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The Marine Mammal Center Hires New Executive Director as Former Leader Retires

Martha Whetstone takes the reins of the internationally recognized marine hospital for seals and sea lions

(Sausalito, Calif – May 3, 2007) – The Marine Mammal Center, a marine rescue, rehabilitation and research hospital, primarily for seals and sea lions, is proud to announce that it has hired a new Executive Director, Martha Whetstone, as successor to B.J. Griffin, who is retiring after seven years. Whetstone was most recently Executive Director and General Counsel of the Bar Association of San Francisco where she managed a \$10 million annual budget and was responsible for raising significant funds for that organization. She will be heading the growth of The Center into the next level of operations management and fundraising as the rebuild of its new hospital nears completion in spring of 2008.

“Martha’s vast experience in managing organizations and fundraising will be a valuable asset to The Marine Mammal Center through the next stages of its development as a leader in veterinary care and research for seals and sea lions, and as an educational resource,” said Merrill Magowan, Chairman of the Board of Directors at The Center.

Prior to the Bar, Whetstone was a consultant to the California Office of Emergency Services, Regional Director of FEMA, and Northern California Political Director of the Democratic National Committee. Whetstone began work at The Marine Mammal Center April 23.

“My work experience and passion for animals are what drew me to The Center,” said Martha Whetstone, the new Executive Director at The Marine Mammal Center. “Under B.J. Griffin’s leadership, The Center is now poised to begin transforming its new headquarters into a life sciences center that will truly be a window for the world to look through and learn about

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marine mammal and ocean health. I plan on guiding and helping this group of motivated staff, volunteers and board members in achieving that goal,” said Whetstone.

Barbara (“B.J.”) Griffin spent 35 years with the National Park Service (NPS) in positions all across the country. Griffin held National Park Service management positions in the east, south and west, overseeing parks such as Yosemite, Independence Hall/Liberty Bell, Shenandoah, and the Presidio of San Francisco. She became the first woman to run a flagship national park in 1995 when she became Superintendent of Yosemite. Upon retirement from the NPS in 2000, she joined the nonprofit community as Executive Director of The Marine Mammal Center.

“I’m most proud of the work that has and will continue to be done here at The Center,” said B.J. Griffin, outgoing Executive Director at The Marine Mammal Center. “I feel confident that the new Marine Mammal Center emerging will be the catalyst for increased efforts in both governmental and private entities in conserving the ocean’s inhabitants and environment.”

Griffin was responsible for raising \$22 million in capital funds for the new Marine Mammal Center (including exceeding the requirement of fulfilling a challenge grant from the Kresge Foundation by 50-percent.) In addition, she led negotiations for donation of land by Duke Energy for the construction of The Center’s Morro Bay and Moss Landing facilities. Griffin was also instrumental in expanding partnerships with NPS, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and U.S. congressional delegations. She also championed The Center’s involvement in the Hawaiian Monk Seal program to include participation in a Captive Care Program to assist this species to survive to reproductive age. Currently, the species is nearing extinction.

About The Marine Mammal Center:

Headquartered in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in Sausalito, California, The Marine Mammal Center is a nonprofit veterinary hospital, research and educational center dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of ill and injured marine mammals - primarily elephant seals, harbor seals and California sea lions - and to the study of their health. Since 1975, The Center has rescued and treated thousands upon thousands of marine mammals and has accumulated a body of knowledge about marine mammal and ocean health from its patients. By educating the public about marine mammals, The Center hopes to foster ocean stewardship and conservation. The Center is supported almost entirely by private funds. For more information, visit www.marinemammalcenter.org

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