

# Año Nuevo State Park

Santa Cruz District



## Docent Training Manual

**2011**



Written and compiled by  
California State Park Staff  
& The San Mateo Coast Natural History Association



Section One

# Getting Started



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# Año Nuevo Docent Training Schedule – Fall 2011



**Sept. 7, Wed.**  
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

## **New Docent Orientation**

**Introduction to Año Nuevo State Reserve and CA State Parks**  
*Ziad Bawarshi & Terry Kiser, State Park Rangers*

**Sept. 10, Sat.**  
9:00AM-3:00PM

## **Point Hike/Meet Your Mentor Potluck Picnic**

*Mike Merritt, State Park Interpreter*  
*Docent Naturalist Mentors*

**Sept. 21, Wed**  
6:30PM-9:00PM

## **Marine Mammals**

*Frank Balthis, State Park Ranger*

**Oct. 1, Sat.**  
9:00am-3:00PM

## **Interpretive Techniques**

*Elizabeth Hammock & Jodi Apelt, State Park Interpreters*

**Oct. 5, Wed.**  
6:30PM-9:00PM

## **Elephant Seals**

*Frank Balthis, State Park Ranger*

**Oct 12, Wed.**  
6:30PM-9:00PM

## **Ohlone Indians**

*Mark Hylkema, State Archaeologist*

**Oct. 22, Sat.**  
9:00AM-3:00PM

## **Working with Children**

*Mike Merritt, State Park Interpreter*

**Oct. 26, Wed.**  
6:30PM-9:00PM

## **History of Año Nuevo**

*Mike Merritt, State Park Interpreter*

**Nov. 2, Wed.**  
6:30PM-9:00PM

## **Introduction to Elephant Seal Research**

*Pat Morris and Guy Oliver, UCSC Researchers*

**Nov 5, Sat.**  
9:00AM-3:00PM

## **Geology of Año Nuevo**

*Jerry Weber, Geologist*

**Nov. 16, Wed.**  
6:30PM-9:00PM

## **Año Nuevo Wildlife**

*Gary Strachan, Retired Ranger*

**Nov. 19, Sat.**  
9:00AM-3:00PM

## **Light a Spark**

*Allen Fleishman, Docent Naturalist*

**Dec. 3, Sat.**  
9:00AM-3:00PM

## **Logistics & Leading Tours at the Point**

*Amy Neiblum, Docent Coordinator*  
*Ziad Bawarshi, State Park Ranger*

**Dec. 10, Sat.**  
9:00AM-3:00PM

## **Mentor & Mentee Walk Rehearsal**

1:00PM-3:00PM

## **Graduation Potluck!**

Revised 9/4/11

# AÑO NUEVO STATE PARK

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

### Duty Statement

**Title:** Año Nuevo Volunteer Docent Naturalist

**Duties:**

Upon successful completion of the Docent Training Course, docents will interpret the natural and cultural history of Año Nuevo State Park by leading guided walks, assisting with special presentations and events, and staffing the visitor center and assisting with sales of interpretive materials authorized by a permanent park staff supervisor.

**Skills/Qualifications:**

Docents must be friendly, courteous, and possess good communication skills. They must be willing to learn and share their knowledge of the park resources with visitors. Docents leading guided walks must be able to lead 1-3 walks per day. Docents leading Equal Access tours for disabled visitors must expect to lead 2 tours per day. Minimum age requirement is 18 years old, if younger there must be parental consent.

**Reports To:** Supervising Ranger - South Sector

**Commitment:**

Docents are required to work two 8 hour shifts per month December through March. April through November docents are required to work two five hour shifts OR one eight hour shift per month. If unable to fulfill the committed volunteer day, docents must attempt to find a substitute from the docent roster. The commitment is for a full year. After one complete year of service, docents may take April-July off or August-November off.

**Training:**

New docents are required to attend the 10 week training offered in the fall. Docents must attend all courses and pass a midterm and final. Visitor's Center volunteers must complete a 4 hour VC training. Equal Access docents must complete Equal Access training. Docents must become familiar with the park trails, rules and regulations and the use of a walkie-talkie type radio.

**Benefits:**

Expanding awareness, understanding, sensitivity and appreciation of the natural and cultural environment. Opportunities to continue education through ongoing enrichments and events. Free State Park day use pass for a year, in the district where volunteering. After 200 hours in a calendar year as a volunteer, free State Park day use pass for the entire state. After hour walks for friends and family.

Docent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Año Nuevo Docent Training **Assignments**

Please complete the required reading **prior to the class** for a greater understanding of the material. You can then ask the instructor any questions you might have from the reading. **All class handouts are required reading as well.**

In addition to the required reading, the following list contains a number of recommended texts. Most of these are available for sale at the Año Nuevo Visitor Center and loan from libraries, including the docent library at the roost.

