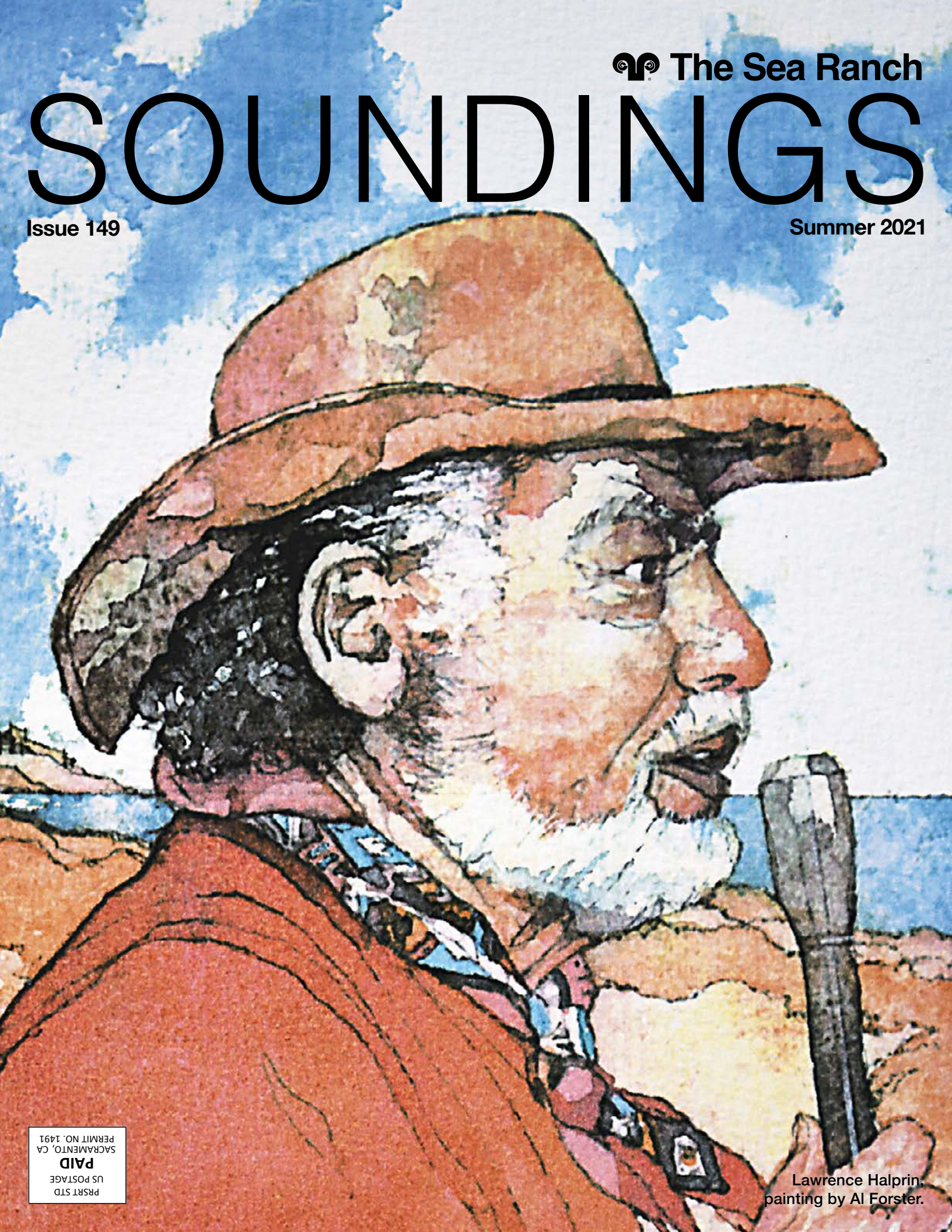
The Sea Ranch

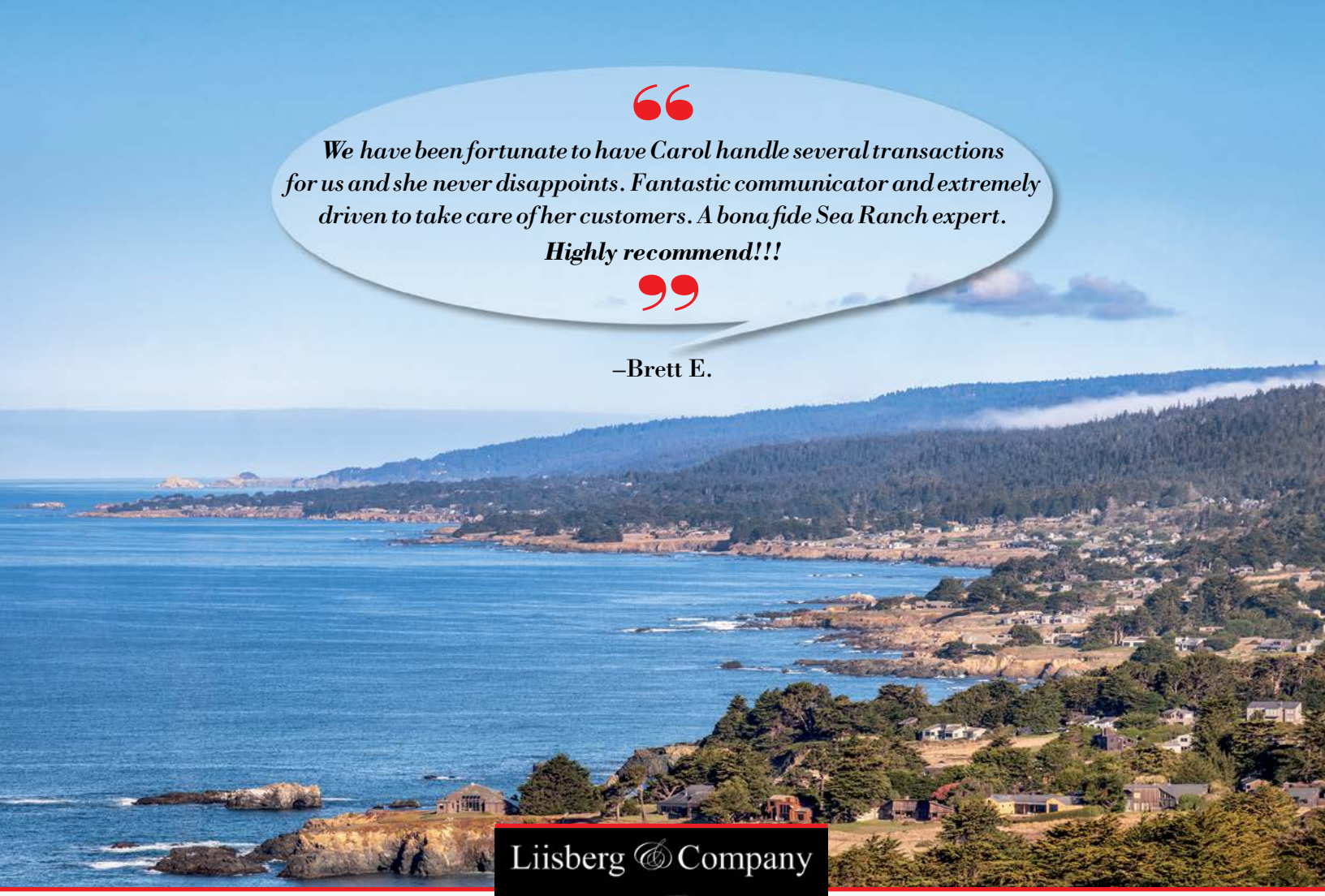
SOUNDINGS

Issue 149

Summer 2021



Lawrence Halprin, painting by Al Forster.



We have been fortunate to have Carol handle several transactions for us and she never disappoints. Fantastic communicator and extremely driven to take care of her customers. A bona fide Sea Ranch expert. ***Highly recommend!!!***

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Ready to Sell?

From Redwood Rise

George Calys, Editor

When thinking about The Sea Ranch and what makes it so special, my mind has settled on a convenient framework, a sort of armature that everything fits into. That framework, simply, is a "three-legged stool" consisting of the societal environment, the built environment, and the natural environment. People, buildings, and nature if you will.

The societal environment includes us as individuals and as a community; how we interact, how we govern ourselves, how we resolve our challenges. I am reminded of Lincoln's words, "though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection."

The built environment of The Sea Ranch sets this place apart from most other housing developments. Here was born the so-called Third Bay Area Tradition of architecture, the notion that the form and materials of a house should reflect the landscape and climate of its site.

In this issue of *Soundings*, we've chosen to focus on the natural environment, which is fitting since that is one of the first characteristics of the place many of us notice. The natural environment includes the living things around us, the flora and fauna, but it also includes the inanimate world we live in as well. We're fortunate to have varied articles from a variety of writers, a number of whom are first-time, or first-in-a-long-time, contributors to *Soundings*. I think you'll enjoy their insights along with articles from our regular contributors.

The response to *Soundings'* transition from a tabloid format to a magazine was overwhelming. Many of you took the time to drop us a line expressing your positive opinions of the change. I received a number of emails and even a couple of handwritten notes! The staff and contributors rightly received accolades too. I think my favorite comment from one Sea Rancher was: "We used to toss the newspaper version away after reading it. This magazine will command a place on the coffee table!" Another reader commented: "We just received the newest issue of *Soundings* and what a surprise! I read it cover to cover. As the former Photography Director for *Dwell Magazine*, I just wanted to reach out and let you know how much I enjoyed it."

Although it goes without saying, *Soundings* is a group effort. Anywhere between 12 and 20 people are involved in planning, writing, editing, laying out, proofing, and posting to the website. Take a moment to thank anyone who plays a role—folks who, for the most part, are volunteers.

At the risk of being repetitive, I can't stress enough how grateful we are to our advertisers. I'm pleased to report that, even with the additional cost of publishing a magazine, our advertisers' investment makes *Soundings* a financially self-sustaining publication. That's why it's so important that we patronize the local businesses that make *Soundings* possible.

Contents

Bristly doghair grass with morning raindrops.

Photo by Karen Wilkinson

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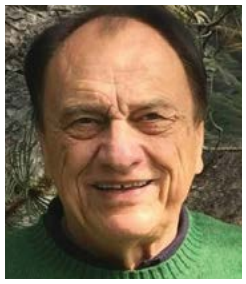
Contributors

Kathryn Arnold is the editor of the *Wild Hope* journal, a semiannual publication focused on the preservation of wildlife and the natural habitat.

Tempra Board is a grant writer and publication designer for nonprofit organizations, lives in her Sea Ranch home she constructed in 2018, and both writes and creates the graphic layout for *Soundings.*



Tom Cochrane, a retired geologist, has taught and written on geology for many years. He is the author of *Shaping the Sonoma-Mendocino Coast*, an exploration of coastal geology.

Chad DeWitt is founder and creative director of the architecture and design firm *Framestudio*. A huge fan of natural light, he claims he can tell the time in his home using nothing more than shadows and post-it notes.

Caroline Ducato, Marketing Director at Surf Market, sources many specialty items found there. She is well-connected to local farmers and food producers on the Mendonoma coast.

Marilyn Green is a transplant to The Sea Ranch from Michigan, whose love of arts and crafts is perhaps only exceeded by her love of cats.

Rozann Grunig is a graphics and artistic designer who has embarked upon a second career as a professional baker for Zilberschtein's Delicatessen and Bakery in Seattle, where she now resides.

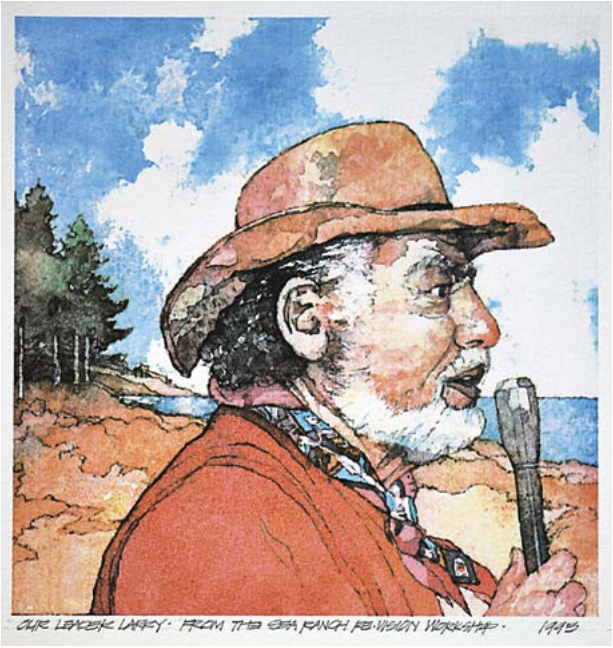
Lu Lyndon was the co-founder of the popular Placewares shop and currently co-owns the Lyndon Design Gallery with her husband, Maynard.

Laurie Mueller is a longtime contributor to *Soundings.* As a past president of the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy, she was instrumental in the development of the Mill Bend conservation project.

Alison Owings's latest book is *Indian Voices: Listening to Native Americans.* An (almost) fulltime resident at Sea Ranch, she is also a freelance editor, particularly of non-fiction.

Maureen Simons is a short story and nonfiction writer whose work has appeared in several literary journals. Her short story, "Remains," published in *Soundings* (Winter 2018) continues to haunt readers.

Rebecca Stewart has been a chef-owner of several restaurants on the West Coast. She was executive chef at The Sea Ranch Lodge and will resume that role upon the Lodge's reopening.



Al Forster, late Sea Ranch architectural illustrator, captured Halprin

Lu Lyndon

The watercolor portrait on the cover of this issue depicts Lawrence Halprin, master planner of The Sea Ranch. Lu Lyndon gives us the background on this work, created by Sea Rancher Al Forster. - Editor

Educated and trained as an architect, Al Forster spent the majority of his professional career as a practicing architectural illustrator. He built an international reputation for his exquisitely crafted watercolor renderings of buildings and projects around the world.

Forster has been the recipient of numerous Awards of Excellence from the renowned American Society of Architectural Illustrators (ASAI). In 2017 Forster won the ASAI Hugh Ferriss Memorial Prize as the best in show for the yearly Architecture in Perspective competition, with over 500 national and international entries of digital and hand drawn renderings. Forster's drawings and sketches were published in numerous periodicals, books and monographs; his rendered images have been the centerpiece of national and international design competitions. He was a successful teacher, mentor and consultant, sharing his craft with students, friends, colleagues and professionals for decades.

