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Saving the Vaquita

Vaquitas are porpoises found only in a small area in the northern Gulf of California (also known as the Sea of Cortez), bordering Baja California and the Mexican mainland. They're shy and small, with dark markings around their mouth and eyes, lending to the nickname "panda of the sea." *They are also critically endangered.* Less than 30 vaquita remain because of accidental entanglement in gillnets set for shrimp and fish. Today, illegal gillnet fishing remains a major threat to the few remaining vaquita.

Currently, efforts are underway to collect the remaining few vaquita and bring them into a protected sanctuary. This rescue effort is called the Vaquita Conservation Protection and Recovery or VaquitaCPR. In an unprecedented move, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums community rallied last spring and raised 1.2 million dollars in just a few weeks to support VaquitaCPR. This effort was then leveraged to achieve the preliminary financial needs for VaquitaCPR. Additional funding is still needed to maintain the conservation effort, but never the less, rescue efforts will begin this October in San Felipe Mexico.

To learn more go to www.vaquitacpr.org



Hey y'all!

If you attended the NMEA conference in Charleston, you heard this warm Southern greeting many times! We had a fabulous time during the SCMEA-hosted conference this summer. Warm hospitality and amazing Southern food was enjoyed by all attendees.

During the conference, SWMEA members from across the region gathered to discuss the latest news for our group. At the meeting, we made some minor amendments to the bylaws to align the guidelines with California state law. These changes mainly involved voting electronically and altering the president election cycle to mirror the timelines used by NMEA. The details from the meeting were sent after the conference.

Elections coming in the fall!

This fall, positions will open for several board members. Candidate information will be sent in September, and the election will be held in October. Please let the Board know if you are interested in taking on a Board position or playing a role as another type of officer.

How to increase your involvement...

The webinar schedule for the coming school year is forming, and you can contribute to the success of the series. Is there a topic you stumble with every year? Would you like to talk to a scientist about a particular idea? We will send out more information in the next couple of months.

Want to get involved? We are always looking for newsletter submissions. Has your school or site had an event that taught about marine issues in our area? Look out for an email for quarterly newsletter submissions.

The Long Beach conference is coming...

2018 is our year to host the NMEA conference in Long Beach. As you know, putting on a conference for hundreds of national teachers is a massive endeavor. If you have not seen our promotional video, check out <http://www.marine-ed.org/page/2018Conference>. There is still room on committees so speak up if you want to get involved!

I hope you had a relaxing summer and are ready to start a new school year. There are many parallels between being an informal and formal teacher at this time of year. You have had a few months to revamp your curriculum and think of new ways to inspire your students. I wish you all the best with your new (or returning) group of students.

Best,

Lori

Educator of the Year - Dena Deck

Dena Deck was awarded the honor of Educator of the Year at this year's National Marine Educators Association Conference for her lifetime body of work and was joined for the special occasion by friends, including one of her former students. Her love of marine science and belief in stewardship of the natural world define her entire marine science education career and are key in her very existence. She has touched the lives of thousands of students by ensuring they have deep, rich, first-hand experiences with the ocean.

While a classroom teacher, she always found ways to integrate the ocean into the curriculum by using literature, music, and art, sharing ocean exploration research and technology, and twice serving as a NOAA Teacher at Sea. Her tremendous impact can be measured in many ways including by just how many students (and their parents) have stayed in touch and continue to be involved in ocean stewardship.



Dena views everyone as a learner and her reach isn't limited to K - 12th grade students. She ensures that her dear friends and colleagues at the Junior League of Long Beach have opportunities to visit and learn at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium where she is a long term volunteer and member.

Retired from the classroom, Dena now works with students of all ages as well as teachers through the E.E. Just program, the Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies, NOAA

Sanctuaries LIMPETs program, and as an advocate for marine education. As a trained California Naturalist she works to conserve places such as Los Cerritos Wetlands. Dena is an active member of the California Science Teachers Association, the Southwest Marine Educators Association and the Los Angeles Local Arrangements Committee for the International Science and Engineering Fair. She served on a delegation of marine educators uniting nations with Cuba this last Spring and is part of the team welcoming a delegation to California in July 2018. We are most fortunate on this ocean planet that her passion for the ocean is contagious and her dedication is unstoppable.



Center for Ocean Solutions Hosts 2-Week Intensive Ocean Policy Course

Twenty-four bright and enthusiastic students from across the country descended upon Monterey in July for the fourth iteration of the MARINE (Monterey Area Research Institutions' Network for Education) Ocean Policy Course.

The course introduces ocean-interested early career professionals to ocean policy and governance, and how science influences public policy decisions at the international, national, and state levels. Participants learn about pressing challenges to ocean health, and together with leaders in ocean science and policy, examine how scientists (e.g., social, economic, natural) and researchers can and do work within the policy-making process to address these challenges.

