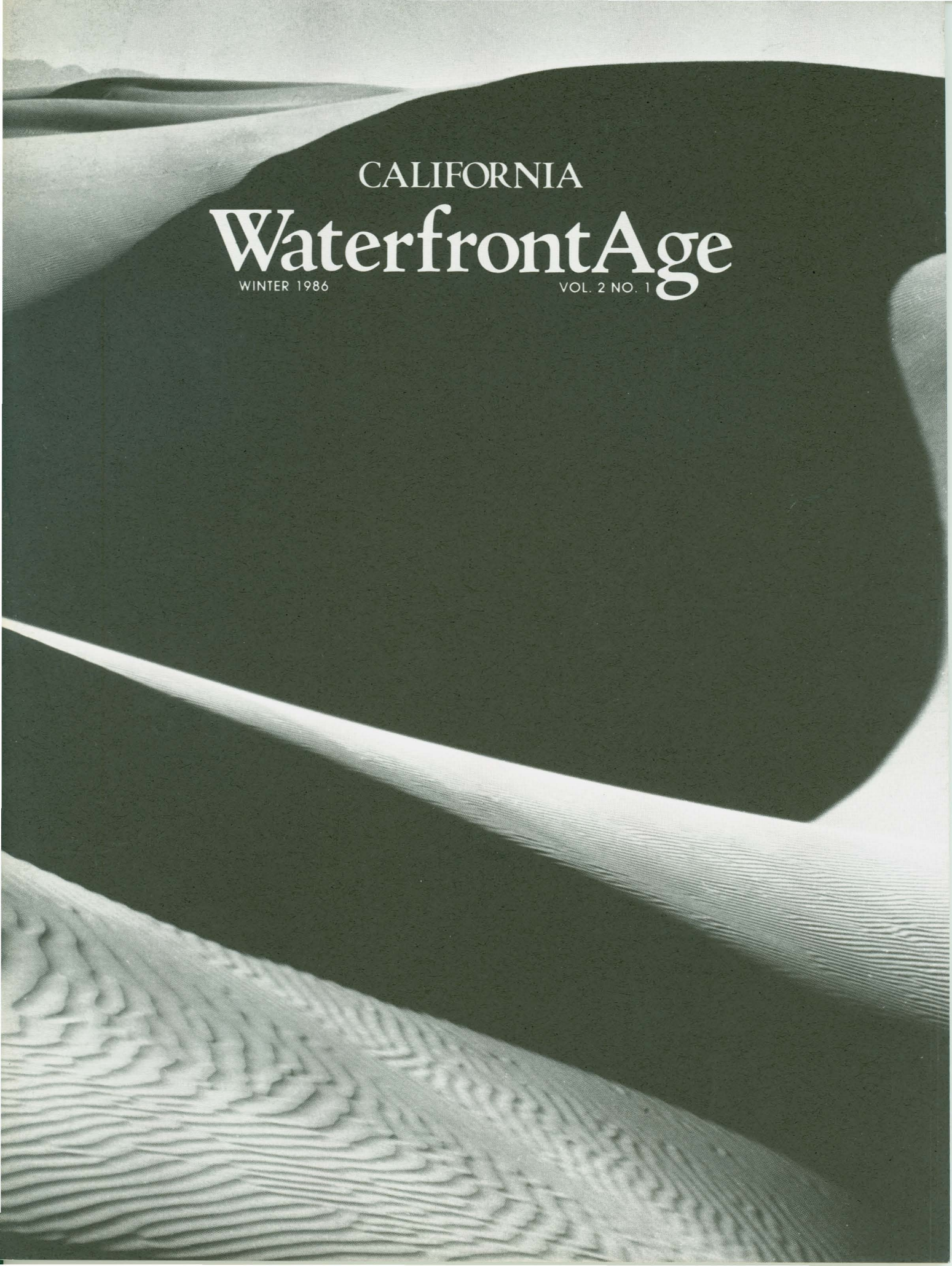

CALIFORNIA Waterfront Age

WINTER 1986 VOL. 2 NO. 1

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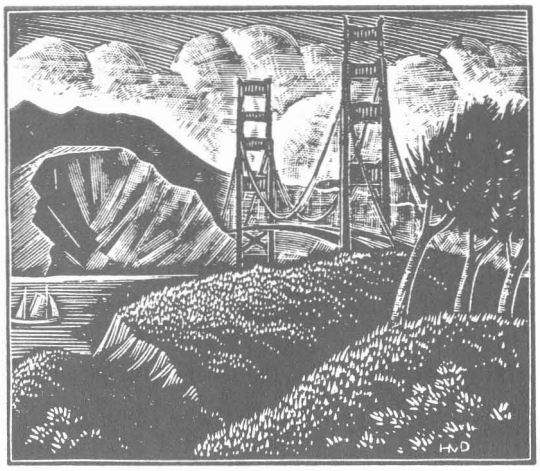
CALIFORNIA WATERFRONTAGE (ISSN 8756-0852) is published four times a year by the California State Coastal Conservancy in association with the San Francisco Bay Chapter, Oceanic Society and is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Coastal Resource Management. Mechanicals produced by Miller Freeman Inc. Photographic work by Gamma Photo Lab. Printed by Warren's Waller Press Inc. Copyright ©1986 State Coastal Conservancy, all rights reserved. No part of this issue may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic, or electronic process or otherwise copied for public or private use without written permission of the publisher. All opinions expressed are the responsibility of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the positions, official or otherwise, of either the State Coastal Conservancy or the San Francisco Bay Chapter, Oceanic Society. To receive the magazine, send name, organization, address, and affiliation to CALIFORNIA WATERFRONTAGE, San Francisco Bay Chapter, Oceanic Society, Fort Mason Center, Building E, San Francisco, CA 94123. Direct all other correspondence, including editorial submissions, to CALIFORNIA WATERFRONTAGE, State Coastal Conservancy, 1330 Broadway, Suite 1100, Oakland, CA 94612. Telephone (415) 464-1015. For information on the programs and projects of the State Coastal Conservancy, contact the Conservancy at the address or telephone number above.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Peter Grenell

As the State Coastal Conservancy's new executive officer and a former Conservancy staff member, I am well aware of the importance of sharing information about the waterfront. Indeed, the Conservancy started *WaterfrontAge* as a means for interested people to inform themselves about waterfront happenings. This magazine is addressed to the entire waterfront community. Now in its fifth issue, it covers a wide range of topics: problems and successes in waterfront restoration, methods and approaches, and waterfront history. Recent articles on the City of Long Beach's Local Coastal Program, Santa Monica Bay's historic piers, waterfront recreation, offshore oil issues, the City of Arcata/Coastal Conservancy Arcata Marsh project, and the Monterey Aquarium, along with an entire issue celebrating the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's twentieth anniversary, illustrate the breadth of *WaterfrontAge* concerns.



The magazine also serves another vital function. It provides a forum for contemplating the uniqueness of the waterfront: its complexity and unpredictability and our ancient and intimate connections to it. Thus, it may help the public, local governments, and the state further articulate an enlightened public policy for the coast.

This dual aspect of *WaterfrontAge* reflects the Conservancy's approach to its task. The Coastal Conservancy was established to mediate coastal land use and resource conflicts and to help resolve issues not amenable to regulatory solution. The agency seeks to help coastal communities help themselves by mobilizing resources and strengthening local capacity for resource stewardship and "creative development." The Conservancy helps people achieve greater harmony with their surroundings through their recognition of the waterfront's physical, cultural, and psychological values and by guiding development accordingly.

Other states are now exploring possibilities for establishing coastal conservancies or conservancylike activities. Here in California, the Coastal Conservancy has spawned two other conservancies, concerned with Lake Tahoe and the Santa Monica Mountains. On the coast, completion of more local coastal programs will further the shift from planning to implementation—the Conservancy's real purpose. It is a time to secure previous successes in wetland protection, increasing public access, waterfront restoration, and other critical areas. It is also time to extend efforts to broader issues of land and resource management. A coastal lagoon won't stay restored long without adequate care for its watershed; a deteriorated urban shoreline won't be really accessible unless the waterfront is recognized for the real asset that it is.

Yet we must not fail to continue to think boldly. The waterfront, and indeed all of California, needs to confront really major issues. For example, urban services and public facilities—"infrastructure," for the jargon-minded—are in need of reconstruction and improve-

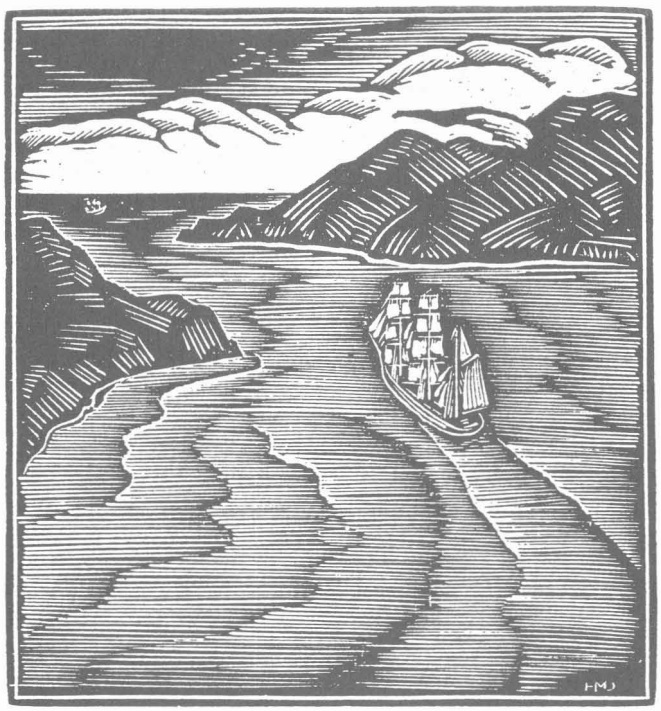
ment. California may avoid the worst effects of deferred maintenance and neglect that plague many eastern cities if it acts now. From public roads to public piers, the opportunities present themselves.

The confrontation of development with agriculture, and both with public recreational needs and natural area preservation, generate other large-scale concerns which also may threaten the future of the state's economy and well-being. The impending loss of agricultural lands on the coast and inland as a result of development, salinization, and economic factors; the destruction of remaining natural and habitat areas from more development and its noxious byproducts; and the demands of California's burgeoning population call for a vigorous and immediate response. Nickel-and-diming it won't do, neither fiscally nor with respect to policy.

The Coastal Conservancy's approach, which involves bringing diverse interests to mutual agreement through nonconfrontational mediation, may well have broader applicability. There are certainly numerous situations that require a shift in outlook. Small coastal cities must come to terms with both their inherent development limitations and their opportunities. Larger cities face profound crises in civic imagination reagarding the future of the waterfront. South coast cities and developers need to recognize in greater degree the amenity values presented to them and the opportunities for truly compatible development. The continuing economic and social importance of such coast-dependent industries as commercial fishing must also be acknowledged and incorporated into forward-reaching waterfront revitalizations.

A significant policy and financial commitment is necessary. New and expanded sources of funding must be tapped, especially if possible federal tax law changes severely limit development financing options. Local governments may still be able to use tax-exempt revenue bonds to finance waterfront restoration, but not as broadly or as easily as before. Federal and state tidelands revenues should certainly be used to pay for needed public improvements in any case.

I expect the Conservancy to be in the forefront of these efforts to build on past successes and to accept the future's crucial challenges. *WaterfrontAge* will continue to provide the sounding board for discussion and reflection, as stimulating as it is informative, one hopes, on these questions and the underlying reasons why the waterfront—and the entire coast—are so important to us all. □



Coastal Conservancy's Recent Waterfront Projects

In November, the Coastal Conservancy authorized a grant of up to $28,641 to the City of Imperial Beach to construct a 1,990-linear-foot trail to secure the marsh edge, reduce erosion, and provide public access consistent with the Tijuana River National Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan. Portions of the western edge of the sanctuary currently are unimproved and present a major threat, as parked cars erode the bluff edge and encroach upon the wetland. The improvements proposed would formally define the edge of the street, preventing future encroachment and runoff degradation while providing public access.

The Conservancy also authorized a grant of up to $407,000 to the Malibu Beach Esplanade (a nonprofit organization) for public access improvements between the Malibu Pier and Surfrider Beach. The grant will enable the construction of a 1,000-foot esplanade, a 200-foot viewing deck, a stairway, and a handicapped access ramp and path connecting the Malibu Pier, Surfrider State Beach, and the historic Adamson House Museum.

The Port San Luis Harbor District received a grant of up to $120,000. Thirty thousand will go toward the installation of transient tie-up dolphins and moorings and consolidation and reconstruction of skiff storage racks on the Harford Pier; ninety thousand is for the construction of an access stairway and a handicapped access ramp at Olde Port Beach.

As part of its new lighthouse program, the Conservancy authorized a grant in November of up to $25,000 to Del Norte County for the rehabilitation of the Battery Point Lighthouse and the accessway to the island where the lighthouse stands. This project will repair and weatherize the lighthouse tower and correct the hazardous condition of the accessway, the effect of age and repeated storm damage. The Battery Point Lighthouse, built in 1856, is one of the first lighthouses established along the California coast and is now one of the county's most popular tourist attractions. Visitors may tour the entire lighthouse and visit the tower, where they are afforded a 360-degree coastal panorama. The Conservancy grant will ensure safe public access to the lighthouse.

At its October meeting, the Conservancy approved the Avalon Canyon Resort/Recreation Urban Waterfront Restoration Plan and authorized the transmittal of Las Casitas Catalina Corporation's Las Casitas Renovation project to the California Urban Waterfront Area Restoration Financing Authority (CUWARFA) for consideration for financing. This is the first CUWARFA project to reach the stage of final consideration.

At the same meeting, the Conservancy authorized a grant of up to $610,000 to the City of Eureka for the acquisition of Palco Marsh, and authorized an additional $30,000 for the preparation of a final enhancement plan, construction drawings, and specifications by the city. The Palco Marsh complex consists of seven parcels which include salt, brackish, and fresh marshes surrounded by riparian vegetation; upland; and an area that has been filled and paved. The proposed plan involves enhancing the tidal and brackish marsh, removing fill and pavement to increase the marsh area, and reserving an upland area at the southern boundary of the project site for future industrial development.

In September, the Conservancy approved two "initial resolutions" for the purposes of the California Urban Waterfront Area Restoration Financing Author-

ity Act: for the Edgemar Commercial/ Santa Monica Museum of Art Complex project and for the Queensway Bay project. These resolutions declare that the projects may qualify for tax-exempt revenue bond financing under the CUWARFA Act and encourage the applicants to submit detailed project plans for Conservancy consideration.

In August, the Conservancy granted $20,000 to the City of Long Beach for the purchase of materials necessary to reconstruct the three-quarter-mile-long wooden boardwalk along the Alamitos Bay Peninsula oceanfront.

CUWARFA Notes

The last quarter of 1985 saw moderate activity on behalf of the California Urban Waterfront Area Financing Authority. CUWARFA's first Final Resolution was adopted, for the restoration of the Las Casitas Hotel in Avalon. Board funds on this project will also be used to relocate a community softball field and construct a flood control basin which will protect the hotel and other areas in the city.

An Initial Resolution was granted for the restoration and conversion of a historic building in Santa Monica into an art museum depicting the history of the Santa Monica waterfront. In addition, Initial Resolutions are proposed for a hotel in Redondo Beach and a public park and parking structure along the Long Beach waterfront.

The authority anticipates a significant increase of activity in 1986, assuming some degree of tax-exempt financing is still available under federal tax law.

—Rolfe Thompson

"Proceedings" Available

The proceedings for the Coastal Commission–sponsored "Battered Coast" conference, held in San Diego in February 1985, are now available. Courtesy copies are available to attendees, and a limited number of additional copies are available through the San Francisco office of the Coastal Commission for four dollars.