Forster began to exhibit his watercolors as a fine artist in 2007 at the Placewares Gallery in Gualala and opened his own 1043 Gallery several years later at The Sea Ranch. His art often expressed an architectural theme. His imagery could be loose and diagrammatic or precise and descriptive as the objective is revealed. He was able to convey, with great care, the qualities of habitation in the places that are being imagined. Many Sea Ranchers have his images of the White Barn in their art collections.

A resident of The Sea Ranch for 25 years, Forster was passionately dedicated to the vision of the place. In 1993 he attended the second Taking Part Workshop that Halprin and his office conducted to review the original concepts of The Sea Ranch. It was after the 1993 Workshop that Forster painted the watercolor of Halprin and inscribed it:

> "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."

Forster passed away in 2020.

The portrait was given to the Archives Committee who will display it in a public area of The Sea Ranch Association office. It has been reproduced with the permission of Forster's wife, Gayle.

Was Halprin an environmentalist?

George Calys

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009), master planner of The Sea Ranch and landscape architect of many urban places, coined the phrase "living lightly on the land," which is still frequently alluded to today. Yet the question of Halprin's being an environmentalist is neither simple nor obvious.

Halprin certainly possessed a reverence for the natural environment; the thrust of his design philosophy was that human settlements and places should engage nature in as unfettered a way as possible. In that sense, Halprin could be considered a conservationist, a word that predates environmentalist. The design of The Sea Ranch was innovative in its time precisely because nature was not obliterated as was common in many post-war subdivisions. Halprin's contemporary, Ian McHarg, author of *Design with Nature,* developed a similar approach to planning on a regional scale.

At the time Halprin embarked on The Sea Ranch plan, the environmental movement was a nascent direction in American society. *Silent Spring,* Rachel Carson's seminal work, had only been published in 1962, a scant two or three years before Halprin embarked on his plan for The Sea Ranch. Was Halprin impacted by Carson? That's unclear; nonetheless the sanctity of the natural environment is evident in his work. Yet, Halprin's legacy can be equally said to rest upon his development of the design process, as set forth in The RSVP Cycles.

The question is thus unresolved. Halprin may not have been an environmentalist as the word is currently defined and used, but it is fair to at least label him as a "proto-environmentalist."

Halprin's famous "Locational Score" for The Sea Ranch (1981), which illustrates some of TSR's founding principles.

Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

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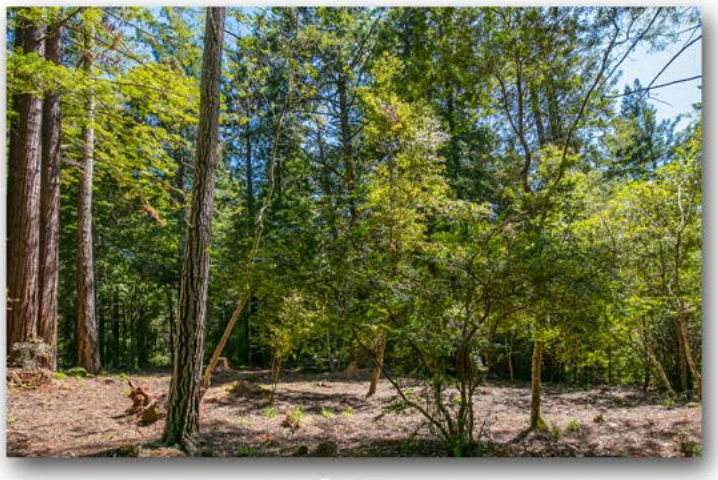

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Nature journaling

Find your inner child, naturalist, and artist on The Sea Ranch

Tempra Board

> *Look as though you are looking for the first time. If you can do that, you are seeing the tree, the bush, the blade of grass for the first time. Then you can see your teacher, your mother and father, your brother and sister, for the first time. There is an extraordinary feeling about that, like the wonder, the strangeness, the miracle of a fresh morning that has never been before, never will be again.*
>
> -J. Krishnamurti

I went for a walk the other afternoon on a calm, foggy day. The light was beautiful, shadowless, perfect for taking photos. I started out on my normal trail around the back of Tallgrass, and looking down, noticed the tiniest little California poppy buds trying to survive in the middle of the trail. I got down on my hands and knees, affixed my macro lens to my iPhone, and attempted to capture the delicate buds, only about a centimeter wide.

Then I noticed other wildflowers . . . beautiful light blue five-petaled flax blooms perched proudly on the end of their tall, lance-leafed stalks. Everywhere was bursting blossoms and seed heads. So many methods of seed dispersal, from airy puff balls that escape upward in the breeze, to the barbed corkscrew of the storksbill driving downward into the soil (the storksbill is a tiny, non-native member of the geranium family, of which you are likely familiar if you have a fur-bearing animal companion with you on The Sea Ranch).

Later, I transferred the photos to my laptop and began to sketch. The excitement of hunting for a good photo gave way to focused attention of every nuance of light, shadow, and texture of stem, petal, and seed. Or in the case of a Goldenrod crab spider I found clinging to a lupine blossom, how its front two legs fuse together and spread out to form a crab claw, which it appears is how it hunts, lying motionless on its back, "claws" akimbo, inside a flower petal.

As I draw, my brain focuses on the minutia, and how to capture it with my Pigma Micron pens. And I think about that crab claw. I wouldn't have known anything about crab spiders or how they hunt had I not spent 15 minutes on the ground, trying to get this particular spider in focus, having my mind blown over the miniature world of my front yard meadow. I got so obsessed that I actually thought for a minute, did I somehow drug myself?

"It can be a problem," acknowledges Sea Rancher Karen Wilkinson, who cofounded and directs the San Francisco Exploratorium's Tinkering Studio with her husband Mike Petrich. When asked what is currently exciting her, Karen just said, "Everything! Spring is crazy. I wish I could be outside 24/7 right now." Karen's excitement (and obsession) for exploring and learning about the natural world is contagious. Luckily for Sea Ranchers and others on the Mendonoma coast, she's been channeling that energy into a nature journaling group she started at the beginning of 2021, called Mendonoma Sketches (you can find and join the group on Facebook or by emailing Karen at karenw@exploratorium.edu).

Suited up and ready to explore: Karen and Mike and (some) of their gear heading towards Bihler Point.

(below) It's all about the sharing.

Photos by David Yager Photography

"I'm usually obsessing over what's right in front of me and Mike's always considering the long view."

Karen Wilkinson

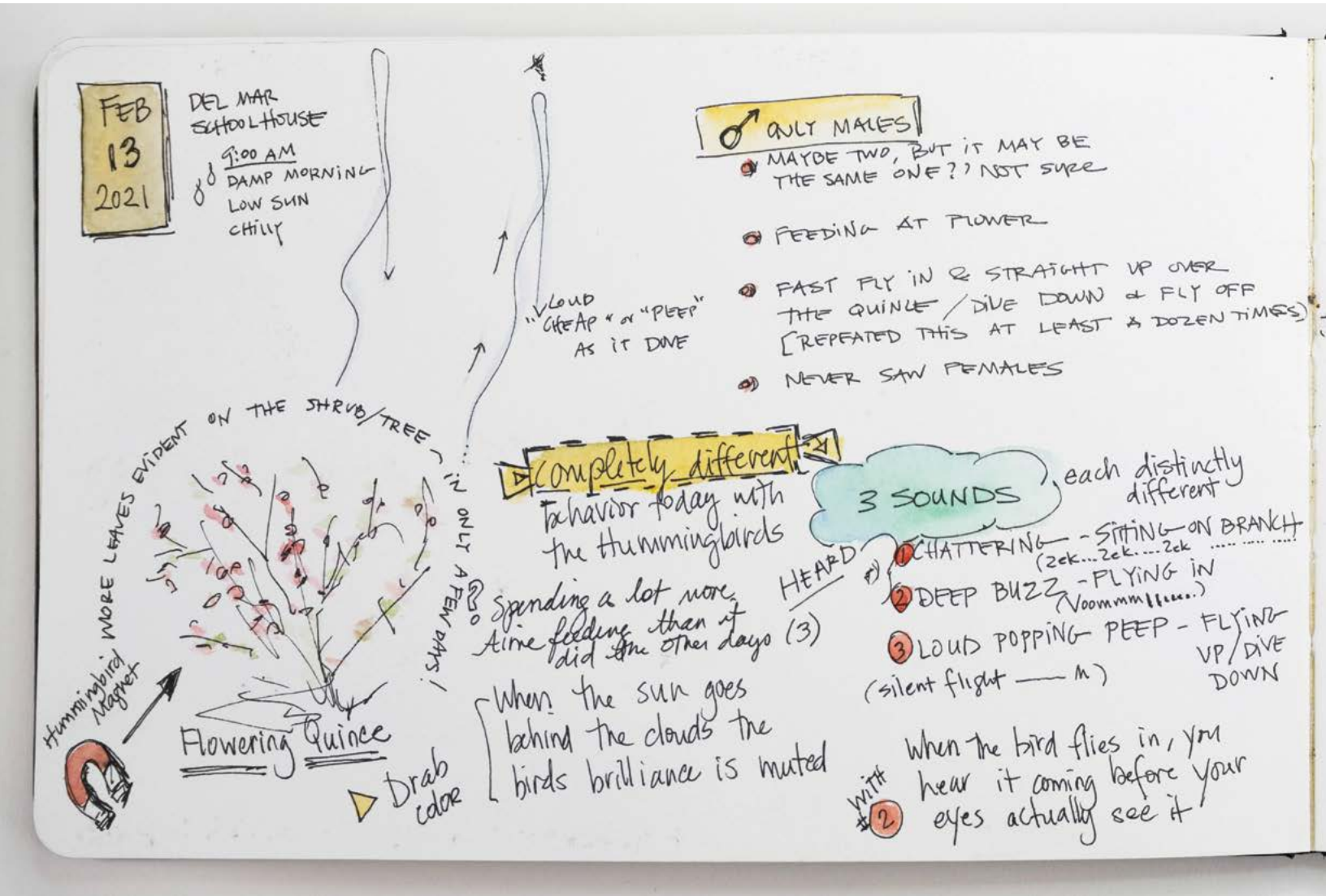
Nature journaling

Starting out via Zoom, Karen and Mike hosted free meet-ups focused on a different theme each month. January was about Stengel Beach and everything there was to see there. At this meet-up, Karen introduced us to the concept of nature journaling and shared some tools and resources (from her favorite fountain pen to nature journalist and teacher John Muir Laws—johnmuirlaws.com—and his online tutorials). February was "In Search of Slink Pods" (also called fetid adder's tongue, a diminutive, early blooming, redwood forest-dwelling wildflower). March was tide pools. April was "Wild about Wildflowers." And in May we finally got to do an outdoor, socially-distanced in-person "Noticing Tour" at the Hot Spot, one of seven biodiversity areas on The Sea Ranch.

Karen and Mike met in art school in Minneapolis in 1991. Karen was a sculptor and majored in Environmental Design as an undergrad. Mike was studying fine arts, filmmaking, and photography. Ultimately they both earned graduate degrees in Education. They began collaborating, winning design awards, and then getting hired to teach art and science workshops to children at the Science Museum of Minnesota. Having never worked with kids, Mike says, "we started researching activity books for children on science, art, and architecture." They were disappointed in what they found.

"They were all set ups—every child was supposed to end up with the same outcome. But we had discovered as young art students that learning happens through each individual's pathway. So we went home and invented new activities, and for the last 30 years that's all we've done!"

And thankfully they did, for so many people, not just visitors to the Exploratorium, but around the world. Karen and Mike authored a book called



(below and left) **Sketches from one of Karen's journals: Sights, sounds, birds, and flowers at the Del Mar Schoolhouse.**

(right) **Have paint; will travel. Karen's well-used traveling watercolor palette.**

The Art of Tinkering in 2014, which features various artists and scientists, sharing how and why they "tinker." They have traveled the world teaching the concept of tinkering, or as Karen puts it, "advocating for making as a way of knowing." This included a month spent in Sarnath, India with the Science for Monks program, started by the Dalai Lama to bring science education to Tibetan monks and nuns.

"When we first talked to the Geshes about building things, they started laughing," remembers Mike. "They didn't think that they could be creative." (Geshe monks are high scholars of the Gelug lineage of Tibetan Buddhism; a Geshe degree can take two decades to attain.) But ultimately, Mike found that these monks were "some of the best scientific minds we'd worked with." They tended to slow

Nature journaling

down and delve deeply into the subject at hand, something our society's fast-paced, multi-tasking environment doesn't seem to allow.

And this is where nature journaling fits in. The idea is not to give "a lecture on what things are called." Rather, Karen shares her experience and models it for others, and your job is to let your interest and attention take you where it wants. Studying nature is not unlike tinkering with materials. You notice something (say, a whimbrel through binoculars on the shore), you try something (sketching what you see), and you start noticing and questioning and learning (what's that bird eating as it digs around? Where's its nest?).

For Karen, and those of us following her lead, nature journaling was an unintended consequence of the pandemic and sheltering in place. Mike and Karen used to be weekenders at TSR, spending about half their time in the Bay Area and the other half traveling around the world. Since March 2020, they have been here full-time—and it's changed them. "Our wanderlust has turned to wonderlust," Karen says. "I can be deeply engaged on the land around us. It's actually been much more rewarding. I feel like something deep has really changed for both of us."

One journaling method is to sit and notice. Take a one by one-foot square and study everything you see in it. There's a meditative quality to this. I spent six mesmerizing hours creating an ink drawing of a Douglas iris and felt like a new person when I was done. We know that meditation can change your brain, quieting its noisy, worrying thoughts. Numerous studies have shown that time spent in nature, too, can dramatically improve our mental health, reducing stress, anxiety, depression, and negative self-talk, while simultaneously improving heart health, creativity, and empathy. Put art and nature together and prepare to have your life change for the better.

