidates from 17 countries became new citizens. This was one of many naturalization ceremonies which took place in national parks during Citizenship Week under a partnership between the National Park Service and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The theme was “Embrace Citizenship – Experience America through your National Parks.”

The countries represented by the candidates included Argentina, Cambodia, Canada, Cyprus, Germany, Guatemala, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, UK, Ukraine, USSR, and Vietnam.



Superintendent Cicely Muldoon remarked, “How fitting it is to take the oath of citizenship here at Point Reyes. National Parks are a uniquely American idea. It is an honor to welcome these new citizens here at Point Reyes National Seashore.”

Images from top to bottom, participants in the ceremony, West Marin 8th graders singing the National Anthem and joyous celebration after the ceremony.

Highlights from this past year



Protecting Our Natural Heritage

The Wildlife staff continued to monitor the remnant fallow deer herd within the park, which currently numbers 73 and is non-reproductive; conducted over 30 northern spotted owl (right) surveys in response to needs Facilities Management; monitored and protected the threatened western snowy plover with nest enclosure placements and beach restrictions, resulting in 13 productive nests and 11 newly fledged young; counted 428 tule elk at Tomales Point during the first elk census since 2009; closely monitored the locations, movements, and numbers of free-ranging tule elk within the park's Pastoral Zone; for the second year, completed common raven surveys within the outer Pastoral Zone and at common murre breeding colonies at the Point Reyes Headlands and near Arch Rock; and conducted or supervised over 80 nesting bird surveys for Facilities Management and other Natural Resource Management branches to protect breeding landbirds from incidental impacts by park operations.



coho smolt production from Olema Creek. Fisheries staff completed the third year of post Giacomini Wetland Restoration fish monitoring. Water quality activities performed in FY 2011 included Olema Creek and recreational beaches. Stream flow monitoring was conducted at Pine Gulch and Olema Creek stations. In monitoring federally listed coho salmon and steelhead trout on Olema, Pine Gulch, and Redwood Creeks, Fisheries staff partnered with volunteers who contributed 2,400 hours of effort.

Fisheries staff and volunteers documented the fourth consecutive season of decline of the endangered coho salmon in Point Reyes (right). Biologist also calculated the 2011



Vegetation Management Branch removed more than 80 acres of non-native invasive European beachgrass and iceplant from approximately 200 acres of coastal dune habitat near Abbotts Lagoon and North Beach (below) and implemented compliance for another 20 acres of dune restoration to be conducted in fall 2011. More than 20 acres of Scotch broom were removed from 170 acres in the Drakes Estero and other watersheds, and the noxious fertile capeweed was treated in 447 acres on ranchlands in collaboration with ranchers.

Sonoma spineflower -- a federally endangered species that currently exists only in the park -- was reintroduced successfully in four locations within the Seashore that have similar habitat and soil conditions.



Citizen Science in Action

This year, the Science Division and the Pacific Coast Science and Learning Center coordinated and facilitated numerous marine and terrestrial science and science education programs. Some highlights include:

- Baseline underwater surveys of the marine fishes and invertebrates at the newly established Point Reyes Headlands Marine Reserve.
- Creation of highly detailed seafloor habitat maps for the waters around Point Reyes.
- Completing an endangered Black Abalone inventory for Point Reyes NS and GGNRA.
- Monitoring the Rocky Intertidal habitats at Point Reyes.

- Providing science internships for 20 students at SF Bay Area Parks.

- Supporting approximately 95 research projects at Point Reyes.

- The annual fungus fair and butterfly counts.

- Sacramento Landing Researcher Housing supported over 1,500 research nights. These researchers and students worked on many topics including: seabird monitoring, white sharks, invasive species, science communication, climate change, snowy plovers and many other topics.

- Hosting lunchtime science seminars on a wide variety of topics.



Rough-skinned newt



© Richard James

Baby octopus from intertidal habitat



© Leslie Adler-Ivanbrook

Implementation of the Giacomini Wetlands Science Curriculum with local students and hosting a 1 week "Science at the Seashore" program for under-represented youth.

