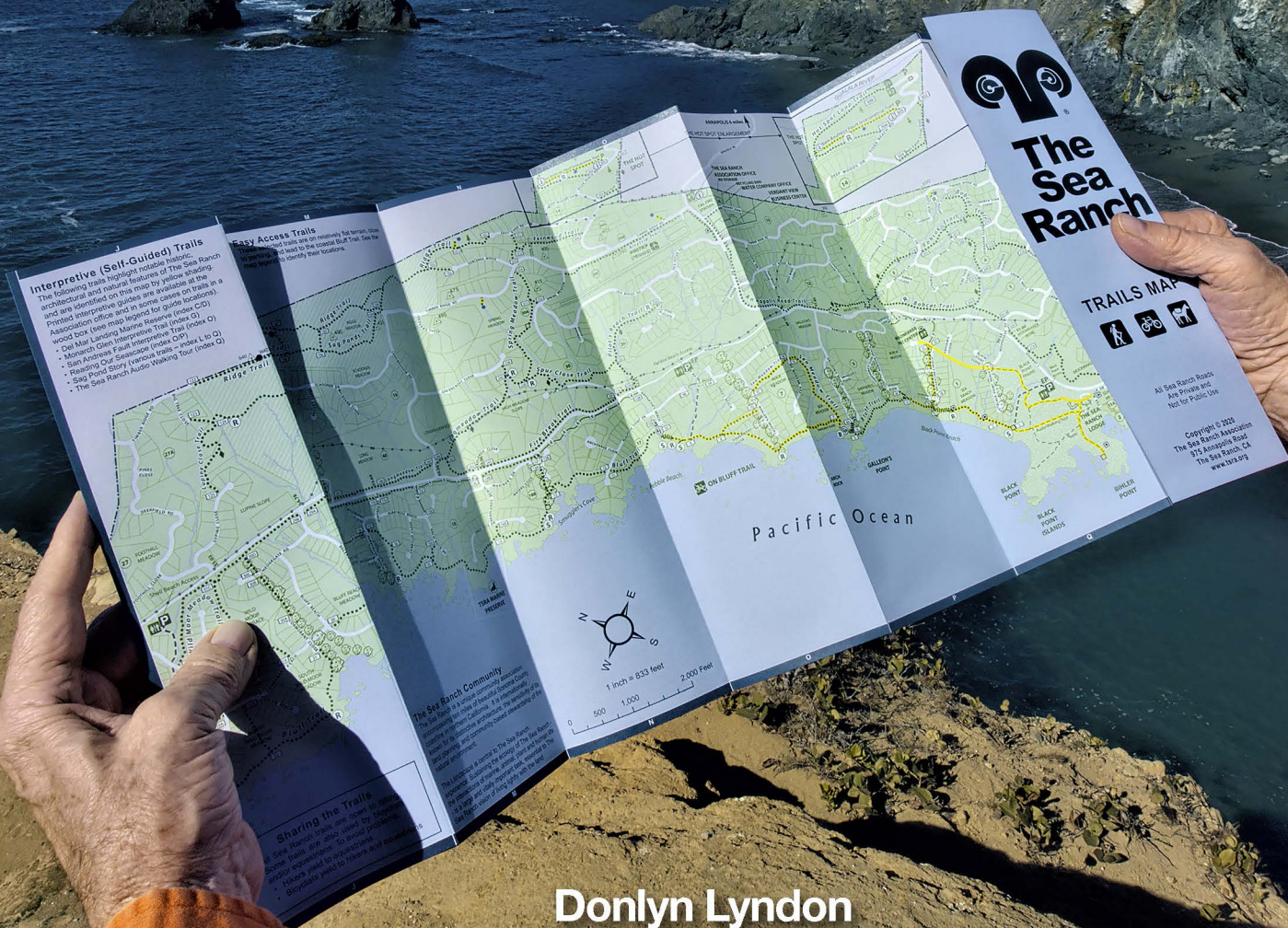


# Place at The Sea Ranch

## Architecture/Landscape Markers on Our Trails



Donlyn Lyndon  
with The Sea Ranch Archives Committee

---

*“And the basic notion is that we would respect the land. We would put people on the land in a way that they were inconspicuous. We would build architecture that was not architectonic, that seemed natural in the place. Contemporary architecture, but . . . not destination architecture. And we weren't going to build a recreational community for destination and play, but a meditative – a quiet, meditative community for ‘just folks,’ as I called them. Not special folks, just folks.”*

— Al Boeke

Oral History, Bancroft Library 2008

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**Place at The Sea Ranch** Architecture/Landscape  
Markers on Our Trails

**Donlyn Lyndon FAIA**

Eva Li Professor Emeritus in the  
College of Environmental Design  
University of California, Berkeley



A project of The Sea Ranch Association  
Archives Committee, 2020

---

*“This is a precious  
landscape, a landscape  
that is not accidental but  
one that has evolved  
through design and through  
the investments of many.  
It depends on continuing  
care, ingenuity and  
discretion.”*

—Donlyn Lyndon  
*The Sea Ranch – 2004*

---

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# FOREWORD

**A** **S THE SUN RISES** over the redwood forested coastal hills, the early morning reveals quiet, dark blue ocean waters and the rugged northern California coastline. In the distance a whale and her calf move slowly northward, revealed by an occasional breach and twin spouts of mist. An osprey glides effortlessly along the bluffs in search of breakfast, landing in a large eucalyptus tree to survey its domain. Deer graze quietly through the meadow below. The day has begun.

This scenario has been going on for centuries while the use of the land has evolved. As the hunting grounds of the native Pomos gave way to the various enterprises of the European immigrants, settlements emerged on the coast to accommodate trapping, lumbering, fishing, and eventually ranching. From those cultural roots in the mid-nineteenth century, The Sea Ranch emerged in the mid-twentieth on what was once a series of sheep ranches embracing more than ten square miles.

Instead of rutted ranch roads, a modern highway now bisects the land. Where sheep and cattle formerly grazed, there are now houses, more trees and fewer meadows. Although remote, isolated, occasionally cold, and often windy, this unique land has seen the emergence of a new community dedicated to preserving it in a natural and unspoiled state.

The Sea Ranch is a gift to our nation and to the concept that people can indeed co-exist with nature. It is a place where a full, rich life can be lived, and historical

traditions celebrated, amid the beauty of a thoughtfully stewarded landscape. Here dwellings celebrate the environment in which they sit through architectural designs intended to blend the structures of man with the structures of the larger landscape. The Sea Ranch embodies the blending of the habitats of nature with the communities of people.

This guide, written and produced entirely by volunteers, is intended to help residents, guests, and visitors better understand the land and the Sea Ranch community in their historical, natural, and cultural contexts. The guide complements and contributes additional insights to the various architectural and landscape markers scattered throughout the community to tell the story of The Sea Ranch. For some, the markers and their associated stories may enhance existing knowledge, while for others, these stories may be an entirely new discovery. In either case, tracing these markers is an adventure worth taking.

Frank M. Bell

*Community Manager, 2010 – 2020*

SEPTEMBER 2020

# INTRODUCTION

**T**O CREATE the special character of The Sea Ranch, the founders integrated innovative planning with the construction of model dwellings and a recreation center as well as a post office and store/cafe for public use. They all serve as examples of architecture that can effectively become a part of the larger landscape. The continuing care and management of this changing landscape is the responsibility of The Sea Ranch Association, whose members are the owners of property here.

One of the most important aspects of this place to bear in mind is that it consists of 3,900 acres of land along nearly ten miles of coast; roughly two-thirds is owned in common and one-third is in private parcels. The creation and care of this place is therefore a kind of joint venture between the Association and the individual property owners who create and maintain dwellings here and steward their land. Design decisions by both the Association and the individual owners are governed by a set of CC&Rs embedded in legal ownership papers, and by *The Sea Ranch Design Manual and Rules*. This process is overseen by an independent Design Committee composed of outstanding

design professionals who are fully familiar with The Sea Ranch and its regulations. (Both documents are downloadable from the Association website, [www.tsra.org](http://www.tsra.org).) Members of the Committee assess each design in terms of its fit to its particular site and its contribution to the qualities of the place as a whole.


The fundamental intent of the rules, guidelines, and design review process is to create a place where nature and human intention can be combined harmoniously. In original planning sessions this intent was described by the primary planner, Lawrence Halprin, as “living lightly on the land,” a phrase of Native American origin that has often been repeated and is generally considered to be a mantra for development at The Sea Ranch. To reflect the continuing care that is essential to the character of this place, however, it could better be described as “living lightly with the land.”

**Follow the markers and learn about the complex and varied history of this area and its architecture and landscape design concepts. Each marker explains the significance of the site and displays a QR code that will connect you to further information.**

# GUIDE, MARKER NUMBERING & MAPS

**A** **S YOU MOVE** about The Sea Ranch, you will find vertical post markers that describe various aspects of this place and how it has come to be. The markers recount historical events that affected this place before it was developed as The Sea Ranch as well as significant events and elements that established its present character.

There are two types of markers, each separately designated on *The Sea Ranch Trails Map*.

**Historical Markers 1 – 25**, designated by a , provide an understanding of the ways the land had been used and of significant events that took place on it during the centuries before it was developed into The Sea Ranch. The land had already been inhabited and tended for centuries, first by Native Americans, then by others who sought to extract economic benefits from the land as lumbermen, farmers, and cattle-then-sheep ranchers. This history is covered more fully in the supplementary booklet:

*Preserving Sea Ranch History:  
A Historical Journey on Our Trails*  
(MAY 2014)

**Architecture/Landscape Markers 26 – 45**, designated by a , are described in this guide:

*Place at The Sea Ranch: Architecture/  
Landscape Markers on Our Trails* (2020)

These markers identify significant elements and characteristics that have evolved since The Sea Ranch was conceived in 1963 and the intentions that have guided the development of the place through more than fifty years.

The map and printed copies of these two publications may be purchased at The Sea Ranch Association office.

## **Marker Numbering System**

The number/letter preceding the dash indicates the unit number where the marker is located.

## **A note about the Maps**

All of these markers are shown on the map, but they are not numbered and may be hard to locate. For ease of use with this guide, smaller segments of the map are reproduced.



These smaller maps are selected areas from the larger trails map:

**Figure 2** corresponds to the Markers included in the chapter “**Setting the Vision.**”

**Figure 6** corresponds to the Markers included in the chapter titled “**Building Community.**”

**Figures 9 and 10** include Markers having to do with “**Elements of the Larger Landscape.**”

The individual Marker numbers are called out by boxed numbers, **2-26**, on the maps.

### **Respecting People, Land and Sea**

- **Stay on the Trails**
- **Respect the property of others**
- **Keep dogs on leash; remove dog waste**
- **No bicycle riding on the Bluff Trail and elsewhere as prohibited by posted signs**
- **No smoking**
- **Be responsible for your own safety**

If you are renting or visiting at The Sea Ranch, be sure to display the tag supplied by your host or your rental agency on your vehicle’s rearview mirror or dashboard, or your vehicle will be subject to citation and immobilization. Carry your pass with you when hiking the trails. The pass from your host or the rental agency must be shown to enter any of the recreation centers. Guests staying with members should obtain vehicle tags and passes from their host.

Day passes for academic study may be obtained through TSRA’s Department of Design, Compliance and Environmental Management (DCEM).

It is essential to note that the entirety of Condominium One is private quarters and that only condominium owners and their guests may enter the court or approach the building. Trespass beyond the posted sign without permission is neither considerate, nor allowed.

.....

**Visitors are asked to remember that The Sea Ranch is a community of private homes. Please respect private property and the privacy and peace of the residents. All Sea Ranch roads, most facilities, and most trails are private: for use only by owners, renters, and their guests.**

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---

*“The Sea Ranch Concept  
is not about a  
‘nice place to live.’  
It’s about a unique place  
to live, unique in its vision  
and its intent to build  
a community dedicated to  
a common effort, an  
effort to protect and  
preserve the natural  
character of a remarkable,  
beautiful and  
appealing place.”*

—Gordon Beebe  
*Soundings*, Fall 1998

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PLACE AT THE SEA RANCH



# ARCHITECTURE/LANDSCAPE MARKERS

**P**LANNING FOR THE SEA RANCH began in 1963, after Al Boeke, Vice President of Hawaii-based Oceanic Properties, Inc., had learned of a large tract of land available for sale on the Northern California coast at the northwestern corner of Sonoma County. The site is traversed by State Route One and consists of rugged bluffs, sloping grassy meadows, and forested hills rising to the east.