Pismo Beach Pier Dedication

On January 18, 1986, representatives of several state, local, and federal agencies gathered in Pismo Beach for the rededication of the Pismo Beach Municipal Fishing Pier. The pier, originally constructed in 1881 and restored once in 1924, had been the property of the State of California for many years until January 1, 1983. On that date, as a result of local interest in restoring the pier in the aftermath of the damaging storms of the winter of 1982/83, title to the pier and adjoining sea wall and parking lot was transferred to the City of Pismo Beach. The pier restoration is part of a larger Conservancy-assisted city project to restore the onshore area adjacent to the pier for public use.

The Coastal Conservancy was represented at the rededication ceremony by Executive Officer Peter Grenell.

Pismo Beach Pier undergoing restoration.

CONFERENCE LOG

Editor's Note: Professional conferences tend to have short half-lives. Although conference papers are often published, summaries of proceedings are usually not distributed to those attending, much less to the interested public. As an occasional department of *California WaterfrontAge*, Conference Log will provide summaries of water-related conferences.

Urban Waterfronts '85

Many conferences are relevant to urban waterfront issues, but only one meeting focuses exclusively on the shoreline of the nation's cities. Urban Waterfronts '85 is the major annual effort of the Waterfront Center. It was held in Washington, D.C., on September 27–28, 1985, and attended by approximately 300 waterfront planners, managers, developers, and concerned citizens. Although the program is limited by the Waterfront Center's East Coast orientation and low budget, the conference was both enjoyable and informative.

Anne Green and Dick Rigby, the codirectors of the Waterfront Center, minimized the formality of the conference so that spontaneous gatherings occurred; personal and professional friendships were made and renewed, and the velocity of business cards exchanged was high. This aspect of the meeting was as important as the structured program.

The conference sessions were diverse and generally well prepared. Case studies, such as the revitalization of Detroit's riverfront, San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's Hoboken waterfront development were effectively presented. The presentation of a failed project by an ecologist formerly with the now defunct Greater London Council was as enlightening as it was unusual. Most conferences present only success stories, but failures are often more educational.

A major theme was economic development by public agencies. Governmental entrepreneurs replaced the Rouse Company, last year's stars, as the public sector assumed a larger role in waterfront development, and local objections to developers' leadership have become more widespread. Initiatives taken by public agencies in Boston, San Diego, and Tampa were described. Other topics ranged from hard edged shoreline engineering to artsy celebrations. The main speaker, a famous author and academic, lulled the after-lunch crowd to sleep. But the remainder of the conference was a good mix of business and pleasure.

—Donald B. Neuwirth

Beach Erosion Conference in Santa Barbara

Panel members representing all of the shorefront local governments in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties agreed at a conference October 26 that an organization is needed to manage sand regionally. If the panel members follow through, a joint powers agency may be established to manage and nourish sandy beaches, a pioneering effort in California government. If this movement is successful, a substantial amount of credit must go to Councilmember Marilyn Breland of Carpinteria for organizing the conference, and for recognizing "sand rights" as a conceptual basis for local governments seeking a cooperative solution to erosion problems.

The idea of sand rights as a public trust doctrine analogous to water rights originated with Orville Magoon, president of the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association, while with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The

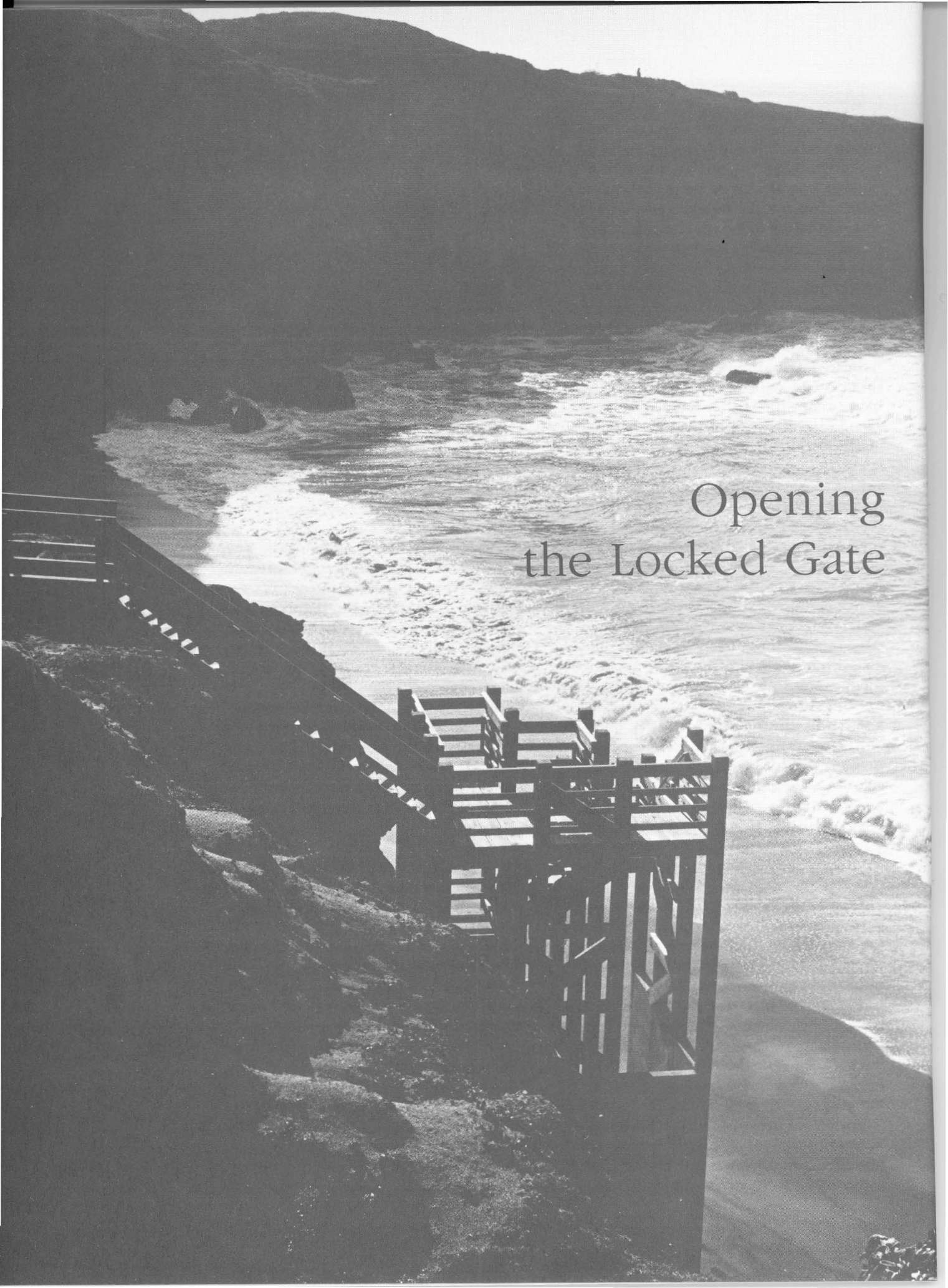
Coastal Commission embraced the concept when it required Orange County to place sand that had collected in a flood control channel back onto the beach rather than sell the material to contractors. Katherine Stone presented a paper on sand rights at the request of commission staff at the recent "Battered Coast" conference in San Diego. Marilyn Breland was interested in the idea, as the beaches of Carpinteria had shrunk 150 feet in width, and the city's consultants indicated that the change had something to do with the accumulation of more than four million cubic yards of sand in and around Santa Barbara harbor. Ms. Breland asked Katherine Stone to speak before the South Coast Regional Beach Erosion Control Group, a planning group that had been formed after the 1983 storms, and subsequently to organize the October conference. The conference, titled "Beach Erosion—A Regional Alternative," featured addresses by over forty experts on the technical and legal issues that surround coastal erosion as well as the final panel of officials from every affected local government. Most stressed the seriousness of existing erosion problems, and slide after slide illustrated the massive number of seawalls that have been built as perhaps the most prevalent response to erosion. Although these seawalls have been fairly effective, they are not without cost to the beach. In some places where erosion would have otherwise continued further inland, such seawalls now define the shore.

One of the featured topics was sand nourishment of beaches, as either an alternative or a supplement to other protective devices. Robert Dean, professor of coastal engineering at the University of Florida and now director of Florida's coastal management program, gave a particularly valuable talk on the economies of scale that can be obtained in larger beach nourishment projects. Essentially, larger projects last far longer than smaller projects. Others spoke of sand nourishment as an alternative to protective structures, one which can sometimes be more cost effective.

Throughout the conference, it was clear that local government is affected by these issues. Local governments are involved throughout the planning and approval process of coastal residences and protective devices and are often sued regardless of what they do. Recent developments in liability law have certainly made life more difficult for attorneys representing local governments. In these increasingly litigious times, there was little question that the idea of sand rights represents a potential expansion of lawsuits into an entirely new area.

As those who are affected by erosion are sometimes convinced that local government actions have caused the problems they face, it is only a matter of time until someone sues under the idea of sand rights. Local officials seemed acutely aware of this, and sand rights was very much a factor behind efforts to establish a regional organization. It was a healthy sign to see local governments taking the initial organizational steps towards solutions, rather than either looking for a federal handout or simply blaming each other. If this effort proves successful, it could provide a meaningful model for many other areas in the state facing similar problems.

—James McGrath □



Opening the Locked Gate

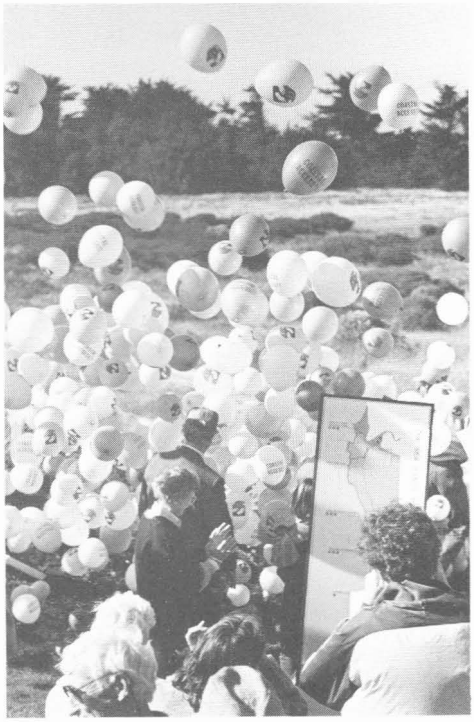
The Development of Coastal Accessways at the Sea Ranch

by Tom Mikkelsen

SOME PEOPLE had waited over twenty years to be able to walk the wild, remote beaches at the Sea Ranch. Now they could. On November 2, 1985, the accessways to Black Point, Pebble, and Shell beaches were dedicated for public use in ceremonies at Gualala Point Regional Park in Sonoma County. The park, located at the northern end of the Sea Ranch overlooking the Gualala River, was the only public facility in the area able to accommodate the crowds that would come to the opening ceremonies. The choice was ironic, albeit practical, for the 125-acre park had been given to Sonoma County in 1969 by Oceanic Properties, developers of the Sea Ranch, to substitute for developing accessways on other parts of the ranch.

Beginning in 1973 and for a decade thereafter, Sea Ranch had been at the center of the most hard-fought and prolonged controversy on the California coast, a bitter dispute between the Coastal Commission and landowners over the need to protect coastal resources and the rights of private property owners. With both sides deadlocked, a compromise offer came from the State Legislature in 1980. Houses could be built if views were protected and public access to the beaches was provided. In the end the compromise held; and on that bright windy day this fall, heralded by balloons, banners, and speeches by politicians (many of whom weren't there for the fight), the accessways at the Ranch were at last opened.

Opening ceremonies at the Sea Ranch.



SEA RANCH began in 1964 as a planned community of 5,200 second homes located on a remote stretch of Sonoma County's north coast. Developers recognized that the land, an overgrazed and failing sheep ranch, did not present the usual amenities found in resort-type communities; they saw instead a dramatic landscape, stark and windblown, with an exceptionally strong sense of place that could offer a complete way of life to new residents. The challenge to Oceanic Properties, a subsidiary of Hawaii-based Castle and Cooke, was threefold: to restore the landscape, to design a community that would preserve the natural character of the land, and to market the concept of a second-home community oriented to landscape preservation through design excellence and land stewardship.

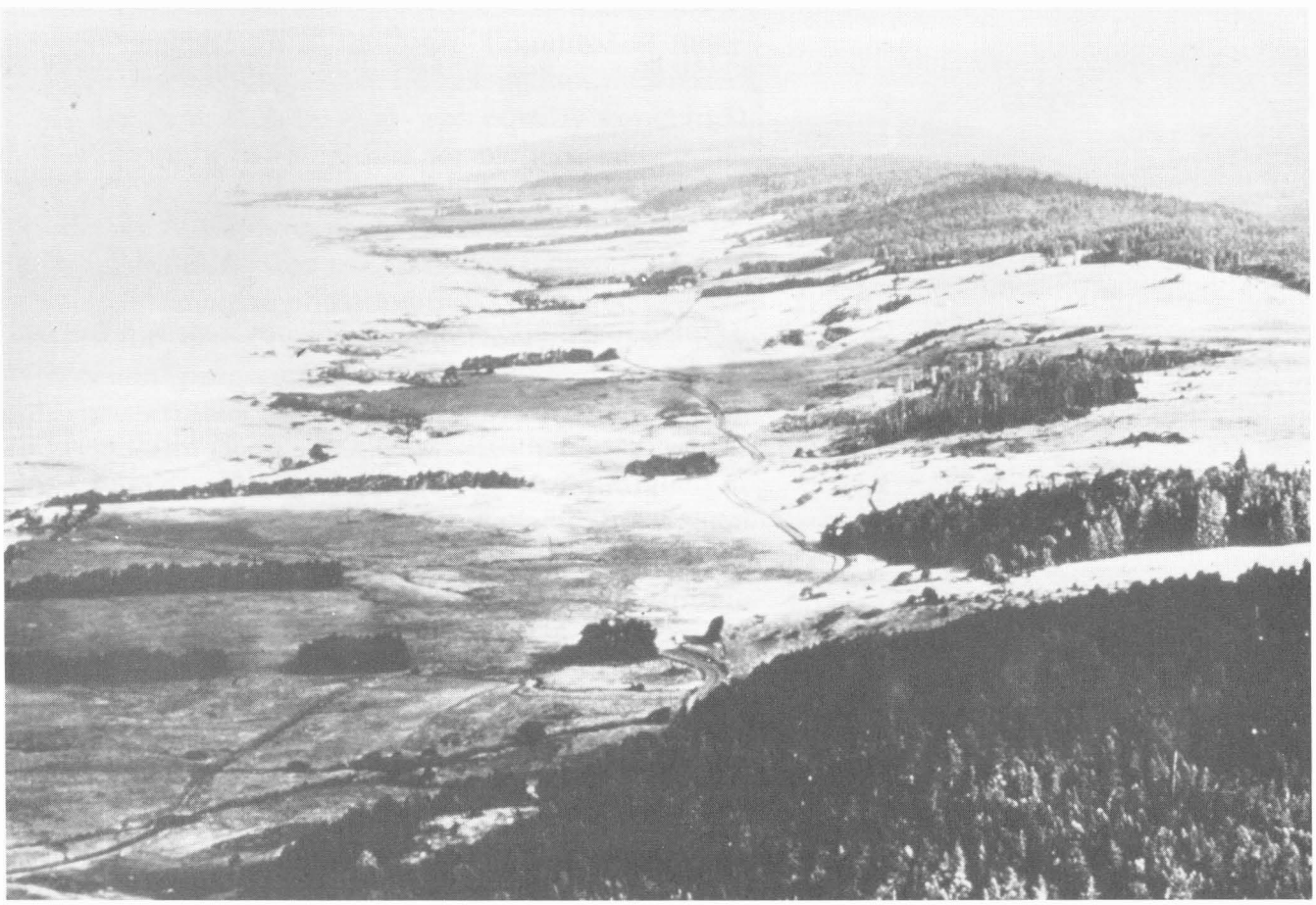
Preservation of land by sensitive design was not a new or innovative concept to the design professions. But Oceanic's willingness to apply it broad brush to a 5,000-acre ranch stretching ten miles along the shoreline, and to risk substantial capital to do so, was unique in California real estate development. Oceanic drew heavily from its real estate experience in Hawaii and from a group of prominent Northern California design firms, teaming up Lawrence Halprin and Associates, Landscape Architects, and the architectural firms of Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull and Whitaker and Joseph Esherick and Associates. Under the direction of Al Boeke, vice president of planning for Oceanic, the design team prepared master plans for the entire ranch and specific plans for the southernmost 1,800 acres. The results of their efforts were significant and quickly drew national attention.