The Sea Ranch is an incredible place to sit and watch, or walk and discover. We've got 50 miles

Winecup clarkia at The Hot Spot via macro-lens.
Photo by Karen Wilkinson

of trails, constantly changing microclimates and habitats, and biodiversity hot spots. On one of the loops from my house, I traverse through meadows, redwood forests, riparian zones, pine groves, and bluffs in a little more than an hour. But lately, that loop has taken far longer as I stop and stoop, and snap photos that I will draw from later. The examination of one plant and its flower leads to another right next to or behind it that I didn't see at first, and suddenly I'm sliding down the rabbit hole of flower obsession.

That level of focus does require time, though with anything you truly love doing, it flies. In addition to their jobs, Karen and Mike are active with TSR committees, including the Ecology Subcommittee of TSRA's Planning Committee, which seeks to study, protect, and educate the community about TSR's and the larger region's natural environment. Its members regularly perform plant and wildlife surveys that contribute to a data set about our region's biodiversity. In fact, at our meet-up at the Hot Spot, Karen, with help from another Ecology Subcommittee member, Pat Friedman, identified two new species for TSR's Biotic Database: a Wine-

"Our wanderlust has turned to wonderlust. I can be deeply engaged on the land around us. It's actually been much more rewarding. I feel like something deep has really changed for both of us."

cup clarkia (*clarkia purpurea*) and a relative of the Siberian candy flower (*claytonia sibirica*), which is related to miner's lettuce.

"People on different committees ask me, 'how do you find the time to do nature journaling?'" Karen adds. "But it's my lifeline. The Sea Ranch for me represents a place and a mindset that is about lifelong learning."

Karen's advice for anyone who wants to try nature journaling? Start wherever you're comfortable. "If you can get words on a page, do that. Or numbers." And most importantly, "silence the inner critic as soon as possible." This was one of the biggest incentives for me. Though we are around the same age, Karen has been like an uber-supportive parent. This kept me going when my inner critic was telling me that my drawings sucked. And with time and practice, they got better.

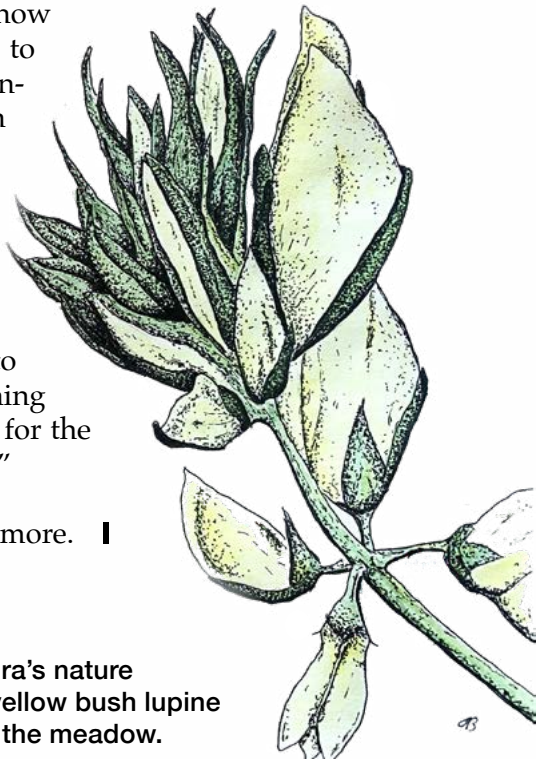
Though it's a great by-product, artistic talent and "pretty pictures" aren't the goals of nature journaling. According to John Muir Laws, discovery, mental peace and calm, and a closer connection with nature are what you'll gain from this practice. "A nature journal is a lens that focuses our attention and crystalizes our observations, thoughts, and experiences," his website describes. Mike suggests spending five minutes in one spot and just noticing. "The more time you spend looking, the more you see."

I've already realized just how much more I'm noticing on my daily walks. The various hues of green, and the layers of texture, as I look out across a spring meadow. The elegant lacy hairs coming out of the pistil of a California phacelia (also known as Rock phacelia, *phacelia californica*) blossom at Bihler Point, half the width of my pinky finger, and visible only through my macro lens. Karen showed me where to find these little gems, and we compared them with Bolander's Phacelia (*phacelia bolanderi*) that we saw at the Hot Spot. But they are so different! Bolander's are much larger blossoms, about an inch in diameter, but with those same strange hairs. They both have a subtle lavender hue, and maybe those little hairs are the key to their connection.

This is what I mean about the rabbit hole of flower-obsessing. The concerted focus is intoxicating, and no matter what my mood was like before, it's always better after such an outing. In some ways, Mendonoma Sketches opened a door to a second childhood. Karen's excitement is so infectious, that it suddenly seems perfectly normal to crawl around in the dirt looking at bugs and whatever else I come across, and then to play with pens and paint. Weren't these the best parts of kindergarten?

Luckily for us, Karen and Mike want to share these kinds of experiences and help others gain from it. The history, architecture, and ethos of TSR initially drew them here, but actually living here and studying this environment has deepened their connection. As Mike puts it, "We sign a bunch of paperwork that says that we won't paint the house blue, but the other things that are intangible are, how are we going to share the environment with each other and how do we actually become stewards of this place in a way that will allow it to become something still meaningful for the next occupants?"

I couldn't agree more.



From Tempra's nature journal: A yellow bush lupine budding in the meadow.

Vanishing kelp forests

Kathryn Arnold

When the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced in March 2021 that the ban on harvesting red abalone would continue until 2026, many ocean conservationists felt the five-year extension was overly optimistic. Unless the bull kelp forests off the Northern California Coast rebound from the collapse that began in 2013, the future for red abalone looks grim. Red abalone take about 12 years to grow to legal harvesting size—seven inches—so it's going to take much longer for the abalone population to come back than the bull kelp. And whether the bull kelp forests can recover depends on a complex set of factors, and our willingness to help.

Not so long ago, giant forests of bull kelp (*Nereocystis luetkeana*)—a type of brown marine alga—thrived along the Sonoma-Mendocino coastline. These oceanic equivalents of redwood forests provide habitat, food and shelter for hundreds of species of fish, marine mammals, seabirds and invertebrates, including sea stars, purple sea urchins and red abalone—three species whose interdependence is inextricably linked to the fate of the kelp forests.

Fond of cold, nutrient-rich water, bull kelp grows on rock surfaces in the sub-tidal zone, stretching upward toward the surface where sunlight penetrates the ocean's depths and fuels the algae's growth. An annual species, it must reproduce from spores each year. Under healthy conditions, it grows quickly, as much as 10 inches per day, reaching heights of up to 60 feet. But conditions have been far from healthy over the last eight years. The once lush bull kelp forests have been replaced by urchin barrens, underwater wastelands where purple sea urchins have eaten the kelp down to bare rock.

The trouble started for Northern California's bull kelp forests in 2013 when sea stars disappeared, decimated by a gruesome wasting disease. Sea stars (especially, sunflower stars) consume juvenile purple sea urchins; without sea stars to keep their numbers in check, the purple urchin population exploded, and they began gobbling up the kelp. The situation was worsened by a three-year-long marine heat wave. In late 2013, a "warm blob" (a mass of above-average-temperature water) settled in the northeast Pacific Ocean, followed by an El Niño event in 2016. The prolonged warmer ocean temperature suppressed the bull kelp's ability to reproduce, leading to collapse. Since then, more than 90% of the bull kelp forest in the Sonoma-Mendocino region has vanished.

The impact on red abalone

The lack of kelp significantly reduced the amount of food available for red abalone, causing them to starve to death or become so weak they can't survive attacks by predators or resist being dislodged by strong waves. The presence of large numbers of purple urchins has also diminished the amount of living space available for abalone in the sub-tidal zone, forcing them to move into shallower water and making them more vulnerable to desiccation during low tides, pollution, and overfishing. Ironically, once purple urchins form barrens and no longer have any food to eat, they go dormant and stop growing. They're able to withstand starvation conditions for many years, but abalone can't survive in barrens. The increased number of abalone shells that have been washing ashore recently is a testament to the extent to which abalone populations are being impacted by purple urchins.

How we can help

Making the shift from urchin barrens back to a kelp-dominated ecosystem will require an extreme conservation effort. In 2018 the Greater Farallones Association (GFA) (https://farallones.org/kelp/) released a comprehensive Sonoma-Mendocino Bull Kelp Recovery Plan (https://farallones.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Bull-Kelp-Recovery-Plan-2019.pdf) to respond to the dramatic loss of kelp. The Plan is being jointly implemented by GFA, the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, CDFW, and numerous university, govern-

A healthy bull kelp forest ecosystem.
Photo by Steve Lonhart, NOAA NBNMS

Red abalone.
Photo by Kathryn Arnold

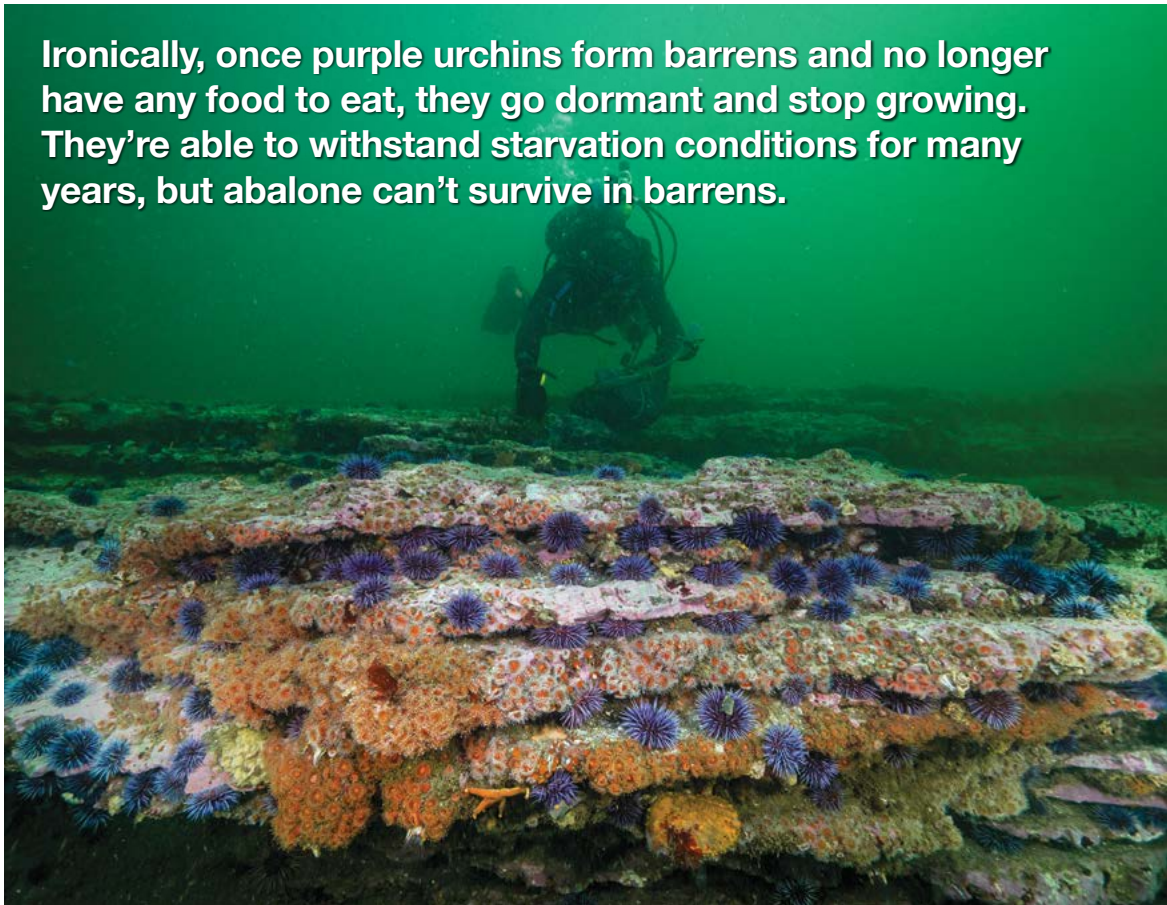
Vanishing kelp forests

ment, private and non-profit partners, including the Ocean Protection Council, UC Santa Barbara, UC Santa Cruz, The Nature Conservancy, Reef Check and Watermen's Alliance, and focuses on selecting sites for kelp restoration based on historical levels of kelp; carrying out kelp recovery actions, including removing purple urchins, planting kelp spores, and reintroducing sunflower sea stars; conducting long-term underwater and aerial surveys of kelp canopy cover and research to inform next steps in recovery and maintenance efforts; and, engaging community members to help with recovery efforts.

Two sections of The Sea Ranch coastline have been identified as potential bull kelp restoration sites. In the fall of 2019 and 2020, GFA performed drone surveys of these sites to estimate kelp biomass; they're returning this fall and need volunteers to watch for wildlife disturbances during the drone flights. They're also looking for FAA-licensed drone pilots with their own equipment to help with long-term aerial monitoring of the local kelp forests. Other volunteer opportunities are available with Reef Check (www.reefcheck.org/california-program/) and Watermen's Alliance Urchin Removal Efforts (on Facebook).

They need scuba divers, kayakers, surfers, and boaters to help conduct underwater surveys of kelp forests and remove purple urchins on the north-central coast. And of course, we can support the efforts of these non-profits with our financial donations. By pitching in, we just may succeed in insuring a future for red abalone. For a deeper dive into events that led to the decline of bull kelp, read: insideclimatenews.org/news/16032021/pacific-ocean-climate-change-kelp-urchin-sea-otter-sea-stars/.

Sources: Sonoma-Mendocino Bull Kelp Recovery Plan, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, KELPRR (Kelp Ecosystem Landscape Partnership for Research on Resilience)



A diver approaches an urchin barren off the Northern California coast as part of a purple urchin collection effort to restore our bull kelp forests ecosystem.

Photo by Patrick Webster

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The RCMS Leadership Team pictured above, L to R: Leon Koenck, PA; Tom Bertolli, MD; Ara Chakrabarti, CEO; Jesse Ewing, PA; Barbara Brittell, PA

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A different tectonic plate:
Sea Ranch geology

Tom Cochrane

Understanding our geologic history gives us a deeper appreciation of beauty and the value of preservation.