Boeke visited the property and convinced his corporation to purchase it from the ranch's owners. He assembled a team of professionals, led by Lawrence Halprin, a noted landscape architect in San Francisco, and including a geographer, civil engineers, and real estate, public relations and legal professionals. Two architectural firms were included at the outset to imagine the best ways of building on this site: Joseph Esherick & Associates and Moore Lyndon Turnbull Whitaker (MLTW).

Together the team forged a vision for what The Sea Ranch could become, using their assembled expertise to create an approach that would be particularly appropriate for this beautiful stretch of coast line. Halprin produced a drawing that he called a "Locational Score," which conveys the primary conditions that were intended to guide detailed development over time.

This guide relates to the Architecture/Landscape Markers that describe significant features of the landscape and community. These markers may best be understood in three groupings:

- **Setting the Vision**
- **Building Community**
- **Elements of the Larger Landscape**

**View from Bihler Point  
of Condominium One and  
coast toward the south.**

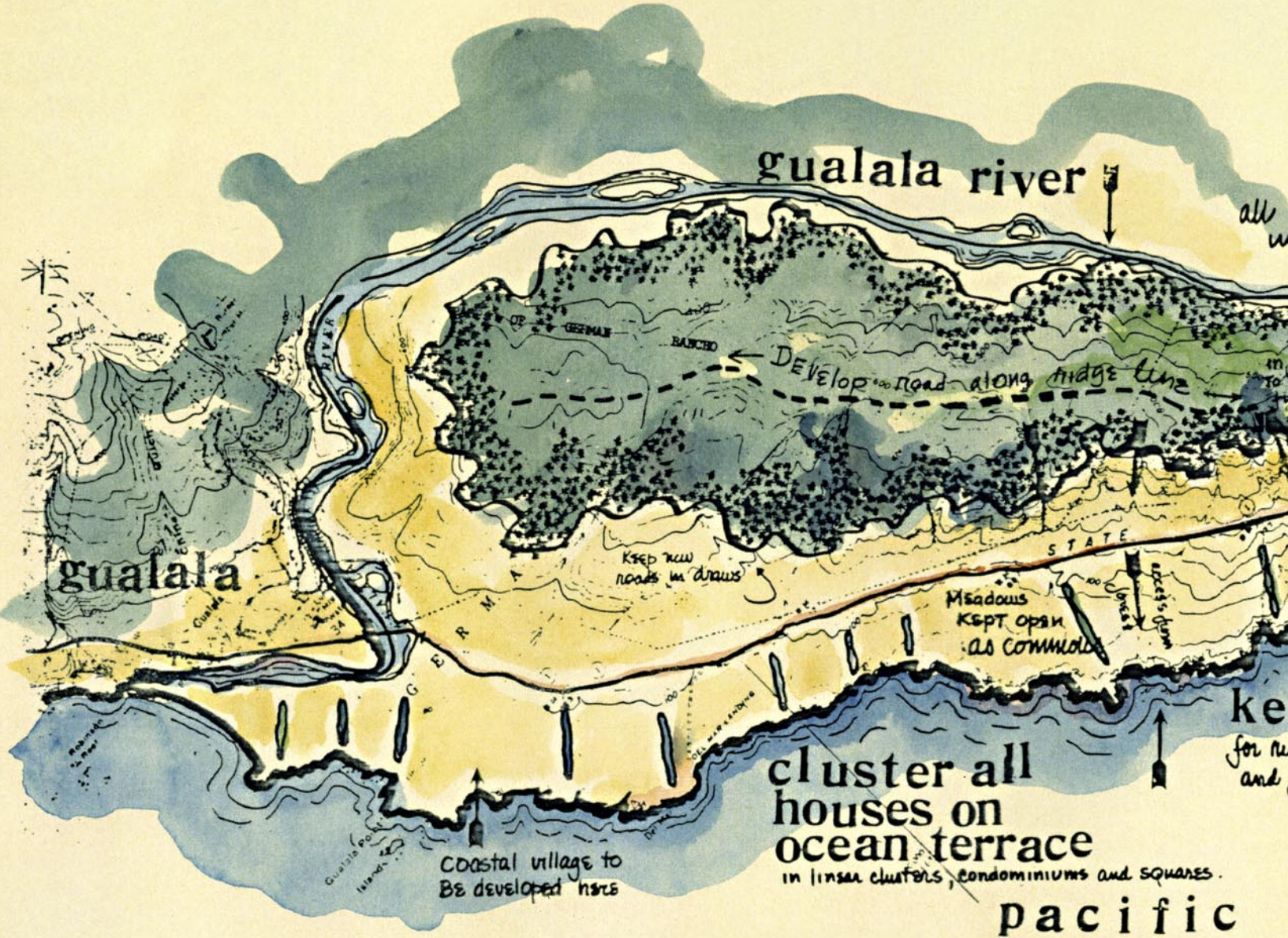


FIGURE 1 Lawrence Halprin's conceptual "Locational Score" from 1981 records the original intentions for various parts of The Sea Ranch: important things to be preserved and the relationship of them all to understanding the place as based in the natural conditions of the site. Halprin called these drawings "scores" rather than "master plans," precisely so that they would indicate the intentions which would govern making specific plans as the development proceeded.

activities to be underground

keep houses back of trees

acquire this property for swimming

in forest natural drainage ways to be preserved & used as green highways to the sea

develop 3000' runway airport

Corporation yard in this area

Keep new roads in areas

NO houses in this area

Condominium here

keep coast open

surfing, hiking, access to water & for visual easement.

Keep meadows open as COMMONS

major Public Beach - develop stair access

area for lodge & inn

Keep flat area open as visual easement

Preserve Black Point as permanent open space

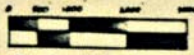
SEA RANCH

Lawrence Halprin & Associates

ocean
















north

• 5000 ACRES •



LOCATIONAL SCORE

**FIGURE 2 Sea Ranch Trails Map segments O-P-Q**

-  Trail, Sea Ranch Lodge
-  Trail, Private Sea Ranch
-  Trail, Public
-  Trail, Interpretive
-  Trail, Easy Access
-  Steep Trail
-  Historical Marker
-  Architectural/Landscape Marker
-  Trail Post Number
-  Spot Elevation
-  Rest/View Log
-  Beach Access Stairs
-  Unit Number
-  54.78 Hwy 1 Mile Marker
-  Emergency Phone (Call Box)



20-32

3-31

1-30

1-29

1-28

27

2-26



# SETTING THE VISION

Markers 26 – 32

**T**HE SEVEN markers in this section can be found on FIGURE 2 (Section O-P-Q on the Trails Map). They begin with Condominium One and continue through the earliest stages of planning, including the Airstrip.

The initial building program by Oceanic included several different elements. **The Sea Ranch Store and Post Office**, designed by Joseph Esherick & Associates and subsequently expanded to become **The Sea Ranch Lodge**, is sited on an ocean-sloping meadow just off State Route One. **The Marker Building**, bearing the logo designed by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, announced the development's presence along the highway and displayed Oceanic's commitment to disciplined design excellence. (The Sea Ranch Store and Post Office building also bears this logo.)

**Condominium One** was built nearby, as well as a group of **Demonstration Houses** farther north which were constructed along the edge of an existing cypress hedgerow. Each will be discussed in turn. ■



Aerial view, circa 1965, from the south showing Condominium One, The Sea Ranch Store, and the Cypress Hedgerows to the north.



South view,  
Condo One

**C**ONDOMINIUM ONE is a ten-unit dwelling structure designed by MLTW that climbs a land form from the nearby ocean cliffs; it was intended as a model for more clustered units to be built along the coast. Condominium One is now on the National Register of Historic Places and has received many design awards.

The structure consists of roughly cubic volumes – one for each dwelling unit – mostly arrayed under a large sloping roof that follows the grade of the land. The building rises atop a mound reaching back from the ocean bluffs. The complex forms two courtyards: one, a car court edged on two sides by long, shed-roofed car barns, the other, an entry court with the terrain descending through it with a square, level gathering platform near its center.

Seen from the location of the marker, across the cove on Bihler Point, the condominium’s large, sloping form – with its bays, projections, and penetrations surfaced by redwood weathering into grays – is akin to that of the bluffs themselves, eroded by the wind and sea.

2-26

## CONDOMINIUM ONE

**This complex, situated on this austere, rugged bluff, appears as a large, rectilinear landform, a “wooden rock.” The heavy-timber structure, clad in redwood siding, recalls the region’s vernacular barns; the auto court evokes the stockade of Fort Ross. The ten units are distinguished, not by spatial gaps, but by bays, courts and facade undulations that articulate each unit’s specific orientation. The dwellings are encompassed under a single-plane shed roof, presenting a mass that does not emulate, but rather reinforces the natural form and scale of the land.**

Architect: MLTW, 1965  
*Progressive Architecture* Citation, 1965  
 AIA National Honor Award, 1967  
 AIA Twenty-Five Year Award, 1991  
 National Register of Historic Places, 2005



The interiors of each unit are square in plan, with varied bay windows and projections that reach towards selective views out to and up and down the coast. The units have high volumes, with spaces reaching up to the underside of the roof. They are built with heavy timber frames of locally harvested Douglas Fir supporting plank walls that have unpainted re-sawn surfaces inside and are covered with redwood siding on the exterior.

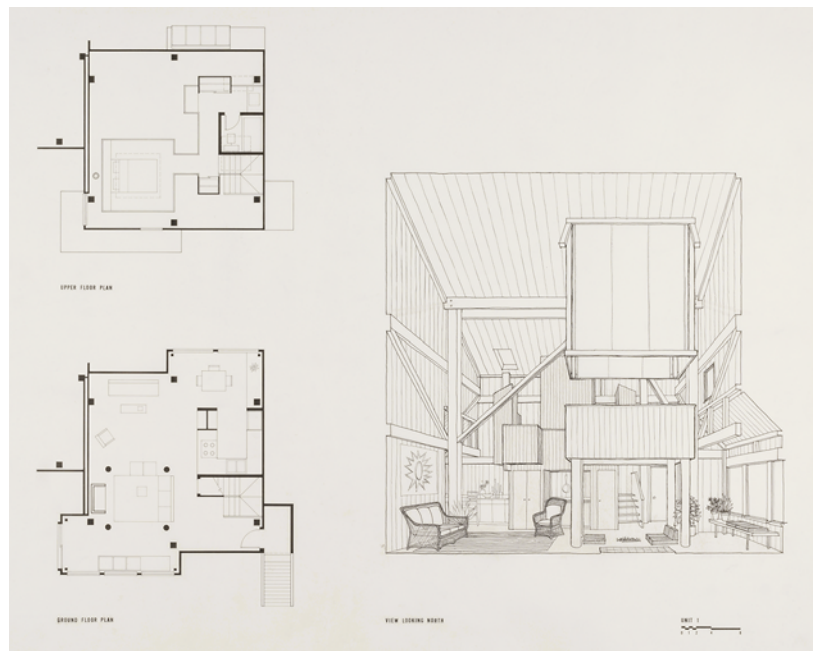
Each unit is different. Most interiors have free-standing, four-post structures that hold sleeping spaces aloft and shelter more intimate seating areas below. Kitchens, baths, and stairs are assembled into large sculpted forms with smooth, painted wood surfaces that rise inside the volumes like large cabinets. Light plays down from skylights onto these forms to create an inner landscape alive with differentiation and a shifting character throughout the day.



Condominium One was intended to serve as a model for additional condominiums to be built south of the original along the coast. At the request of Oceanic Properties, MLTW did a preliminary site plan, carefully fitting seven more complexes close to and around several mounds comparable to the knoll on which Condominium One is built. Unfortunately, they were never executed due to market conditions and changes in corporate strategy. Condominium ownership was a new concept when these were built, and the real estate staff and many potential customers had some difficulty understanding what such ownership entailed. ■

**FIGURE 3 Plans and an interior perspective of Unit One show the arrangement of heavy timber posts framing a large interior volume, with a canopied sleeping loft above a “four poster.” Projecting bays and a semi-enclosed kitchen are on the lower level, and an enclosed bathroom and closets take form above.**

Light falls from skylights onto wood structure as specific views out to the landscape are framed by projecting bays. Redwood-sided walls link the condominium units as they slope towards the ocean, enclosing a common courtyard. A bay near the top steps out for views to a nearby rock and the coast beyond.





**T**HE SEA RANCH STORE AND POST OFFICE were originally quite modest: a bank of post office boxes and a desk. The Store was for basic conveniences like eggs, butter, and milk. The owners of a unit in Condominium One could send their child to walk up and buy some essentials. There was also a modest eatery.

