

Citizen Science Zoom Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2020, 2pm

Meet Kimberly Barbosa Soerio – New Programs Manager for Stewards

Email: kimberly@stewardscr.org – contact her for any questions or concerns.

Volunteer Check-in – We checked in with all volunteers to see how they are doing and which programs they volunteer with. There were quite a few new volunteers on the call, which was very nice to see.

State Park Update: Michele Luna, Executive Director

Michele reported that Armstrong Redwoods and Austin Creek are in a state of soft opening whereby people can now drive to them and parking lots and restroom are open. We are now collecting day-use fees for those that drive into the park but the picnic area is not a gathering place and people must maintain physical distancing and wear their masks when they come close by other park visitors and park staff. Most people are behaving themselves but some are not, mostly younger visitors are not bringing masks. On Sonoma Coast the park is still in soft closure and only open to those who can walk or bike there and only before 11am and after 5:00pm. No parking lots or restrooms are open. Campgrounds and Visitor Centers are supposed to reopen during phase 3. We are not in phase 2.

We were given permission to do a tidepool excursion last Friday at Miwok Beach to shoot photos and videos for educational purposes and that went very well. There was discussion about the nesting snowy plovers at Salmon Creek and how they may need protecting once the parks open more.

Citizen Science in General – We won't be able to start monitoring again until parking lots open. State Parks is having a difficult time keeping people at bay on the coast and they don't want to generate confusion by allowing volunteers to park.

Pinniped Monitoring – Sonoma Water is handling necessary monitoring right now and are not allowing volunteers to monitor at this time. We hope this will change in a month or so. Michele will be in touch with Water agency staff to confirm.

Viola Adunca – A new volunteer was interested in monitoring viola adunca again so Kimberly will touch base with Chris Heinzelman to see about whether or not that can be done on Red Hill as long as access is on Willow Creek Road.

Seabird Monitoring – Hollis Bewley report

The upshot for us is that parking on the coast has not yet opened up but since things seem to happen kinda quickly once they do, we'll begin working on scheduling throughout the summer so we're ready to go - I'll send something out shortly.

There's some concern about monitoring Bodega Head West on a weekend due to the potential difficulty of maintaining physical distancing with so many park visitors, so please let me know if you're interested in monitoring this site and if there are preferred days of the week so we can schedule a new day.

We need to set up a couple of tentative dates for the site visit and training we had planned before the SIP. Please let me know if there's a day of the week and time slot that does NOT work for any of you. We should plan on about 3 hours since we'll need to sign out equipment at the Ranger Station, caravan up to the west parking lot on Bodega Head to see what's going on there and then over to the east parking lot to see the vantage point for the colony on Bodega Rock, then back to the Ranger Station to sign equipment back in.

Protocol for cleaning equipment: we'll need to establish a protocol for cleaning equipment and the binder of forms before and after each use. There will be a cannister of disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer in the equipment locker and I'll ask Stewards and State Parks about recommendations concerning the use of gloves and paper.

Please let me know if anything else comes to mind! Looking forward to seeing y'all sometime soon.

Volunteers will be kept updated on activities they can participate in through our e-newsletter that has been going out specifically to them. We hope to send updates weekly as parks start reopening.

We forgot to turn on the recording of this Zoom meeting so these minutes will be posted on the Volunteer Resources page of the Stewards website.