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**President Obama Signs Act which Protects Elephant Seal Colony at  
Piedras Blancas Near San Simeon, California**

*President Expands California Coastal National Monument to include Six Sites across the State*

January 20, 2017 (San Simeon, CA) – Last week President Obama invoked the Antiquities Act of 1906 to expand the California Coastal National Monument, a move that provides added protections for elephant seal colony Piedras Blancas and five other sites across the state.

“We’re very grateful to President Obama to include one of San Simeon’s most precious resources as part of the California Coastal National Monument,” said Michael Hanchett, president of the [San Simeon Chamber of Commerce](#), which runs the tourism marketing program Visit San Simeon. “This elephant seal rookery has become a globally loved place to learn about this rare and wondrous creature. Three-quarters of a million visitors come to see them each year, which helps support and preserve local businesses and jobs.”

Today more than 17,000 elephant seals migrate thousands of miles to this secluded sandy beach twice per year. The best times to visit the rookery are in January, February and late April, but visitors can visit throughout the year. Docents are on-hand to provide information about elephant seal breeding, birthing and molting—all of which take place a few miles north of San Simeon. In addition to elephant seals, visitors come to the historic park to explore the Piedras Blancas Light Station, whose tower and support building are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

“Nothing could be more important at this time than to protect the California Coastline in perpetuity,” said Donovan Marley, from [Friends of Elephant Seal](#) and the regional SLO County campaign lead in the statewide effort. “Our children and grandchildren depend on us to have the vision and the wisdom to secure—with the highest possible level of protection--the fragile habitat of the millions of birds, land mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and marine mammals that feed, birth, breed, molt and rest in the lands and waters surrounding the historic Piedras Blancas Lighthouse.”

The California Coastal National Monument, originally established by President Clinton in 2000, protects and preserves objects or sites of historic or scientific interest along the state’s coast. In addition to Piedras Blancas, located just north of the world-famous Hearst Castle, other newly

protected sites include Trinidad Head, Lost Coast Headlands, Waluplh-Lighthouse Ranch, Cotoni-Coast Dairies, and Orange County Rocks and Islands.

“I am pleased to see the expansion of these already well-loved spaces,” said California Natural Resources Agency Secretary John Laird said in a statement in support of President Obama’s action. The six individual sights across northern, central, and southern California highlight the diverse treasures of our coastal environments. Many of these areas are adjacent to iconic state-protected lands. The President’s action will further protect these special places, and allow for better cooperation between the state and federal government in order to manage and protect these lands for all stakeholders.”

#### **ABOUT VISIT SAN SIMEON**

Visit San Simeon promotes the San Simeon region as a premier California Central Coast destination. Situated along either side of one of the most beautiful stretches of Highway 1, San Simeon is a secluded retreat filled with natural splendor, endless outdoor adventure, scenic wonders and treasured historic landmarks. From watching the elephant seals at the Piedras Blancas rookery to touring the world-famous Hearst Castle, sleeping under the stars in San Simeon State Park to hiking along beaches and pristine stretches of Pacific coastline that have been naturally carved by the sea, San Simeon is a rare, secluded California gem.

***Editor’s Note:** For photos please contact Stacie Jacob, Solterra Strategies.*

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