Shortly after opening, the building was expanded to include a full restaurant and bar, a fireplace lounge, and a real estate office with a fetching contour model of the planned development.



## THE SEA RANCH LODGE COMPLEX

The Marker Building behind you, as well as the Store and Post Office in front of you, were among the first structures built by the developer at The Sea Ranch. The store was later expanded to include a bar and restaurant, with guest rooms in a separate building. The complex demonstrates how a public facility can blend with the land rather than assert itself against its context like a billboard. The east facade of the main building carries the iconic ram's head logo by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon. Two barns from pre-Sea Ranch days still remain in the complex.

Architects:  
Store, Post Office, Marker Building:  
Joseph Esherick & Associates, 1966  
Lodge:  
Al Boeke and Louis McLane with Agora Architects, 1968



Rooms for lodging were added in separate wings that faced rooms out to the ocean and up the coast, often through bay windows that animate the facades of the building. These wings also form a courtyard for entries and stairs protected from the wind. The upper rooms had lofts, all had wood stoves, and all were without phones or televisions that would disturb the peace. A high, wood-fenced enclosure concealed parked cars. The long columned porch that so characterizes the place now even then offered a sense of gatherings and an expansive future.

Subsequent Lodge owners have for some time considered a future which makes use of the prairie meadow to the north which they own. This piece of land, zoned for further development, is one of the largest open spaces on the Ranch offering prime views of Black Point, the most prominent coastal landscape feature of the area. ■

**Current Lodge building incorporating original store and post office, with extension and lodging rooms beyond.**

1-28

## HEDGEROW HOUSES

Constructed as demonstration housing by Oceanic Properties, Inc., these five dwellings, plus Esherick's own home for a total of six, are grouped together and integrated into the cypress hedgerow. Their sloping roofs – some sod-covered – window placement, staggered siting, and slight adjustments in orientation to fit the land illustrate strategies for buffering wind, maximizing sunlight and viewsheds, and preserving common open space. The first detached houses constructed, they helped set the high design standard for which The Sea Ranch is known.

Architect: Joseph Esherick & Associates, 1966



built to illustrate another potential of the site. Known as the Hedgerow Houses, they were designed by Joseph Esherick & Associates and are located at the western end of a long hedgerow that reaches to the bluffs just north of Black Point.

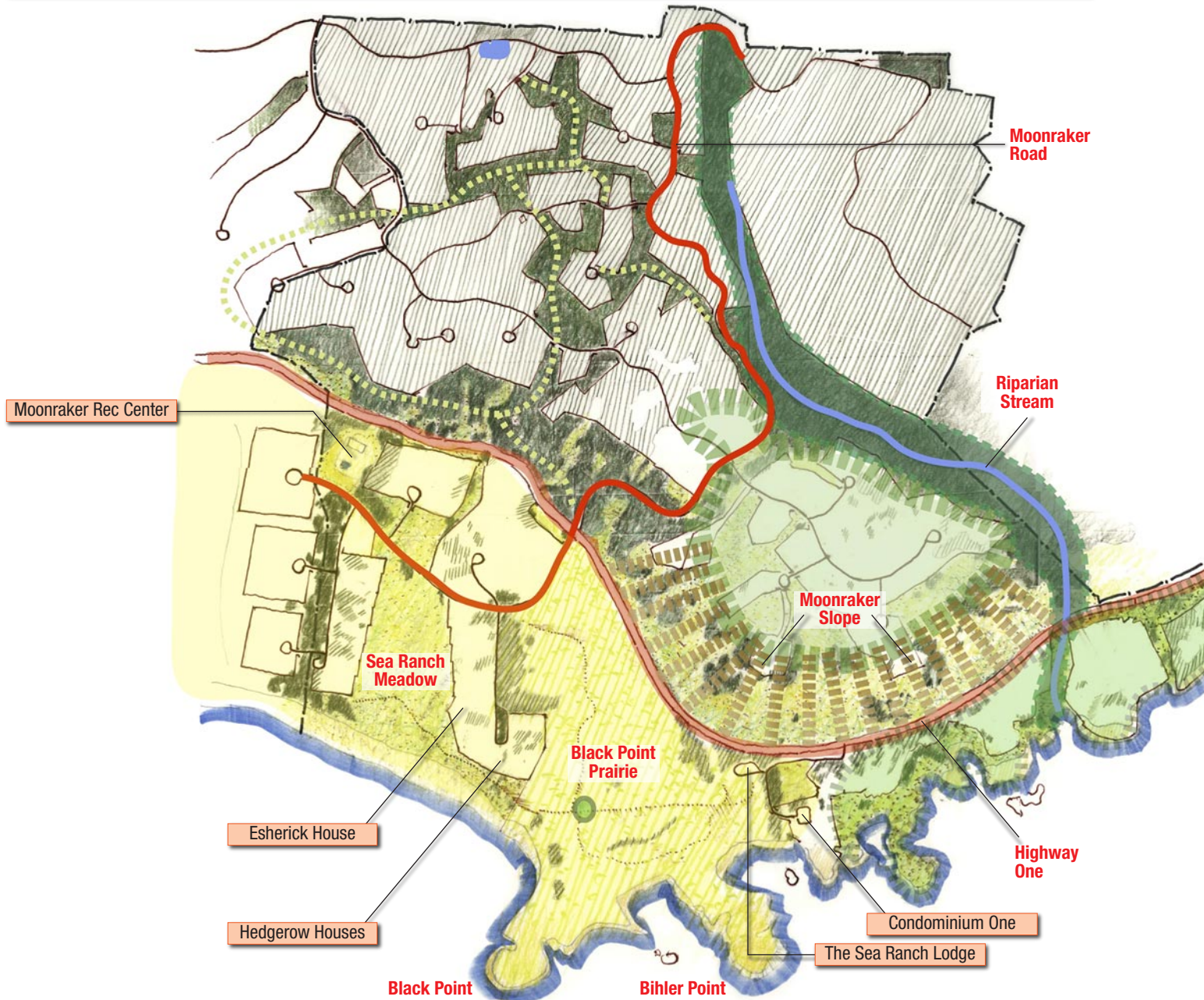
These houses form a consistent group. They are slightly set into the ground, with building forms modified by bays to catch particular views. Roofs slant down into the strong winds that come from the northwest and reach up towards the southern sun. This direction of the roof pitch makes wind-shadows behind the buildings where patios and gardens are protected from the wind.

Several of the roof surfaces were initially made of sod, which requires a lower roof slope than shingles. That slight variation in roof pitches creates an undulation in the mass of buildings that echoes the gently rippling slopes of the meadow landscape they front.

**T**HE DEMONSTRATION HOUSES are to the north, across the large open Black Point Prairie, and adjoining a mass of trees shaping the other side. They are a group of individual but related houses,



**FIGURE 4** This map shows the geographic scope of the first area of development, including the landscape forms, the roads that pass through it, the coves and points of the shore line, and the relation of private lands (lighter color) to lands owned in common. In the lower left corner is a meadow that clearly demonstrates the original Sea Ranch concept, with houses arranged along the edge of existing hedgerows, leaving unobstructed views of the coastline.



1-29

## THE SEA RANCH DESIGN CONCEPT

**This meadow, the first planned for development at The Sea Ranch, has taken on “iconic” status. Integrated structures and landscape embody basic design concepts originated by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin and the consultant team for the developer, Oceanic Properties, Inc. Houses are set at meadow’s edge near existing hedgerows for wind protection. Clustering homes maximizes the central meadow as common open space, allowing expansive views for each residence, not just those nearest the bluff. Hillside houses are inconspicuously sited at forest edge. The simple design of the houses reflects the influence of north coast vernacular architecture, and adapts to local climatic conditions.**

1963 – 1965



*close but respectful relationship to neighboring landscape and buildings, the use of local materials sympathetic to the site, and forms that would provide shelter from the strong winds while reaching for the sun and outlook. Even more fundamentally, they are places that prioritize the perceptions that people will have moving about and within them, aware of being present in a very special place and climate. ■*

---

*“Our most difficult task was to find a way for people to inhabit this magnificent and natural system in numbers without destroying the very reason for people to come here.”*

—Lawrence Halprin  
*The Sea Ranch – Diary of an Idea*

---

Although there is an overall sense of common purpose in these shingle-sided wood buildings, each has its own identity. Adjustments in the site plan and connecting garden walls give each house a separate position in the complex, yet together their presence as buildings has become one with the landscape.

Aligning with the edge of the hedgerow instead of stepping out into the meadow or stringing across the ocean front, this plan keeps the ocean front clear, and detailed planning adjusts to local conditions. This concept was intended to become a theme for all of the development and is an essential component of The Sea Ranch Design Concept.

*These original building clusters – the Condominium, the Store and Lodge complex, and the Hedgerow Houses – were envisioned as architecture that would show what could follow, especially through their*



**Joseph Esherick’s own house, set among the Hedgerow Houses, shows careful use of window openings to throw light along walls and capture specific views, as well as a glass-enclosed porch for wind-protected entry.**

**T**HE GROUP OF EARLY DESIGNS meant to illustrate ways of building at The Sea Ranch includes the Moonraker Athletic Center, built to be used by all property owners. Designed by Halprin and MLTW, it remains one of the most innovative structures in the way that it joins building to landscape. Earth berms and a long wood structure work together to surround wind-protected sunny spaces for a swimming pool and tennis courts. Being inside the small but spatially complex changing rooms, which are augmented by Stauffacher-Solomon's brilliant "Supergraphics," is an extraordinary experience, as the graphics accompany and tease movement among the light-washed, painted walls and stairs of the structure. From this marker, walk to the top of the stairs for a view down to the tennis courts and out to the meadow and ocean. ■



Supergraphics inside the women's locker room.



1-30

## MOONRAKER RECREATION CENTER

The defining feature of this innovative pool/tennis complex is its seamless combination of landscape and building. Earthen berms join with the wooden "wall" accommodating locker rooms to create a wind-calmed oasis. Interior "supergraphics" by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, in large-scaled, vibrant shapes and letters, psychologically expand the tiny spaces. Recreated and refreshed in 2018, these architectural graphics were among the very first examples of working this way.

Architect: MLTW/Moore Turnbull  
Landscape Architect: Lawrence Halprin, 1966  
*Progressive Architecture Citation*, 1966  
AIA National Honor Award, 1968





3-31

## SIGNATURE HEDGEROWS

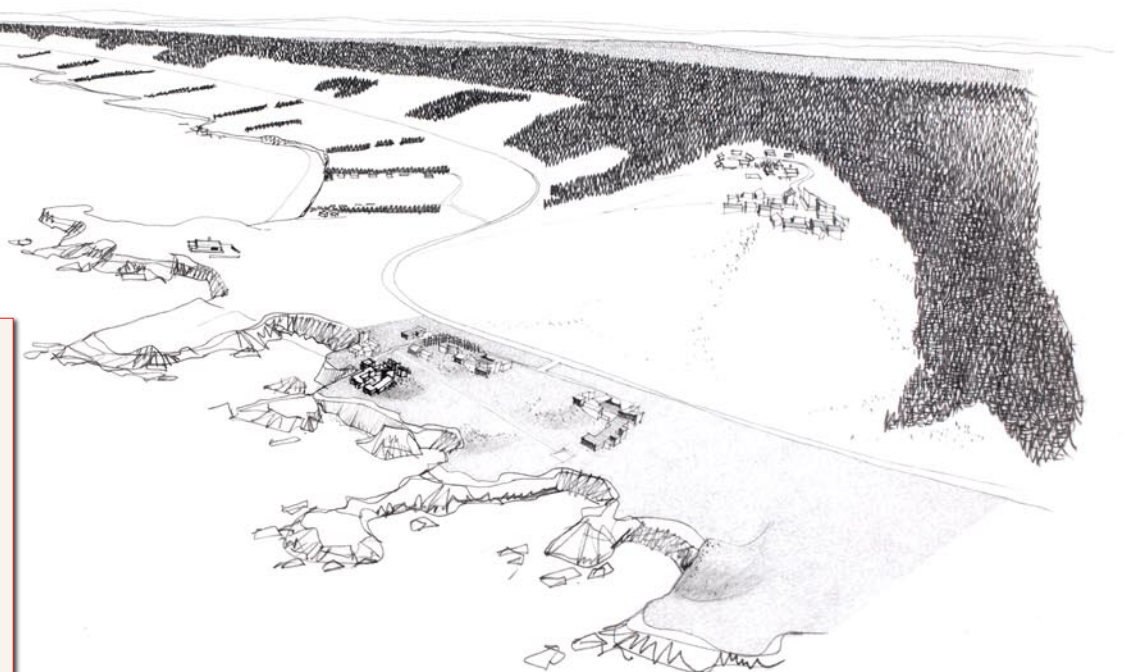
A few years after Walter Frick acquired the Del Mar Ranch in 1912, he began planting double rows of Monterey Cypress to divide the land into saleable “ranchettes” of 200–250 acres each. After he decided against subdividing, the trees served as windbreaks for grazing animals. These 19 hedgerows were the most prominent landscape element when Oceanic Properties, Inc. purchased the ranch. As the original cypress trees reach the end of their lifespan, the hedgerows are being replaced with a similar double row layout as has happened here.



ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING characteristics of the land that Oceanic purchased was the recurrent appearance of east/west ranks of hedgerows marching up the coast. They created a series of giant “rooms” in the landscape, emphasized in this early drawing by William Turnbull, Jr. Original planning for The Sea Ranch took great advantage of this larger order by relating the positioning of private lots to them.

The hedgerows are now 100+ years old and in need of gradual replacement. This marker is located in one such area where the original trees have been removed and the new trees are now well established. Interestingly, the space left by the removal of those century-old trees has become a small meadow.

FIGURE 5 This drawing, circa 1964, made during the early design process by William Turnbull, Jr. of MLTW, shows the scope of the hedgerows marching along the coast, an imagined geometric shaping of the forest front, and early studies of first buildings.





Look closely; you can walk along the line of large, low stumps tracking the position of the original hedgerow. Just across the road from this marker is a noteworthy house by Don Jacobs, who designed many houses at The Sea Ranch with interesting volumes, shaped well for their sites. The hedgerow originally extended across the front of the house, providing intriguing views south to Black Point. The house and garage forms are simple and

sharply defined, with a bay on the ocean side that looks back from the living room into the cove beyond to the north. An addition by Monty Anderson seamlessly fits into the place. ■

TOP Bluff Reach hedgerow, view facing west

ABOVE Galleons Reach hedgerow facing east with stumps from original trees and new hedgerow on the right.

20-32

## THE SEA RANCH AIRSTRIP

This private airstrip, constructed by the developer as part of the original Sea Ranch site planning, is in a meadow that may have once been used for grazing. The field enables airplane access to this remote location as an alternative to negotiating the tortuous curves of Highway One by car. The hangars were later designed as simple steel structures enclosed by wood siding that echo rural vernacular buildings.

Hangars Architect: Don Jacobs, 1985



A MAJOR OPEN SPACE up in the forest off Annapolis Road is the clearing for the airstrip, which also provides long vistas to the north from the Verdant View area, where there are a number of businesses, including a café and the Sea Ranch Building Supply, with work and storage yards. The latter was founded by Matthew Sylvia, who was *the* builder for most of the first decades.

The building on Annapolis Road now used as The Sea Ranch Association offices was built by Sylvia, designed by MLTW in 1965; the commercial structure at 1000 Annapolis Road, also by MLTW and built in 1968, was originally Sylvia's office and construction yard. Both buildings have since been adjusted by others as uses changed.



Various additional structures and uses have spread loosely behind the Association offices. The most notable of these, facing Verdant View with an amiably twisted porch, is used now as offices for the Water Company, although it was originally designed as the Fire House and later used by the Association. Al Boeke, whose vision and direction were so important to the founding of The Sea Ranch, signed as the architect of record.



This extended site, with further planned investment by the Association, as well as better pedestrian connections and landscaping, has the potential to join with the other buildings and uses in the Verdant View area to become a landmark village center. ■

TOP & INSET **Airstrip, view looking North**  
 CENTER **Airstrip, view looking South**  
 LEFT **Water Company Building**

FIGURE 6 Sea Ranch Trails Map segments K-L-M



29A-37

29A-39

36

21-40

29A-38

36A-34

36A-35

18-33

●●●● Trail, Private Sea Ranch

— — — Trail, Public

— — — Trail, Interpretive

||||| Trail, Easy Access

◆ Steep Trail

■ Historical Marker

⊙ Architectural/  
Landscape Marker

236A Trail Post Number

△ Spot Elevation

Ⓡ Rest/View Log

Ⓢ Beach Access Stairs

③ Unit Number

54.78 Hwy 1 Mile Marker

EP Emergency Phone  
(Call Box)



# BUILDING COMMUNITY

Markers 33 – 40

**T**HIS GROUP of Architecture/Landscape Markers in FIGURE 6 (Section K-L-M on the Trails Map) is located near the historic Knipp-Stengel Barn (see Marker 36A-18 in the Historical Marker set). These include the Stables, the Ohlson Recreation Center, two sets of Clusters, and the Walk-in Cabins, as well as some especially influential examples of ways of building at The Sea Ranch. The marker for the Central Timber Production Zone designates a segment of the larger forest that is dedicated to commons.

The Knipp-Stengel Barn is the major landmark in the middle section of The Sea Ranch. Like

Condominium One, it is on the National Register of Historic Places. Its clear, strong, white shape is unmistakable as you pass by on State Route One. This barn is the most effective reminder of the ranching past that shaped the character of the land long before The Sea Ranch was founded. Previously used as a stable and at one time in considerable neglect, it was restored by an extraordinary group of volunteers who worked tirelessly to return the barn to use, with material support from The Sea Ranch Association.

The group, whose members became known as “The Barnies,” still exists and watches over



**View of the Knipp-Stengel Barn in earlier days.**

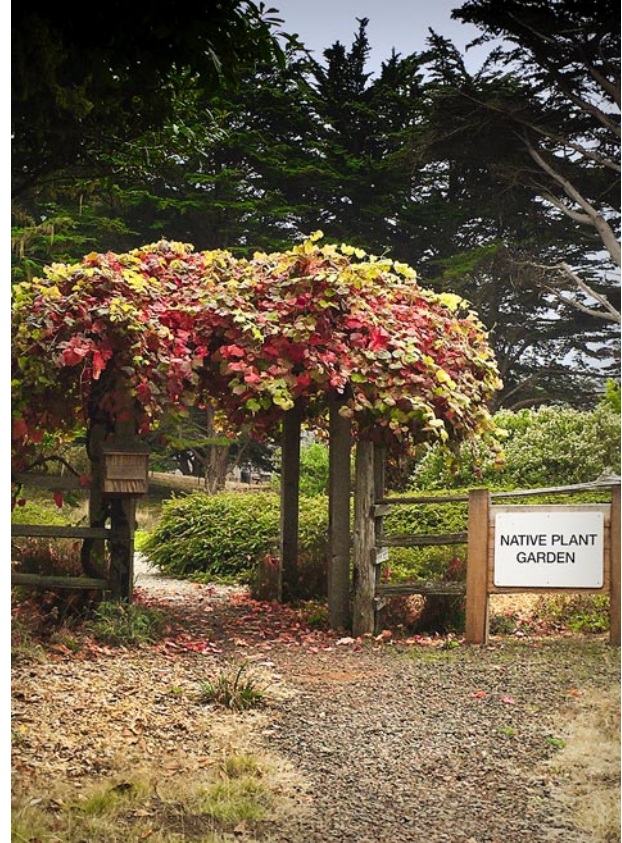
**LEFT The Barn as it appears today after decades of restoration by volunteers.**



Ohlson  
Ranch  
House

and manages the building, which is used for especially large meetings, theatrical performances by the Sea Ranch Thespians, and the showing of classic films. Events of special significance presented at the barn include memorials for Lawrence Halprin and Al Boeke, two “authors” of The Sea Ranch Concept. It was also the site for the concluding event in the year-long celebration of The Sea Ranch’s 50th birthday: the premier performance of *The Sea Ranch Songs*, written by Aleksandra Vrebalov, and performed by the internationally-known Kronos Quartet, with an accompanying video by Andrew Lyndon.

Nearby is the house now known as the Ohlson Ranch House – named after the four brothers from whom Oceanic Properties



bought the land and which was Elmer Ohlson’s personal residence before its sale to Oceanic. This house is now the location of The Sea Ranch Library and provides space for a wide range of the volunteer committee meetings essential to stewarding the community and its properties.

This area is also the location of the Native Plant Garden, which provides examples of plants that can be effectively grown at The Sea Ranch, respecting the design guidelines using only plants native to this area. This beautiful garden is maintained by a group of dedicated volunteers. ■

18-33  
**BINKER BARN**

These barn-like houses were named after early Sea Ranch realtor “Snap” Binker, who conceived the idea of providing lot owners with a stock plan usable for various Sea Ranch sites. With heavy timber framing and plank walls clad with redwood siding, they were built to resemble the ranch buildings along the coast. Each home’s central, steeply-gabled volume is supplemented by more intimately-scaled bays and porches that slope outward to the land. The 17 “Binkers,” including the three in this neighborhood, all seem well settled, whether standing in forest or meadow.

Architect: MLTW/Moore; Turnbull, 1967–71  
 A Binker Barn on the hillside was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.



The clarity of the central barn shape is supplemented by shed-roofed additions, porches, and bays in all directions, responding to views, slopes and privacy needs. This basic design creates houses that sit well in their respective locations. The barn form provides high space within; rooms are subdivided to take advantage of the spacious, timber frame volume, with intimate corners created by the bays. One of these Binker Barns, built up in the forest on Timber Ridge Road, is the first single-family dwelling at The Sea Ranch to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. ■

**I**MMEDIATELY TO THE SOUTH of the Ohlson complex stand examples of an especially influential way of building at The Sea Ranch: The Binker Barns, designed by William Turnbull, Jr. for salesman-developer “Snap” Binker and built by Matthew Sylvia.

Intended as a structure that could be replicated in many different site conditions, seventeen were eventually constructed; four are in this segment of The Sea Ranch. One stands alongside the trail just near this marker, another just uphill near Wildberry Close, a third farther south on Albatross Reach is less visible, back near the highway beyond a stand of vegetation, and the fourth on the south side of Arch Rock Road (where the owners have taken the unusual step of repeating the barn form right behind the original to provide for additional living space).





36A-34  
**STABLES**

Equestrian facilities have been part of this land for well over a century. The first Sea Ranch equestrian facilities were located in the Knipp-Stengel Barn, built in the 1880s, across Highway One. The current horse sheds, fencing and related facilities derive their simple architectural vocabulary from the rural vernacular wooden structures of northern California, which influenced The Sea Ranch design philosophy.

Architect: Dan Levin, 1985



**T**HE STABLES, their fenced open areas, and circular paddock are precisely spaced across the landscape. From the location of this marker you can see the clear relation of their gabled forms to the building that preceded them—the much larger white barn structure across the highway.

The Stables and the Ohlson Recreation Center (see next marker) embody The Sea Ranch Association's commitment to provide recreation facilities and informal gathering for members and their guests. ■

**T**HE OHLSON RECREATION CENTER, which includes a swimming pool and three tennis courts plus changing rooms, is another innovative complex combining architecture and landscape.

The complex is located to the south of the Ohlson hedgerow within some shaped berms of earth that shelter the swimming pool level and offer, from the upper entry level, a fine view over the pool, the open meadow beyond and out to the ocean. There is also a short tunnel view, through some cypress trees, of the trail leading down to stairs that access the coved beach below. The changing spaces and saunas are housed in high, colorful spaces at various levels within a large, long, wind-buffering structure designed by MLTW/Moore Turnbull, which forms a landmark background for the pool and a windbreak for the tennis courts behind. A cypress hedgerow planted beyond the tennis courts buffers winds from the south. A riding trail crosses the highway from the Stables and descends among those trees to join a trail through the lower meadows. ■



36A-35

**OHLSON RECREATION CENTER**

This athletic center was the second built at The Sea Ranch. While larger than the earlier Moonraker Center, what was formerly called the North Recreation Center is an obvious descendant of Moonraker. Both designs treat the structures as elements of the landscape, fusing landform, vegetation and building into a single composition. The Ohlson building serves as a “wind-dam” in the words of William Turnbull, Jr., sheltering the tennis courts to the south, and joining with the hedgerow to the north to define an outdoor, wind-calmed room for swimming and sunbathing.