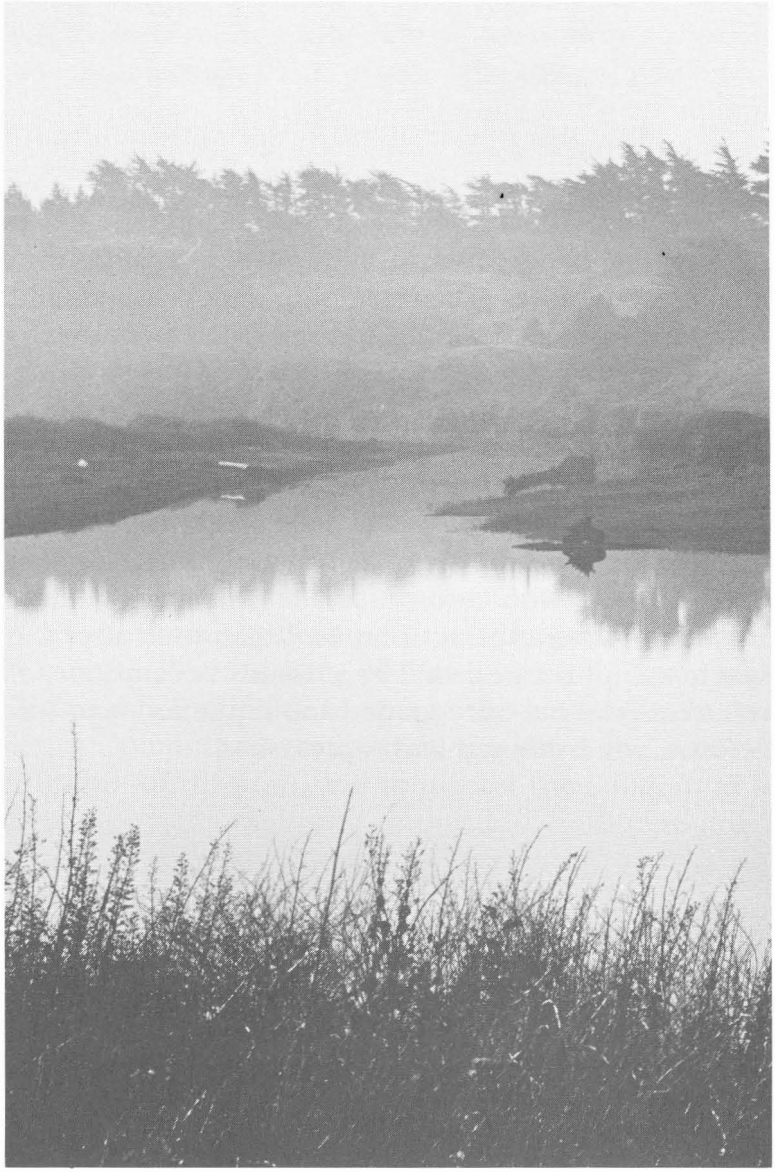
The first structures were designed responding to both climate and site. Large glass surfaces were provided to capture the warmth of the sun. Roofs were slanted into the prevailing wind to force air over the buildings and create protected exterior spaces in their

lee. Exposed surfaces were treated as simply as possible to conform to the natural colors and texture of the land. Site planning provided a varied pattern of development with condominium units and houses clustered to preserve open space and views. The general density of development was established at one dwelling unit per acre. Individual homes were sited along the existing cypress hedgerows to minimize intrusion into open meadow areas. The remaining undeveloped land was to become a "commons," cared for by and open to all residents of the Sea Ranch. The design of future houses would be entrusted to a design committee to continue the character and style established by the design team.

This ambitious design and management program was matched by Oceanic's unfailing commitment to an ideal of responsible and proper land development. A program of landscape restoration began soon after the Ranch was purchased in 1963. Fields became meadows, eroded areas were graded and replanted, and forest areas were thinned and replenished.

Opposite: Aerial photo of the stretch of Sonoma County coast that was to become the Sea Ranch. Below: A view of the site when it was a sheep ranch. Note the cypress hedgerows running perpendicularly back from the shoreline; these were an important element in the original design of the Ranch.





The need for public access was considered early in the planning process. County officials expected a traditional subdivision design and wanted Oceanic to provide land for small parks to be evenly distributed along the ten-mile length of the Ranch. Oceanic felt that a string of parking lots would mar the character of the land and that so many little parks would prove difficult to manage. Consultation with state and local park officials yielded an alternative proposal, and in 1969, 125 acres of oceanfront land at Gualala Point were given to Sonoma County for a regional park. In 1971, Oceanic dedicated additional land near the park for a trail from Highway 1 to Salal Cove.

THE FIRST condominium unit and hedgerow houses were completed in 1965 and met with immediate critical acclaim, receiving the Governor's Design Award in 1966 and awards of merit and honor from the American Institute of Architects in 1966 and 1967. Many other awards would follow. The designers had pioneered a style of building highly suited to the North Coast region and had developed the buildings on the landscape with extraordinary care and sensitivity. So successful was the development of the first 1,800 acres that by 1969 Oceanic's gamble to restore and preserve Sea Ranch appeared on the verge of financial success. Sales had exceeded expectations, but a downturn in the real estate market later that year forced Oceanic to alter plans for the remaining 3,400 acres.

Opposite: Gualala Point Regional Park. Below: This award-winning condominium design by Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull, and Whitaker harmonized with the natural conditions of the site. The roof slants into the prevailing winds to force them up and over the structure and create a protected, warm pocket in its lee.

"Time eroded the original concept of a tight coastal community surrounded by open space," reflects Al Boeke, who left Oceanic in January 1969. "Time and then regulation affected cash flow. Negative cash flow makes decisions—after a while, all of the decisions." Subsequent plans abandoned a proposed pedestrian-oriented coastal village on the northern portion of the Ranch and substituted a more standard subdivision design of individual lots and curvilinear roads for the original dense clusters of development. Although highly informed by previous plans, the new plan allowed housing to creep into the meadow areas.

The county approved the plans, and by 1972 Oceanic had sold over 1,700 individual home sites. But as Sea Ranch grew to a community of over 300 homes, opposition to new development on the coast increased also. Despite their pioneering efforts at landscape preservation and architectural design, Sea Ranch's creators paid for the sins of earlier slipshod, fast-buck developers when the public, frustrated by years of inactivity in the State Legislature, forced passage of a strong new law to protect the coast.

Contrary to the original intentions, later designs allowed buildings to creep into the open meadows.

By the 1950s, California was in the middle of its second great land rush. Fueled by an exuberant postwar economy, this quest for land was consuming the fertile agricultural valleys surrounding Los Angeles and San Francisco with subdivision after subdivision. Parceled four by four and into four again, the large farms and ranches that once formed the open space and scenery of California's nationally renowned shoreline were being subdivided and developed at an ever increasing rate.

By 1970, 80 percent of the population of California lived within an hour's drive of the coast, and scenery was not the only resource threatened by development. Wetlands and estuaries, vital links in coastal ecosystems and the commercial fisheries, were being indiscriminately dredged for ports and marinas and filled for industrial uses. By 1972, 75 percent of Southern California's coastal wetlands had been destroyed or significantly degraded. Freeways and sewers were planned for the coast to service new populations, sea walls and breakwaters were proposed for public tidelands to protect now-valuable properties, and access to the shoreline became increasingly difficult as house after house walled off the beach for private use.

Conservationists had worked for years to stem the loss of resources, first through the enforcement of local general plan and zoning laws and finally in the State Legislature with special laws to protect the coast. In 1968 a group of Northern California environmentalists based in the Santa Rosa area formed Citizens Organized to Acquire Access to State Tidelands (COAAST). Believing that developments such as Bodega Harbor and the Sea Ranch blocked public access to the tidelands, they placed an initiative on the Sonoma County ballot in 1968 to create a countywide system of coastal accessways (Proposition B). The initiative was defeated, but the group held together and pressed their concerns on the State Legislature.

The legislative efforts were not successful until 1971 with the passage of the Dunlap Act. (AB. 395 mandates that all coastal jurisdictions require coastal access as a condition for zoning or rezoning land for residential use.) However, in that three-year period COAAST found a common ground with other environmental groups, such as Get Oil Out (GOO) in Santa Barbara and local chapters of the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club. These associations led to the creation of the Coastal Alliance, a loosely knit but active statewide lobbying group. Their efforts at coastal protection met with limited success in Sacramento but led quite by accident to their greatest triumph—the passage of Proposition 20, the Coastal Initiative.

"They suggested the initiative to us," states Bill Kortum, an original founder of COAAST. "I remember walking down the [State Capitol] hallway with Janet Adams [director of the Coastal Alliance] and John Zierold [Sierra Club] when the lobbyists from PG & E and the Real Estate Association came up and said, 'Why don't you take [coastal protection] to the initiative?' We agreed, and they were overjoyed. They assumed that they could defeat an initiative."

THEY WERE wrong. On November 7, 1972, rallying to "Save the Coast," Californians overwhelmingly voted in favor of Proposition 20, the California Coastal Zone Conservation Act. The act created six regional commissions and an overseer state commission charged with the responsibility to prepare a comprehensive plan to protect the coast and to regulate development on or near it by permit until the plan was completed. The

commissions began work in January 1973, and within four months the new North Central Coast Regional Commission began reviewing permit applications for homes at the Sea Ranch.

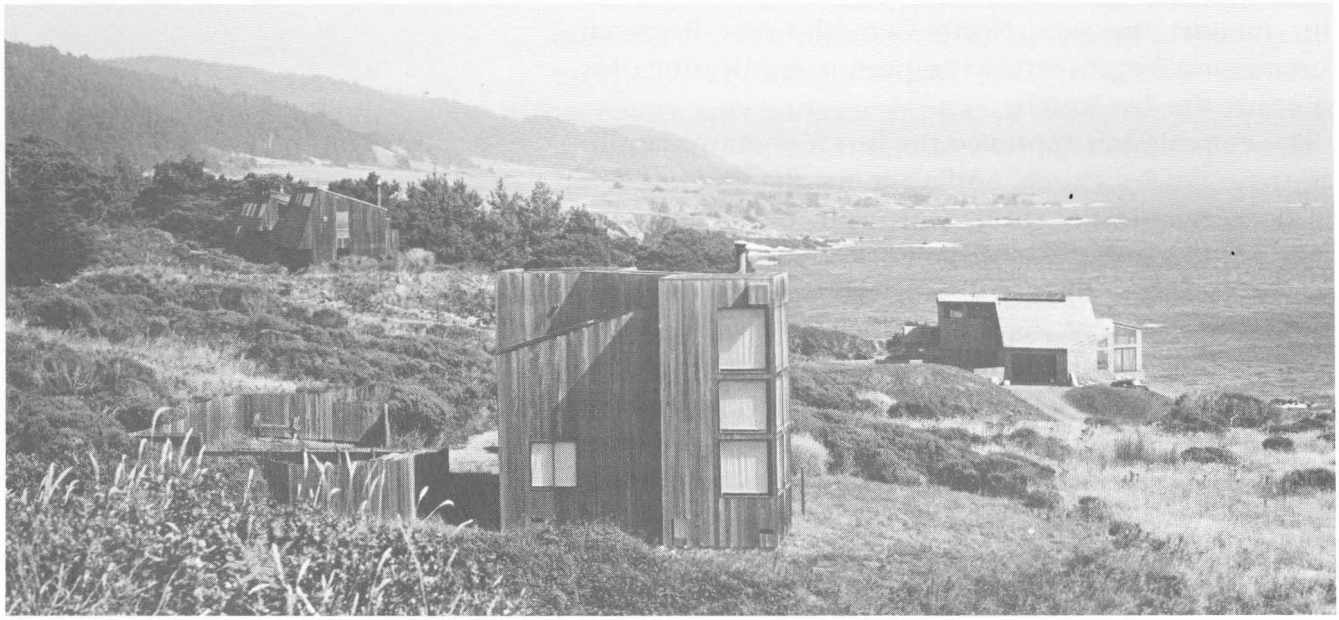
The commission approved the first few permit applications at the Sea Ranch, finding at first that the individual home would not, in and of itself, be inconsistent with the new law. "We all voted for Proposition 20," states Mary Allen, former project manager for Oceanic Properties. "No one wanted another Malibu. We were naive to think that a law to protect the coast would be used against us. At Sea Ranch we had done things right." Ironically, Oceanic's best intentions were turned against them. The new trees matured and began blocking views from Highway 1. Environmentalists (notably COAAST) challenged Sea Ranch to provide more public access and questioned the premise of developing a community of 5,200 residences.

"Fifty-two hundred homes would have a serious impact on the wildlife and native plants," states Charles Rhinehart, cofounder of COAAST. "They would all use septic tanks, and it was all downhill to the tidelands. Those lands were our concern." Testimony from those opposed to further building at the Sea Ranch forced the commission to reconsider and led to a temporary moratorium on the issuance of permits.

The moratorium forced Oceanic to file the first of many legal actions at the Sea Ranch. Oceanic claimed that owners of lots that had obtained subdivision map approval prior to the passage of Proposition 20 had a right to build homes and should be exempt from commission review. This issue was very important to the Coastal Commission in light of developing information about a substantial number of unbuilt subdivisions on the coast.

"This was the first case of this magnitude with so many potential houses, prior approvals, and construction in reliance of these approvals," states Richard Jacobs, deputy attorney general representing the Coastal Commission. "The right to build was key to scaling things down and controlling build-out."

Oceanic's claim of exemption was not upheld by the court, and the lines of confrontation were drawn. Lot owners saw their dream of a house on the coast frustrated by the new law and steadily increasing construction costs. Oceanic found the rules of the game changed midstream and saw profit turn to loss.



"We felt cheated," states Mary Allen. "In 1972, we had an approved plan for a community of 5,200 homes. We spent millions to develop the facilities to serve this community based on this approval, and then we were told that we couldn't build, that the people who bought land here couldn't build. Government did not honor its commitment to us. We thought that this was grossly unfair and fought back."

THE MORATORIUM ended late in 1973. Commission planners had studied designs for the Sea Ranch and devised a series of conditions to address the issues raised by development under the new coastal law. The commission then began approving permits subject to the new "overall conditions." The conditions required new public access; the creation of view easements; limitations on the height, size, and bulk of buildings in scenic areas; and new standards for septic tanks and water supply facilities. Several of these conditions, notably access and view protection, required lot owners to devote land owned in common with the Homeowners Association, but individual lot owners were powerless to force the association to comply and thus were unable to build. At this point, the association sued in federal court, claiming that the overall conditions violated their constitutional rights. This suit would remain in court for the next eight years.

"They were trying to take our land without paying for it," states John McChesney, president of the

Homeowners Association. "We owned the land between the highway and the beach. The conditions kept people from building until [the public] had access. They could have used eminent domain to buy the land rather than take it with conditions." Attempts to negotiate an end to this impasse continued for several months. Commission planners and the Homeowners Association were unable to agree, and seeing no meaningful progress, the Regional Commission again began denying permits. These apparently inconsistent regulatory actions, to approve some and deny others, compelled the State Commission in early 1974 to exert jurisdiction.