Rock formations

Our Sea Ranch rocks were born 225 miles south of here in an offshore deep-water basin. Sediments from the continent were dumped into the ocean during the Upper Cretaceous Period more than 65 million years ago. These rocks covering most of the length of The Sea Ranch belong to the Gualala Formation and consist mostly of sandstones and shale. The Gualala Formation is split into two members—the Stewarts Point Member on the south and the Anchor Bay Member on the north end.

You can see these two members along the bluff edge. Take the beach trail at the Ohlson Ranch Center. There are two patches of conglomerate mixed in with the sandstone and shale beds. These conglomerates were old stream or beach deposits at the edge of the basin or were washed into the deeper basin by ocean currents and possibly earthquakes. If you examine these conglomerates closely, you will see that the one on the north end of the beach contains more darker colored pebbles that the south end conglomerate with more white quartz pebbles. The north younger one is the Anchor Bay Member and the south one the Stewarts Point Member. Geologists think that the differences mark different source areas of rocks from the distant Southern Sierras.

San Andreas Fault

Then about 35 million years ago, the San Andreas Fault was born. Plate tectonics caused the Pacific Plate to change motion from a period of subduction under the North American Plate to a north-west movement in a transform fault motion. The fault split off a narrow section from the continent and made it ride along the Pacific Plate. The land under our feet is known as the Gualala Block—a small strip of land and the ocean basin offshore. Point Reyes, Bodega Bay, and north of Fort Ross have land above water stretching to Point Arena. The block continues under the ocean to Cape Mendocino where the San Andreas joins a triple junction and swings west.

Movement along the San Andreas Fault has carried us here at The Sea Ranch from our birthplace in Southern California in a series of many movements. Geologists calculate that the movement averages 1.5 inches per year. The movements occur in rapid movements of a few inches to several feet at a time. We have seen no movement here at The Sea Ranch since the 1906 earthquake event. That movement was up to 22 feet of horizontal displacement over a 270 mile stretch of the fault. In the 115 years since the 1906 event, the block has been moving slowly at a depth of six to twelve miles with a total of twelve to sixteen feet of horizontal movement. When the stress at the surface finally reaches the failure point the fault will jump. We can hope that the next movements will be a series of small displacements, rather than one big jump.

Attitude of the rocks

Now that we have frightened you about the "big one," we must look at the rocks along the bluff edge for the length of The Sea Ranch. On your daily walk, you will see rocks that dip and are twisted in all directions. Small adjustment faults seem to occur every few feet with very few stretches of rocks all dipping in one direction. These original rocks were deposited in deep water in nearly horizontal positions. There doesn't appear to be any rocks exhibiting wave ripple marks or sand dune festoons of crossbedding. Imagine the stresses that these rocks have undergone in their trip of 225 miles!

Black Point Beach boasts some of The Sea Ranch's oldest rocks: a unique metamorphosed basalt possibly dating to 80 million years ago.

Photo by David Yager Photography

A rocky point of land is harder than a cove of land where the rocks are weaker or more broken up by faulting. You can see long open water traces offshore at low tide—which mark fault zones. Some bluff areas have narrow channels cut many feet inland. Sea caves are all created by faults—often where two faults are close together or intersect. Water flows along many of these faults, draining the inland meadow areas and the hills above. All the streams flowing into the ocean appear to be along fault traces.

The most spectacular faulted areas for your examination are located at Pelican Bluffs and Moat Creek, both just south of Point Arena. Arena Cove has a huge anticline in the bluff front. We do have anticlines and synclines on The Sea Ranch, but they are harder to point out. (I will locate them for you in future issues.)

Black Point Spilite

Just north of The Sea Ranch Lodge, we encounter the Black Point Spilite. It extends along the bluff for nearly a mile to the north. It has been mapped as an anticline with younger rocks to the south dipping to the southwest and rocks to the north dipping to the northwest. The center of the anticline is about midway along the bluff edge north of the stairway to Black Point Beach. About halfway along the beach, you can see some poorly developed pillow lavas. These indicate the lava was deposited in water.

Sea Ranch geology

The Black Point Spilite was once a series of basalt lava flows, or a series of basalt flows from an island arc located offshore—again offshore Southern California. It appears to be dated at 80 million years ago, or possibly younger during the Upper Cretaceous Period.

However, this is not an ordinary basalt rock like the one you can visit at Iversen and Hearn Gulch. Our rock has been slightly metamorphosed, giving it a green color and metamorphic minerals not found in a basalt. There is a small percentage of magnetite in the rock. With a magnet, you can pick up magnetite in the black streaks along the beach. I estimate ten to twenty percentage of the rock shows some magnetism.

As you drive along Highway One just south of Annapolis Road, your car radio (especially AM) will cut out and cell phones may be interrupted due to the magnetism.

Something has happened to the original basalts. The lavas were apparently thrust under the North American Plate and slightly metamorphosed but were subsequently broken off and uplifted by an ancestral fault and later readjusted by the San Andreas Fault. Now this rock formation is at the surface, and it is also located more than one mile south on the Richardson Ranch—offset more than one mile by the Gualala Ridge Fault (an older trace of the San Andreas Fault). The Black Point Spilite has a strong magnetic anomaly. I suggest that the magnetic anomaly offshore of Del Mar Point and with another anomaly offshore of Point Arena are possible buried blocks of the Black Point Spilite.

The Black Point Spilite has been dated at 80 million years age (Jurassic Age) but may be older as the age dating may be marking the time of metamorphism and not the older time of the lava formation.

Pleistocene Epoch

Fast forward with our age chronology to 2.9 million years ago when the Pleistocene Epoch began. There were more than 13 episodes of Continental Glaciation of approximately 100,000 years in length and a similar number of 20,000-year Interglacial warm times. There were no glaciers here, but the sea levels rose and fell 350 feet or more. The ocean advanced and retreated five to ten miles in its contact with the land. Early Americans 15,000 to 20,000 years ago

Roughly 10-20% of the black rock at Black Point Beach shows magnetism.

Photo by David Yager Photography

lived on the broad Continental Shelf—which explains why few artifacts are found on our present shore.

As the glaciers melted, the sea level rose, and wavecut marine terraces were created onshore as the ocean waves struck the land. As the seas withdrew in the succeeding glaciation, the terraces were covered with beach sands and gravels, and even some patches of sand dunes (the north end of The Sea Ranch). On The Sea Ranch we see the evidence of five or six terraces.

The lower terrace—The Sea Ranch Meadows—is approximately 80,000 years old. The next higher terrace is older—approximately 125,000 years old. It marks the location of Highway One through The Sea Ranch and for many miles along the coast. The older terraces are more destroyed by erosion but show up as flat spots on the hillside area. Timber Ridge Road marks a terrace 500,000 or 600,000 years in age.

New rocks

If you park at the Sea Pine trail head and examine the beach and bluff front, you will see steeply dipping in slope massive sandstone blocks. These rocks are offset by small adjustment faults. The surface of the wavecut terrace is covered by up to fifteen feet of sand and gravel coastal terrace deposits—again deposited 80,000 years ago. At the north end of the small beach is a fine gravel to very coarse sand deposit that has been consolidated from a loose sand/gravel mix to a fairly hard rock. A fault at the north end of the beach funnels water along the fault and through the gravel. Minerals from the waters (iron and other minerals) have slowly cemented the loose deposit into a rock. This is the youngest rock on The Sea Ranch—probably only a few thousand years old.

Summary

We have progressed from the oldest to the youngest rocks, seen the effects of the moving Gualala Block on those rocks, seen the effects of rising and falling sea levels, etc. In the long history of time from the Jurassic to the present, there are many gaps in time where rocks are missing. Some of these rocks are represented in the offshore basin, but a continuous timeline is not present.

In future articles I will point out many additional features and places for you to look at.

For Kashia neighbors, fire is a friend

Alison Owings

Walking down a narrow path she figured badgers had made, her pants tucked in her socks to ward off ticks, her long beaded earrings swinging in the breeze, Nina Hapner exulted as she neared the ocean. What a day! What a location! And… she was soon to explain, what an opportunity.

For the land she happily trod lay within the Kashia Coastal Reserve, the 678-acre landmass sold (or returned) to the Kashia in 2015. It lies south of Stewarts Point, past the sad tumbling down schoolhouse, past an abandoned sheep barn, and north of Salt Point State Park, with which it shares a border. You have come to the right spot when you see a sturdy sign at a west side pullout announcing Kashia Coast Reserve, followed by a list of organizations that helped the Kashia raise money for the purchase from members of the Richardson family, which, when they decided to sell, gave the Kashia the right of first refusal.

Hapner, director of environmental planning for the Kashia (pronounced ka-SHY-a) band of Pomo Indians, is on the one hand thrilled that the Kashia, originally oceanside dwellers, pushed back from their homeland up the mountains several miles to the Stewarts Point Rancheria (many tribal members live in Santa Rosa), have a return route.

"It offered the tribe for the first time in over 125 years to have access back to the ocean without having to ask a private land owner, the state, or the County [for] access. You'd have to pay to pray, to practice your cultural rights." Original Kashia territory, she said, ranged from Gualala down to Salmon Creek, near Bodega, and inland, too. "They are ocean people. To not have access to something that your stories are told to you about, it's devastating because you have things it's difficult to teach your children. Then trying to even have access to fish, like having to make sure you have a fishing license…"

Yet Hapner, whose partner and daughter are Kashia, while she is Tsalagi (commonly called Cherokee) knows that she and the band, and its governmental agency allies, face a major challenge.

The glorious reserve, in short, needs work.

As the recipient of a degree in Wildlife Biology from Humboldt State University, she sees problems close up and from a distance. In the grassy badger-beloved meadow west of Route 1, she spots countless invasive species, from rattlesnake grass to thistle to Spanish grass (meant for Spanish horses) to more, which have crowded out native vegetation. Across the highway, up the hill and into the forest, she focuses on a more daunting challenge.

"The Bishop pines. They do not look healthy there. They are starting to die off. Bishop pines actually are a fire adapted tree." They are also native. But because "there hasn't been any management on them," they are stressed out from overcrowding, "water issues," and pitch canker disease. "They're just being overwhelmed."

Overwhelmed, one might say, from being underappreciated. Sturdy plank-bearing Douglas firs, by contrast, have much more commercial value. Loggers working this part of the coast, she continued, "were interested in trees you could take to the mill and be milled and get money for. That's not Bishop pines." They are very "pitchy," in Hapner's description. They also vary greatly in size and shape. "People don't mill Bishop pine trees. But we will." To this end, the Kashia bought a portable sawmill, now at the ready on the Stewarts Point Rancheria. It will mill Bishops for boards, and thereby replace old fencing along Route 1 on both sides of the mile-long Kashia Coastal Reserve. In an agreement with Sonoma County's Open Space District, a path next to the fence's western side will accommodate non-

Nina Hapner, director of environmental planning for the Kashia. (below) Sign announcing the Kashia Coastal Reserve south of Stewarts Point.
Photos by Alison Owings

tribal visitors. If they want to fish, though, they will have to come by boat from the ocean, as the Kashia had had to do.

The Kashia Band's immediate next step, this summer, is to implement a previously approved and well-known Timber Harvest Plan, now modified by the Kashia with agreement from the Sonoma County Open Space District. It involves harvesting a variety of trees determined to be in precarious health, in part from overcrowding. As Hapner puts it, "The important thing to understand is that this plan was adjusted to benefit tree growth and build health and resiliency in the forest." The plan also includes clearing some—by no means all—accumulated fire-inviting deadwood. That challenge is evident even from Route 1.

Yet the deliberate use of fire is central to what comes next in the Kashia's intentions to restore the Reserve. In the next year or so, the band will apply to CAL FIRE for a "Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan" or NTMP, which in Hapner's words "will enable further care of the forest landscape as needed." That means burning some of the land to save it, a traditional Native fire management practice meant to bring the forest and grasslands back to the aforementioned resiliency. (For more on the practice, see the Wikipedia entry, "Native American use of fire in ecosystems.")

Necessity for such a measure seems clear. Because Native ways have not been utilized for so long and because others' ways have paid little attention to the health of this stretch of land, the Reserve lost not only animals, including spotted owls, but so many plants, including wild mushrooms and various grains, that even Kashia elders are not sure what may be restored. Nina Hapner recalls them saying the sea and grasslands and forest were their grocery store, providing everything a person needed.

Transformation from despoiled invaded landscape to resilient homeland will take time and patience. And fire. Nothing will be burned intentionally during a dangerous fire season, of course. The Kashia plan to wait for a certain amount of moisture, among other conditions, until they—and their allies—start moderated fires to thin their new land back to health.

Smiling as happily as she had at ocean's edge, Hapner said she can hardly wait to see what the fires will restore. ▮

Condo One and the Milky Way.
Photo by Paul Kozal

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

Walt Whitman

Peer into the universe

George Calys with Carl Brosius

At the risk of offending amateur astronomer, Carl Brosius, the night skies of The Sea Ranch have wonders that are worth "looking up in perfect silence." Brosius, a Sea Rancher with his own observatory, was kind enough to point out a few highlights that can be viewed with the naked eye, or even better, with a pair of binoculars.

At the top of the list must surely be humankind's galactic home, the Milky Way. To the ancient Greeks, the dense band of stars looked like milk and our word "galaxy" is derived from the Greek word for milk, γάλα (gala). The summer months are excellent times to view the Milky Way which can be seen as soon as it becomes dark. Around midnight, the galaxy is high overhead, stretching from the southwest to the northeast.

The Milky Way is a spiral galaxy with a dense center and stars revolving around that center. Just how many stars are in the galaxy is not precisely known; estimates range from 100 to 200 billion stars. When viewing the Milky Way, one is looking through the disc of the galaxy from Earth's vantage point about two thirds of the way out from the center. Because of nighttime light in cities and suburbs, the Milky Way is not visible to many Americans; even many rural areas are too bright to view it easily. The Sea Ranch is a nearly optimal location for viewing this spectacular night show.

The Perseids are an annual meteor shower considered one of the brightest of the year. Meteors are bits of rock, dust, and grains left from the trail of a comet. The Perseids are the "junk" left from the comet Swift-Tuttle. When the Earth passes through the trail of the comet, these bits of junk enter the atmosphere and burn brightly; we see them as meteors or "shooting stars."