Architects: MLTW/Moore Turnbull with Donlyn Lyndon, 1971




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*“Architecture . . . is the act  
of place making,  
connecting the specific to  
the not so specific,  
the present to the past,  
the form to the function,  
and the building to its  
environment.*

*A building is an act,  
not just an object.”*

—Richard Whitaker  
*GA Houses* – 1980

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**A** SEGMENT of The Sea Ranch properties that is part of the larger forest is dedicated to Commons. Of special concern is the preservation and reinforcement of forest health. This area, with its network of trails, features special environments, such as “sag ponds” of still water in hollows created by movements in the earth crust, and “fairy rings,” those clusters of redwoods that have grown from the roots of older trees which have died or been cut for lumber, creating rings of smaller trees rising skyward. Examples of both of these landscape elements are visible from the trail very near this marker. ■

36

### **CENTRAL TIMBER PRODUCTION ZONE (CTPZ)**

**This portion of the ranch land, originally purchased for development by Oceanic Properties, Inc., along with forested areas to the north and south, was sold to a timber production company in 1986 and selectively logged. The central section was subsequently repurchased by The Sea Ranch Association in 1992 and dedicated as commons. These 282 acres are now managed by The Sea Ranch Association and contain a number of hiking trails. Notable are the “fairy rings” of redwoods and the nearby sag ponds.**



29A-37  
**MADRONE CLUSTER**

A key element of Lawrence Halprin's plan for The Sea Ranch was to conserve common open space by closely clustering dwellings, a concept first demonstrated with the Hedgerow Houses and Condominium One. This U-shaped group of houses, constructed by Oceanic Properties, Inc., is an orderly complex of integrated forms gathered around a central car barn, with autos sheltered like agricultural animals. The viewsheds, however, are oriented outward – to meadow, forest and sea.

Site Plan and Two Demonstration Houses:  
 MLTW/William Turnbull, Jr., 1973

Architect, Remaining Houses:  
 Oceanic Properties, Inc., Al Boeke Consultant, 1974 – 1980



**TWO SETS OF CLUSTERS** conceived by William Turnbull, Jr., and the Walk-in Cabins designed by Obie Bowman, continue the original concept of building housing in ensembles as earlier seen in the descriptions of Condominium One and the Hedgerow Houses. Each group is different, designed to best fit the landscape. All are made with wood siding and simple volumes, with bays and nooks added to suit the site, and car barns to sequester cars.

The Madrone Cluster circles the car barn. The houses are mostly separated, with enclosed courts, but linked by walls and vegetation. Their views are either expansive down to meadows and the coast or connected to the adjoining forest. Entries are approached from the shared compound. ■

**Madrone Meadow  
 showing central  
 car barn.**



**T**HE MOST REMARKABLE of these clustered dwellings are four units at the forest end of the White Fir Meadow designed by Turnbull. This group stands as a finely sculpted form fronting the open meadow space, the farthest east of buildings that stretch out from a barn that accommodates all the cars for these units. Similar car barns occupy the southern boundary of the meadow edging the forest, with clustered units at each end and a set of four nearly identical free-standing houses across the drive, which verge into the meadow.

*Together the varied groupings of these clustered units shape the transition from meadowed slopes to the dense forest. In so doing they also create smaller places of distinct character. ■*

29A-38

## WHITE FIR WOOD CLUSTER

**This cluster is the lower of two sets of cluster housing built for sale by the developer. These modest dwellings were envisioned, according to Al Boeke, as “changing rooms” between city living and the outdoors, where one could enjoy activities such as hiking the network of trails that crisscross the area. The four demonstration units at the head of the meadow, just below the first car barn, are of post & beam construction. The balance of the complex was revised to reduce costs. The integrated site planning makes these dwellings fit into the topography particularly well.**

Site Plan and Architect, Demonstration Houses:  
MLTW/William Turnbull, Jr., 1973

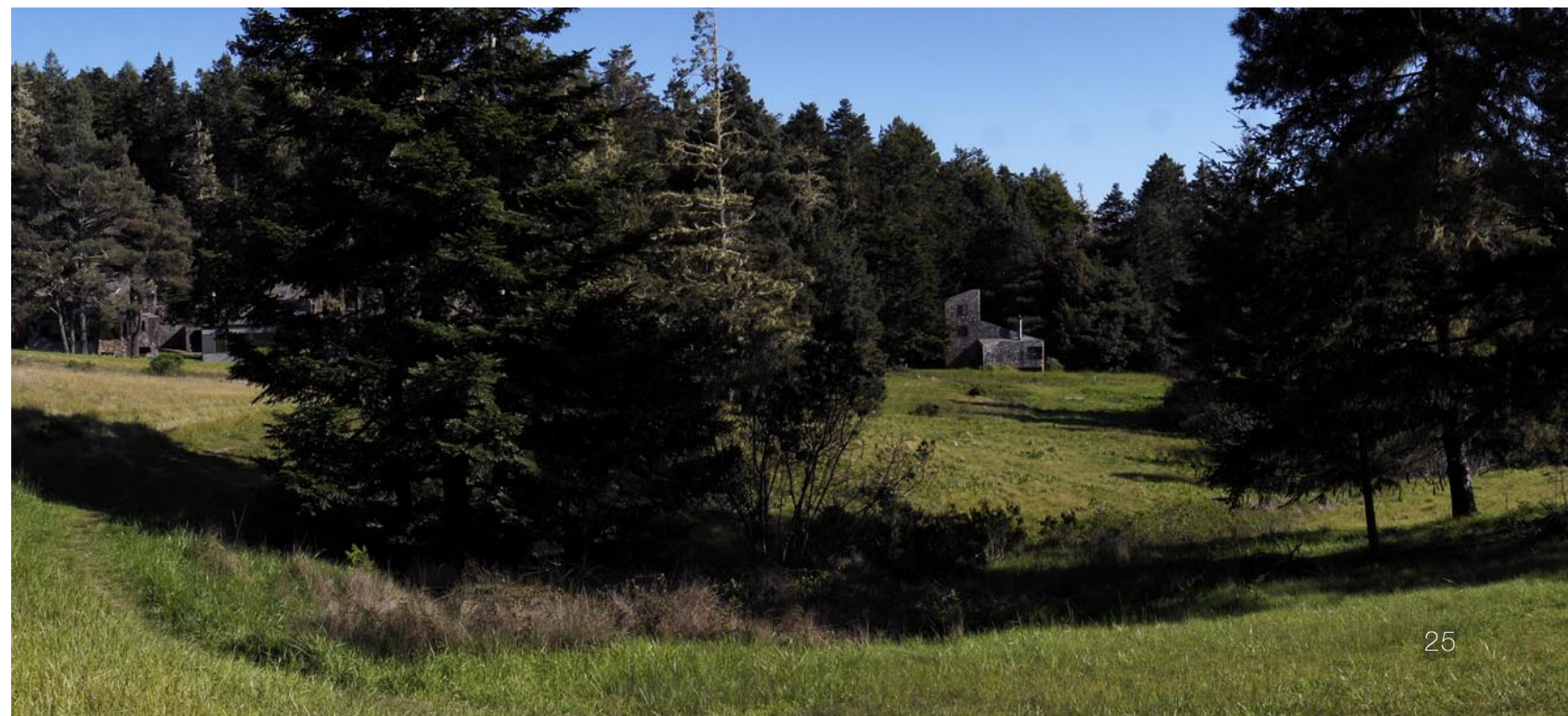
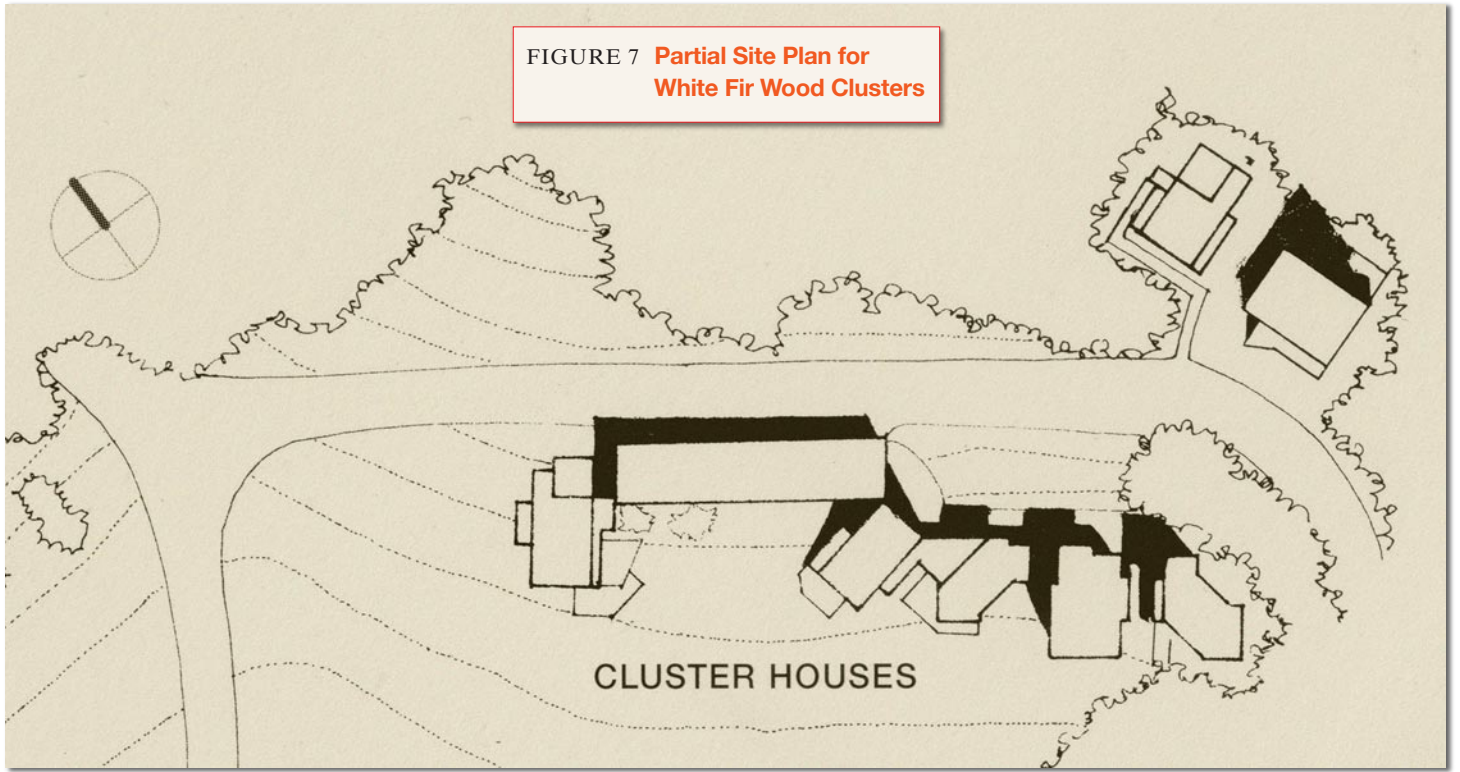
Architect, Remaining Houses:  
Oceanic Properties, Inc., Al Boeke Consultant, 1974–1980



**White Fir Wood Cluster houses dwell in the transition between forest and meadow.**



FIGURE 7 Partial Site Plan for  
White Fir Wood Clusters



**T**HE WALK-IN CABINS are another innovative cluster of dwellings, located on the slopes above the White Fir Wood Cluster. These well-formed dwellings, designed by Obie Bowman, are sited among the redwoods, free to find their places on a forest floor not paved for driveways. Auto access is limited to infrequent servicing and essential deliveries; cars are parked in a space on the road below, leaving the area free of reflective metal, automobile noise, and fumes. The cabins are small in footprint but capacious, with high volumes reaching up to a loft under a skylight. Decks extend at the main level into the forest surroundings, offering glimpses through tree trunks, branches, and conifer needles to views beyond, including, often, the ocean horizon. ■

29A-39

## WALK-IN CABINS

Oceanic Properties, Inc. constructed this group of 15 small, economically-built cabins as weekend getaways, with access by foot and parking at the base of the hill. The complex has the feeling of a summer base camp for nature exploration. Each cabin is 20 feet to a side, with a loft covered by a skylit flat roof on one corner from which two roof planes drop down like tent flaps. These repetitive house forms are varied by the particulars of their siting among the redwoods and on the steep slopes.

Architect: Obie Bowman, 1972  
Award in Architecture and Engineering, 1972  
Sea Ranch Design Award, 1974  
First Honor Award, Homes for Better Living Awards Program,  
AIA/House and Home, 1975  
AIA/Sunset "Western Home Awards" Citation, 1976



Exterior of one of the Walk-in Cabins.

Interior view shows the simplicity of design.