Preserving the Historic Lighthouse

The Point Reyes Lighthouse received funds this year to restore components of the turning mechanism of the historic lens and clockwork. The rotating first order Fresnel lens, built in Paris in 1867 by Barbier and Fenestre, was maintained by the U.S. Lighthouse Service and U.S. Coast Guard as an active aid to navigation until 1975 when it was retired and later turned over to the NPS. It is one of the only first order lenses with original clockwork still in its original location and in operating order. The brass chariot wheels that support the lens while it rotates had become so worn they were interfering with lens rotation and threatening the mechanical integrity and stability of the lens.

The park contracted to assist in preservation and new chariot wheels were machined and installed to help stabilize the lens. For additional preservation of the lens and components, a set of three lens jacks was fabricated. Reproductions of an original in the museum collection, the jacks will support the lens and take the weight off the chariot wheels when the lens isn't turning. This work has prolonged the active life of the 140-year-old lens and clockwork. The Lighthouse is one of the most iconic and most visited sites in the park and PRNS is one step closer to its goal of being able to operate and fully interpret this important historical artifact for the education and enjoyment of visitors.



Chariot wheel replacement.



Curator Kirsten Kvam applying oil to the chariot wheels.

Interpretation and Resource Education

In the tradition of the National Park Service, we continue to personally reach out to educate the public to the importance of the park and the value of its resources through our visitor centers and our staff. We developed several new programs using the Science on the Sphere exhibit that discuss the topics of Climate Change, Exploration, and Geology.

Special events included Big Time, Sand Sculpture Contest, Memorial Day Service, a Beach Cleanup, Earth Day/Birthday with John Muir National Historic Site, and Transition West Marin. We reached over 4,000 visitors.

In addition, volunteers and docents reach out to the public from visitor centers and from the heart of the park, whether it was from the Elephant Seal Overlook or from Tomales Point. This year our docents contributed over 5,000 hours and connected with almost 29,000 visitors.

We revised and updated the Trail Map, and developed a new Elephant Seal Resource Paper. We worked with National Geographic's "Trails Illustrated" division to develop a new topographic map that includes interpretive and safety information as well as trail information.

New exhibit panels were developed and produced on Ranching History, Elephant Seals, and Earthquakes.

The web continues to be an important way of reaching out to the public, not only in preparing for their visit to the park, but to keep them informed of issues and management decisions that affect the park. This year we added over 80 new pages and uploaded over 300 documents and pages. This brings the website up to over 1,000 pages.

We are working to reach out to audiences who connect to the world in new and different ways. Our staff has developed a Facebook page to connect with visitors. And we have developed a number of short programs to be used in a cell phone tour of the park. These programs can be dialed up using a cell phone or can be downloaded to a smart phone before visitors come to the park and accessed even if there is no cell reception.

During the year we have worked with a company to build an app specific to Point Reyes for smart phones and tablets. It has a huge amount of information on trails and resources, including popular loops, elevation profiles, information on specific species and resources, and ways of supporting and becoming involved with the park. It is beautifully illustrated with photos, both modern and historic.



A classroom interacts with the Science On a Sphere® exhibit at the Bear Valley Visitor Center

Facilities Management

Numerous construction and rehabilitation projects were undertaken by the Facilities Management group. Here is a partial list:

Completed construction on new Point Reyes Hostel (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act)

Constructed new water line to provide fire protection to the Hostel

Completed Muddy Hollow Reroute (ARRA)

Replaced inefficient lighting park-wide lighting in park offices

Relocated Wilkins propane tanks out of seasonal wetlands – service vehicles could no longer access tanks –to higher ground and extended gas distribution piping to new location

Painted restrooms at Estero Trailhead, Wildcat Campground, and Coast Camp

Constructed information kiosk at Inverness Park

Completed ARRA funded project to install PV system at Hostel and deconstruct structures at Cheda Ranch

Mowed / brushed 85 miles of trails

Cut and cleared 147 downed trees

Completed ARRA funded Muddy Hollow Reroute project

Completed Estero Trail Bridge replacement (25 foot bridge)

