

Kashaya/Fort Ross Russia Delegation Trip

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2013 AT 7:00 P.M.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. DONATIONS WELCOMED

A delegation of 22 individuals set out on September 6, 2012, for a historic journey that completed a circle that started 200 years ago. The delegation included representatives of the Kashaya People, a Coastal Miwok Elder, California State Park staff, Fort Ross Conservancy staff, Gualala Arts staff, a Sonoma County official, San Francisco Presidio staff, partners to Fort Ross, and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Their adventure included visits to St. Petersburg, Moscow and Tot'ma, home town of Ivan Kuskov, the founder of Fort Ross.

In St. Petersburg, at the Kunstkamera Museum, they viewed the Pomo artifacts collected by Ilya Voznesenski 170 years ago from Fort Ross. This was a powerful and emotional experience. The Kashaya and Coastal Miwok representatives explained the history and purpose of the items in the museum collection to the curators. The artifacts now had their own story, their own names and their meaning in Pomo life.

The American Consul General, Bruce Turner, of the American Embassy in St. Petersburg hosted a reception for the group. They toured St. Isaac's, Peter and Paul Fortress, Pushkin Tasarkoye Selo, Catherine's Palace, Peterhof, Hermitage Museum and a showing of Swan Lake at the Mikailovsky Theater.

In Moscow, the group participated in a conference hosted by the Russian Academy of Sciences. Speakers included representatives from the delegation as well as the Director of World History, Institute of

Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Orthodox Church representatives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission. They met with the Russian Association of Indigenous People of the North, made a historic visit to the Duma (Russian version of Congress), and gave a press conference to share their stories with Russian State Newspaper, Moscow Times and other news media. The group was featured on the front page of the Moscow Times!

A long 8-hour train ride and a 100 mile bus ride took the group to Vologda and Tot'ma. The people of Tot'ma opened their homes and hearts to the delegates. Their hospitality introduced the delegates to local foods, banyas (Russian steam baths), and local song and dance.

They were hosted by the City of Tot'ma, the Museum of Sea Farers and the Museum of Ivan Kuskov and met the Mayor who joined them the entire time while in Tot'ma. A visit to the tomb of Ivan Kuskov, founder of Fort Ross, was very moving.

Returning to Moscow, the group visited Red Square, St. Basil's, the Kremlin, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offices, toured museums, and attended a last reception at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mansion where they were greeted by the Russian Ambassador to the US.

Come hear Fort Ross State Park Interpreter, Robin Joy Wellman and other delegates share their experiences with photos during a lecture on Friday, January 11, 2013 starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Gualala Arts Center. Donations welcomed.