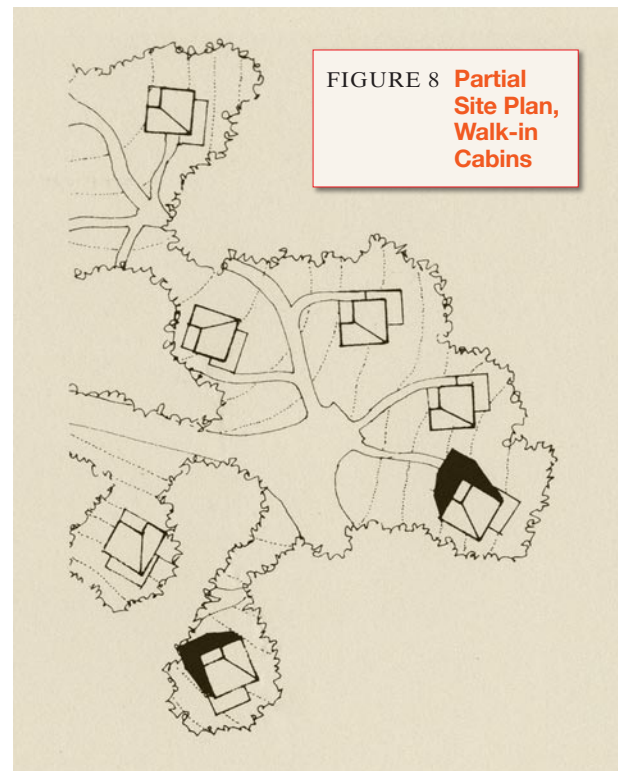


FIGURE 8 Partial Site Plan, Walk-in Cabins

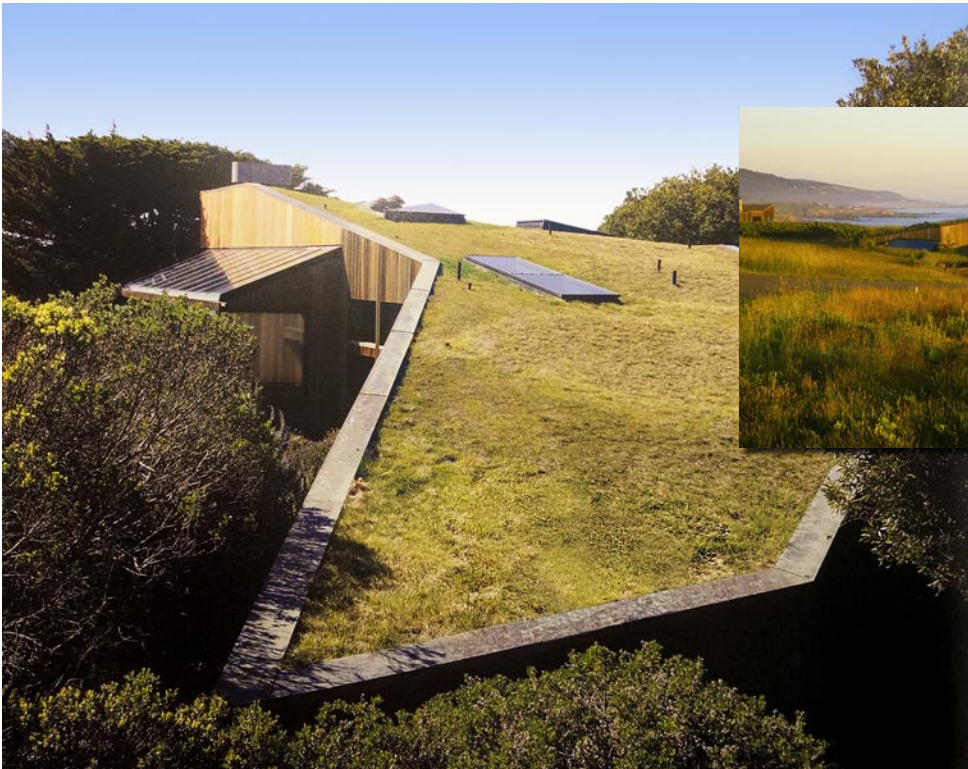
21-40  
LIVING ROOFS

Several of the early Sea Ranch houses incorporated the then-innovative concept of living, or sod, roofs. This vegetative covering integrates structures into the surrounding landscape and provides insulation, water conservation, and wildlife habitat—fulfilling the founding philosophy of “living lightly on the land.” Living roofs continue to be used at The Sea Ranch and are now common on a broad array of urban structures.

Architect: Obie Bowman, 1985  
Redwood Empire AIA Design Awards, Honor Award, 1988  
Builder's Choice Design and Planning Awards, Merit Award, 1988  
AIA/ACSA Competition on Environmentally Conscious  
Architecture, Citation, 1991



**T**O THE NORTH of the Ohlson complex, another marker denotes one of the several houses throughout The Sea Ranch built using roofs covered with sod. This house, originally the Brunsell house, has a geometry of several slopes that makes its low forms echo the varied mounds of the meadow to the east. (A subsequent owner has surrounded it with vegetation, compromising its ability to become a part of the larger landscape, though its low forms nearly disappear in the vegetation.) Within, the house is still open to the sweep of the ocean and the warming sun from its bluff-top position and represents a fine tradition of making houses whose forms relate to their topography. Its architect, Obie Bowman, has been a consistent forerunner in examining new ways of building here. ■



**Brunsell House, 1985**

**Brunsell House today,  
sod roof detail**

**FIGURE 9 Sea Ranch Trails Map segments E-F-G**





# ELEMENTS OF THE LARGER LANDSCAPE

Markers 41 – 45

**T**HIS GROUP OF MARKERS is spread out over a larger segment of the map and includes some buildings that are unique both in program and in form: The Sea Ranch Chapel and The Sea Ranch Apartments.

Two places that are significant elements in the larger landscape are Salal Creek and the Golf Course. The Bane Bill marker notes the importance of state legislation that has affected the whole development. These markers are spaced out across two segments of the Trails Map (FIGURES 9 & 10).

No doubt, as you have explored The Sea Ranch landscape along our trails, you have encountered fellow hikers exploring and enjoying the place. Perhaps some have stopped to share and discuss an observation with you – a deer prancing away, a whale spout in the ocean, the name and breed of the dog accompanying you, or the names of diverse plants by the side of the trail. All these too are elements of the larger landscape you encounter here and the tremendous diversity you can experience.

These trails are conceived, monitored and maintained by members of the volunteer

Trails Committee, who meet regularly as teams to do necessary maintenance, sometimes in tandem with the Facilities and Resources team of The Sea Ranch Association. The trails are a tremendous gift to all who make use of them. ■

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*“Today’s Sea Ranch community is a product of its geography, geology, design philosophy, environmental values, and participatory governance. Sea Ranchers share a ‘sense of place’ that reflects their deep connection to the land, commitment to the founding principles, and an extraordinary spirit of volunteerism and community involvement.”*

—Phil Graf  
*Mapping The Sea Ranch – 2016*

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34B-41

## THE SEA RANCH CHAPEL

This nondenominational chapel was created to honor Kirk Ditzler, who regarded art as the intermediary between the physical and spiritual worlds. To realize his design, artist James Hubbell assembled a team of local artisans and craftsmen, led by contractor Thamby Kumaran, who specialized in hand-built structures. It was crafted from a model and sketches rather than construction plans. Rough boulders anchor the building to the earth. The roof form was inspired by the shell of a sea snail. A sculpture in the landscape, the chapel stands as a curvilinear counterpoint to the right angles of most Sea Ranch architecture.

Coordinating Architect: Don Jacobs, 1985



**T**HE FIRST MARKER found in FIGURE 9 (E-F-G on Trails Map) refers to the privately-funded, non-denominational Sea Ranch Chapel, a building of unique character and fine craftsmanship that provides meditative space open to all. Its unusual vocabulary of crafted shapes sets it apart as a place of special interest, and it has served many as a peaceful and inspiring place for remembrance.

Just south of the Chapel is the North Fire Station, slightly shielded by trees. Its presence does not intrude on the scene, but its careful design is reassuring. Don Jacobs and Dan Levin were the architects; Levin was also a chief of the Volunteer Fire Department.

Here is the beginning of the Chapel Trail, which winds up to the edge of the forest and back down across the Monarch Riparian Corridor. From there the trail ventures up again to the edge of

the forest, providing sweeping views across Sheep Meadow, before heading north along the Azalea Loop through forest and wetlands where the Western Azalea blooms, ending at the Dog Park on the east side of the highway in the Del Mar area. More recreation and meeting places, known as the Del Mar Center, have been built on the west side of the highway adjacent to a ranch house built by Ed Ohlson, one of the brothers who were previous owners of the property sold to Oceanic. (Historic Marker 35E-11) ■

### Azalea Loop Trail



34A-42

**THE BANE BILL**

**With the 1972 passage of the voter-approved Coastal Zone Conservation Act (Proposition 20), The Sea Ranch became embattled with California’s North Central Coast Regional Commission, which was charged with regulating coastal development. The subsequent building moratorium and dispute over public access to the coast was finally resolved in 1980 with the “Bane Bill.” The bill reduced the planned number of residences by over 50 percent and introduced five public access trails to The Sea Ranch beaches, as well as scenic easements along Highway One.**



**T**HE SECOND MARKER in this group is located by the bluffs at the west end of Pelican Meadow. It refers to land planning restrictions created by the Bane Bill, a state legislative act that added five public access trails and restricted the number and location of some residences. The bill included height restrictions that apply to areas where views from State Route One might otherwise be obstructed.

Although the bill mandated measures that applied throughout The Sea Ranch, this marker location highlights elements of the bill’s influence. The marker is near the Walk-On Beach Trail, a public-access path that threads west from its parking area by the highway, through trees, across Leeward Road, and along the edge of the meadow, weaving through some of the secondary growth of the hedgerow. The trail then joins the Bluff Trail and heads south along the edge of the rocky shore, ending with a stair to the beach.

South of the stair, the Bluff Trail is reserved for Sea Ranchers and their guests. North of the stair, however, the Bluff Trail is open for public access, leading all the way to Gualala Point Regional Park.

The Bane Bill also mandated a reduction in the total number of dwellings at The Sea Ranch. To accommodate this reduction, some previously planned parts of the development were eliminated (as, for instance, along the south side of this meadow). Properties once designated for condominiums were also changed to sites for individual houses (a curiously counterproductive move since condominiums use less land per dwelling unit than individual houses).

In summary, the Bane Bill restrictions played a significant part in the formation and use of the landscape as we know it. ■

**Pelican Meadow**

FIGURE 10 Sea Ranch Trails Map segments B-C-D



- Trail, Private Sea Ranch
- — — Trail, Public
- — — Trail, Interpretive
- Historical Marker
- ⊙ Architectural/Landscape Marker
- 236A Trail Post Number
- △ Spot Elevation
- R Rest/View Log
- 31 Unit Number
- 54.78 Hwy 1 Mile Marker
- EP Emergency Phone (Call Box)

35D-43

**THE SEA RANCH APARTMENTS**

This group of 45 small houses and duplexes, originally built as employee housing and now managed by an affordable housing corporation, was constructed in two phases following a mandate from the California Coastal Commission. Working with a modest budget, the architect created five house types, all based on the core of a rectangular gabled room. Building walls often extend as fences, separating properties and terminating in storage sheds. With each house usually placed near one edge of its property line rather than mid-lot, the site plan maximizes usable outdoor space.