In 2021, you can view the Perseids from July 17 through August 24, but they peak on the nights of August 12 and 13. During the peak, one can observe from 60 to 100 meteors an hour, making it one of the most sought-after astronomical events. Viewing the Perseids from The Sea Ranch takes a bit more effort as they appear in the north and northeast sky and will at times be behind the ridge. By the early morning of August 13 (midnight to 4 AM), however, they are high enough to be seen from non-forest areas.

Several planets of our Solar System are visible during the summer months. Venus, our nearest planetary neighbor, is visible in the western sky at dusk. Mars, the "red planet,' will be visible in the evenings until late August. Jupiter, the largest planet, will be at its brightest the evenings of early August until early September. Glimpses of Saturn can also be enjoyed at about the same time as Jupiter. Other planets can be seen but require binoculars or a telescope.

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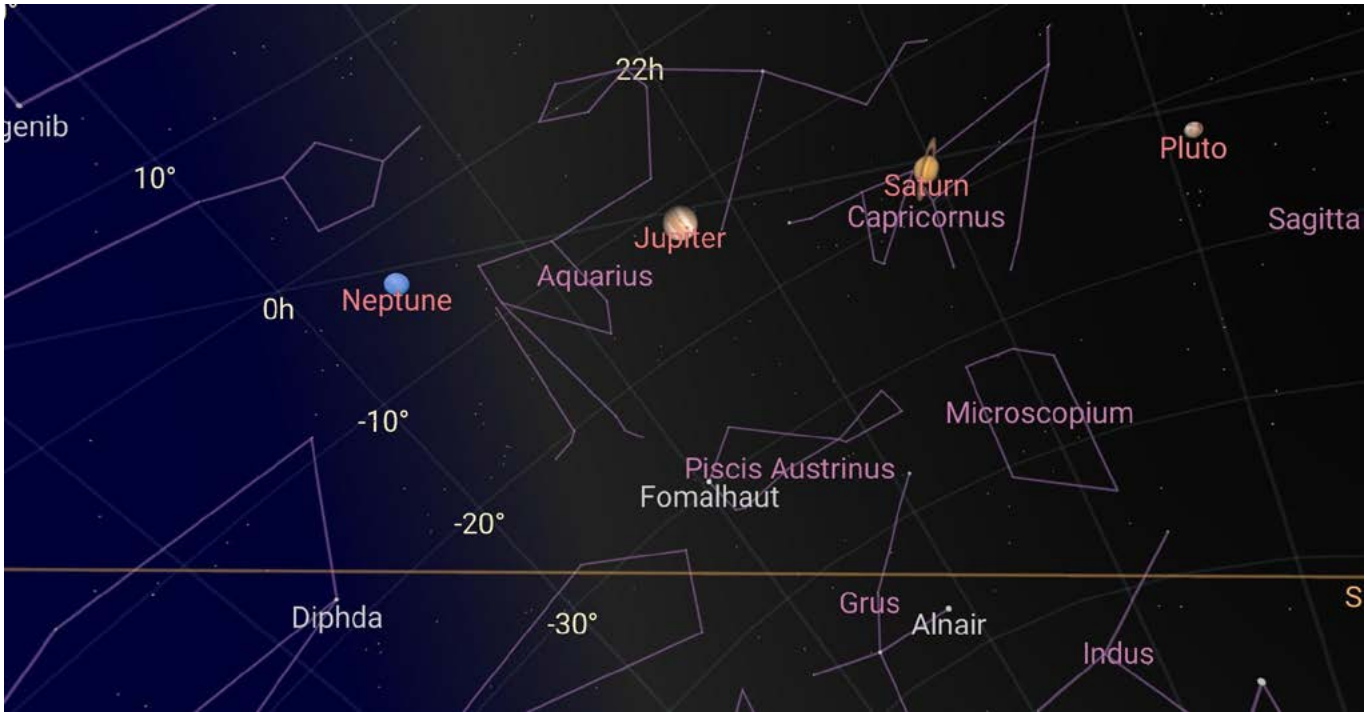
Peer into the universe

Locating planets has been made simple these days; a smart phone loaded with an astronomy app makes it as simple as pointing one's phone at the sky and reading the names of stars and planets. Many apps are free to download; Sky Map, Sky Walk, Sky View, and Stellarium are popular.

Any astronomical viewing requires two things: clear weather and dark skies. Summer weather at The Sea Ranch can be variable and "Fogust" can obstruct viewing the sky. Dark skies, however, are one of the blessings of The Sea Ranch; without streetlights or other exterior lighting, the skies are as dark as possible for a populated area.

Once the stuff of mythology, the sights of the night sky at The Sea Ranch are the best free show on earth. Get bundled up, grab your smart phone, maybe some binoculars, and go enjoy the show!



Sky Map is one of several free smart phone astronomy apps.
Photo by George Calys

Tide pools: a magical ecosystem

Marilyn Green

Of the many ecosystems found on the Mendonoma coast, perhaps none are as fascinating as tide pools.

What is a tide pool?

"A tide pool is an isolated pocket of seawater found in the ocean's intertidal zone. Formed in depressions along the shoreline of rocky coasts, tide pools are filled with seawater that gets trapped as the tide recedes. While these small basins at the ocean's edge typically range from mere inches to a few feet deep and a few feet across, they are packed with sturdy sea life such as snails, barnacles, mussels, anemones, urchins, sea stars, crustaceans, seaweed, and small fish." (NOAA, https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/tide-pool.html)

There are many choices for exploring tide pools on The Sea Ranch. Most beaches offer opportunities to see creatures and plants that are usually underwater. Although Tidepool Beach is perhaps the best-known tide pool location, no one beach is "better" for tide pool observation. Locate tidepools by accessing The Sea Ranch Trails Map (https://www.tsra.org/trails).

Tide pools on The Sea Ranch

- Pebble Beach
- Green Cove
- Tidepool Beach
- Walk On Beach

Tide pools off The Sea Ranch

- Gerstle Cove
  (Salt Point State Park, south of The Sea Ranch)
- Bowling Ball Beach
  (north end of Schooner Gulch State Beach, south of Point Arena)

(left) The diminutive and shy Pacific red octopus; (next page) Ochre sea stars may be rebounding on the Pacific coast.
Photos by Craig Tooley

Tide pool tips

- The best time to visit tide pools is at low tide.
- Bring a bag with you to pick up any plastic, paper, glass, or metal trash on the beach.
- Find footholds on bare rocks, which are less slippery than those colonized with algae and other sensitive sea life.
- If you peek under a rock, put it back where and as you found it. Leave the animals and plants alone.
- Do not collect intertidal species. It is illegal to do so in many areas.
- Never turn your back on the ocean!

Drought and The Sea Ranch water supply

George Calys

In the mornin' you go gunnin' for the man who stole your water
And you fire till he is done in, but they catch you at the border.

"Do It Again," Steely Dan

As the musical duo Steely Dan reminded us, it wasn't so long ago that people sometimes fought to the death over water in the American West. Today, in California, water is controlled not with gunfire, but in a complex patchwork of laws, regulations, and water rights established over the last two centuries. The situation at The Sea Ranch (TSR) is less complicated, in large part because TSR owns its own water company.

In modern American life, the availability of safe, plentiful water is taken for granted. Turn on a faucet and out it comes, seemingly effortlessly. A look behind the scenes at The Sea Ranch Water Company, however, reveals a well-tuned system of water storage, treatment, and distribution.

Eric Schanz is responsible for water here. As the Director of Works, Schanz and his crew manage the pumps, tanks, treatment plant, reservoir, and water mains necessary to deliver water to Sea Ranch homes. He explains in simple terms how it all works:

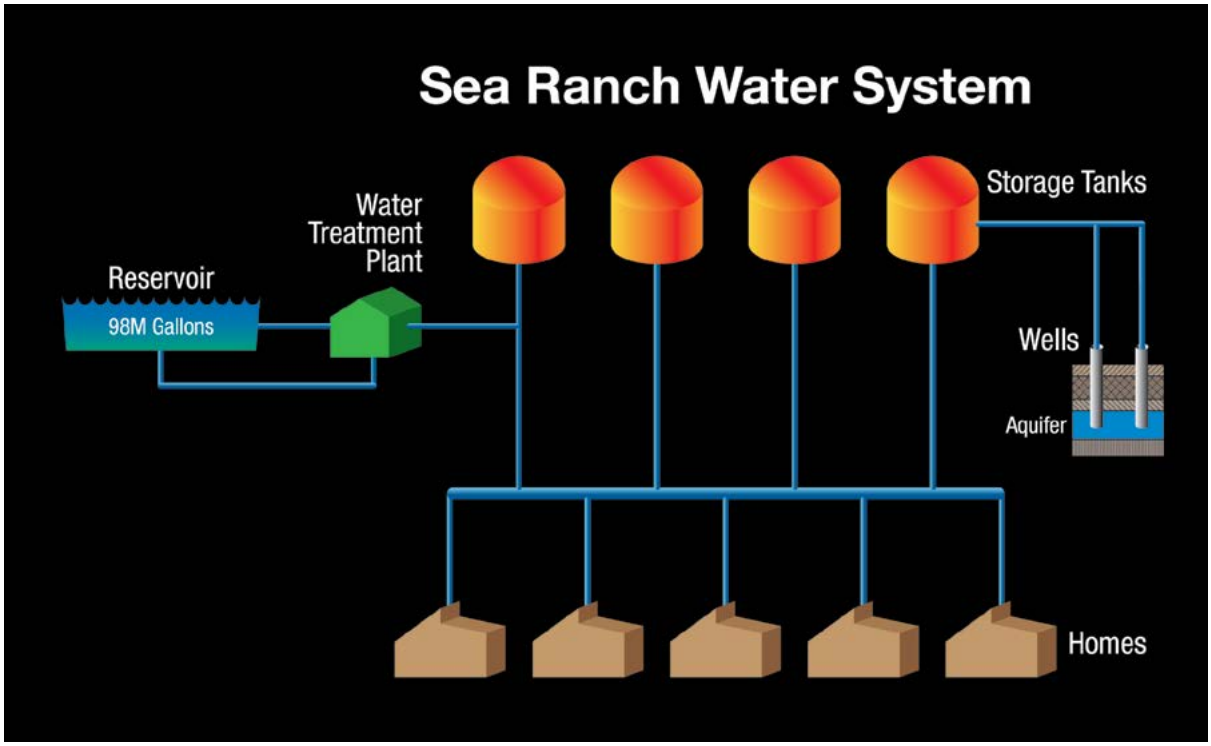
- Unlike other California districts who use surface water or snowmelt, all of the Sea Ranch's water is from ground water which is found in underground flows of water called aquifers.
- Two wells just east of the Gualala River from the Hot Spot, bring up water from about 100 feet underground.
- The pumped groundwater is then treated to drinking water standards and stored in a series of tanks and a reservoir.
- The elevation of the tanks create pressure so that water comes out when a faucet is opened.

(See diagram on next page)

The Sea Ranch Water Company is in the enviable position of being able to provide water to every home as well as having been designed to absorb future construction on the 400 or so unbuilt lots. Other communities do not share this luxury; nearby Gualala has a de facto moratorium on new construction because its water company (North Gualala Water Company) is not making new water connections. Seems like The Sea Ranch is in good shape waterwise, right? That would be true, except for the statewide onset of an extreme drought and the subsequent stress to cities, agricultural areas, and sensitive ecosystems.

But does this impact The Sea Ranch? The answer is somewhat involved.

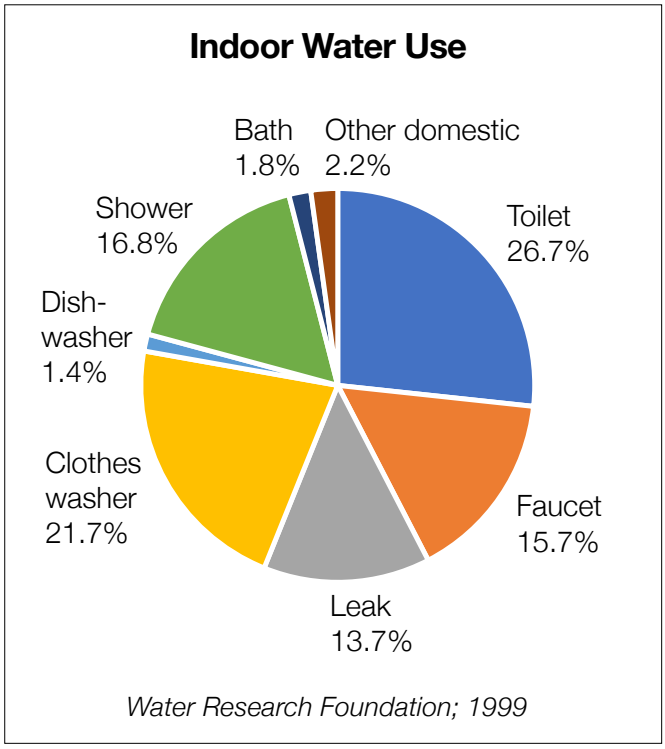
The reservoir, which holds 98 million gallons, is nearly full. In 2019, The Sea Ranch used 65 million gallons; in 2020 that jumped to 72 million gallons. At the 2020 level of usage, there is approximately 15 months of water, which seems like a lot. The tricky part is refilling the reservoir as the water is used. Two factors come into play: one, the pumps which bring up groundwater to the reservoir can only be operated when the State Water Resources Control Board permits it (generally in the winter and early spring); and two, it can take weeks to refill the reservoir (this year it took two and a half months). Because no one can predict when or how long groundwater will be pumped, it is difficult to de-



How we get our water: An overview of TSR's water system.
Graphic by Hall Kelley

termine how much water The Sea Ranch will have in 2022. Another dry winter would exacerbate the problem.

Accordingly, The Sea Ranch Board and Water Company have enacted a voluntary 10% reduction in water usage (InfoAlert April 28, 2021). How can Sea Ranchers minimize water usage? Take a look at how the average American home uses water:



Several simple strategies can reduce water usage:

- Use a front-load washing machine that uses 40% less water.
- Don't let water run while shaving, brushing teeth or rinsing dishes.
- When you are washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.
- Listen for dripping faucets and toilets that flush themselves. Fixing a leak can potentially save hundreds of gallons each month.
- Check your toilet for leaks.
- Prevent and report water waste.
- Run the dishwasher and clothes washer with full loads only.
- Don't irrigate outdoor plantings or gardens; spot water only if necessary.
- Hold off on washing cars at home; try waterless car wash products.