The State Commission then faced a dilemma of unprecedented proportions. Sea Ranch was a large subdivision, one of the largest on the coast, but it was not unique. Studies found a substantial inventory of legally subdivided but unbuilt lots in the coastal zone: 1,600 lots at Pacific Shores in Del Norte County, 4,800 lots at Shelter Cove in Humboldt County, 4,300 lots in Mendocino County, over 10,000 lots in Big Sur, 8,000 lots in San Luis Obispo County, and over 25,000 lots scattered throughout the Santa Monica Mountains in Los Angeles County. The issues at Sea Ranch could not be handled in isolation. Any decision the State Commission made would have wide ranging effects throughout the coastal zone. The State Commission was equally concerned about the plight of individual lot owners, caught between the Homeowners Association and the state and powerless to comply with the overall conditions.

"Proposition 20 was not intended to grind people into dust," states Joseph Bodovitz, former executive director of the State Coastal Commission. "The salability of the coastal program depended on our ability to solve problems. Sea Ranch was bogging us down and making hostages out of people."

The State Commission proposed a compromise. In May 1974 they voted to approve permits with the same "overall conditions" but with an additional provision that would give lot owners the option of depositing a $1,500 fee in lieu of complying with the conditions pertaining to land owned by the Homeowners Association. This deposit would be used to mitigate the affects of development if the association were unable or unwilling to comply with the conditions. This "in lieu" system was reluctantly accepted by applicants, and from 1974 to 1977 approximately eighty permits were issued under this system.

The Coastal Act of 1976 made the commissions permanent, required local governments to prepare coastal programs, and continued permit regulation until the coastal programs were completed. The new law strengthened the commissions' mandate to provide and protect public access. New members were appointed to both the Regional and State commissions. Lot owners continued to pay the required deposits in order to build their homes but considered them unfair. The Homeowners Association continued their lawsuit and remained unwilling to comply with the overall conditions. The new State Commission, seeing no meaningful progress towards resolving the issues at Sea Ranch, again considered denial of applications pending completion of Sonoma County's local coastal plan. The commission eventually approved the applications in 1979—by which time they had collected 118 deposits at the Ranch—but reverted to the overall conditions, abandoning the unpopular "in lieu" fees.

Over these two years the fabric of good will that held negotiations together, worn and frayed by the constant struggle, broke apart. Both sides traded charges of stonewalling, bad faith, and a vested self-interest in maintaining the impasse. This acrimonious debate was a great injustice to the creditable position on each side. Both sides were honestly deadlocked on issues fundamental to their ethical beliefs and responsibilities. The Coastal Commission could not approve development without addressing issues such as public access to the state tidelands. Property owners believed that the state should not take their land without paying for it.

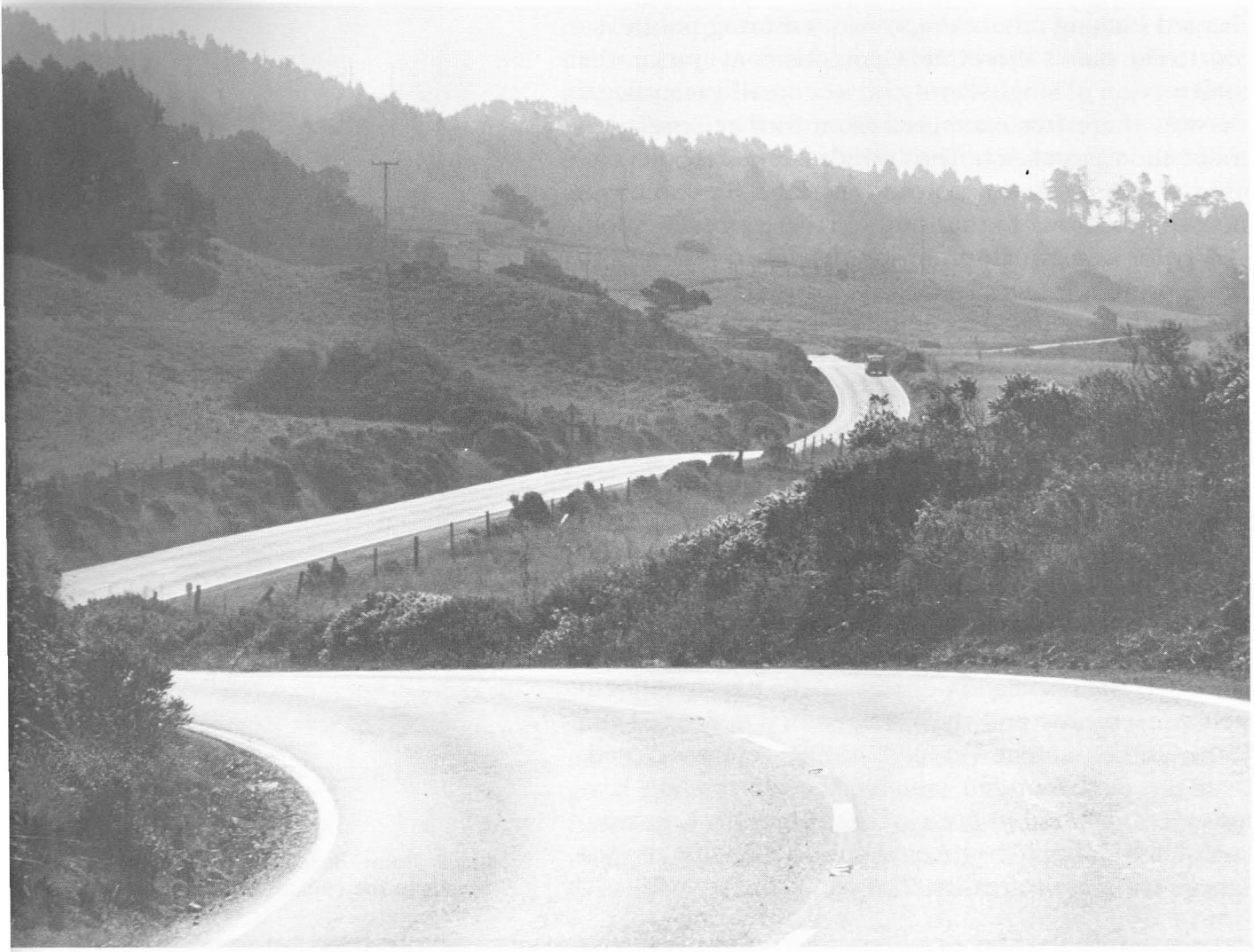
LONG AWARE of the problem at the Sea Ranch and sensitive to the complaints of their constituents, state legislators were anxious to see an end to the dispute. In politics the art of compromise is an art without compromise, and the challenge fell to the State Legislature. At the request of representatives of the Homeowners Association, Assemblyman Tom Bane of Van Nuys set out to devise a program to settle the controversy once and for all.

The result was Assembly Bill 2706 (the "Bane Bill"). The bill offered a cash payment of $500,000 to the Homeowners Association to settle the claims of parties at the Sea Ranch. In return, the association would convey easements for five public accessways and a blufftop

trail to the State Coastal Conservancy, an agency charged (among other things) with ensuring public access to the state's shoreline. Upon this conveyance, the construction of single-family homes on all vacant legal lots was thereafter exempted from further regulation under the Coastal Act. The bill also required the creation of easements to protect views and the establishment of guidelines for buildings in these areas. Responsibility for water quality and supply were transferred to the appropriate regional boards for their disposition. Provisions were made for improvements to Highway 1 should they be needed, and the 118 "in lieu" deposits were returned to homeowners. The bill went into effect October 1, 1980, and the association was given until July 1, 1981, to accept the offer.

This complex solution to a long standing problem became even more complicated. As expected, both sides had difficulty with the compromise. The Coastal Commission agreed to the terms, but the Homeowners Association and COAAST filed separate legal actions in opposition to the bill. Despite the difficulties, on June 29, 1981, the association deposited the required documents in escrow, and the Conservancy deposited the $500,000 settlement. On July 24, 1981, escrow closed. Over the next fourteen months, the outstanding lawsuits were decided in favor of the Bane Bill. Construction of houses could begin, and public access on the Sea Ranch was close to reality. The compromise held!

Black Point Beach, with Sea Ranch homes in the background.



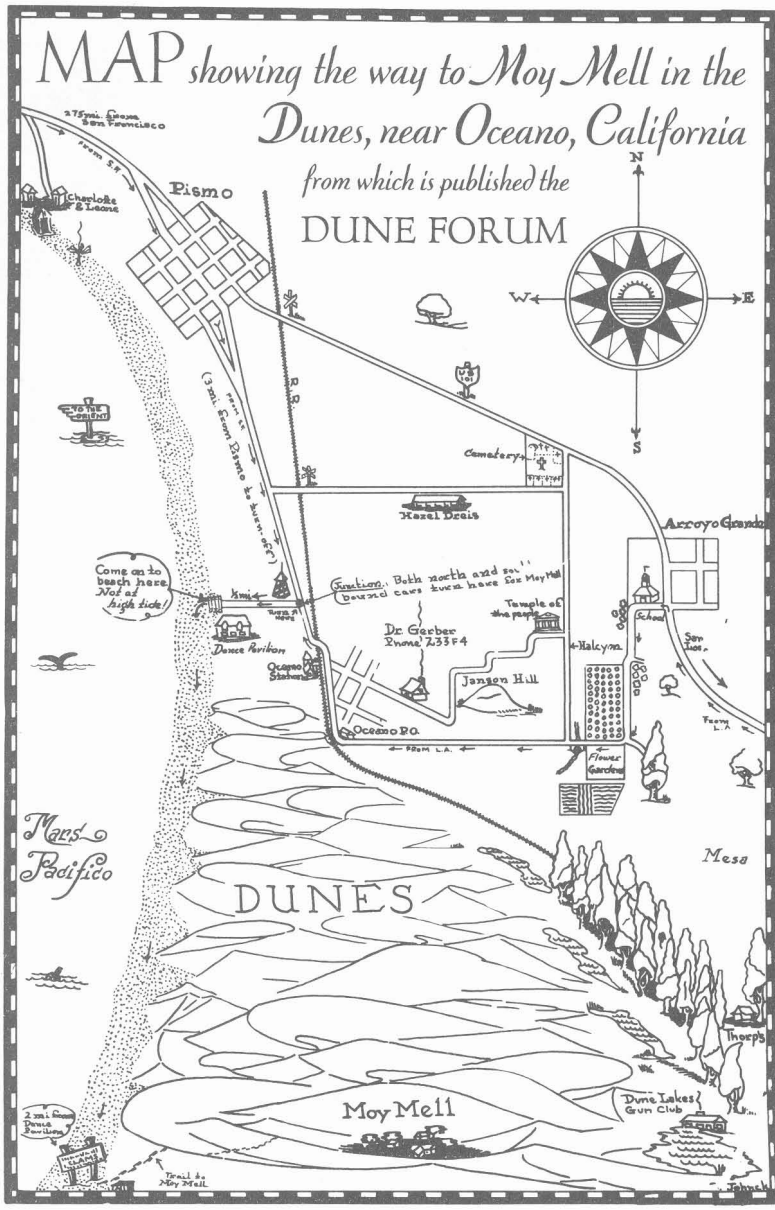
THE DRIVE to the Sea Ranch from the Bay Area requires well over three hours. It is a long, pleasant drive. Turning west from Highway 101 near Santa Rosa, the route passes through small rural communities along the Russian River, joining State Highway 1 just west of the coastal town of Jenner. Continuing north from Jenner, Highway 1 runs parallel to the shoreline, clinging to the sharp contour of the coast in a dramatic and changing landscape of high ocean bluffs, open grasslands, and pine forests. The road winds on for an hour or more, meandering past ranch lands and an occasional store or inn until reaching the Ranch. Here, well designed signs announce the location of the general store and lodge, mark entrances to the subdivision, and establish that the Sea Ranch is private property. A small road sign reads Sea Ranch, Population 280, Elevation 40'.

On November 2, 1985, six new signs were found along Highway 1 at the Sea Ranch. They read "Coastal Access" and point out the location of three accessways on the western side of the highway. On June 11, 1981, the Coastal Conservancy transferred the access easements provided by the Bane Bill to Sonoma County to be developed and managed as a part of the County Regional Parks System. The Conservancy also provided a grant of $255,000 to the county to improve the easements for public use. The newly completed accessways consist of a small parking lot with informational signs and a rest room, a marked trail leading to the shoreline, and where needed a stairway connecting the trail to the beach.

These three accessways and the score of houses now under construction are tangible evidence of the remarkable accord created by the Bane Bill. Two more accessways and a three-mile-long blufftop trail will be opened in spring of 1986. In all, forty parking spaces, four stairways and a footbridge, and about five miles of access trails will be provided for public use at the Sea Ranch. Over the years to come, approximately 1,500 new homes will be built, and Sea Ranch will grow to a community of over 5,000 residents.

Whether forty parking spaces were worth twelve years of disillusionment and anxiety, and whether such a limited number of beachgoers and hikers would have a perceptible effect on a community of 5,000 people, is for others to speculate on. The deeply held beliefs and responsibilities of people involved in the controversy were upheld. The rights of property owners to build their homes were secured, as was the commission's responsibility to provide public access to the shoreline. Just or not, the struggle is over.

Tom Mikkelsen is the former Access Program Manager for the Coastal Conservancy.


MAP showing the way to Moy Mell in the Dunes, near Oceano, California
from which is published the
DUNE FORUM
N
S
E
W
Pismo
Cemetery
Hazel Dreis
Arroyo Grande
Come on to beach here. Not at high tide!
Dr. Gerber Phone 233F4
Jensen Hill
Oceano Rd.
Halcyon
Flower Garden
Mesa
Mare Pacifico
DUNES
Moy Mell
Dune Lakes Gun Club
Thorp's

Bohemia in the Dunes

by Wayne A. Saroyan

THERE IS A certain primal energy that radiates from a spot deep in the windswept expanse of sand dunes along California's central coast, an unidentified yet clearly discernible magnetism that seems to emanate from the very core of this untrammeled land of "nebulous immensity" (as one poet described it). It is a region of temperate, almost generous nature; shifting hills of sand create carved bowls and niches sheltered from the constant sea breezes, where isolated clusters of willow and alder trees, thick with underbrush, provide a semblance of sanctuary from the steady, unflinching glare of clear azure skies.

The native Chumash Indians, whose civilization predates the arrival of Portola and Father Serra by ten millennia, revered the dunes and their surroundings as mythic, sacred places. Portola, too, found comfort and pleasure here when his exploring party, northbound for Monterey, tarried for three days in 1769 near what came to be named on that very trip Oso Flaco ("Lean Bear") Lake, a clear, round body of fresh water less than half a mile inland from the Pacific shoreline. The Spanish adventurer found Pismo clams in abundance along the coast, and was once visited by "six gentiles (Indians) . . . who live in two rancherias, which they say are not far distant."

Oso Flaco ("Lean Bear") Lake.

In the late 1800s, as health spas and other healing institutions designed to cope with the fallout of a post-industrial America began to sprout like weeds along the entire California coast, the notion of potential "utopia" turned towards the dunes in southern San Luis Obispo County. Hot mineral baths a few miles north in the foothills of the Irish Hills at Avila Springs had begun to draw a modest tourist trade, as did hot springs in Paso Robles far to the north of the county. As the Southern Pacific Railroad and its expanding universe linked the county to the rest of the world, railroad tracks were laid within miles of the dunes, and the nearby agricultural community of Oceano became a richly touted beach-front paradise almost overnight when the Oceano depot opened in 1898.