Architect: William Turnbull Associates, 1985, 1992  
AIA National Honor Award, 1990

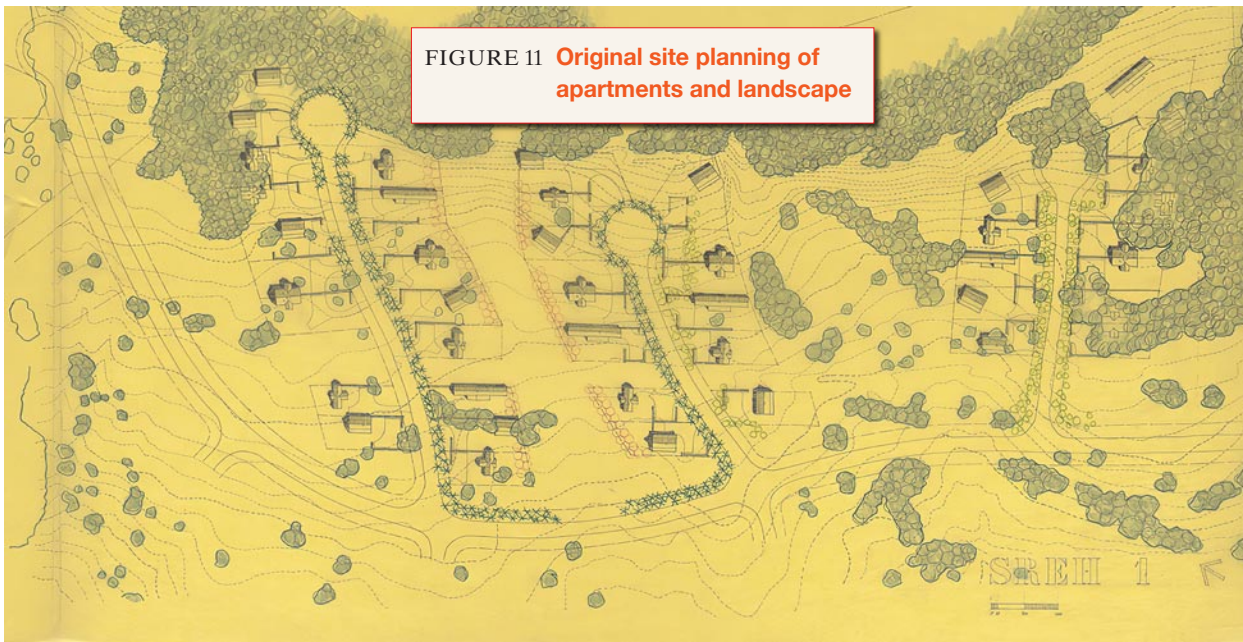


The Sea Ranch Apartments

The Sea Ranch Apartments provide much-needed, lower-cost living quarters for rent to coastal residents. They were ingeniously designed by William Turnbull, Jr., the “T” of MLTW, who earlier had been one of the designers of Condominium One. These units are clearly derived from vernacular building forms and variations on a few simple house types; they relate to each other effectively through skillful site planning, connecting fences, outbuildings, vegetation, and play spaces for children. They carry the fruits of design excellence to the very edge of The Sea Ranch. ■

**T**HIS CONCLUDING GROUP OF MARKERS found on FIGURE 10 (B-C-D of the Trails Map) includes two important elements of our landscape and one architectural complex that has both social and design importance.

FIGURE 11 Original site planning of apartments and landscape



**T**HE LANDSCAPE OF THE COASTAL PLAIN is traversed regularly by streams that descend from the upper reaches of the coastal hills to the ocean. These streams are important aspects of the ecology of the area, providing safe passage and habitat for wildlife, as well as drainage for the land. One of the most important and dramatic of these water courses is Salal Creek and its banks with their associated riparian animal passages. This creek and its often dramatic vegetation are also bordered by a trace used before European settlement by the Pomo people as a seasonal trail from the ridge to the beach where they harvested fish and shellfish. It is now edged by a public-access trail crossing through the Golf Course to the shore. Take the trail eastward to a delightful waterfall and pool. ■

35A-44

### RIPARIAN PASSAGE: SALAL CREEK

Riparian zones are the transitional areas between land and water. At The Sea Ranch, these are the banks of streams flowing from the hills in the east, through the meadows to the ocean bluffs. They form a defining feature of the natural landscape. These zones were severely overgrazed when this land was purchased in 1963. With careful husbandry, the native vegetation has rebounded to control erosion, absorb pollutants in stormwater runoff, and provide wildlife habitat. Salal Creek is representative and the only one reaching the ocean without a substantial drop in elevation.



35A & 35D-45  
**GOLF COURSE**

**The Sea Ranch Golf Course was built in two phases. The first nine holes were designed in the Scottish “links” style – often featured in the British Open – which fully exploits the windy, sandy, relatively treeless seaside environment, with its stunning viewsheds, natural waterways and rolling landforms. The second nine holes were more conventionally designed. The course is privately owned.**

Golf Course Architect, Robert Muir Graves;  
 First Phase 1974; Second Phase 1995



**T**HE GOLF COURSE is privately-owned and managed. This very large open space, with abundant vegetation and the animal habitat it provides, forms a significant portion of the landscape of the north end of The Sea Ranch, not only for golfers, but for owners of adjoining properties and their guests, and for the views of trees and open spaces it affords to automobile passengers along State Highway One.

Its special features and irrigated grounds surround some houses and front many others, providing carpets of green that differ from the rough, grazed and seasonally changing meadows more characteristic of the general landscape. ■

**Water Hazard near 10th fairway**



## ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPE

**T**HROUGHOUT THIS BOOK we have been following the Markers created by the Archives Committee of The Sea Ranch Association and installed along the our trails. The initial developers paid careful heed to the placing and design of houses and clusters, while conserving much of the native vegetation and animal habitat to be held in common by property owners. This careful planning is what gives distinction to the very special character of this place along the Northern California coast.

Subsequent management by The Sea Ranch Association and its independent Design Committee has ensured that the Commons are well-managed

and that all development, by the Association or by individual owners of property, furthers those common goals. These efforts have generally resulted in buildings that cluster together with the landscape and each other to become parts of a larger whole, not simply individual assertions of domain.

In a climate that is almost always windy and where the sun is mostly welcome, building forms that help create suitable micro-environments have resulted in some common themes. Roofs that channel and walls that buffer the wind, windows and skylights that harvest the sun for warmth or are shaded during hours and seasons when it becomes excessive, create buildings that share common goals and are part of the place.

As climate change continues, the ways of building will need to be adjusted and even some differing species of vegetation may need to be introduced to offer effective shelter and sustain a healthy landscape, while conserving natural resources.

Wood products, initially so readily available and so essential to the earlier economy of the region, suitably dominated construction. The patina of weathered wood, or finishes that emulate its tones, created buildings that visually settle easily into the landscape of both trees and meadows. But weathering on the coast can be intense and there is the threat of fire to contend with, so now metal and concrete and concrete-fiber materials with more resistive characteristics are becoming more





common. With imagination and care, these changes can be absorbed into the fundamental ideals of the place:

*To make surroundings where people can pay attention to the near and the far, the natural and the constructed, the wild and the considered, and take pride in contributing to a community that understands, conserves and invents. ■*



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*“The Sea Ranch is, in the end, many . . . special places. It is memorable . . . to the participant as a collection of experiences, a special geography, an evolution from the grass and cypress landscape of a previous rural generation. Both the landscape and the architecture represent ideas in the ever ongoing process of growth, change and fruition.”*

—William Turnbull, Jr.  
1970

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**Simple forms, shown here clustered together, use fiber cement panels along with wood and glass.**

**PAGE OPPOSITE Here, the metal roof dips down into the wind and reaches up for the sun to form a paneled courtyard facing the existing hedgerow: a classic Sea Ranch move.**

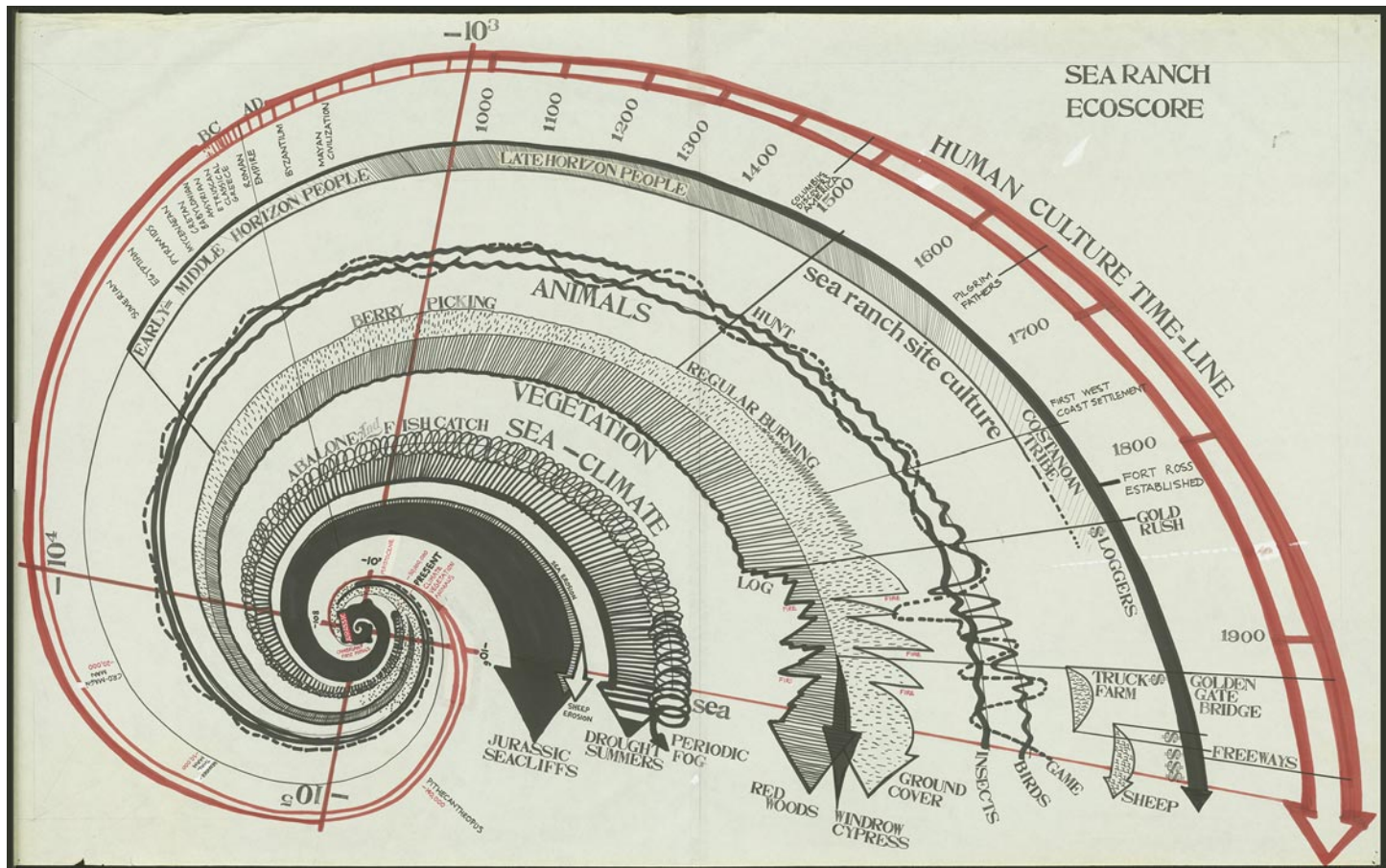


FIGURE 12 Lawrence Halprin's "Ecoscore" (ca. 1968) illustrates the forces that have shaped the Sonoma Coast over thousands of years.

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

**F**OLLOWING THE TRAILS among the Architecture/Landscape markers, you will have encountered many of the features that make The Sea Ranch a very special place. They are a part, of course, of a larger coastal landscape that has been here (and changing) for a great long time, and it is the possibility of connection to that landscape which draws many here.

That ours is only a small part of that vast evolving drama of creation was the point of another fine diagram made by Lawrence Halprin, the “Ecoscore,” suggesting the unfolding of time in place through many forces acting during those eons. That diagram also shows us that it will of necessity continue to change. Evolving climate conditions and burgeoning technological change remind us of that daily.

In that context we may play a small role, but it is one that is crucial to our lives and to those who will follow. We must learn to perceive ourselves as stewards of this place, not consumers. We need to learn to live here respectfully and creatively, channeling what powers we have to become part of a movement that draws inspiration from the past and present and offers promise for the future.



Aerial view  
looking north,  
circa 1965

Architecture, built within this marvelous landscape, forms the micro-setting for our lives and for that of our descendants. We should care for how it is made, the way that it relates to the landscape, and the stories that it tells.

The examples we have marked and discussed do that. Making that caring be a part of our lives should be a priority for us all. ■

## RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

### **The Place of Houses**

Charles Moore, Gerald Allen and Donlyn Lyndon, Henry Holt and Company, New York 1974, reprinted in 2000 by University of California Press, with an epilogue.