## September 7 Introduction to Año Nuevo State Park

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**Required:**

Section 2 Program Guide  
pages 1-25

## September 21 Marine Mammals

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**Required:**

Section 3.2: Marine Mammals  
pages 35-53

**Recommended:**

The Pinnipeds by *Marine Reidman*

## October 1 Interpretive Techniques

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**Required:**

Section 4 Interpretive Techniques  
pages 173-189

**Recommended:**

Interpreting Our Heritage, *Freeman Tilden*

Environmental Interpretation, *Sam H. Ham*

The Good Guide: A Source Book for  
Interpreters, Docents & Tour Guides, *Grinder  
Mcoy*

## October 5 Elephant Seals

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**Required:**

Elephant Seals: A Comprehensive Guide  
*Carole & Phil Addams*

**Recommended:**

Elephant Seals,  
*Friends of the Elephant Seal*

## October 12 Ohlone Indians

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**Required:**

Section 3.10  
Native American History  
pages 141-146

**Recommended:**

The Ohlone Way, *Malcom Margolin*

The Natural World of the California Indians,  
Robert F Heizer, Albert Elsasser

Native Ways, *Malcom Margolin, Yolanda Montijo*

## October 22 Working with Children

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**Required:**

**DUE: First Docent Hurdle**

**Recommended:**

Interpreting Our Heritage, Chapter VII,  
*Freeman Tilden*

Sharing Nature with Children, *Joseph Cornell*  
Interpretation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Chapter 6,  
*Larry Beck and Ted Cable*

## October 26 Año Nuevo History

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**Required:**

Section 3.10 European & American History  
Pages 144-168

**Recommended:**

Coburn Mystery, *June Morrall*  
The History of Pigeon Point Lighthouse,  
*Frank Perry*

## November 5 Geology of Año Nuevo

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**Required:**

Section 3.8 Geology  
Pages 133-138

**Recommended:**

Field Guide to Geology, *David Lambert and the  
Diagram Group*

## November 16 Año Nuevo Wildlife

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**Required:**

Section 3.1 Ecology  
Pages 28-34

**Recommended:**

Section 3.3 – 3.6 Wildlife  
Pages 54-124

**DUE: Second Docent Hurdle**

National Audubon Society Field Guide to  
California, *Peter Alden, Fred Heath*

A Natural History of Monterey Bay,  
*NOAA and Monterey Bay Aquarium*

## November 19 Light a Spark

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**Required:**

**Recommended:**

Natural History Trail:  
A Self Guided Walk

## December 3 Logistics & Leading Tours at the Point

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**Required:**

Section 2.3  
Año Nuevo Docent Tour Logistics  
Pages 16-18

**DUE: Scavenger Hunt**

# Docent Hurdle #1

*Docent name:*

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Wow! Can you believe it has been over a month since you started Año Nuevo Docent Training? We hope that everything is going well for you so far. Now it's time to challenge yourself.

Visitors will be sure to ask some of these questions when you are docenting, and after completing this learning tool, you will be able to answer those questions. Use your Training Manual, roost library, mentors, docent coordinators, handouts, lecture notes, smcnha.org website, etc. to answer them. Please have fun and remember brevity is okay, but not too brief. **Try to answer each question with a story of no more than three sentences, if possible.**

## **Marine Mammals**

What is a marine mammal? List three characteristics of marine mammals. Name three different groups of marine mammals.

What are pinnipeds (what does the word *pinniped* mean)? What types of pinnipeds can you see here at Año?

List three of the differences between seals and sea lions.

In the spring, whales can be seen traveling along the coast. The easiest way to spot whales is by seeing them spout. What is a spout? What type of whales are they, probably?

Where are the whales coming from/going to in the spring? What do they eat, and how do they eat?

What other whales might be seen here?

You are at the point and hear barking coming from the island; explain what this sound is.

Visitors are looking at the elephant seals and say; "I've seen these at Fisherman's Wharf." Can you think of a reply?

What two marine mammal predators eat seals and sea lions?

You see a furry little critter floating on its back in the channel between the island and the point. Tell us something about this wonderful creature.

## Elephant Seals

1. Explain the annual life cycle of the Elephant Seal (go through an entire 12 months of a female and a male).

Tell us three amazing things that UCSC researchers have discovered about elephant seals.

Explain the molting process.

Explain the length and weight of elephant seals without using units of measurement. In other words, compare elephant seals to familiar objects or familiar critters. Do this for females, males, pups, and weaners.

## **Ohlone**

1. What was the name of the Ohlone tribe centered at Año Nuevo and why did/do they come to Año Nuevo? Are there any Ohlone that come to Año Nuevo these days?

What can you tell us about the foods the Ohlone ate?