The water saved today is the water that will be available a year from now!

Information in this article was provided by Eric Schanz, Director of Works, Sea Ranch Water Company.

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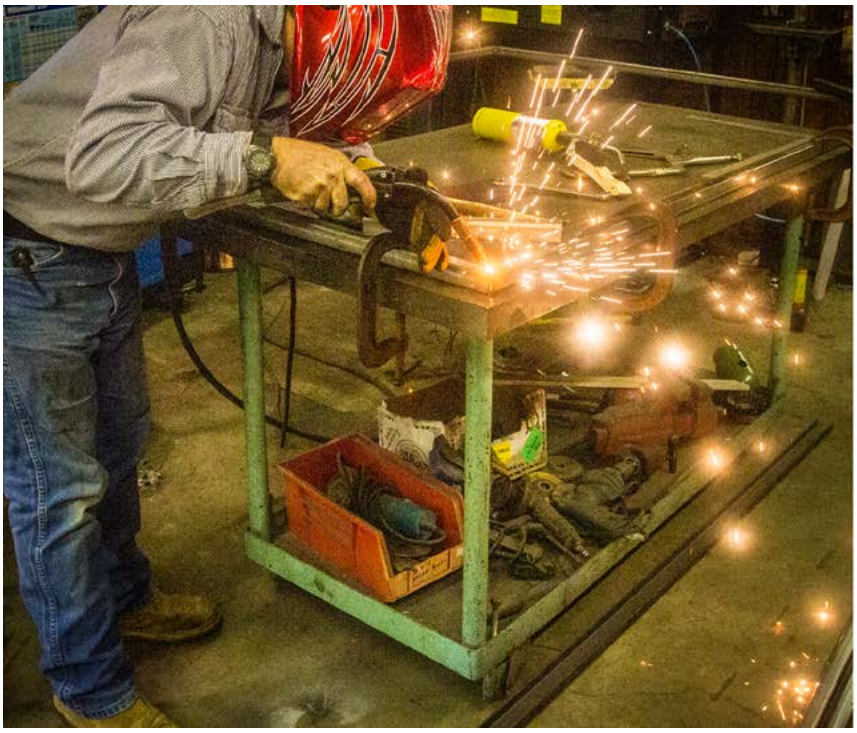

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Mill Bend. *Photo by Gail Jackson*

The overriding message from the community was to find a balance between public access and the protection of its ecological values:

Don't love it to death.

Planning underway for Mill Bend Preserve

Laurie Mueller

At a virtual forum earlier this spring, Redwood Coast Land Conservancy (RCLC), the Mendonoma region's local land trust, provided the latest update on planning for the Mill Bend site, discussed the challenges in restoring salmon to the Gualala River, and presented alternatives for building a network of trails on the recently purchased property.

When the scenic 113-acre Mill Bend property at the mouth of the river came on the market in mid-2017, the local community regarded purchase of the property as a critical opportunity to protect and restore this beautiful and ecologically important site.

Redwood Coast Land Conservancy stepped forward to lead the successful effort to acquire and preserve Mill Bend by raising $2.7 million in funds through grants and community donations. RCLC closed escrow on the property in January 2021 and has now begun the exciting and challenging process of planning for the conservation, habitat restoration, and responsible public access for the site.

To help with this complex planning process, RCLC has contracted with Prunuske Chatham, Inc. (PCI), an environmental consulting firm based in Sebastopol, to develop an integrated conservation plan to conserve and restore natural resources and to provide public access to the Mill Bend Preserve.

Community input has been a key element of RCLC's planning process. RCLC has held a series of community forums since 2017 to gather input on community interests and preferences for Mill Bend and to provide updates on its progress to acquire and manage the property. At the community forum held on April 11, RCLC discussed findings of an environmental survey of the property and presented some alternatives being considered for public access to the site.

These conceptual alternatives reflect the results from a survey conducted by RCLC following last year's forum held in August 2020 to determine the community's interests and priorities for Mill Bend.

The highest priority selected by the approximately 200 people who responded to last fall's survey was the restoration of salmonid populations, followed by interest in extending and connecting parts of the California Coastal Trail, providing public access, protecting the site and its ecology, installing interpretive signage, and providing access for paddle sports in the Gualala River.

Those who answered the survey expressed interest in amenities such as picnic tables and restrooms, but not at the risk of damaging the environment. The overriding message from the community was to find a balance between public access and the protection of its ecological values: don't love it to death.

In discussing possible alternatives for the Mill Bend Conservation Project, Mill Bend Project Manager Dave Shpak noted that many factors have to be considered as RCLC develops plans for Mill Bend. In addition to community preferences, other concerns need to be taken into account, such as regulatory constraints, requirements by funding agencies, inherent conditions of the site, and the long-term maintenance costs of any improvements.

While the picturesque bend in the river and the upland property adjoining it are scenic natural

Mill Bend Preserve

vistas today, they once were the site of Gualala's three lumber mills, which were huge operations that left lasting impacts on the site, including compacted soils, erosion, filled-in wetlands, built-up gravel bars, and extensive infestations of non-native vegetation that must be addressed as part of any restoration or access planning.

PCI consultants began the planning process with an extensive survey of the site to determine wildlife and plant communities, sensitive habitat areas, cultural and historical uses of the site, and to identify constraints on use of the property such as Highway One, which bisects the Mill Bend site, or areas subject to flooding or erosion.

PCI has now completed the initial site review and is working on conceptual plans for preservation, restoration, and public access. At the April 11 Forum, Joan Shwan, PCI's manager for the project, presented an ecological setting map to discuss the varied ecological areas and habitats of the Mill Bend property, which include the disturbed former mill sites, the forested areas of redwoods and bishop pine, the riparian forest along the river, the willow wetlands area, the estuary, and the perennial stream at China Gulch. She also listed the wide variety of wildlife and plants found in these varied habitats. Aspects of cultural history, such as the use of the site by indigenous peoples, the pioneer cemetery on the property, lumber mill sites and the rail line along the river's edge, were also included in the survey.

Salmonid restoration

PCI fluvial geomorphologist, Lauren Hammack, discussed the requirements and challenges for restoration of salmonids, a high priority for the Mill Bend site. She described the importance of estuaries like the one at Mill Bend for juvenile salmon, who live in estuary environments as their bodies prepare for the transition from fresh to salt water. Although the focus for salmon restoration has often been on upstream river stretches, young salmon who are allowed to grow larger by remaining for a longer time in the estuary are more likely to survive once they reach the ocean and thus are more likely to return. To survive in the estuary, they need places to hide from predators such as otters, cormorants, ospreys and pelicans, and to find ample food.

The Mill Bend estuary may look natural, but the natural tidal wetland areas were filled in and elevated for the lower mill site, which eliminated most of the "nooks and crannies" of woody brush and other wetland vegetation in and along the estuary where young salmon can hide. The large gravel bars in Mill Bend, the result of "legacy sediment" caused by earlier timber harvesting practices and other upstream land use, have also reduced the natural habitat for salmon.

Although salmonid restoration is a high priority, a preliminary assessment of the options for improving salmon habitat indicates a four-to-five year process, with additional grant funding needed to put improvements in place.

While salmonid restoration has a longer time horizon, plans for public access to the site have progressed. PCI has recommended four areas of the Mill Bend site to consider for public access trails.

Proposed public access sites

PCI landscape architect Maggie Jensen discussed conceptual designs for public access trails in each of these four areas, in each case presenting a "lighter touch" alternative and another alternative that might provide excellent public access values but would likely be more challenging because of other factors such as greater environmental impact, increased costs to build and maintain, coordination with neighboring landowners such as Cal Trans and Sonoma County Regional Parks, or an increased level of regulatory requirements.

Town access. The first zone under consideration is to the north of Mill Bend, where a trail extension

Salmonid restoration is a high priority. *Photo by Eiko Jones*

(right) Mill Bend's North Forest Access Alternative 2 Conceptual Map by PCI.

would connect the existing Gualala Bluff Trail with the Mill Bend property to the south either along Highway One (the "light touch") or would run along the west side of the highway using the old railroad right of way. Building the trail along the bluff below the highway would offer great vistas but would require a suspension bridge and would be more costly.

North forest access. The second area for proposed public access is a north forest loop trail on the upland side of the highway. Both alternatives being considered would provide loop trails, but the second alternative would provide a much larger trail loop with a greater range of experience.

Mill site/river access. In the third zone, located on the upland side of the property, a trail would run along the edge of the Gualala River on the east side of the Highway One bridge and would connect with Gualala Arts. In a second alternative, the trail would cross the river and connect with the campground and trails on the south side of the river. Building a bridge across the river would provide an important connection for the California Coastal Trail but would be much more costly, could interfere with salmon restoration, and would face many regulatory hurdles.

Mill Bend access. The fourth zone is the area on the west side of the Highway One bridge where kayaks and other river craft can haul out. The lighter touch alternative proposes a boardwalk trail north from the access road through the willows and a seasonal restroom. The second alternative would extend the boardwalk further north and also provide for a trail under the highway bridge to connect with trails on the upland side of the property.

As a follow-up to the April Forum presentation, RCLC is conducting another survey to gather input on community preferences for the alternatives being considered for public access in each of these areas and will incorporate the results into planning going forward. RCLC will hold another community forum this fall to discuss continuing progress on plans for Mill Bend.

A video of the full April 11 Forum, "Mill Bend: Planning For Tomorrow" can be accessed on RCLC's website at www.rclc.org along with other information about RCLC work parties and other activities at Mill Bend and RCLC's other public access sites.

Won't back down

Friends of Gualala River continue protection efforts

Tempra Board

Friends of Gualala River (FoGR), our area's grassroots watershed protection non-profit, continues its hard work defending the Gualala River from the threat of floodplain logging. On May 20, FoGR filed a motion for a preliminary injunction to halt logging of Gualala Redwood Timber (GRT) Company's Dogwood timber harvest plan (THP), which had been stayed while FoGR's state lawsuit went through the appeal process. Now that the state suit has ended, FoGR's current federal lawsuit (filed in September 2020 in partnership with the national Center for Biological Diversity) can continue.

The federal suit alleges the Dogwood THP will violate the Endangered Species Act because it will result in the taking of four listed species found in the watershed: Central California Coast coho salmon, Northern California steelhead, California red-legged frogs, and Northern spotted owls. According to FoGR, the Dogwood THP will harm these and a host of other species and their habitat through not only the removal of large redwoods, but through the associated process of logging, including log hauling, roadbuilding, and road maintenance in the Gualala River floodplain. As this article was going to press, FoGR released new data showing that eDNA (Environmental DNA) of coho, steelhead, and the red-legged frog were present in the Gualala River in December 2020. This is important because it proves that three of the four species listed in the lawsuit are present.

The Dogwood area begins near the Gualala Point Regional Park Campground, adjacent to the Gualala River, in an area known by locals as the "Magical Forest" because of its beautiful stands of healthy 100+ year-old redwoods, ferns, sorrel, and a host of rare plants. It then stretches up river to Switchville, and extends for miles down the south fork, which flows parallel to The Sea Ranch and the Hot Spot. Since the Dogwood THP was originally approved by California Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) (over the objections of hundreds of Mendonoma residents, scientists, and other agencies such as the California Department of Fish & Wildlife and the National Oceanic & Atmospheric

"FoGR is not against all logging but we want it to be done in a way that does not harm the endangered and threatened species that live in and around the floodplain and river . . ."

Lynn Walton

Administration (NOAA) Fisheries) in 2015, FoGR has successfully blocked its implementation. The federal lawsuit is in the discovery phase now and is expected to go to trial by the end of this year.

FoGR has stated that GRT's lawyers have been aggressive, attempting to intimidate FoGR by threatening to sue individual members of its Board of Directors, if FoGR doesn't agree to dismiss the suit. However, volunteer boards of non-profit organizations have statutory liability protections under sections 5047.5 and 5239 of California's Corporation Code.

Of the hundreds of THPs filed by Gualala Redwood Timber and others in the last few decades, FoGR has only opposed a handful of them, specifically those that most directly stand to irreparably harm the Gualala River and its floodplain. The Dogwood fits this category, and "would remove many of the last, largest remaining trees in the watershed—and those monumental 100-year-old trees are located in the floodplain," says Lynn Walton, FoGR's Vice President.

GRT owns 29,000 acres of the 191,000-acre Gualala River watershed, though they aren't the only entity that logs in it. FoGR has been able to work cooperatively with other landowners, such as The Conservation Fund, which practice sustainable forest management. "One of our major focuses is on protecting the floodplains," Lynn adds. "FoGR is not against all logging but we want it to be done in a way that does not harm the endangered and threatened species that live in and around the floodplain and river, which we believe the Dogwood THP would do if we sat back and let it happen."

Litigation is not the only tool in FoGR's toolbox. Its volunteers regularly engage in education, outreach, and advocacy about the Gualala River floodplain and its inhabitants. Among its current efforts is to build a 3D topographic model of the river's 300 square-mile watershed. Chris Poehlmann, former President of FoGR and Annapolis resident, builds interactive exhibits for museums, zoos, and aquariums, and has designed a model to be housed at the Gualala Point Regional Park visitor's center and used to teach schoolchildren and visitors about the watershed. The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department has agreed to support this project with a $10,000 grant, but FoGR needs an additional $10,000 to complete it.

In addition, FoGR hosts expert-led educational events and workshops, which recently included a free Earth Day virtual workshop on salmonids with a senior scientist from California Trout. Local *Mendonoma Sightings* author Jeanne Jackson, FoGR's Treasurer, conducts in-school educational workshops, sharing with students the various "creatures that live in and alongside the river." Her mission is to help our community's young people understand why and how to be good stewards of the floodplain. Jeanne says that when she shows them a picture of a steelhead fry or newborn western toad, the size of a tiny pebble, and explains that the floodplain is their home, they start to understand the harm done by driving over the gravel bar.