Central valley residents, as well as the moneyed classes of Northern and Southern California, found pleasant escape from the harsh extremes of the stifling summer heat in this "Atlantic City of the West," with its bath houses, waterfront cottages, and hostelries that dotted the beach from Pismo south to Oceano. By 1906, the three-towered Victorian "Grande Pavillion" on the beach south of Oceano opened its portals to summer vacationers seeking respite in the more civilized sea-front climate. Touring automobiles, latest craze of the day, were commonplace sights as they motored along the flat, tawn-colored sand of La Grande Beach.

While commercial utopianism blossomed at the popular beaches northwest of the dune range, religious utopia was heralded with the arrival of a Theosophical community whose leaders, William Dower and Frances LaDue, sensed the inherent magical property of the area and sought to locate within its influence. LaDue and Dower, followers of Helena Blavatsky and her occult teachings (then based in New York), received a psychic message from the lineage of avatars known as the Great White Brotherhood, telling them to remove themselves from the splintering East Coast assemblage and reestablish Theosophy on the more liberal West Coast. The two traveled west until they reached the dunes, then turned back two miles inland to settle in their new domicile, the town of Halcyon, in 1903. Intertwining a profound and complex spirituality with socialist economic underpinnings, the town coalesced into a tract of land nestled in quiet, meditative groves of eucalyptus trees resplendent with the autumn migration of monarch butterflies.

One principal aim of the Theosophical community at Halcyon was to continue the work begun by Dower, a doctor of medicine. In 1904, the Halcyon Sanatorium, designed to promote the values of love and spiritual harmony to vanquish illness and disease, opened its doors to the public. The building itself stands today, an imposing three-storied Victorian gingerbread with turrets, gabled features, and bay windows overlooking the calm stretch of Pacific Ocean. An opening day audience was treated to an exhibit of science's latest marvel, the X-ray machine.

Here, to Halcyon or its sanatorium, came all variety of travelers and wayfaring souls: writers, poets and painters, mystics, and an oddball assortment of hobos and bindlestiffs copping a few nights' lodging in the nearby orchards and eucalyptus groves. Conveniently located midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco, Halcyon evolved into a renowned stopping point for the road-weary spiritualists who found its docile seclusion an ideal alternative to the frenetic lifestyle in California's booming metropolitan centers to the north and south. Halcyon, it seemed, was an oasis in the spiritual desert between Big Sur and Point Loma.

(As for the rest of southern San Luis Obispo County, most residents politely ignored or distanced themselves from the goings-on of the Theosophists and their visitors. Agriculture was, and still is, the economic mainstay of the fertile inland Arroyo Grande valley. Between the farms and the carnival atmosphere that soon developed north in Pismo Beach—the funhouses, skating rinks, beachfront promenades, gambling parlors, and the last licenses whorehouse in the state of California—the eclectic mysticism of the Halcyon people was so relatively demure that it went largely unnoticed.)

The Halcyon sanatorium as it appears today.

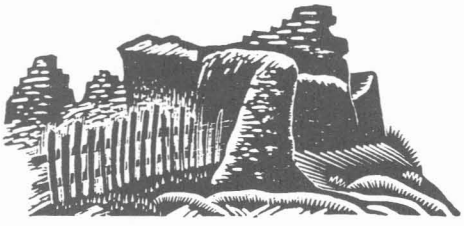
BY THE TIME of the Great Depression, Halcyon was well established with a resident population of fifty or so practicing Theosophists. The community originally incorporated as a land-holding agency whose participating members each held title to half an acre of land, plus stipend, in exchange for the contribution of their skills to maintain the grounds and temple buildings. In the late 1920s, the socialist inclination of the community's economic utopia had collapsed, but its spiritual aspirations would propel the town of Halcyon into the present day.

As a spiritual sanctuary and healing center, sensitized to nature and the powerful "vibrations" of the surrounding lands, Halcyon attracted an extraordinary cast of writers and poets, painters, renegade socialists, and the seedlings for a bohemian counterculture. One local luminary who often hosted visitors from the literary and social circles of San Francisco was the musical composer John Varian, whose wood-paneled home stood a few hundred yards from the ellipsoidal Temple of the People, center of the community and Theosophical life in the small town. Among Varian's guests in Halcyon was a young man by the given name of Chester Alan Arthur III, who called himself Gavin: mystic, astrologer, "champion of the working stiff and the deviate," seeker of the Higher Path, and grandson to a U.S. president.

Gavin, not quite as financially secure during the Depression as his land-owning hosts, scouted the region for a more suitable hermitage, one free of the obligatory trappings of life and its monthly rents, confining walls, and jangling telephones. He didn't have far to look: one glance westward to the dunes, and Gavin saw the home of his utopia.

The sand dunes, with their willow copses and sheltered vales, were already familiar ground to the hundreds of migrant workers who traveled the state from harvest to harvest, often laying over for the winter in the comfort of the region. Informal tent cities appeared seasonally along the fringes of Highway One and the Oceano dunes, north of the rising plateau of the Nipomo Mesa.

In its heyday, the Oceano depot shipped out more than 500 carloads of peas and pole beans each year. Dry beans, grains, sugar beets, and varietal seeds were the prime commercial exports of the agricultural valleys east of the dunes, where Japanese and American farmers worked productively through the early decades of the century. People camping out along the valley and the beach seemed commonplace. It was only left to Gavin, his hermit's inclination inspired to new heights, to bring a sense of spirit and civilization to this windswept outpost of cosmic self-realization. By 1930 and the start of the Depression, the foundation of a bohemian utopia had been laid in the sand.



With the Depression, life began to change along the Central Coast. La Grande Pavillion was left abandoned to fall ungracefully into disrepair; beachfront cottages and bath houses stood empty along the coast. Driftwood

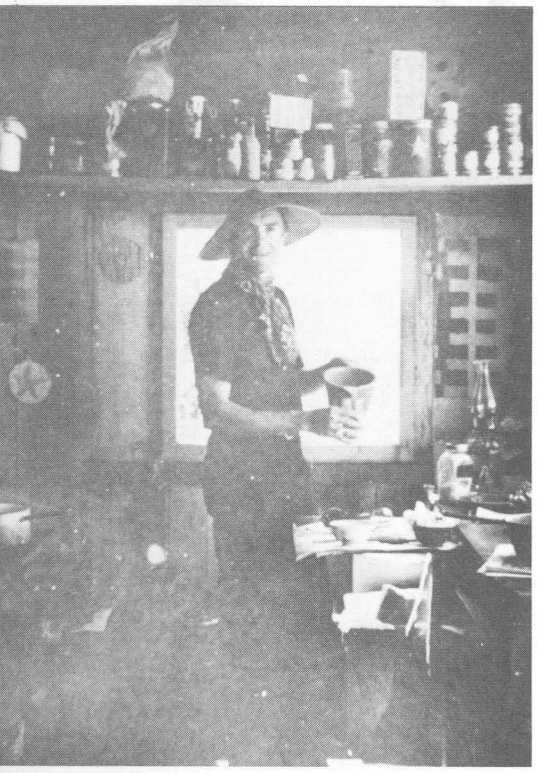
from storm-damaged piers littered the beach, odd rows of thick wooden pilings rising like a staircase out of the ocean, marking, however unintentionally, the route inward to the dunes and the new abode of a handful of the faithful who followed Gavin deep into the mountains of sand.

The deserted vacation cabins on the beach provided an initial encampment for the "Dunites," as they styled themselves. Yet even these rundown buildings proved too near to the outside world: an occasional automobile would promenade along the Grande Beach, disturbing the quiet, contemplative reverie of Gavin's introspective musings. Wood from the empty buildings soon began to disappear as Gavin and his cohorts transported the material further into the center of this half-mile-wide expanse of sandy mountain range. A new town, devoid of subdivision and property markers, was built up behind a modest gathering of trees and scrub.

Brief sorties from the dunes to Halcyon and Arroyo Grande for food, liquor, pen and ink, and other basic necessities of the hermit's life, aroused curiosity among the Halcyon residents and their visitors, who had picnicked in the dunes since the town was founded. Within two years, the tiny population of the Dunites began to swell, from five to fifteen, then thirty; the sanctuary of these mystic utopian socialists was almost overrun with the curious and the devout, who oftentimes lingered only long enough to discover the true meaning of boredom before returning to the mundane existence of the city dweller. A few stayed and joined the eclectic gathering so blissfully settled in the dunes.

FOR THE Dunites, life and nature were generous providers. Pismo clams, rich along the shoreline, became the dietary staple of a hermitage in the dunes, although this meager diet was sometimes augmented by a raiding party to the fertile valleys and rows of vegetables cultivated by the Japanese. A community house and guest cabin were built to accommodate visitors, and the commune even acquired a name: *Moy Mell*, a Gaelic expression meaning "Pasture of Honey." Life was sweet indeed.

Through the dunes and to Gavin's humble abode came artists and mystics, among them the expatriate Irish poetess Ella Young. It was she who lent Gavin the name Moy Mell, and her visits to the Dunites became a



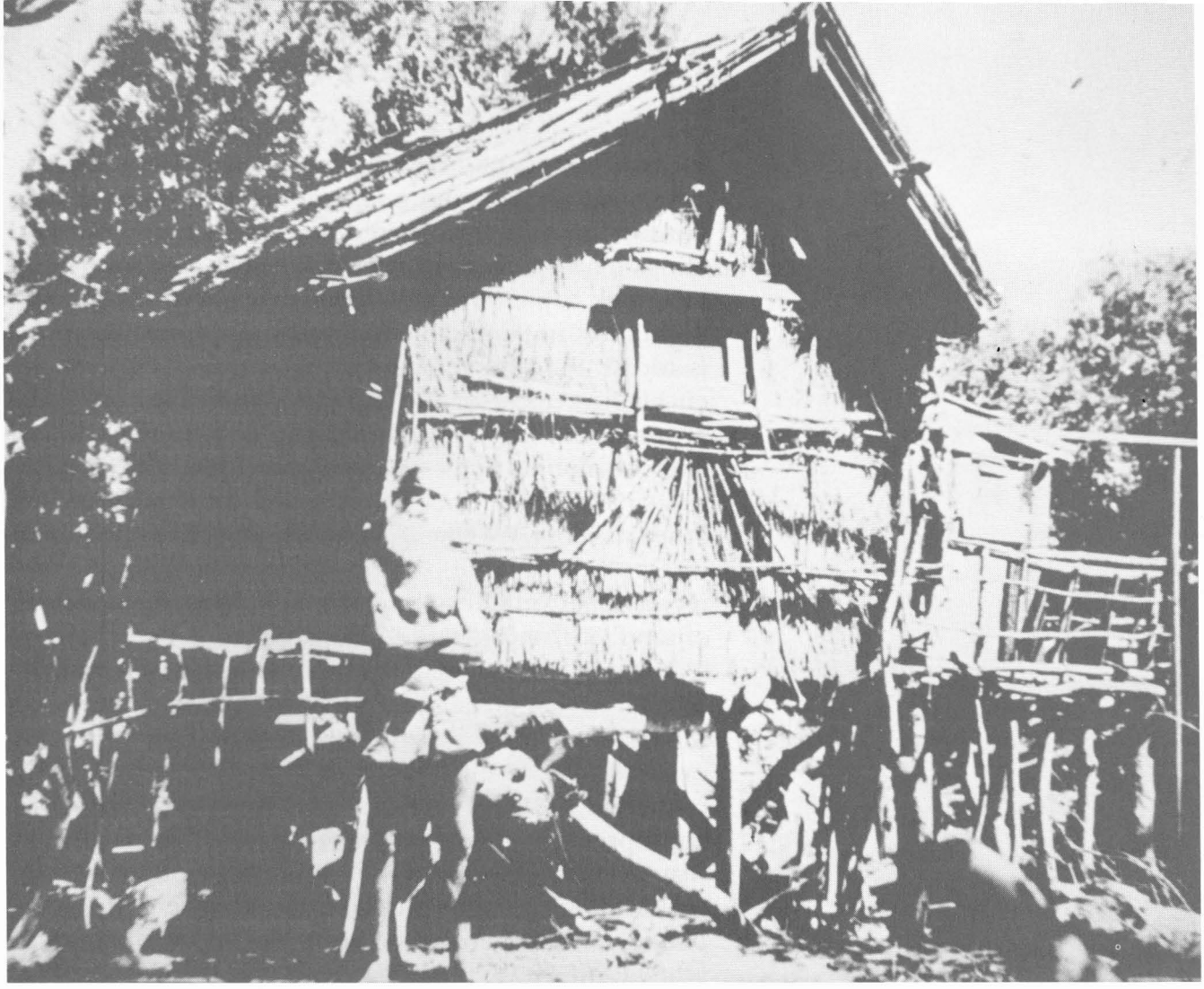
Elwood Decker, one of the Dunites, in his cabin. Decker lives today in Arroyo Grande.

regular part of her life, alternating with periods of literary endeavor as the guest of the Varians in Halcyon. Outside of occasional residence in Berkeley (where she held a guest lecture chair in Gaelic studies at the University of California under the patronage of Senator James D. Phelan), Ella Young found a sense of comfort and marvel in the inspired conversations and rambling philosophical discourses that enlivened fireside evenings spent in the tiny dune huts.

Gavin had been there three or four years now, refining a revolutionary metaphysical system based on Eastern wisdom, astrology, sex, and Napoleon brandy. (He eventually published the results in a book called *The Circle of Sex*.) George Blaize, alternately known as "Frenchy," "Nature Boy," or "George the Evangelist," dined solely on whole grains soaked in water, drank only whiskey, and lived in a thatched reed hut a good stone's throw from the permanent camp at Moy Mell. George had earned the sobriquet "Nature Boy" from his daily attire, which consisted of little more than a worn loincloth and a thick, sandy white beard. A painter, together with his wife and children, had taken a summer's residency one year, an old sailor who carved walnut-shell boats found lodgings, and the comings and goings of the Dunites made for an exciting, dynamic environment, dedicated in its spirit to the pursuit of inner harmony.

Secrets of revelation weren't contained within the dunes and its residents. In the mid thirties, Gavin began publishing a literary journal, Dune Forum, which was distributed throughout the world. In it, Gavin offered the outside world a glimpse of the philosophy he was nurturing, and wrote: "You don't have to live in the dunes to be a Dunite."

MOY MELL had its share of celebrity, and rumor has it that both W.C. Fields and John Steinbeck visited, or at least knew of, this mystic settlement in the sands. Edward Weston knew it, and he photographed the dunes in the mid thirties. A *Vogue* fashion model, Emily Wingate, was a frequent resident of Moy Mell. And the community had its own resident poet, Hugo Selig, whose odd bits of verse were carefully saved from destruction by Ella Young and appeared in a book entitled *Wheel of Fire* published by Ward Ritchie in Los Angeles. Hugo, a "guru" of sorts in his own right, soon left the



George Blaize, also called "Nature Boy," one of the original Dunites.

communal and partylike environment of Moy Mell for a more sequestered abode, where spiritual pursuits dominated his waking hours. Individual Dunites attracted their own discipleships and generated a steady ebb and flow of people through the well-worn footpaths.

By the 1940s, the Dunites' published pleas for socialist reform and spiritual harmony had been largely ignored by the rest of the world, which stood on the brink of world war. Within weeks after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the magic of Moy Mell began to dissolve. George Blaize was found collapsed in the dunes and died of heart failure at Arroyo Grande Hospital in May of 1943. The County Board of Supervisors prepared to take legal action to evict the coastal dwellers, and the Coast Guard arrived in full armed strength to enforce the eviction. The glory days of Moy Mell were quickly eclipsed by the tide of war, to be preserved only in a satirical novel, *The Face of the Clam*, by Luther Whiteman, a brief visitor to this sandy oasis. A few hardy souls perservered deep in the sandy recesses of the dunes, but for the world at large the utopian bubble had burst.