*The design of houses and how they can contribute to places; chapter on The Sea Ranch and discussion in the epilogue of Lyndon's own house at The Sea Ranch*

### **Chambers for a Memory Palace**

Donlyn Lyndon and Charles W. Moore, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 1994

*An exchange of ideas between Moore and Lyndon about composition of places*

### **The Sea Ranch . . . Diary of an Idea**

Lawrence Halprin, Comet Studios, The Sea Ranch, CA 1995,

Reprinted by Spacemaker Press, 2002

*Important account of the formation of The Sea Ranch. (both versions out of print)*

### **The Sea Ranch: Fifty Years of Architecture, Landscape, Place, and Community on the Northern California Coast**

Donlyn Lyndon and Jim Alinder, Princeton Architectural Press, Hudson, NY. 2004, 2014

*The most comprehensive study of TSR, with essays by Lawrence Halprin and Donald Canty, descriptions & photos of 55 buildings/sites and notes on "Designing for Place at The Sea Ranch"*

### **Appropriate: The Houses of Joseph Esherick**

Marc Trieb, William Stout Publishers, San Francisco, CA 2008

*A study of the ideas and work of Joseph Esherick*

### **Images of America: The Sea Ranch**

Susan M. Clark, Arcadia Publishing, San Francisco, CA 2009

*Summary history of the area and its transformation into The Sea Ranch*

### **The Magic of The Sea Ranch**

Rob Elder, Two Cats Press, The Sea Ranch, CA 2011

*A fine essay and interviews with 52 Sea Ranchers or neighbors*

### **Why? Why Not**

Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, Fun Fog Press, San Francisco, 2013

*Reflective tales of her involvement in the creation of graphics for The Sea Ranch*

### **The Sea Ranch Audio Walking Tour**

Narrated by Donlyn Lyndon in 2014, downloadable from The Sea Ranch Association website, tsra.org

*Narrated walking tour of the first segments of The Sea Ranch*

### **Preserving Sea Ranch History – A Historical Journey on Our Trails**

Harry Lindstrom, Published and Copyright 2014 by The Sea Ranch Archives Committee

*Additional details including pictures on the pre-Sea Ranch history (1845–1963) described by the 25 Historical Markers installed for The Sea Ranch's 50th birthday*

### **The Sea Ranch Commons Landscape, Commons Landscape Planning and Management**

Downloadable from The Sea Ranch Association website <http://tsra.org>

*Description and analysis of the landscape of The Sea Ranch with recommendations for its management prepared by the Commons Landscape Committee, 2010 – 2016*

### **The Sea Ranch Songs**

Aleksandra Vrebalov, Performed by Kronos Quartet, Video and animation by

Andrew Lyndon, ©© 2016 Cantaloupe Music.

<http://cantaloupemusic.com/albums/sea-ranch-songs>

### **Mapping The Sea Ranch**

Phil Graf, Published and Copyright 2016 by The Sea Ranch Archives Committee

*For the celebration of The Sea Ranch 50th birthday, Sea Ranchers mapped their memories of a unique place that has seduced them and changed their lives.*

### **The Sea Ranch: Architecture, Environment, and Idealism**

Edited by Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher and Joseph Becker,

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and DelMonico Books, Prestel, 2018

*Catalog of 2018 SFMOMA exhibit examining its influence through photos, drawings and essays*

# RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

CONTINUED

## **PLACENOTES: The Sea Ranch**

Charles Moore Foundation, Austin, TX, Kevin Keim, 2018, <http://www.placenotes.com>

*A mobile application dedicated to observations about The Sea Ranch and its creators*

## **GA Residential Masterpieces 29**

MLTW/Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull and Whitaker, The Sea Ranch. Texts by William Turnbull, Jr. and Donlyn Lyndon, Photographs by Yukio and Yoshio Futagawa. EDITA Tokyo Co., Ltd. 2019

*Large format book of drawings and photographs of Condominium One and Moonraker Recreation from 1968, 1980, 2019*

## **Living at The Sea Ranch**

The Sea Ranch Association, 2019

*Information about living at the Sea Ranch with photographs and some interviews, compiled by the TSRA Vision Committee*

## **Journey to The Sea Ranch**

<http://searanch.ced.berkeley.edu/s/sea-ranch/page/home>

*An interactive virtual collection of digitized primary sources from the holdings of the Environmental Design Archives at UC Berkeley and the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania, 2019, including materials from the William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW, Joseph Esherick (EHDD) archives at UC Berkeley and the Lawrence Halprin collection at University of Pennsylvania*

## **TSR Forests – Sea Ranch Values & 21st Century Science**

Downloadable from The Sea Ranch Association website <http://tsra.org>

*Principles, objectives, alternatives and recommended guidelines for TSR's forested commons, the report of the Forest Task Force. December 2019*

# ILLUSTRATION / PHOTO CREDITS

FIGURE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE	ILLUSTRATOR	SOURCE
1	Locational Score	2/3	Lawrence Halprin	Lawrence Halprin Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, RSVP Cycles, 5000 Acre Locational Score
2	Trails Map, Segments O-P-Q	4	—	The Sea Ranch Association
3	Condominium One, Unit One Interior	7	William Turnbull, Jr.	William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley
4	Sea Ranch Concept	10	Nelson Scott Smith	Nelson Scott Smith
5	Hedgerows, Sea Ranch, Condominium 2 Perspective Drawing	13	William Turnbull, Jr.	William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley
6	Trails Map, Segments K-L-M	16	—	The Sea Ranch Association
7	Site Plan, White Fir Wood Clusters	25	Adrian Ammon Mujica	<i>The Sea Ranch: Fifty Years of Architecture, Landscape, Place, and Community on the Northern California Coast</i>
8	Site Plan, Walk-in Cabins	26	Adrian Ammon Mujica	<i>The Sea Ranch: Fifty Years of Architecture, Landscape, Place, and Community on the Northern California Coast</i>
9	Trails Map, Segments E-F-G	28	—	The Sea Ranch Association
10	Trails Map, Segments B-C-D	32	—	The Sea Ranch Association
11	Site Plan, TSR Apartments	33	William Turnbull, Jr.	Sea Ranch Employee Housing, William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley
12	Ecoscore	38	Lawrence Halprin	Lawrence Halprin Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, RSVP Cycle Eco Score

PHOTOGRAPHER	PAGE	DESCRIPTION
Jim Alinder	6	Condominium One; 7
	12	Moonraker Rec Center exterior; 19 (top)
	27	Sod Roof; 33
		Sea Ranch Apartments
Obie Bowman	27	Brunsell Sod-Roof House
Allen Francis	30	Sea Ranch Chapel
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	14	Galleons Reach Hedgerow; 15
	17	Knipp-Stengel Barn; 18
	20	Ohlson Ranch House; 20
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	34	Azalea Loop Trail; 34
	35	Salal Trail; 35
	36	Golf Course; 36
		Munger House

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PHOTOGRAPHER	PAGE   DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
Paul Kozal	12   Moonraker Rec Center Supergraphics; 14   Bluff Reach Hedgerow; 19   (bottom) Binker Barn; 26   Walk-in Cabin, exterior & interior	
Donlyn Lyndon	21   Ohlson Rec Center; 24 / 25   White Fir Meadow; 31   Pelican Meadow	
Lu Lyndon	18   Native Plant Garden	
Fred Lyon	39   Aerial View from 1960s	Lawrence Halprin Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania
Adrian Tackman	x   Condominium One; 7   Condominium One, Interior Unit #8	
David Wakely	37   Turnbull Griffin Haesloop “Skyfall” House	
Alice Wingwall	17   Historic image of Knipp-Stengel Barn	
—	5   Aerial View including General Store	Lawrence Halprin Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania
—	8   (top) Marker Building & General Store	Lawrence Halprin Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania
—	9   Hedgerow Demonstration Houses	Joseph Esherick Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley

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*“That I have known this place in my lifetime  
 That I have walked these amber meadows  
 And rich forests with clear eyes  
 And a hopeful soul  
 Is a dream fulfilled that was never dreamt.”*

—Al Forster

The Sea Ranch Re-vision Workshop – 1993

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The creation of wooden posts with text plaques marking historically-significant aspects of The Sea Ranch is a project of the Archives Committee that began as part of TSR's 50th birthday celebration. The first phase of the markers program chronicled pre-Sea Ranch events and culture, primarily that of the European settlers. The Committee, led by Doug Paul and Harry Lindstrom, raised funds for the project from a very supportive number of Sea Ranch members, as acknowledged in the companion booklet, *Preserving Sea Ranch History: A Historical Journey on Our Trails* (May 2014).

The fundraising was so successful that monies were retained for a later expansion of the markers program to cover noteworthy elements of The Sea Ranch period. An Archives Subcommittee, chaired by Doug Paul, was formed in April 2018 to implement this phase two. Other subcommittee members are Christine Kreyling, Harry Lindstrom, Lu Lyndon, Paula Smith, and Charlie Wilson. Many meetings and some 3,300 emails later, we have published this book, *Place at The Sea Ranch: Architecture/Landscape Markers on Our Trails* (2020).

The marker topics covered by this guide were proposed, selected, researched, and sited by subcommittee members, with the much-appreciated assistance of architects Donlyn Lyndon and Lisa

Dundee, Executive Director of the Design, Compliance & Environmental Management Department (DCEM) of The Sea Ranch Association.

With the insightful guidance and support of Frank Bell, Community Manager of the Association, we obtained needed approvals from the Design Committee of DCEM, as well as the Association's Planning Committee and Board of Directors. We are very grateful for the unanimous support received from all the individuals involved with these various entities who gave so generously of their time.

With marker-post material in hand, Facilities and Resources (F&R) Director John Prescott and his crew quickly had all posts cut and routed, treated and installed. We much appreciate their thorough and proper placements. Sea Rancher and indefatigable volunteer Perk Perkins then sealed the wood where it had been routed for the marker plaques and procured the tamper resistant screws and other supplies. Archives Committee member Paul Mundy checked smartphone signal strength at each marker and photographed all markers. Again, important behind-the-scenes jobs that were performed eagerly and quickly.

Simultaneously, Charlie Wilson drafted the texts for the plaques, which were extensively reviewed

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTINUED

by Lisa Dundee, Donlyn Lyndon and others, before Christine Kreyling did rewrites and editing. Finally, graphic designer Hall Kelley put the text into good form for the fabricator, Econoline Signs, Inc. of Santa Rosa. Without the professionalism and skills – and most of all the willingness – of all these folks, this project would never have been accomplished! Thank you!

Finding an architectural authority willing to write the companion guide for this set of markers was another challenge. We are very fortunate and grateful that Donlyn Lyndon stepped forward. We could not have found a more knowledgeable individual than Donlyn, one of the “founding architects” of The Sea Ranch – the “L” of MLTW, the firm that designed some of the first buildings at The Sea Ranch – and co-author, with Jim Alinder, of *The Sea Ranch: Fifty Years of Architecture, Landscape, Place & Community on the Northern California Coast*, (Princeton Architectural Press, 2004, revised 2014). He is also Eva Li Professor Emeritus in the College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley. He was assisted by Christine Kreyling and Lu Lyndon, who edited this book’s text.

Graphic Design and Production: Hall Kelley

We are proud of the end result, and hope that new generations of Sea Ranchers learn from our efforts and experience firsthand why we all love this place filled with wonders.

Doug Paul, The Sea Ranch Archives Committee  
OCTOBER 2020



This book would not exist without the leadership of Doug Paul and the extraordinary work of The Sea Ranch Archives Committee. Christine Kreyling edited the final Marker texts, Linda Kennedy sourced documents in the Committee’s archive, and Lu Lyndon has assisted immeasurably with coordinating the components of the book and clarifying ideas. Gabrielle Clement worked with Katherine Riddle and Chris Marino at the archives at UC Berkeley and with Allison Olsen from the Architectural Archives at UPenn to source their photos. The graphic design and many of the photographs are the work of Hall Kelley, whose imagination and skill have brought brilliance and visual order to its form.

Donlyn Lyndon  
OCTOBER 2020

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*“At The Sea Ranch  
we have developed a  
community based in wild  
nature and sustained by  
its beauty. We have an  
important responsibility  
here. What do we bring to  
this environment and how  
do we alter it? I feel myself  
a custodian rather than an  
owner of it . . . I feel I owe  
constant vigilance and care  
for its poetic and spiritual  
survival. I hope those who  
follow feel the same.”*

—Lawrence Halprin  
*The Sea Ranch . . . Diary of an Idea*  
1995

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The Sea Ranch  
Association

**This book was created to expand upon *The Sea Ranch Trails Map*, following the Architecture and Landscape Markers which have been placed along the trails to tell the Sea Ranch story.**

**The markers explain the vital characteristics of this place that have evolved since it was conceived in 1963; this text describes the intentions that have guided our development through more than fifty years.**

**The Sea Ranch embodies a very special understanding of how to live within and care for natural environments. Enjoy this book and its many photographs, drawings and maps, then take to the trails to see what has been created through thoughtful stewardship of this extraordinary place.**

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