On the advocacy front, FoGR is working to convince the State Water Quality Control Board to follow its mandate to protect water quality in the Gualala River. In 2001, the EPA listed the Gualala River as "impaired" under the Clean Water Act due to

FoGR's Board of Directors: Charlie Ivor, Jeanne Jackson, Nathan Ramser, and Lynn Walton in the "Magical Forest" along the Gualala River floodplain, part of the Dogwood THP.
Photo by David Yager Photography

Friends of Gualala River

extensive sediment and high temperatures—death sentences for spawning salmon. The EPA also set limits to the amount of pollution (in this case, sediment), called Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), that could enter the river and its tributaries without exceeding water quality standards.

However, the River remains listed as impaired and according to FoGR, the State and Regional Water Boards have not helped to address or control sources of sediment. FoGR hired a professional hydrologist to conduct a sediment analysis and has petitioned the State Water Board to, among other actions, "1) adopt the Gualala River's TMDL into the North Coast Basin Plan; and, 2) develop and adopt an Action Plan to achieve the TMDL and improve water quality as required by the EPA Clean Water Act."

FoGR continues to raise funds from the community to support the current lawsuit, as well as its advocacy and educational efforts. For the federal suit, it has raised $152,000 of its $175,000 goal as of May 19.

For more information or to make a contribution to ensure the health of our watershed, visit FoGR's website at http://gualalariver.org.

Gualala Redwood Timber did not respond to requests to comment on the Dogwood THP or lawsuit. –Editor

Rehab with Chad

Biophilic design: The Sea Ranch approach to home design gets a name

Chad DeWitt

It's been hard to miss the brisk turnover in real estate on The Sea Ranch. The early iconic homes that were designed by noted architects like MLTW (Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull, and Whitaker), William Turnbull, Joseph Esherick, Charles Moore and Obie Bowman have always commanded a premium, but in this current market, even the once affordable Walk-In Cabins are selling for far over asking, pricing many would be owners out. Buildable lots remain a good value, and the market has now woken out of its slumber. As many new lot owners are dreaming about their future home, it's a useful exercise to explore what makes the homes by the early architects so desirable.

Some of the answers to that question can be found in the new design buzzword: Biophilic design. Biophilic design involves connecting the home's occupants to its environment through natural materials, windows, natural ventilation, indoor plants, as well as through using shapes and colors found in nature. "Biophilia is the humankind's innate biological connection with nature," reported environmental consulting firm Terrapin Bright Green in a 2012 paper titled "The Economics of Biophilia." "It helps explain why crackling fires and crashing waves captivate us; why a garden view can enhance our creativity; why shadows and heights instill fascination and fear; and why animal companionship and strolling through a park have restorative, healing effects."

Studies have shown that the presence of water increases a feeling of tranquility, and that having a visual connection with nature leads to a lowered heart rate and improved attentiveness. Advocates claim Biophilic design positively impacts the occupants' health and wellness, which offer clues as to why we feel relaxed when we return to our Sea Ranch homes, and why our homes have served as a refuge for so many during the pandemic.

Here are six Biophilic ideas from the early designs at The Sea Ranch to incorporate into your new home.

1. Natural lighting. Skylights are a signature element of most early Sea Ranch homes, and Turnbull was a master of natural lighting. He placed skylights in unique ways, such as above a built-in dresser in an alcove, connecting the occupant with the morning light as they dress for the day. Bowman used oversized skylights in the bedroom loft of his Walk-In Cabins, which allowed you to stargaze through the redwood canopy from the comfort of your bed.

Skylights when placed thoughtfully can be more than a source of natural light; they can provide an experience that connects you to the weather, the passage of time, and through their shadow play, can endlessly animate a room.

2. Natural ventilation. While The Sea Ranch is known for its strong winds, there's nothing quite like the smell of the ocean air breeze gently blowing through your home. Many ocean facing homes heat up uncomfortably during the afternoon. Include operable windows in your design and add one at the top of your tallest interior space, which will allow the warm air to naturally vent out, drawing in cool air from the lower windows.

3. Establish direct connections with the environment. Incorporate an indoor planter in your home entry and fill it with the same western sword ferns that are found in your garden. Use outdoor materials and construction techniques in the interior of the house. In a home by Bowman, he built the floor of the staircase the same as the outdoor deck staircase, complete with spaces between the boards, catching glimpses of the landing below.
In Esherick's own home, the living room has views

Natural light brings the outdoors in. *(below)* **Take your color cue from what's outside your door.**
Photos by Chad DeWitt

of the meadow and the ocean bluff, but in another room, he uses a window like a picture frame, capturing the coastline as it meets the horizon.

4. Select natural materials with a sense of place. Natural stone like limestone and slate, along with local wood: Douglas fir, pine and redwood connect us to our surroundings. Avoid using white drywall, opting for clay plaster treatments, or even papering the walls with natural grass cloth.

5. Embrace natural colors. Look to our environment for inspiration for your home's color scheme. We are surrounded by an exquisite palette of colors, from the muted tones of the local geology to the golden grasses in the meadow. Moore had a vibrant ocean blue and the orange of the California poppy in supergraphics found in his Condominium unit.

6. Incorporate natural shapes. Curve your walls like James Hubbell did at the Chapel, or align the pitch of your roof with the windswept cypress trees the way Esherick did in his Hedgerow Homes. Incorporate organically shaped Japanese paper lanterns in a home with a rational floor plan that is based on a hexagonal honeycomb.

Chad is the founder and creative director of Framestudio.

Coast Highway Artists Collective

A little red building with a lot of heart and art

Rozann Grunig

The art community along the Mendonoma coast is a major draw for locals and tourists alike. Many artists move to this area to be part of such a vibrant and creative community. For the past nine years, the Coast Highway Artists Collective in Point Arena has been a haven for many local artists to show their work. The members have worked hard to create a welcoming space for everyone in the community.

Located in a small, historical building built in the early 1900's, the gallery is in the heart of Point Arena. Visitors enter through a garden planted and maintained by collective members to a flagstone patio with benches to rest and absorb the small oasis. The collective was founded in 2012 by a group of local artists who wanted the help reinvigorate Point Arena, which was undergoing a kind of renewal after years of boom and bust.

The building has a very interesting history. Local book publisher, the late Warren Jones, purchased the building in a state of disrepair, having no idea how to use it other than improving his beloved City of Point Arena. A group of artists suggested an art gallery and he embraced the idea. Volunteers rebuilt the building and called the gallery CityArt. The interior was completed in 1997, and was active as the creative and vibrant CityArt Gallery for 10 years. The gallery closed in 2007 and the building sat empty, waiting patiently for a new life.

Then, in 2012, the idea of the gallery was resurrected and Barbara Fast, a renaissance woman in her own right (former pediatric surgeon, artist, and musician) became the founder and first manager of the newly minted Coast Highway Artists Collective. The artists who work to make this collective succeed are just as eclectic and quirky as the building they inhabit.

Currently there are 22 artists whose work ranges from oils and watercolors, photography, jewelry, textiles, woodworking (including birdhouses), and ceramics. With so many creative outlooks among this diverse group, one thing all agree on is the importance of the gallery as a place to display and sell their work, and the amazing sense of community and nurturing each member experiences.

The gallery often hosts guest artists in addition to the collective members. As

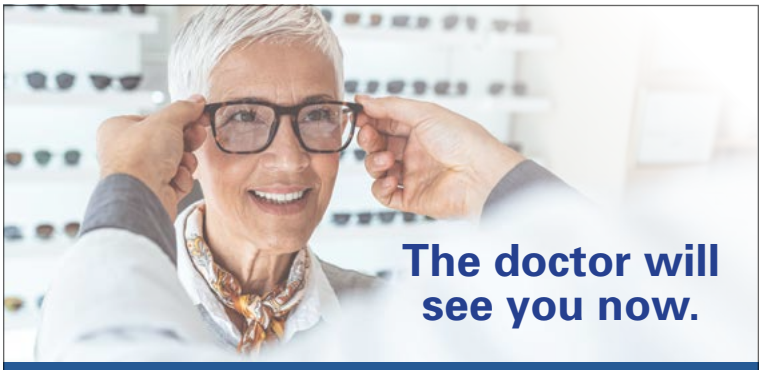
The CHAC Gallery at 284 Main St., Point Arena
Photo by Ling-Yen Jones

Jewelry by Ling-Yen Jones at the Coast Highway Artists Collective in Point Arena.

the area begins to reopen after a year of COVID-related restrictions, the gallery offers masked and socially distanced monthly opening receptions for featured artists, which often include live music in the garden when the weather cooperates.

Under the leadership of current gallery manager Ling-Yen Jones, the gallery participates in American Craft Week and the annual Almost Fringe Festival, a fun event where artists are encouraged to let their imagination run wild and create from the heart, not from the wallet. The gallery opens its doors for Point Arena's annual Hometown Holidays, a special night when Main Street fills up with holiday shoppers and revelers. The gallery lights up with a holiday tree decorated with handmade ornaments made by collective members.

The Coast Highway Artists Collective is regularly open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The gallery is located at 284 Main St., Point Arena, next door to the Redwood Credit Union. More information is available at www.coast-highway-artists.com



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Becca's kitchen: bold flavors

Rebecca Stewart with SURF MARKET

I love cooking Latin dishes; the flavors, the spices, the chili peppers! At one time, I was even going to name a restaurant Pepper's! My refrigerator is filled with condiments, wonderful varieties from so many different regions, habanero, chili crunch, on and on. My spice cabinet holds different chili blends, hot and mild. I'm addicted to Maldon Smoked Sea Salt! I believe mixing fresh fruit and vegetables for salsa is a winning combo, like peaches, nectarines, corn, zucchini and chilis.

Becca's favorite salsa salad.
Photo by George Calys

Becca's favorite salsa salad

(let the market dictate your salsas or salads!)

2 heirloom tomatoes diced
1 peach seeded and sliced
2 nectarines seeded and sliced
3 red radishes sliced thin
1/4 cup chopped cilantro
2 tbsp **Bunches and Bunches Green Fired Roasted Chili Sauce***
Pickled red onion and jalapeño
4 tbs rice wine vinegar
2 tbsp sugar
1 tsp each salt, cumin seed, crushed whole coriander seed,
1/2 jalapeno sliced thin to taste
1/2 red onion sliced thin
Maldon Smoked Sea Salt

In a small saucepan heat up vinegar, sugar, water, salt, sugar, cumin seed and crushed coriander seed, pour over the sliced red onion and jalapeño. Let set for a couple of hours or even overnight, drain when ready to use.

Mix fruit, radish, cilantro and lime juice with the red onion and jalapeños. You can dice this up also, but I like it like a salad, or it can be served with sliced up romaine at the last minute! Sprinkle with smoked salt.

Cilantro and pecan pesto quesadillas

1/2 cup pecans, toasted
1/2 cup crumbled Cotija cheese
3 oz chèvre cheese
1/2 cup Italian parsley leaves
1/2 cup cilantro leaves
1 clove garlic, coarsely chopped
1/2 tsp cumin seed, toasted
2 tbsp or to taste **Double D Farm's Carrot Habanero Hot Sauce**
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
salt and pepper
Olive oil and **Tajin** spice to brush on the quesadilla

In a food processor, pulse together the pecans, cheeses, parsley, cilantro, garlic, cumin, and Double D Farm's Hot Sauce. Add the olive oil and pulse again until well blended but... not completely smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Lay out tortilla, then a thin layer of the pesto, fold over and grill or heat in a pan. Brush the tortilla with oil, sprinkle with Tajin spice, and cook in a 400-degree oven for about 7 to 10 minutes, till nice and brown on top.

These quesadillas would be great with the salsa salad on the side!

***Bold items available at Surf Market**

Becca's kitchen

Cod, bay scallops & prawn lime & coconut cocktail

8 oz white fish, like cod, snapper, or halibut
8 oz bay scallops
12 medium size shrimp peeled and deveined
1 can unsweetened coconut milk
1 lime zested and juiced
2 to 3 tbsp **Bunches & Bunches Green Fire Roasted Chili Sauce**
1 tbsp or to taste **Double D Farm's Carrot Habanero Hot Sauce**
2 tbsp chopped cilantro
1 tbsp honey
1/4 cup chopped red onion
1/3 cup diced fresh pineapple
1/2 tsp **Maldon Smoked Sea Salt**
1/4 tsp freshly ground white pepper
Toasted coconut, lime wedges and cilantro for garnish

In a large skillet, cook together the fish, scallops, prawns and coconut milk over medium heat for about three minutes. Transfer to a nonreactive large bowl and immediately refrigerate to chill. Add lime zest and juice, chili sauce, hot sauce, cilantro, honey, onion, pineapple, and salt. Gently mix with chilled seafood. Garnish with toasted coconut, lime wedge and cilantro. Serve in large cocktail glasses, like a margarita glass or a large red wine glass. Serves 4-8.

***Bold items available at Surf Market**

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Interview:
Dan Schoenfeld, Wild Hog Vineyard

Caroline Ducato

Dan Schoenfeld. *Photo by Caroline Ducato*

At Surf Market, we are proud to have many special relationships with a variety of local purveyors. Dan Schoenfeld and his wife Marion are the owners of Wild Hog Vineyard in Cazadero. Dan recently sat down with us to talk about wine, lessons learned from the pandemic, and the humble beginnings of Wild Hog Vineyard.

Caroline Ducato: How did you end up in Cazadero making wine?

Dan Schoenfeld: I had always wanted to live in the country; it's where I am the most content. When I moved to California in 1969, I would work at every opportunity I had to save some money with hopes of buying some land. We had been looking around and in 1973, we came across 40 acres for sale here in Cazadero. The property was very rustic, but little by little, we made it our home. I was always interested in home winemaking, but just as a hobby. In 1981, we made the decision to plant grapes, establish a winery, and give it our best shot. It took four years for the vines to be established and from there, we started making Wild Hog Vineyards wine. I am very proud to say that in 1983 we received our organic certification, which designates all of the fruit from Wild Hog Vineyard as organic.

CD: Are you off the grid in Cazadero?

DS: I am proud to say we are completely off the grid here at Wild Hog. There are no electrical lines or poles up here. In 1979, a friend ended up with a bunch of solar panels that were supposed to be used for a NASA project but had been rejected for a variety of reasons. We put them up and have been running on solar and hydroelectric power ever since. We are quite certain that we were the first winery in California running on solar panels and there's a good chance that we were also the first in the nation. Renewable energy sources are becoming more widely available now and that's a very good thing for all of us.