ALONE RENEGADE Monterey pine marks the trail that winds through the northern edges of the Oceano dunes, past hillocks covered in scented coreopsis that clings tenaciously to the shifting sands. The trail leads to a thick copse of willow trees, overgrown with brush and almost impenetrable in the last ten years. The time is today: Halcyon remains a tiny hamlet secluded in eucalyptus, most of the outlying lands sold off years ago, and the imposing sanatorium now towers over a field of mobile homes parked along the tourist-trade route of Highway One. To the south, dune buggies and other varieties of off-road vehicles crisscross the dunes in a cacaphony of noise; summers find thousands of recreational vehicles parked along the hectic stretches of sand. Stillness is rare in the dunes.

The trail twists around a sandy mound, past a midden pile of broken clam and abalone shells, and dives into the thicket of brush and wind-blown willow trees. No evidence of two small houses can be seen, nor the tiny outhouse a few feet from where these houses—more appropriately "huts"—once stood. The drainage pipe that served as a well is still resting it its trough, though traces of the gardens that surrounded the little compound are nowhere to be seen. For more than thirty years, until 1974, this little grove was the home of the "last of the Dunites," Bert "Bourke" Schievink.

Schievink arrived in the dunes shortly after the original migration in the mid 1930s. His needs were kept to a minimum, and his conversation kept to himself. Unlike many of the other dune dwellers, Bert kept a low profile and contented himself with astrological musings from the roof of his hut, where a chair sat facing the south to coincide with the psychic vibrations that radiated along the coast.

In his later years, Bert became known to a few hardy Sierra Club hikers, whose efforts had created a dune preserve immediately north of the old site of Moy Mell. (The dunes, in fact, narrowly escaped becoming the site of Pacific Gas and Electric's planned nuclear power plant; diligent lobbying of the Sierra Club, and particularly Ansel Adams, persuaded PG&E in the early 1960s to locate their plant to the north at Diablo Canyon.)

When Schievink died in September 1974 and his obituary appeared in a local paper under the heading "The Last of the Dunites," most south county residents hadn't the vaguest idea of what had transpired just a few miles distant. The rest of the world had progressed relentless-

San Francisco writer Wayne A. Saroyan is a bookseller and historian specializing in California and the Far West.

ly into the future, virtually ignorant of a reclusive spirit that had tapped the magical fountain of the dunes within his private, undisturbed utopia. It seemed almost as though the entire story of the Dunites had been written in the shifting sands. □

POSTCRIPT

During the past twelve years, the history of the Dunites has been explored virtually single-handedly by a former Southern Pacific railroad worker. In the summer of 1973, Norm Hammond inadvertently stumbled into the private grove of Bert Schievink. Since then, Hammond has persistently researched the lives and times of the Dunites: their lifestyles and writings, poetry and astrological musings, and the whole of their existence from the 1930s to the present day. Hammond has tracked down and interviewed the surviving handful of residents and their relations; sifted through paper bags stuffed with notes, poems, and hand-scrawled diaries; and compiled this archaeological and historical treasure into a book soon to be published by Tabula Rasa Press in Los Osos, California. A work in the tradition of the "annalists" of history (who leave no stone unturned, no fact omitted), Hammond's book will be the first and only full-length testament to a major facet of California's long, intriguing history.

The author of this article is deeply appreciative of Norm Hammond and the incredible amount of work he has devoted over the past dozen years to this project, and looks forward to the next afternoon spent with a bottle in the old haunts of the Oceano sand dunes.

—Wayne Saroyan

Small City Waterfronts: Problems and Opportunities

by Peter Grenell

Eureka waterfront.

ALMOST EVERY large city with a waterfront has a waterfront revitalization program planned or operating, as do many smaller cities. From Baltimore to Seattle, from Gloucester to Morro Bay, local governments and private developers are busily making over the troubled, often forgotten neighborhoods which nurtured their original development.

Much of this waterfront redevelopment reflects both private developers' need to maximize their economic return from their unique location—that's why they located there, after all—but also a widespread and deep-seated aversion to the diversity and "creative disorder" which have historically characterized urban waterfronts. Meanwhile, many cities continue to grapple with the impacts of external industrial change on their waterfront industries, as well as their own unique community outlooks.

This discussion will concern itself with the waterfront restoration efforts of small cities, those with populations of less than 150,000. These cities' waterfronts—whether on rivers, lakes, estuaries, or right on the coast—face serious challenges in surviving economic and social change. Yet they also possess special opportunities for revitalization. With increasing metropolitan and small city growth, national parks overuse, and other pressures on existing recreational facilities, redeveloping these urban waterfronts will gain in importance.

The term *waterfront* obviously includes the shoreline with its piers, wharves, and immediate onshore environs. But the waterfront also includes an area behind the shoreline proper that may be two or three city blocks deep, and which contains and can contain land uses that are linked to waterfront activities housed right on the shoreline. Everything from warehouses and marine suppliers to visitor-serving commercial uses and public institutions fit readily into this area.

The waterfronts of small cities are often characterized by little available land for redevelopment, deteriorated public facilities, abandoned or underused public and private facilities, and inadequate or even nonexistent public access to the water's edge. The scale of development is usually fairly small or "fine-grained," so that residential and other uses are mixed in with or very close to the main activity. Small cities are also subject to more severe impacts of structural or other significant changes in economic sectors, especially those represented locally. Cities of this size typically have a single primary economic activity—commercial fishing, for example, or tourism. The impacts of recent shifts in the commercial fishing and timber industries on the economies of several small California coastal cities are considerable and continuing.

MANY SMALL cities have other problems. Chief among them is a shortage of financial and technical resources, in both local government and private agencies, to effectively tackle the complexities of waterfront restoration. We have an essentially pragmatic and impatient culture, one which seeks quick, simple solutions to large and complicated problems. At the same time, some communities are divided by long-standing controversies into "pro-" and "anti-development" factions; or they are split by severe disagreements over the type, scale, or location of particular developments. Much new development is scorned by local inhabitants as not in keeping with the traditional atmosphere or as lacking in sensitivity to the existing nature of the community's waterfront. The inability of much private development and local public policy to capitalize on the complex, ambiguous, changing nature of the urban shoreline is at the root of many waterfront controversies.

There is also frequently a curious lack of public or civic imagination concerning the opportunities, whether already present or able to be created, to revive and enhance these small city waterfronts. I believe this response is partially related, at heart, to a prevalent mistrust of urban density, heterogeneity, and activity. This takes many forms, including a preference for "coarse-grained" zoning and separation of uses, self-contained shopping malls, neatly manicured if antiseptic parks, lack of sidewalk activity, and, above all, no loitering. Many small cities which possess restorable waterfronts began as or grew into major centers for fishing (Eureka, Morro Bay), tourism (Oceanside), or other commercial or recreational activities. A sense of its history can provide a solid grounding for a community's restoration effort.

Eureka waterfront.

The two main values of the waterfront, for water- or shore-related industries and for public use, provide a healthy focus for restoration in small cities. The pervasive "community orientation" found in small communities is a potentially powerful asset in assuring that a restored waterfront is not a sterile or private one. For in these smaller waterfront areas, one very often finds remnants of the vitality, variety, intimacy, and informality that marked them in earlier days. The challenge in such situations is to demonstrate that economic development and environmental enhancement for public benefit can complement each other and are not antagonistic. The small size and scale of development and lesser complexity encountered in small city waterfronts may also provide a great opportunity for enhancement, not replacement. Scarce financial resources can be usefully concentrated on limited possibilities. Physically, such sites frequently have particular scenic qualities associated with location and development scale that call for a few fairly obvious design solutions to retain a recognizable and desirable waterfront character and to promote public access to the shoreline without conflicting with marine industry. There are sometimes opportunities for compatibly mixing the two through grade or level separations or other "controlled access" approaches. Behind such a public- and marine-oriented waterfront edge, a good deal of other development might be permissible without danger to the waterfront use and atmosphere.

Public initiative, commitment, and finance are essential requirements for successfully taking advantage of such opportunities. A major task for small cities is to arrive at a coherent view of what each wants its waterfront to be, and then to make a firm commitment to achieve this goal. In addition, such cities require assistance in articulating guidelines for the location, scale, and design of their waterfront restorations. This task involves determining directions for the scale, distribution, and type of waterfront uses, and the placement and design of public access areas, facilities, and circulation patterns. Of primary importance here is to conserve and make full use of the existing amenity: the water's edge, its space, and its views. Public investment "up front," while providing needed public access and other facilities improvements, can signal such a commitment and stimulate private investment, which can provide further public improvements and economic benefits compatible with private development.

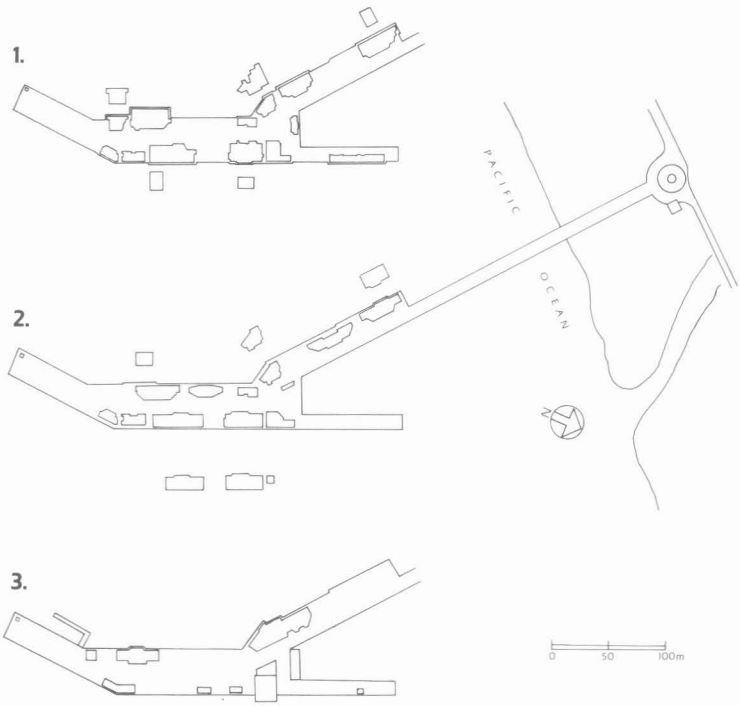
Small cities especially need help in obtaining and directing such initial investment and in "packaging" complementary private investment. These communities also may require assistance in orchestrating methods for resolving waterfront land use and resource conflicts and arriving at an operational consensus.

The state has a definite and significant role in supporting local attempts at waterfront restoration. The State Coastal Conservancy has been assigned the responsibility by the legislature to organize and implement a program of urban waterfront restoration. The Urban Waterfront Restoration Act of 1981 and the California Urban Waterfront Area Restoration Financing Authority Act (CUWARFA) of 1983 have codified that mandate. The Coastal Conservancy has assisted in and is now working with over forty programs on the coast, in the San Francisco Bay area, or within the state's metropolitan areas to create economically feasible and environmentally sound waterfront restoration solutions.

NORTHERN San Diego County's City of Oceanside (population 85,000), a formerly thriving coastal tourist and vacation haven, has declined over the years because of the erosion of its once-thronged beaches and changes in the economic base of the community. After several years of turbulent public discussion and formal consideration, the city, its citizens, a private developer, and the Coastal Commission, with the help of the State Coastal Conservancy, reached agreement on a plan and program for restoring its one-and-a-quarter-mile-long Strand beachfront. Oceanside's solution is the result of an accommodation

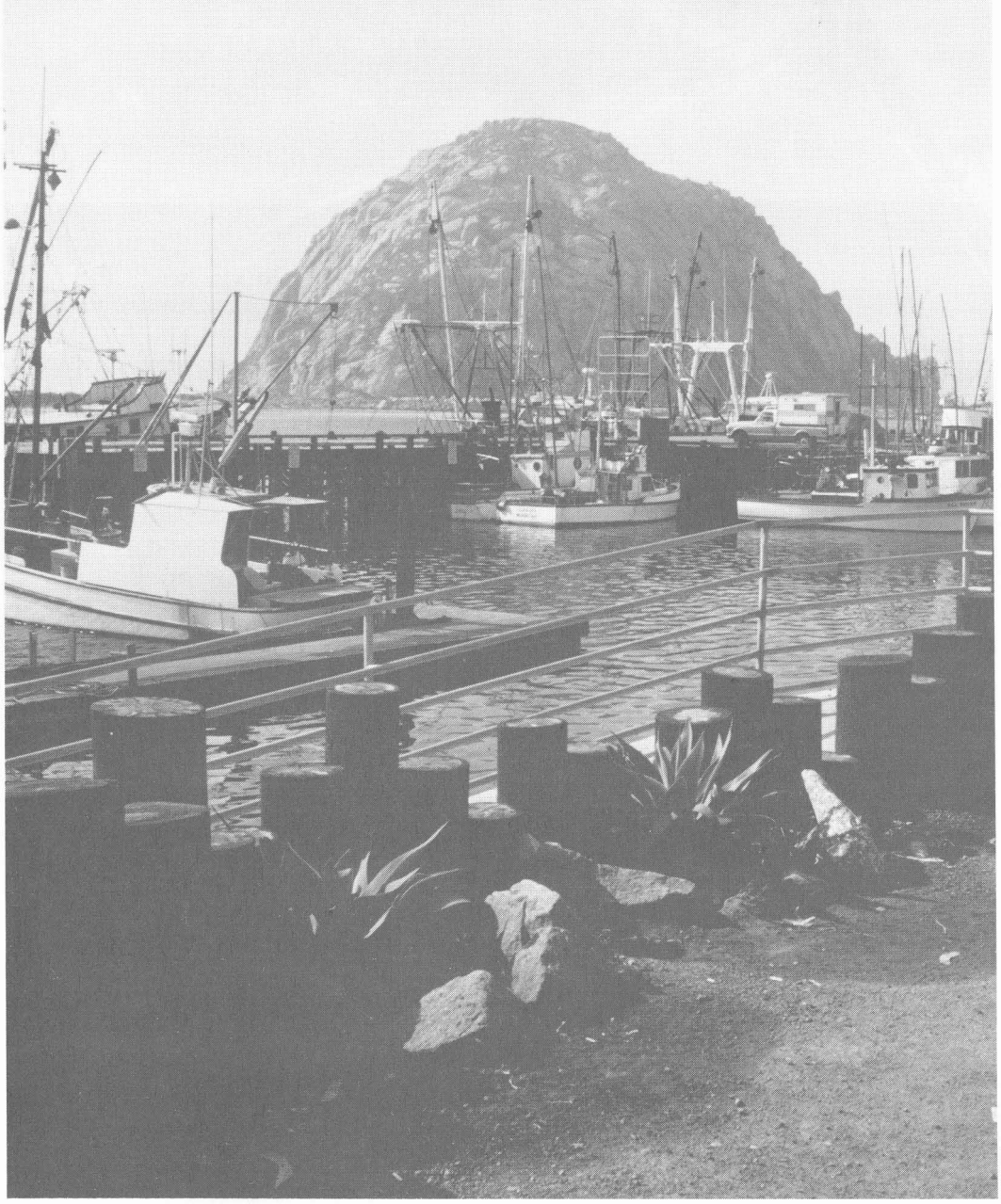
Oceanside.

reached by these diverse interests in a public community design process orchestrated by the Conservancy. Several specific projects within the overall waterfront plan—such as acquisition of land for a new waterfront park, provision of new public accessways, renovation of a shoreline community center, and restoration of the municipal pier—are being implemented with public and private funds. In Oceanside, the state's supporting role in aid of local government is most recently exemplified in the upcoming Conservancy action to consider funding to help reconstruct the treasured municipal pier. One important lesson from Oceanside's experience is that it takes time to carry through such complex endeavors, but it pays to endure. Another valuable lesson is that open discussion of waterfront planning problems and controversies in a constructively organized milieu generates positive and practical results.