Name three things you might find in a midden at Año and tell what each was used for. (If you are stumped here, be sure to look around the Marine Education Center and also ask your mentor to show you middens.)

Briefly explain what happened in the 1700's that would change Ohlone life forever.

# **Docent Hurdle #2**

*Docent name:*

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Okay, here you go! Get ready to jump another hurdle! Your jumping muscles are all warmed up and ready, aren't they? Once again, these are questions that you are likely to encounter on your guided walks; now is the time to be stumped! Won't it be great to not be stumped (too often) on your walks!

Have fun and remember brevity is okay, but not too brief. Answer each question with a story of no more than three sentences, if possible. Please use complete sentences to answer the questions. Thanks!

## **Geology**

Approximately when and how was the island formed?

Fifty years ago the dunes at Año Nuevo were much larger and have moved dramatically. Explain what this process is.

What fault zone crosses Point Año Nuevo and name the famous fault along the guided walk trail. What is unusual about this fault

## Wildlife

2. A visitor asks you, "I saw a snake cross the trail. It was one of the most beautiful snakes I have ever seen! Its head was orange and belly turquoise." What was it?

Do we have any poisonous snakes in the Park?

As you walk along the trail you will frequently see a lizard skitter away. What is the most common lizard at Año and tell us something interesting about it.

It is spring, there are puddles on the trail, and suddenly all the 8-year-olds are not interested in what you are saying and are looking closely in the puddle at the tadpoles. What are tadpoles and which species are responsible for creating them here at Año Nuevo?

Tell a *short* story (two or three sentences) about three different furry critters at Año that are not marine mammals.

3. You see a bird flying low over the tops of the coastal scrub bushes. It looks like a hawk and has a white rump. Can you name the bird? More important, can you tell the visitor what it is doing?

Think of three birds you are likely to see at Año Nuevo. Describe each bird and tell us three interesting things about each bird.

Approximately how many species of birds have been identified here at Año?

Is there such a thing as a sea gull? What is the most common gull you will see along our coast?

Do you have a favorite bird that is on our Año bird list? Why is it your favorite?

## **History**

4. When and how did Año Nuevo become a State Park?

Does anyone live in that house on the island? (Tell the story of Año Nuevo Island.)

What does Año Nuevo mean and how did it get its name?

When was the building that houses the Marine Education Center built (approximate date), and what was it used for in the past?

In 1973, Año Nuevo changed significantly. What happened?

## **Fun**

5. What are you going to carry in your pockets during the guided walk?

List three items you will need to bring with you each time you come to Año Nuevo.

# Scavenger Hunt

## Entrance Station

Find out the name of the person in the entrance station.

Name:

Is s/he a ranger?      If not, what is his/her position?

What is another name for the entrance station, starting with a K?

Ask the entrance station person for a visitor permit. Read it.     

As you leave the entrance station, locate the pay phone. Describe where it is located.

Find the restrooms. Describe where they are located.

## Marine Education Center

*This section must be completed when the Marine Education Center (MEC) is open. For item #1, the horse barn must also be open, with the film running. If they are not open the day you come, ask the park staff for help or you can complete this at a later date.*

6. Go inside the horse barn when the *Elephant Seals of Año Nuevo* video is running, and watch it.     

Find two skulls on display. What animals are they?

Find two birds on display. What birds are they and where in the reserve do they live?

Water fountains are located in two areas on the reserve. Where are they?

Is bottled water available? (Hint: Look around the bookstore.)

Can visitors buy rain gear?

## **The Trail to the Staging Area**

7. Time how long it takes to walk from the MEC to the staging area. (This includes the time you take to read interpretive displays.)

Name the ship that washed ashore in 1913. What happened to destroy this ship?

*Walk to the staging area using the pond loop trail that goes by the left bank of the pond.*

Observe birds on the pond. What do you think they are doing?

Read one more interpretive display and summarize the information.

## The Staging Area

*This is the small building with the elephant seal graphics under the sheltered area.*

8. Read the displays at this spot. Which one did you find most interesting?

What is the big rock sitting outside the staging area?

## The Roost

*Walk down the path to the right of the staging area, past the outhouses, around (not over) the rope, and on to the roost.*

9. Go inside. Is there electricity?  Where do you get water?

Where do you think things that go down the drain go?

Find the loaner jackets.

Walk outside the roost, lock the door, and find the outhouse next to the roost FOR DOCENTS ONLY!  
Go inside if you dare.

Find where the hidden key to the Roost and the Staging Area is.