CD: What characteristics are you looking for when you are making wine?

DS: I am a firm believer of letting the grapes do the talking. Good fruit makes good wine. I love full body, good structure, balanced acid, and tannin. On very rare occasions, we make slight adjustments to our wines but overall, my approach is to "let it be."

CD: Any silver linings from the experience of the pandemic?

DS: Over the last year, our community here on the coast blew me away in the very best way. People were kind, caring, generous, and looking out for each other. It was a hard time for all of us and it was uplifting to witness the best parts of humanity shining through.

CD: What is your perfect idea of happiness?

DS: Friends, music, delicious wine, and great food. We're getting back all of those things slowly and it sure feels great.

Twofish Baking survives & thrives

Maureen Simons

The COVID-19 era announced itself at Twofish Baking Company in a decidedly dramatic way. The bakery's owners, Hilla and Margaret, helped save a woman's life.

In early March 2020 a disheveled man, his eyes wide with panic, burst through the doors.

"Help me! Call 911! My partner isn't breathing, you gotta help her!"

Hilla sprinted outside and found a woman, limp and unresponsive, slumped across the seat of a battered car. She called 911 as Lois Falk, an off-duty Nurse Practitioner, drove up. Hilla waved her over, and they pulled the woman from the car.

"I don't like her color," Lois frowned. "I really don't like her color."

Hilla ran to retrieve Twofish's AED - a portable medical device that measures and jumpstarts the heart's rhythm. The instrument indicated chest compressions were the best course of action. Margaret joined them and the three women took turns doing compressions – mere inches from the woman's face – for over fifteen minutes. After EMTs arrived and fully stabilized her, the woman refused further treatment and the couple sped off in their car.

A bystander tapped Hilla on the shoulder.

"I heard that guy say his girlfriend had a fever a few days ago."

Margaret and Hilla gaped at each other. Neither had worn masks during the ordeal. It seems unthinkable now, but this was during the bewildering early days of COVID-19, before the outbreak was called a pandemic, before mask mandates and safety protocols, when there was only one confirmed case in Sonoma County - from the ill-fated Diamond Princess cruise ship.

Hilla, Margaret and Lois were tested and quarantined with the threat of a $10,000 penalty if they stepped outside their homes. Four days later their test results, thankfully, came back negative.

This surreal incident was a fitting prologue to Margaret and Hilla's life over the next year - a year marked by heroic effort, uncertainty, anxiety and threats to their physical safety and financial solvency. Relentless improvisation, the kindness of the community and the hard work and bravery of their team kept them going.

"We made pivots inside of pivots," Margaret said. "And somehow we survived."

A brave new world

COVID-19 worsened exponentially soon after the parking lot event. On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom imposed a 'Stay at Home' order that shut down vacation rentals and most travel. Twofish was deemed an essential business and allowed to stay open on a "to-go only" basis, with strict social distancing and sanitation requirements. Revenue dropped 30%, a death sentence for many small businesses.

Supplies ran short when a secondary epidemic of panic buying took hold. Twofish is dependent on regular deliveries of fresh, high quality ingredients (specialty flour, premium meat) and finished goods (paper products, cleaning supplies) which disappeared quickly.

"Managing Twofish is a little like running a battleship," Margaret said. "You're taking care of your soldiers, steering the boat, maintaining the engines, and firing the cannonballs. With COVID, there were no maps, no consistent rules, and broken supply

Margaret and Hilla hang in.
Photo by David Yager Photography

“Managing Twofish is a little like running a battleship. You’re taking care of your soldiers, steering the boat, maintaining the engines, and firing the cannonballs. With COVID, there were no maps, no consistent rules, and broken supply lines. We had to make it up.”

Margaret

Twofish Baking

lines. We had to make it up. We adjusted constantly and improvised our way around the shortages and shifting circumstances. But when you pivot repeatedly, you end up going in circles."

Long hours and ingenious workarounds became the standard for every small business. One acute shortage, the lack of hand sanitizer, had daunting implications. Twofish found a way to help. Hilla's brother Paul is the Director of Winemaking at Korbel Winery and had reset a brandy production line to make alcohol-based hand sanitizer for healthcare workers. He called Hilla, who has a label maker for large stickers - the kind that seal Twofish BLT wrappers.

Overnight, Hilla produced 1000 labels for Korbel's free sanitizer. In return, Paul gave her three cases of one-liter bottles. She returned to the coast and immediately distributed the sanitizer throughout the area; to the RCMS, fire departments, the senior center, and essential businesses such as grocery stores, banks, and restaurants. Recipients were dumbstruck.

"When Hilla walked in the door, smiling behind her mask, and handed me two bottles of sanitizer, I couldn't believe it," said Chris Aitchison, owner of Sea Ranch Supply, and Assistant Fire Chief of the North Sonoma Coast Fire Department. "This was so great for the community. We absolutely could not find it anywhere. It helped the store and the local EMS agencies. It was a lifesaver."

But their most pressing challenge was making payroll.

"We had to do whatever we could to keep our team employed," Margaret said. "We just kept plugging away."

They drew from cash reserves, even as the community rallied in touching ways. Regular customers would walk around the store and grab random items from the shelves. They'd buy a sweatshirt and a dog toy, a candy bar, and a pint of vodka with their baguette. They left outrageous tips. 'Grab and Go' meals were a big hit. Twofish employee Chris Garris worked full time creating them. "When I would ask Chris what he was going to make that week, he would shrug and say 'I have no idea. It depends on what I can buy,'" Margaret said. "Fortunately, those meals and our warm-up ready pizzas have been super popular."

It wasn't enough.

They applied for a government PPP relief loan to cover salaries. Customers urged them to do a GoFundMe campaign to solicit donations. Hilla's self-reliant Finnish nature kicked in and her first reaction was "Nah." As time wore on, and the red ink turned maroon, she relented.

Baguettes about to be baked.

Paging Frank Capra

Twofish's $15,000 GoFundMe campaign hit Facebook early one morning in April. It exploded within minutes, and they surpassed their goal in less than 24

Daily house-made breads by Twofish.
Photo by Cristalen

hours. But that wasn't all. People streamed in the door, reenacting a scene from the movie It's a Wonderful Life. They handed over envelopes full of cash, wrote checks for hundreds of dollars, rounded up their bill to $300.

"We were flabbergasted. When you're caught up in the day to day grind you forget how a little place like ours can make a difference in people's lives," Hilla said. "But we knew other local businesses were struggling too, so we closed it down after a few days. The money kept coming." While they were stunned by the generosity and fervor of their customers, the most indelible impression wasn't financial. It was the realization of how much Twofish meant to the local community, and to friends many time zones away who hadn't eaten a caramel sticky bun in years.

"It was like being Queen for a Day on steroids," Margaret said, "It was pretty cool." Hilla still has a hard time talking about it without tearing up.

Learning to live with COVID-19

The cash infusion was perfectly timed. Travel reopened in June 2020, and revenue began to recover. They received a government loan. Adherence to safety protocols was challenging with visitors from densely populated areas, who sometimes behaved as if they were taking a 'COVID vacation' on the North Coast. Too often they ignored social distancing guidelines or would rip off their mask to drink their latte inside the store.

"You know, we try to smile, be friendly, but we're human," said Hilla. "Our staff interacts with 150-200 people a day. When some guy would be standing there with his mask loose, and I could see spittle flying, I would ask myself if today was the day I'd contract COVID. It was like Russian roulette – spin that chamber and hope you don't get hit. It can make you just a touch grumpy." She laughed her familiar staccato laugh and sighed.

Thanks to daily health monitoring – including taking employee temperatures – and exacting sanitary practices, the Twofish staff stayed safe until November, when COVID-19 hit the North Coast. Two employees were exposed, and the bakery closed for a week to avoid a possible domino effect. (The employees tested negative.) In January another local outbreak occurred, and two employees tested positive. Margaret and Hilla made the hard decision to close the bakery for three weeks which allowed their team to file for unemployment. The two women used the time to streamline offerings and logistics. When they reopened, most of the team returned. As essential workers, all Twofish employees are now fully vaccinated.

Other food service establishments haven't been so fortunate. The volatility caused by revenue loss, sudden closures, changes in public health guid-

Twofish Baking

ance, and supply shortages has pushed many to the limit. By December 2020, 17% of restaurants in the US had closed permanently due to the pandemic, according to a study by the National Restaurant Association. Business is brisk at Twofish, and they are deeply grateful, if exhausted, to still be here.

"Even though it's been a tough year, we're still doing what we've been known to do, which is to take care of people. That means a lot to us. Even the lady with the chest compressions at the start of the pandemic," Margaret said. "Who we never saw again."

What few people know is that Twofish also quietly delivered free coffee and pastries to countless shifts of RCMS staff and volunteers doing tests and vaccinations. "They've done an incredible job. They're the real heroes," Margaret said. "We wanted to keep them warm, keep them going."

Margaret and Hilla feel they've become smarter about how to run their business efficiently. And they're grateful to have a superb team. Both factors will help as vaccination rates increase, safety requirements are eased, and more visitors arrive. Twofish will remain vigilant, however, so customers shouldn't be surprised if the staff continues to take precautions for some time.

They've learned, as we all have, how quickly the world can change.

"Even though it's been a tough year, we're still doing what we've been known to do, which is to take care of people. That means a lot to us."

Photo by David Yager Photography

New Sea Ranch board members

George Calys

With three positions open, 1,131 Sea Ranchers elected new Directors to The Sea Ranch Board at the Annual Election on May 29. The turnout represented nearly 51% of all Sea Ranch owners (one third of all owners are required for an election quorum).

The candidates and vote counts were: Scott Nevin (927 votes); Chris Jaap (892 votes); Manuel Alonso-Martinez (766 votes); Gina Hubbell (434 votes); Ray Razavi (337 votes).

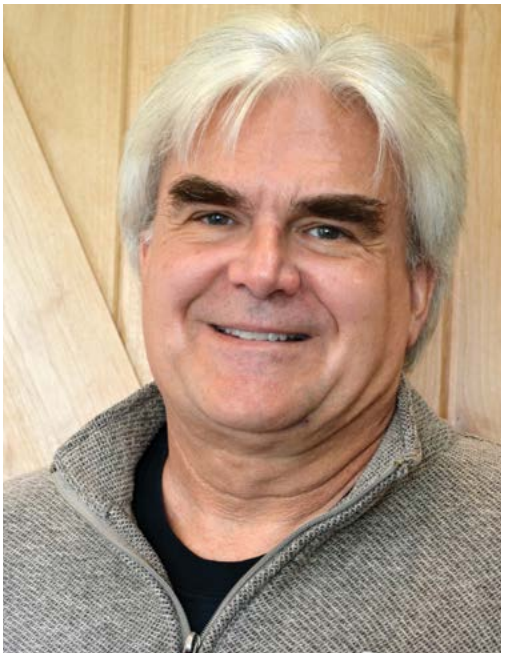
Nevin, Jaap, and Alonso-Martinez will serve as Directors until May 2024.

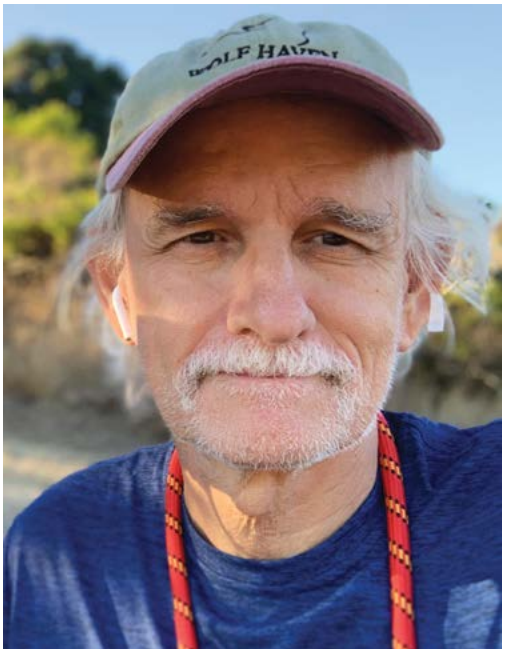
Nevin is a systems engineer for Keysight Technologies in Santa Rosa and his career was previously with Hewlett-Packard and Agilent Technologies. A twenty-year part time Sea Ranch resident, Nevin and his wife, Linda, completed construction of a new home here in February and now reside at The Sea Ranch full time.

Jaap and his partner, Ron, first visited The Sea Ranch in 2004 and continued as weekend renters until they purchased a home in 2013. Jaap is an attorney in private practice and has served the prior three years as a Sea Ranch Board member.

Alonso-Martinez is an anthropologist and for 30 years has served as an executive director for several environment nonprofit organizations. He and his wife, Martha, have lived on The Sea Ranch for two years. They have two sons and a daughter.

The new and continuing Board members (Karen Amiel, Maggie Crosby, Michael Kleeman, Neil Moran) met in a goal-setting session on May 30. The following officers were selected: Neil Moran (Chair); Chris Jaap (Vice Chair); Michael Kleeman (Treasurer); and Scott Nevin (Secretary).





(from top)
Scott Nevin, Chris Jaap, and Manuel Alonso-Martinez

The Sea Ranch
SOUNDINGS

A quarterly publication provided at no charge to Sea Ranch members. Published in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter

EDITOR George Calys

LAYOUT & DESIGN Tempra Board

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Maria Linker

SOUNDINGS welcomes ideas for articles from Sea Ranch members. Ideas, along with a proposed writer, should be submitted to the Editor at **soundings@tsra.org** prior to the Editorial Deadline for consideration. Article ideas are evaluated based on suitability, relevance to The Sea Ranch, and space considerations. Articles, if approved, are due by the Copy Deadline.

Soundings articles do not represent the official policy of The Sea Ranch Association or Board of Directors.

Editorial theme next issue: Design and the Arts

NEXT EDITORIAL DEADLINE: August 1, 2021

COPY DEADLINE: Sept. 1, 2021

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From The Sea Ranch Declaration of Restrictions, Covenants, and Conditions

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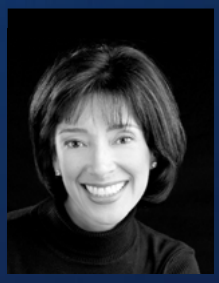

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