



The Sea Ranch Association

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Administration

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Chrom

May 17, 2006

Sonoma County Regional Parks  
Mark Cleveland, Supervising Park Planner  
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Subject: Bluff Top Trail Public Access Easement

Dear Mr. Cleveland,

The Board of Directors of The Sea Ranch Association has reviewed the content of your letter to the Association dated February 21, 2006. Upon receipt of your letter the Association requested Mike Lane, Ph.D., California Registered Geologist, to assess the technical content of your letter and report back. Mike Lane's geological observations and conclusions are contained in a separate letter which is enclosed herewith. Please note that it would be helpful if you could provide Mike Lane with County Parks' GIS data for the area to assist in his continuing evaluation.

I regret to report that the Board is disappointed with some of the directions suggested in your correspondence and with the level of detail offered to justify the positions taken. Our areas of concern are as follows: Adherence to The Sea Ranch Association's bluff erosion principles; complete site evaluations; long-term solutions; safety issues; exacerbation of erosion; visual impact; and license agreement.

1. Adherence to Bluff Erosion Principles. The Sea Ranch "Bluff Erosion Principles" (October 2005) for resolution of bluff top trail public access problems are enclosed. These were established by The Sea Ranch membership and Board of Directors during a series of hearings which you were kind enough to attend and to which you contributed. While I have not detected local resistance to preserving public access to bluff top trails at The Sea Ranch, I perceive that it will be difficult to progress unless The Sea Ranch "Bluff Erosion Principles" are honored or at least addressed during our exchanges.

2. Complete Site Evaluations. The Sea Ranch Board is of the opinion that in order to identify proposed solutions additional work must be undertaken to better evaluate each site. After that work is done and proposed solutions are identified for each site, we think that the County should consider doing thorough CEQA review on the "whole of the project" (CEQA Guideline section 15378(a)). Your letter indicates that a CEQA evaluation will be entertained only at Sea Pine Reach. We suggest that it will be more appropriate for the CEQA evaluation to include Broad Reach, Rock Cod, and Main Sail.

3. Long-term Solutions. By removing many of the engineered solutions proposed by your consultants (armorring of the bluff face) at Broad Reach and Rock Cod it appears that County Parks is aiming for cosmetic solutions at these locations, rather than the kinds of solutions envisaged by the Coastal Commission which you have advised us are generally intended to constitute 75-year solutions.

4. Safety Issues. At Main Sail, the former cave has collapsed, thus temporarily removing that specific potential hazard. However, there is no fence such as exists at the Broad Reach and Rock Cod sites. In the absence of such protection, the Association is concerned that a continuing safety issue exists at Main Sail and requests discussion with County Parks regarding repair options as soon as possible.


5. Exacerbation of Erosion. At Sea Pine Reach, the Association is particularly concerned that your proposed introduction of a trench drain will exacerbate erosion of the bluff. Please refer to the companion letter by geologist Mike Lane for discussion concerning the complex site-specific geology and its remedial implications at Sea Pine Reach.

6. Visual Impact. Also at Sea Pine Reach, the suggestion that a bridge should be considered creates concerns about visual impact (please refer to The Sea Ranch principles for resolution).

7. License Agreement. It isn't clear from your letter why an easement is preferred over a license agreement at Sea Pine Reach while license agreements appear to be acceptable elsewhere. Community members and The Sea Ranch Board have indicated a strong preference for a license agreement approach.

We think that letter exchanges could continue on and consume time and effort without helping us towards the kind of agreement that will suit both County Parks and The Sea Ranch Association. I'd therefore like to suggest that a meeting be arranged between County Parks, The Sea Ranch Association, The Sea Ranch Association Members, and affected property owners. We would review areas of agreement and disagreement, and the participants would offer their respective viewpoints towards resolving the issues. We would prefer that following the public meeting there would be a face-to-face negotiation rather than an exchange of letters.

Yours sincerely,

  
John R. Fox  
Community Manager

Enclosures: The Sea Ranch Association Bluff Erosion Principles, October 2005  
Geological Analysis dated May 12, 2006, by Mike Lane, Ph.D.

cc: Honorable Mike Reilly, Board of Supervisors

BLUFFTOPTRAIL5/DB/4400/7550

# THE SEA RANCH ASSOCIATION

## Bluff Erosion Principles (October 2005)

- Protect the physical and visual privacy of The Sea Ranch community and its members.
- Public Access Bluff Trail should remain along the bluff.
- To the greatest extent possible, the Public Access Bluff Trail should remain within its original surveyed boundaries.
- Avoid routing the public along Sea Ranch roads and trails.
- Design Committee and other TSRA professionals to review design of any remedial features (e.g., bridges).
- Minimal or no addition of duty or cost to The Sea Ranch for the care/maintenance of Public Access Bluff Trails or added remedial features (e.g., bridges, armoring).
- County should pay for any remedial features to Public Access Bluff Trail.
- Limit visual impact of remedial features (i.e., step down bridges below ground level).
- Limit environmental damage.
- Provide long-term solutions: Coastal Commission rule of thumb that solutions should last for 75 years.
- Reduce long-term effects of erosion.
- Remedial features should be safe.
- Solutions should have support of The Sea Ranch community, the County, and the larger public.
- Implementation of remedial features should be expeditious and should be sensitive to the neighbors.