Using current case studies in ocean policy along with interactive activities, discussions, and field trips, the course aims to immerse students in the complexity of ocean-related decision-making. For example, students spent one full day engaged in a role-playing scenario acting out stakeholder meetings to discuss oil drilling in the Arctic. They also had the opportunity to get outside and talk to members of the public about ocean issues, meet leaders in the field of ocean management at a career night, and mingle with students from China during a crossover day with the Middlebury Institute for International Studies' Blue Pioneers program. For their final project, the participants worked in groups to draft and submit a public comment letter on a current listing in the Federal Register.

This year's course organizers included Laura Good, Education Manager at the Center for Ocean Solutions (COS); Angee Doerr, Research Associate in coupled human-natural systems at COS; and Whit Saumweber, a visiting fellow at COS who has worked with the White House Council on Environmental Quality and on the National Ocean Policy. Several guest lecturers, whose backgrounds spanned environmental law, policy, management, and science, also helped lead interactive sessions throughout the course. By the end of two weeks, the course participants had not only covered a wide range of topics and material, but also forged friendships and made connections that will stay with them into the future.

Watch a video of students talking about their experience during the course at <https://youtu.be/pDQLm9pW6FM>.

Read more about the course and download the course curriculum package on the Center for Ocean Solutions website <http://centerforoceansolutions.org/>



California Coastal Voices

The California Coastal Commission has just released a brand new, free resource for middle and high school teachers. California Coastal Voices is a project-based learning tool designed to address California's Next Generation Science, Common Core, and History-Social Science standards. Consisting of six units or "projects" that introduce students to coastal conflicts, challenges, and scientific and policy issues, the emphasis is on problem solving and communication.

California Coastal Voices can be downloaded in its entirety or by project. Student readings and templates can be downloaded separately and student handouts are available as documents for teacher customization. Extensive links and resources have been compiled and prepared for use with California Coastal Voices projects, including downloadable slides shows, videos, and data sets,

Free workshops will be offered this fall at different locations in California and are listed on the website at <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/coastalvoices/workshops.html>

Exploring the Kelp Forest Ecosystem Online!

The Monterey Bay Aquarium has a new, free, multi-level game available in the App Store and Google Play called Kelp Forest! The game allows students to build their own kelp forest exhibit as they learn about the needs of kelp, how to keep kelp alive, and the animals that survive in this amazing ecosystem. The curriculum flow supports the 3rd- through 5th-grade Systems and System Models NGSS Crosscutting Concept. The game includes consistent feedback mechanisms, such as rewards, goal progress, and animal reactions. Please play with it, use it, and share it with your audiences!



Dolphin Calf Makes a Splash

A healthy dolphin calf is getting into the "swim" of things at The Mirage. The energetic female calf was born July 17, to Huf n Puf, who was born at Siegfried & Roy's Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat in March 2000. Both mother and calf are doing well. Immediately after delivery, the calf swam unassisted to the water's surface and took her first breath. The calf, which will soon be named, has quickly taken to her surroundings, is nursing well and bonding with her mother as she closely follows her around the habitat.



Upcoming Events

September 9 - 13, 2017

AZA Annual Conference hosted by the Indianapolis Zoo in Indianapolis, Indiana

March 24 - 29, 2018

AZA Mid-Year Conference hosted by the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens in Jacksonville, Florida

July 13 - 20, 2018

NMEA Annual Conference in Long Beach, California

Become a SWMEA member today!

The Southwest Marine/ Aquatic Educators' Association (SWMEA) is a marine educators network throughout Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Members receive four on-line newsletters each year and a subscription to our listserve.

Receive discounts on our semi-annual professional development seminars as well as discounts in several SWMEA facilities.

For more information contact Julien Jordan at

jchristopher@lbaop.org

SWMEA Connection Call for Articles

We hope you enjoy this edition of your SWMEA Connection newsletter. We encourage all members to contribute articles and other news regarding your facilities and what's happening in your neck of the woods (or desert or ocean, wherever you may be)!

Check out the schedule below to see the deadlines and publication dates of upcoming SWMEA Connection editions. It's never too soon to start thinking about items you would like to submit for inclusion. Please send any articles to Kellie at kkorhonen@dolphinquest.com or to me at sschenk@mandalaybay.com. Kellie and I both look forward to receiving your contributions, and to making the SWMEA Connection the most informative, interesting, and best looking newsletter out there!

Sincerely,
Steven and Kellie

Upcoming Newsletters

Winter 2017

Deadline - November 15th
Publication - December 1st

Spring 2018

Deadline - February 15th
Publication - March 1st

Summer 2018

Deadline - May 15th
Publication - June 1st

Fall 2018

Deadline - August 15th
Publication - September 1st

The SWMEA Connection

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