Mowed over 420 miles of paved and unpaved roads

Removed an estimated 150 storm-downed trees from park roadways

Removed approximately 300 cubic yards of ice plant from North Beach Road shoulders and parking lot

Installed photovoltaic panels to supplement electrical service at RCA Transmitting Station

Developed study using infrared photography to help identify future energy conservations projects

Greening of the VIP picnic by composting everything except for one bag of garbage

Received Energy Star Building Award for Park Headquarters



Ice plant removal from North Beach parking walkway



New bicycle rack at Wildcat Campground

Resource and Visitor Protection

In 2011, Rangers again responded to a near record number of Search and Rescue (SAR), and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) incidents. Rangers worked extensively with other federal, state, and local agencies, particularly with the US Coast Guard and Marin County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue team, on a number of water related SAR incidents both in Tomales Bay and on coastal waters.

With the creation of the California Marine Life Protection Areas in 2010 bordering the seashore, Rangers increased marine patrol presence along the coastal waters of the park.

Rangers and numerous

other federal, state, and local agencies jointly investigated the cultivation of marijuana on the Bolinas Ridge in Mexican Drug Cartel grow sites. The 3-month investigation culminated in the seizure and subsequent destruction of almost 12,400 plants on Marin Municipal Water District land that was accessed by criminals through the Seashore. Cooperative efforts also resulted in the reclamation of multiple historic cultivation sites and the removal of large amounts of associated garbage and cultivation infrastructure.



Thousands of feet of plastic drip irrigation line removed from an illegal grow site.

One of the numerous prescribed burns to help control non native plant species.



Fire Management

The 2011 San Francisco Bay Area Network (SFBAN) Wildland Fire Management Program had a busy year with personnel deployed on interagency fire assignments in support of New Mexico (State of New Mexico), Oregon (Mount Hood NF; Crater Lake NP), Texas (State of Texas), and Mississippi (Gulf Islands NS). Fire assignments within California included mobilization to Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs, Lava Beds NM and multiple mobilizations to Yosemite NP.

A total of five statistical wildfires were reported within the SFBAN, two at Point Reyes NS and three at Golden Gate NRA.

SFBAN personnel worked on mechanical hazardous fuel removal projects at John Muir NHS, Pinnacles NM, Point Reyes NS, Golden Gate NRA and Great Basin NP (Nevada).

Prescribed burns were conducted at Point Reyes NS (McCurdy Rx and experimental plot burning), Golden Gate NRA (Bobcat Rx). Prescribed burn assistance and support was to East Bay Regional Parks Fire Department (Round Valley Regional Park, eastern Alameda County) and Bureau of Land Management (Clear Creek Management Area, near Hollister).

Partnerships

Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA) has been working in partnership with Point Reyes National Seashore since its inception in 1964. PRNSA provides outstanding services including the Field Institute, Clem Miller Environmental Education Center, sales in park visitor centers and fundraising for critical projects.

This past year, over \$95,000 in scholarship funds were raised to allow underserved children to attend summer camp. Along with NPS staff, PRNSA also offered the first ever Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids) in any National Park; now an annual event.

The first Modern Day Mather Hike brought over 20 outdoor leaders, health providers and other business leaders to focus on ways to use open space to promote a healthy lifestyle and eating habits.



Participants in the first annual CBC4Kids.



Employee and Visitor Safety

Operational Leadership training identifies key risk factors that affect individual and team performance. It has been specifically designed to provide the National Park Service with a standardized approach that will assist employees in assessing and managing risk throughout the organization. This training was made a high priority this past year. The Seashore Safety Committee worked to get every park employee through this training.

Increased outreach efforts were achieved by designing and producing the brochure *Enjoying the Beach Safely* which educates the public about tides, sneaker waves, child safety near the ocean, and tsunami hazards.

A safety stand down day was designed to keep safety in mind all the time. We had 100% participation and it was a huge success with a keynote speaker and several hands-on demonstrations.





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The National Park Service
cares for special places saved
by the American people so that all
may experience our heritage.

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