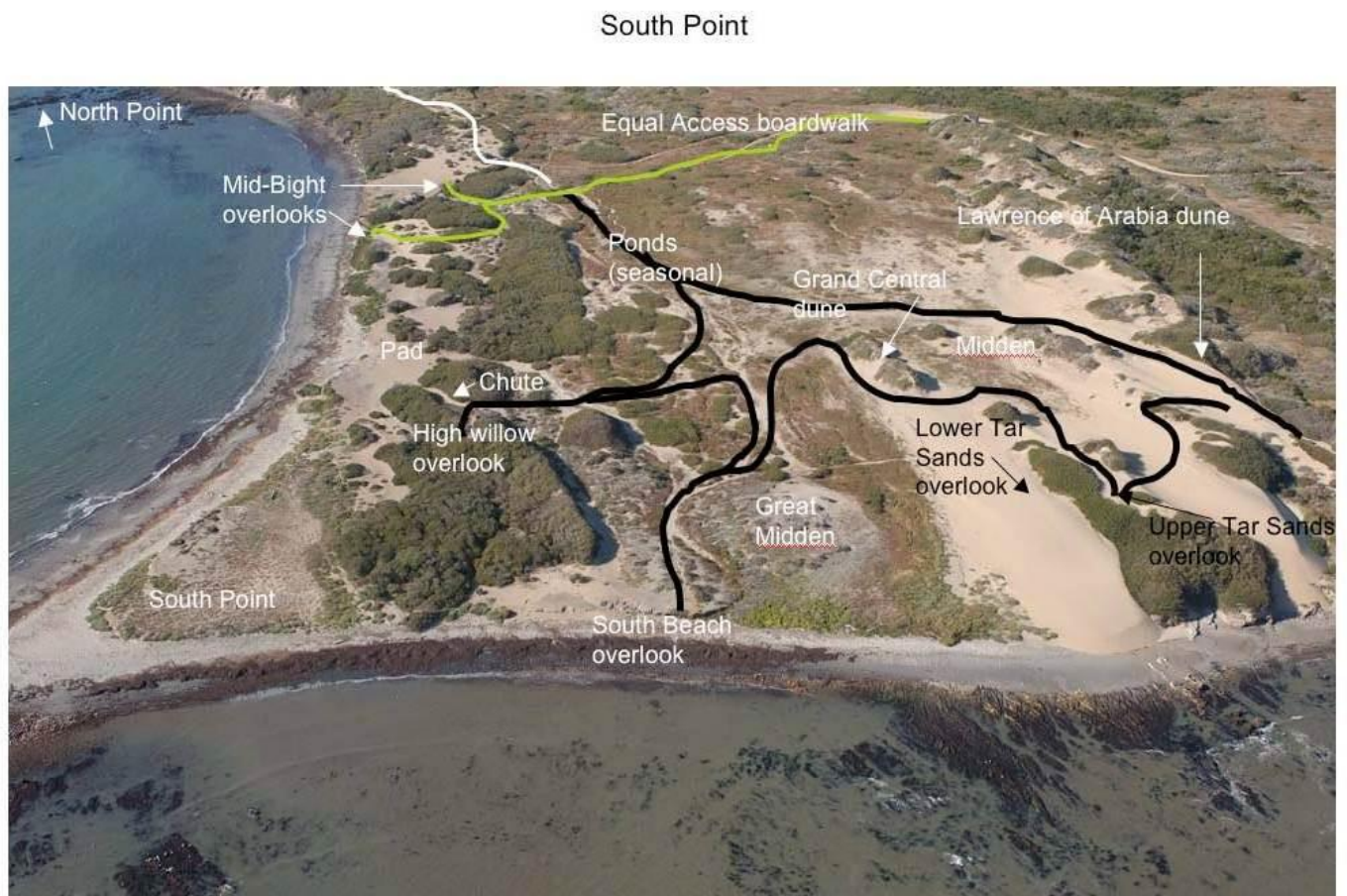
## The Año Nuevo Point Trail

*This is the trail with the Wildlife Protection sign at the beginning.*

10. Find three places along the trail you could talk to your group that is not in the way of another group traveling back from the Point.

*Take the North Point Elephant Seal Viewing trail that goes to the right up into the willows. Notice that you are now walking uphill onto a sand dune.*

At the top look out over the huge sand dune. This is called the Lawrence of Arabia Dune. Using the map below, walk around the point and try to find all the locations on the map.



## Docents at Mid-Bight Beach

11. Go to Mid-Bight Beach and find a docent. How many docents are there at this area? Depending on where the elephant seals are, the docents might be stationed at South Point or North Point, if you don't find any at Mid-Bight Beach.

Introduce yourself and show them what you are doing.



Write down three questions that visitors ask the docent. Write down the answers the docent gives.

1.

2.

3.

Find the elephant seals. Find out what age they are. (Hint: You may need to ask the docent some questions.)

Are there any alpha bulls around?

***Congratulations!***  
***You have completed your Scavenger Hunt!***