Top: Stearns Wharf opening ceremonies, Santa Barbara, October 1981. Bottom: Two proposals for the Stearns Wharf restoration were denied before a final plan was approved. The first included approximately 90,000 square feet of commercial space, with a good deal of second-story construction; the second allowed about 50,000 square feet of commercial development, still with several two-story buildings. The third proposal reduced the commercial space to 30,000 square feet, all on one level.

Farther up the coast, the city of Santa Barbara (pop. 77,000) had a major economic/public access conflict regarding the future of its city-owned Stearns Wharf. A historic and much-loved public structure that had evolved into a major regional recreational facility, Stearns Wharf had been closed for several years because of severe fire damage and deterioration. With Coastal Conservancy assistance, the apparent conflict between provision of maximum public access on the pier versus a self-supporting public enterprise was resolved. This accommodation arose from a regulatory stalemate in which the city and its developer claimed that the pier could not be rebuilt without a threefold increase in the amount of space devoted to revenue-generating development. The solution was a multiple-source funding arrangement, including the use of a little-known federal loan program (since defunded) arranged for by the Conservancy, as well as city and Conservancy funds. This enabled redesign of the Stearns's uses to leave three-fourths of the deck area available for free public access. In effect, the existing development "footprint" on the pier was rebuilt. The wharf reopened in October 1981, and in its first year of operation the wildly successful restoration grossed over one million dollars and has been swarmed over by thousands of people who welcomed back "their" wharf.



Morro Bay and Morro Rock.

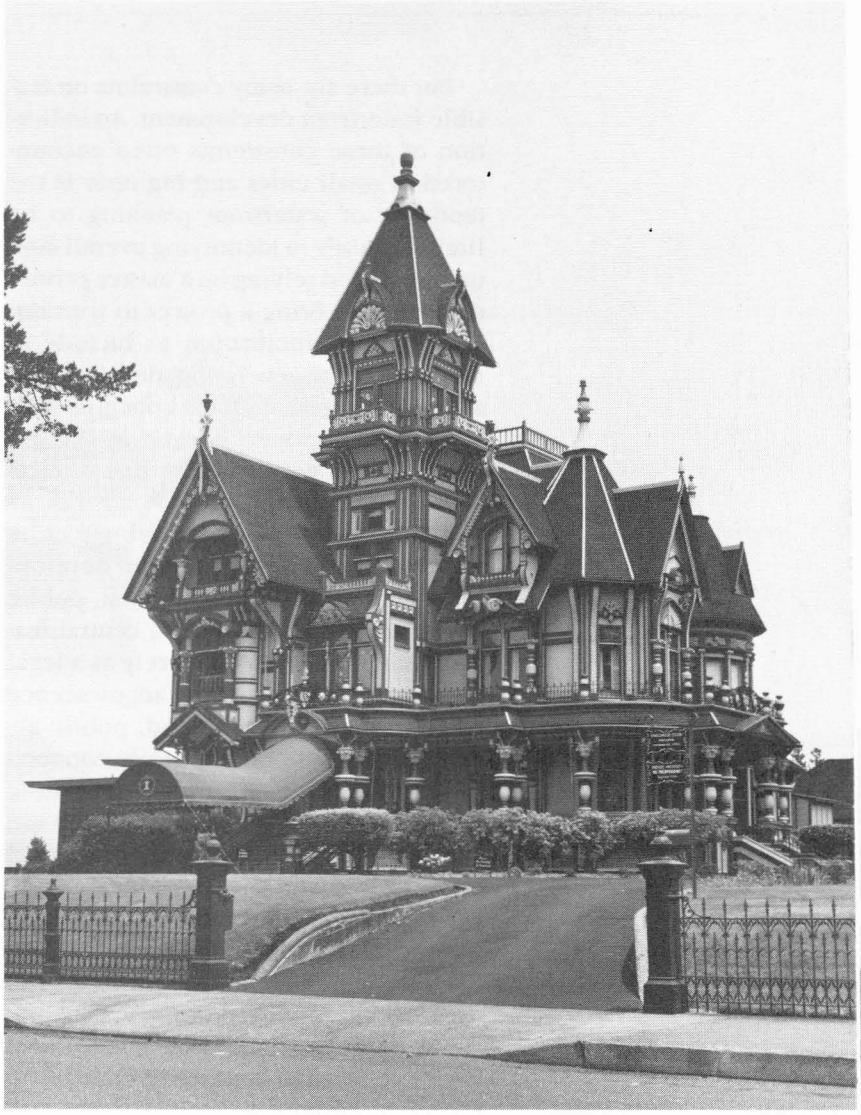
Morro Bay (pop. 9,500) continues to be the principal commercial fishing port on the central coast as well as a major regional tourist destination. With famous Morro Rock standing opposite a congested harbor, it is also one of the most picturesque places on the coast (ignoring, of course, the huge power plant that almost dwarfs the Rock). Morro Bay waterfront dynamics continue to revolve around the controversy over whether to allow more development, and especially how much, what kind, and where. Interestingly enough, while the struggle has raged over whether more commercial fishing facilities can be accommodated, whether more hotels would be allowed, or whether any more development is acceptable, the city has actually developed an overall waterfront plan on which there is broad agreement and has moved to implement the main features of that plan. These include improvements to commercial fishing facilities and public access that take advantage of this small community's unique natural surrounding. This local commitment, in spite of continuing differences, has been sustained over the past five years and has been supported once again by state assistance through the Coastal Conservancy and other agencies.

The Monterey waterfront was, until recently, almost completely inaccessible to the public.

The city of Monterey (pop. 30,000), anchoring the north end of Big Sur's wild and scenic coast, presents an unusual situation: a small city that is a national tourist attraction—especially since the opening of the spectacular Monterey Bay Aquarium—and subject to tremendous development pressure and congestion. The city recognized that its waterfront was almost completely inaccessible to the public. After much intense and prolonged controversy with the Coastal Commission and citizens groups over requirements for public and private development along the shoreline, it has recently undertaken an ambitious program to open up its waterfront more to the public and to guide further private development to take advantage of the fact that "amenity pays." Monterey has more funds of its own and more potential for tapping private investment than most small coastal cities. Yet it still requires additional public assistance "up front" to ensure that needed public improvements are in place and to guide future waterfront development. Monterey has sought and received Coastal Conservancy assistance in implementing its waterfront restoration program. Here the twin focus has been on increasing public shoreline access and on acquiring lands directly usable by the public currently in non-waterfront-dependent uses.

A FINAL example of a small city attempting to come to grips with its waterfront problems is the north coast city of Eureka (pop. 25,000). In contrast to the previous examples, Eureka has suffered the severe and successive impacts of major adverse economic shifts in its two primary waterfront-related industries, commercial fishing and timber, over which it has had little or no control. The city has attempted to take advantage of its significant historical architectural heritage through a program of restoring the old central neighborhood immediately behind its extensive if deteriorating waterfront. Attractive as it is, this effort has not yet generated the kind of significant economic revival hoped for by the city. The city's damp, gray climate and serious locational disadvantages have limited the city's tourist and convention appeal. Moreover, a locally perceived difficulty concerns the existence along portions of the city's waterfront of degraded or threatened wetlands. These marshy areas and their adjacent uplands comprise remnants of the original Humboldt Bay shoreline that existed before European settlement. They are viewed by some as impediments to needed development, even while existing redevelopable areas remain idle.

Most recently, the city has apparently modified its emphasis on tourism and the kind of wishful convention-center development that has become almost a fashion for many coastal communities seeking an economic shot in the arm. Attempts are now being made to attract coastal-dependent industries that can make ready use of underused waterfront lands, even as the city, with Coastal Conservancy help, continues to try various approaches to conserving its dwindling but unique wetland inventory compatible with its development needs. Stimulation of opportunities for other industrial growth, based on local strengths and advantages, may well prove more advantageous for Eureka than the tourist-oriented restorations being attempted farther south.



The Carson House in Eureka, built by a lumber baron shortly after the turn of the century.

Some worthy goals have been proposed here. The hard fact remains, however, that there is no free lunch. Current state funding programs, including the Coastal Conservancy, the CUWARFA revenue bond program, and other departmental programs such as the California Department of Boating and Waterways, can provide significant stopgap and "up front" funding and leverage to attract private investment, without which projects are often incapable of proceeding. State funding also can support local demonstrations of commitment to orderly restoration.

But there are many constraints on feasible waterfront development. An indication of these constraints often encountered in small cities and big ones is the tendency of waterfront planning to be limited mainly to identifying overall land use mixes and relying on a master private developer to bring a project to fruition. The frequent inclination to include as much revenue-generating development as possible attests to local concerns with "finding the money"—even at the expense of the very amenity that attracts such attention.

There are several design principles by which the success of waterfront development efforts can be gauged. First, public access must be considered a central feature rather than treated merely as a legal requirement or a grudging acquiescence to popular pressure. Second, public access areas should be physically connected in order to ensure maximum public use of the shorefront. Third, public use areas should be as inviting and functional as possible, given particular local conditions. Fourth, with public access and use assured along the shoreline—compatibly with legitimate waterfront industrial uses—other public and private development, including major new institutional uses, can be sited behind the immediate shoreline without detriment to the primary waterfront activities.

Fifth, however much economic needs may suggest, the scale of new development, especially if it is supportive of but not primary to the waterfront's essential character (e.g., hotel development or offices), should not fundamentally change this character nor physically dominate the area. Sixth, there must be some degree of "fine-grain" mix of activities to avoid the sterility that has characterized much waterfront restoration. Seventh, if our experience to date in California's small waterfront cities is any indication, what may seem intense and intractable use conflicts are capable of reasoned and mutually acceptable solution given commitment, energy, and perseverance.

Finally, regarding innovation, small cities may in fact provide fertile ground for demonstrating new approaches to solving old problems. For example, small coastal cities may be able to use new technology involving use of salt water to reduce their fresh water needs to supply such public waterfront facilities as restrooms or pier and equipment washdown. The City of Avalon has had such a system in use for years, leading to a reduction in fresh water use of up to 60 percent, to name just one example. Within San Diego's portion of the Tijuana River Estuary, a Coastal Conservancy–assisted demonstration waste-water treatment facility is now functioning successfully, raising hopes for a solution to the major problem of waste water treatment that now plagues San Diego, Imperial Beach, Coronado, and other settlements nearby. Such experiments might be expected to have greater impact in small cities because the scale of both the problem and the solution are perhaps more manageable, and any beneficial results might be more readily apparent.

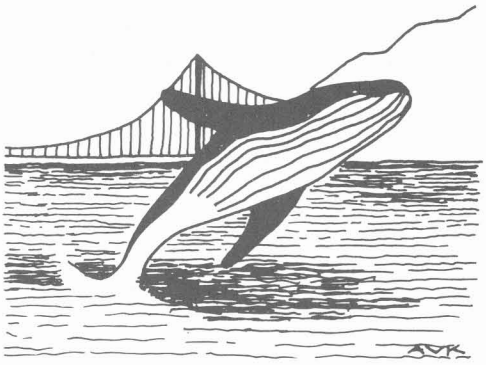
To conclude, I suggest that the problems of small city waterfronts can be usefully considered within the broader context of California's growing problem of infrastructure and public facility reconstruction. Signs of the need to rebuild our urban physical plant are surfacing daily. This need is all the more clear and urgent in view of the fact that 80 percent of California's population lives within the coastal zone or in proximity to it. Allocation of tidelands revenues for this priority purpose would be but one significant step in the right direction for public policy to take to revitalize one of California's most important resources, its small urban waterfronts. □

Peter Grenell is the Executive Officer of the California State Coastal Conservancy.

BOOK REVIEWS

Warning Sign

Caution: Working Waterfront. Ann Breen and Dick Rigby. The Waterfront Press, 1985. $24.95.



The authors, codirectors of the Waterfront Center in Washington, D.C., have compiled an overview of the issues surrounding the survival of traditional, small-scale "marine enterprises" in the face of the rising tide of real estate values and the seemingly insatiable appetite for nonmaritime uses of the waterfront. They have used four case studies to erect a signpost, a bicoastal advisory to Go Slow on the road to ever-increasing conversion of the blue-collar scene to one of white collars, Bermuda shorts, and tank tops.

The volume serves as a broadcast medium, a red flag, for the planner, politician, and the very people most affected, and tells them that their experience is not a unique or isolated one. It is more a book about people than places. It is also a book full of between-the-lines philosophical issues, while the text seems to be about more pragmatic ones.

The text is organized into two parts. Part one centers on the displacement pressures; part two, the pressures for public access in, between, over, and among legitimate working, fishing, industrial, and port uses. The two topics, while related, make an uneasy marriage, so it is fortunate that they are presented as independent sections in this book. There is also a helpful section on resources—of the written and analytical sort, subdivided for further pursuit of either topic.

It was inevitable that a treatise would be written on how the tidal wave of commercial reuse of the waterfront has become a threat to economically weaker working uses. There are too many examples to ignore for long. The elixir for a sagging tax base and the smelly, disordered waterfront in many cities has been the festival marketplace—retail, commercial, tourist, office, and residential uses, with the water serving primarily as a visual amenity. While it may have begun on abandoned piers or lifeless industrial property, it has not stopped there. As it continues to spread in large towns as well as small, it has gained momentum and economic clout; but, as the authors point out, it comes with a price tag.

The costs are calculated in terms of lost employment, diversity, and character. The case studies presented are of the Miami River area in Florida; Portland, Maine's central waterfront; Sausalito's Marinship area; and Henry Pier/Lake Union in Seattle. The authors use the metaphor of poisoning plankton in the oceanic food chain for allowing small boat yards, tug operations, commercial fishing, and other small marine businesses to die or be carelessly displaced.

The first part ("Pressure to Displace") is as much about lifestyles as it is about the skills, professions, and livelihoods that exist on the working waterfront. Although the authors profess that

they have tried not to "romanticize" the working waterfront, they have not entirely hidden their biases from view. And there should be no apology for that. Even so, the case studies are somewhat unsatisfying if one is looking for conclusions, answers, or even just a strong point of view. The section covering Sausalito's Marinship, of which I have some personal knowledge, reads more as a transcript of events than an analysis. It seems to be a story that is building toward a showdown, but it ends without any particular insight or climax.

The Miami River study was similarly undirected and inconclusive, sort of a snapshot in time that may only have real meaning when the next photo is taken in ten years. The Portland study is more focused and more instructive, particularly for those who are interested in the continuation of commercial fishing as a part of the working waterfront and as part of the ambiance for associated tourism. The Seattle example is interesting because it deals head-on with integrated land use policy issues that must underlie decision making if a conscious balance is to be struck, rather than the lopsided toll that a laissez-faire approach would take.

The second part ("Pressure to Open Up") includes sections on physical access (parks, pathways, and street ends), visual access (viewing platforms and towers, etc.), and interpretive access (tours, kiosks, etc.). The examples given show how to achieve compatible public access to working waterfront areas and demonstrate the authors' careful research and wide ranging pursuit of the best examples. This part of the book is soothing to read, but not stimulating, since it only presents successful solutions. It would have been more useful if it showed some failures as well. California's Bay Conservation and Development Commission and Coastal Act are given quite a lot of attention for the benefit of others around the country.

This volume is required reading for those interested in waterfront planning and public policy issues, particularly small-scale and blue-collar employment, and in defending the diversity and tradition of all forms of marine enterprise. A further note of caution: if you are bothered by typographical errors and, in places, a rather poorly edited text, be forewarned—the going is tough.

—Randy Rossi

The Cost of Seaside Living

Living with the California Coast. Edited by Gary B. Griggs and Lauret E. Savoy. Duke University Press, 1985. $27.95 (cloth), $14.95 (paper).

