



B. Introduction & Background Information

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In the 1960's, development in the coastal areas of California became embroiled in controversy surrounding public access to the beaches through private property. The largest of these proposed coastal development plans was submitted by Oceanic California, Inc. (OCI) in 1963 for the Del Mar Ranch property, located just south of Gualala in Sonoma County. The proposed development was to be called The Sea Ranch (TSR), and if approved by Sonoma County as submitted, it would have permanently closed about 10 miles of coastline to public use.

In 1968, a group of local activists opposed to this proposed development, formed an environmental organization called Californians Organized to Acquire Access to State Tidelands (COAAST). This organization worked through the State Legislature to place an initiative on the ballot that would require OCI, The Sea Ranch developer, to provide public coastal access as part of their development plans. The initiative lost at the polls, but it did lead to the passage of the Dunlap Act in 1968.

The Dunlap Act required that developers of oceanfront projects provide public access to coastal beaches and tidelands as part of their project. In response to this legislation, OCI deeded The Salal Trail Public Access Easement (PAE) to the County in 1972.

The Coastal Alliance, a coalition of over a 100 organizations from communities along the California coast became actively involved in the issue of public coastal access. This organization petitioned to place Proposition 20, the "Coastal Conservation Initiative", on the a state ballot. Proposition 20 was passed by California voters in 1972, and it established the California Coastal Commission to regulate a statewide coastal zoning and permit process to protect environmental resources and public access in all proposed developments within their jurisdiction. The 1976 Coastal Protection Act made permanent the coastal protection program launched under Proposition 20 - the "Coastal Conservation Initiative."

New home construction in TSR development was subject to the California Coastal Commission zoning and permit process established by the voters under Proposition 20 in 1972. The Coastal Commission placed several conditions of approval for the issuance of coastal building permits on the developer, including public access to the shoreline. OCI and TSR Association (TSRA) refused to provide any additional public access as part of their development, so the California Coastal Commission denied the issuance of any new coastal building permits.

This impasse went on for several years until 1980, when the California State Legislature passed the Bane Bill (State Public Resources Code 30610.6). Under the Bane Bill, TSRA and OCI were required to grant five (5) vertical public access easements (PAE) from Highway One to the beach along the 10 miles of shoreline within TSR, including a three plus mile stretch of bluff top trail for public use connecting Gualala Point Regional Park with Walk On Beach. For the granting of these PAE to the Coastal Conservancy in 1981, TSRA and OCI were paid \$500,000.00 and exempted from future coastal building permits for single family dwellings. The provisions of the Bane Bill were added to the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan (LCP) in 1982. (Public Resources Code 30610.6 – Exhibit 1).

In October of 1982, the State Coastal Conservancy transferred ownership of these five (5) public access easements (PAE), along with the bluff top trail and forty-two acre scenic view easements within the TSR development to the County of Sonoma.

The Coastal Conservancy provided grant funds for the development of the public access easements, including trail work, bridges and stairs. OCI provided funding for the development of the trailhead parking areas and restrooms. These improvements were substantially completed by 1987. The scenic view easements from Highway 1 to the Pacific Ocean were restored by the County in 2002 under a grant from the State Resources Agency.