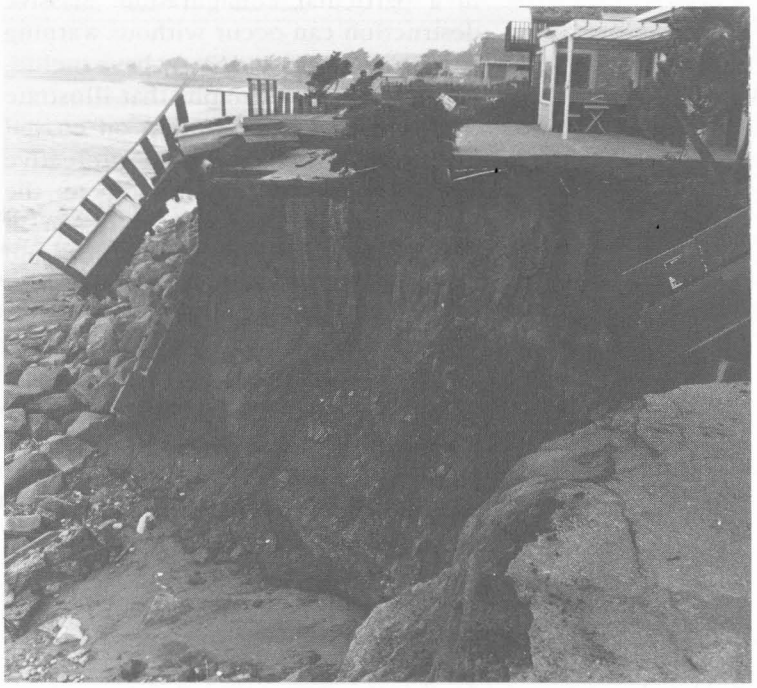
Editor's Note: *Living with the California Coast* is the ninth in a series of books inspired by Professor Orrin Pilkey, Jr., of Duke University. New editions of *The Beaches are Moving* and *Coastal Design* (reviewed in *California WaterfrontAge,* Vol. 1, No. 1) by Mr. Pilkey and various coauthors provide the background for the series, which will eventually cover the entire coastline of the continental United States.

The California coast has two faces. Travel brochures present the illusion that August weather lasts year round, but residents soon discover that another and more furious personality shows itself during the winter months. Storm waves have regularly caused massive destruction of public and private property. A buyer of shoreline real estate must be aware that coastal erosion in California is a serious problem, and common sense must prevail over the desire for an ocean view.

Living with the California Coast is the best attempt to date at trying to present the magnitude of the problem in practical terms. Griggs and Savoy assembled regional experts and have produced a book that, for the first time, illustrates the erosion problems facing developers within California's entire

coastal zone. Considering the fact that California has approximately 1,100 miles of coastline, the usefulness of this book to an uninformed public can be greatly appreciated.

An excellent discussion of coastal processes is presented in the book's second chapter. This explanation of how waves behave and how sand moves along the shoreline helps the reader understand just how complicated shoreline erosion problems can be. Beaches, bluffs, headlands, wetlands, and sand dunes respond unpredictably to wave attack. Manmade structures may last many years without incident, only to succumb when wave direction, wave height, beach conditions, and tides are



Top and bottom: Erosion and storm damage along the California coast. From *Living with the California Coast*.

in a particular configuration. Massive destruction can occur without warning or mercy. Griggs and Savoy have included dramatic photographs that illustrate the impact of wave run-up on coastal dwellings and shoreline protective works. Photo documentation in the book provides an excellent lesson in how coastal dwellings should—and should not—be designed to prevent or minimize wave damage.

This book also covers a topic that *all* coastal property owners should be aware of—coastal protective devices. A homeowner who builds near a bluff edge may some day need a sea wall or revetment to save his dwelling from the power of the sea. Entire communities may need much larger-scale solutions such as groin fields or breakwaters. Because the source of the problem is so complex, preventing erosion can be an incredibly expensive undertaking. *Living with the California Coast* explains how protective devices have been used by homeowners and presents accurate cost estimates for installing these structures.

Anyone who plans to invest in coastal California real estate should read this book before they select a blufftop lot. August weather is not perennial in the Golden State.

—Dick McCarthy

The (Almost) Whole Highway One Catalog

The California Highway One Book. Rick Adams and Louise McCorkle. Ballantine, 1985. $17.95.

"Monterey County: see it invent itself upon the ascent of the Santa Lucia Mountains; beauty shaped from forest and rocks and tide and elevation, Big Sur comes from nowhere and nowhere seems as blessed. This is the ethereal kingdom, where spirit and beauty commingle in lurid movements of earthly paradise pantomime. Drench the senses."

Obviously these lines are not Robinson Jeffers, Jack Kerouac, Henry Miller, or a pastiche of them; they are Rick Adams and Louise McCorkle in *The California Highway One Book* (p. 127). This big book (10 3/4" x 14") has each two-page spread organized into six columns which offer a map of one section of the Pacific Coast Highway (excluding San Diego, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties) and describe its history, discuss land use and environment, point out roadside attractions, and note other sources of information. Almost every column also features its own stylistic excess, factual error, typographic mistake, and/or misspelling.

It is a great idea and well packaged, but the execution and content are disappointing. (The concept was handled well in 1939 by the Federal Writers' Project of the WPA in books still available in reprints.) The present authors packed in as much essential information and ephemera as possible, overwrote, underedited, never checked their facts, but must have had a great time. They are not to blame for the results. Their publisher is responsible for this shoddy effort. Ballantine Books must have thought this book would be a quickie blockbuster; but the magnificent cultural and natural resources on the coast deserve the best that publishing has to offer. The drive is much better than the book.

—Donald B. Neuwirth

Book Notes

The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective by Mel Scott (reviewed in our last issue) is now available in bookstores. Our review listed the price incorrectly: the book costs $48.50 in hardcover and $16.95 in paperback. We regret the error. □

WATERFRONT PEOPLE

Editor's Note: *Waterfront People is a new department in* California WaterfrontAge. *The waterfront has historically been a place filled with interesting characters: "old salts," artists and artisans, literate longshoremen, poets and philosophers. Discussion of the issues of shoreline development should retain this human flavor and not become an abstraction, bereft of a human interest and flavor. Each issue, therefore, will carry an interview with someone having a unique perspective on the waterfront. This first interview is with Marie DeSantis, a chemist by training, who was a commercial fisher for six years and is the author of* California Currents *and* Neptune's Apprentice *(both published by Presidio Press and available for $15.00 each from Ms. DeSantis, 327A Vallejo Street, Petaluma, CA 94952). Alyse Jacobson, the State Coastal Conservancy's Enhancement Program Manager, conducted the interview.*

WaterfrontAge: *There have been a lot of reports on how the commercial fishing industry has taken it on the chin in recent years. If you had an unlimited budget, what would you do to bring back the commercial fishing industry to economic health? Is it possible?*

Marie DeSantis: You couldn't give me enough money! The problem is not so much within the commercial fishing industry; the problem is the type of society that's impinging on it. The fishermen are up against a society that is in opposition on every level. They're a hunting-gathering people, and we're talking about a postindustrial, streamlined, computer-age society.

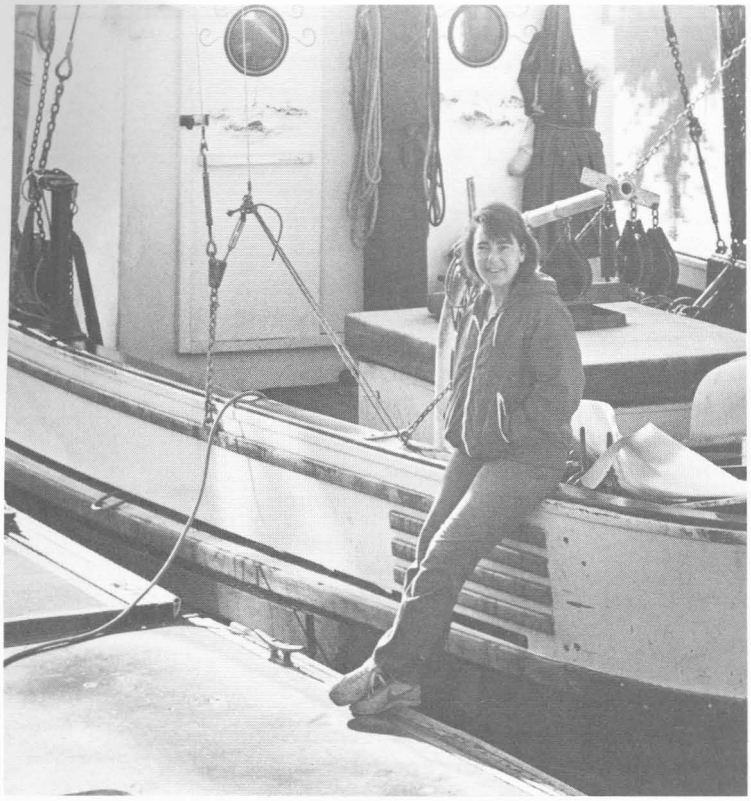
The ocean is another medium, and a lot of our culture—every culture—derives from the fact that we walk on land. The ocean is so changeable, and the direction of almost every society now is into predictability, into "managing" resources. The ocean will never be predictable. Because I'll tell you: when you're coming into a harbor or you're trying to get into an anchorage, at night, in the fog, your life depends on whether you know how a certain direction of wave bounces off a certain head of land. You're dead if you can't figure that one out. I mean dead.

The fishermen have an experience and a history and a total culture devoted to working with nature as it exists. When the fish are there, they're there; when they're not, they're not. It is a feast-or-famine type existence. But their whole culture/society/way of life is geared around that. But when you have to take time away from your work to be at a political meeting on such and such a day to argue your case for reasonable dock fees or dock space at all or different fish quotas or the right to use certain types of nets, it's two types of survival.

Are you saying commercial fishing is a rare and endangered lifestyle?

There's a lot of the fishermen who say it's over. It's over in its worthwhile form. Just like so many other losses in this country, it's not dying a clean death where you can mourn it. It's dying a very slow death of co-optation. It's more deadly in a way, because everybody hates it when somebody come in and grabs your family—that comes right from the gut—but when people are getting co-opted, they're still smiling after it's been done to them.

I think the fishermen were under the



impression, as are many small communities, that their community was going to be maintained as it was; they were just going to have more business as waterfront areas became chic. They didn't realize that every business they already have is going to be replaced by one that's bigger, fancier, slicker; and they're going to be out of business, not have more business.

Don't you think there can be any kind of accommodation—leave some over for the fishermen?

Even if you divide it down the middle, it's temporary, because you know the gentrified segment of the harbor is going to run the show. And that segment knows that when they've got half of it, they've got 99.99 percent of it, just because the restaurants and kitsch boutiques have got the politics, they've got the economy, and they've got the whole continent behind them. That's their people. Who have the fishermen got?

We're seeing the death of a way of life. The fishermen who continue to exist understand that they are vestigial to the direction this country is taking.

That's a fairly apocalyptic view. What do you think will happen?

I think of it as on a ship. You've got a whole bunch of crew members who've never dealt with a disaster before, haven't paid attention at all as it's going along—what happens is panic. And that's what I think will happen: panic, and dog-eat-dog, and each person for themselves.

And the fishermen know this.

Oh yeah, they know it. They know it's over. Unless some miracle. . .

What would be that miracle—if you were in charge of miracles?

The miracle would be a sudden bolt of consciousness. A sudden realization that we'd better not carry this scene too far, the way we're going.

Are any of the fishermen bringing this consciousness to action?

Oh, absolutely. I think the fishermen feel that perhaps the direction of society is like a rubber band. As far as our society being in mesh with a natural system, we have stretched that one pretty far. I think most people will agree with that. But we are a part of nature, we really are. And if you stretch the rubber band so far, yes it might break, but—and certainly this is my hope—it might also spring back.

For example, one friend of mine, Nat Bingham, was working on a stream restoration project to restore salmon runs long since lost to logging and siltation. I said, "Why do you do this, Nat?" When he's digging in the muck, carrying cement up this cliff with no trail—"Why do you do it?" And he says, "Well, I'm just holding on to this knowledge and keeping it going, in the chance that it will be needed again." And so for him, and partly for myself, that knowledge is worth holding. □

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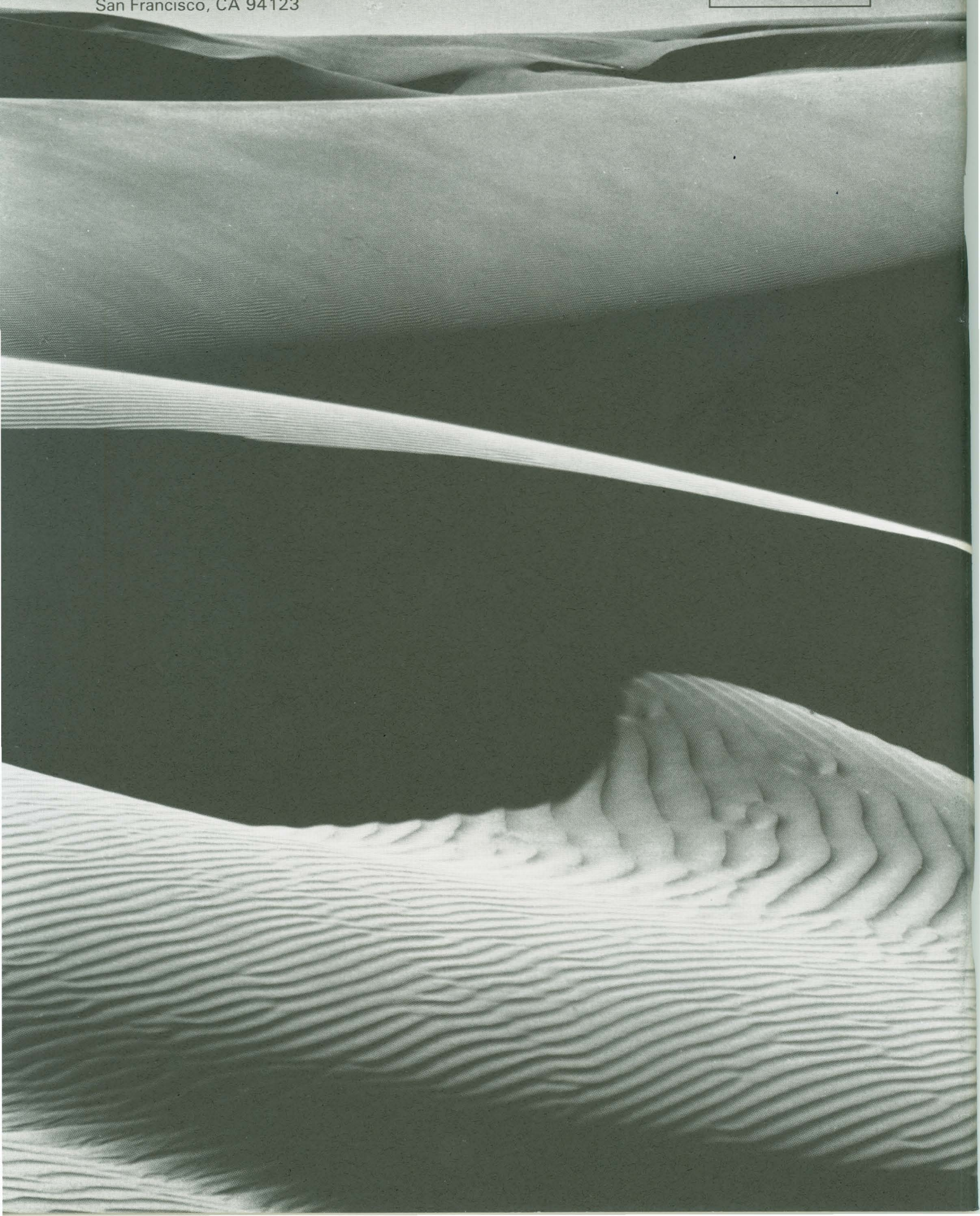
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