



## PLACES Guide

There are many **places** to explore during the Awareness Walk. Go to any one of them, or part of one, or several, as you choose. Each offers a distinctly different experience and opportunity for discovery.

Around the White Barn (1) the landscape defines three distinct places or neighborhoods, each characterized by elements of landscape, architecture, and history.

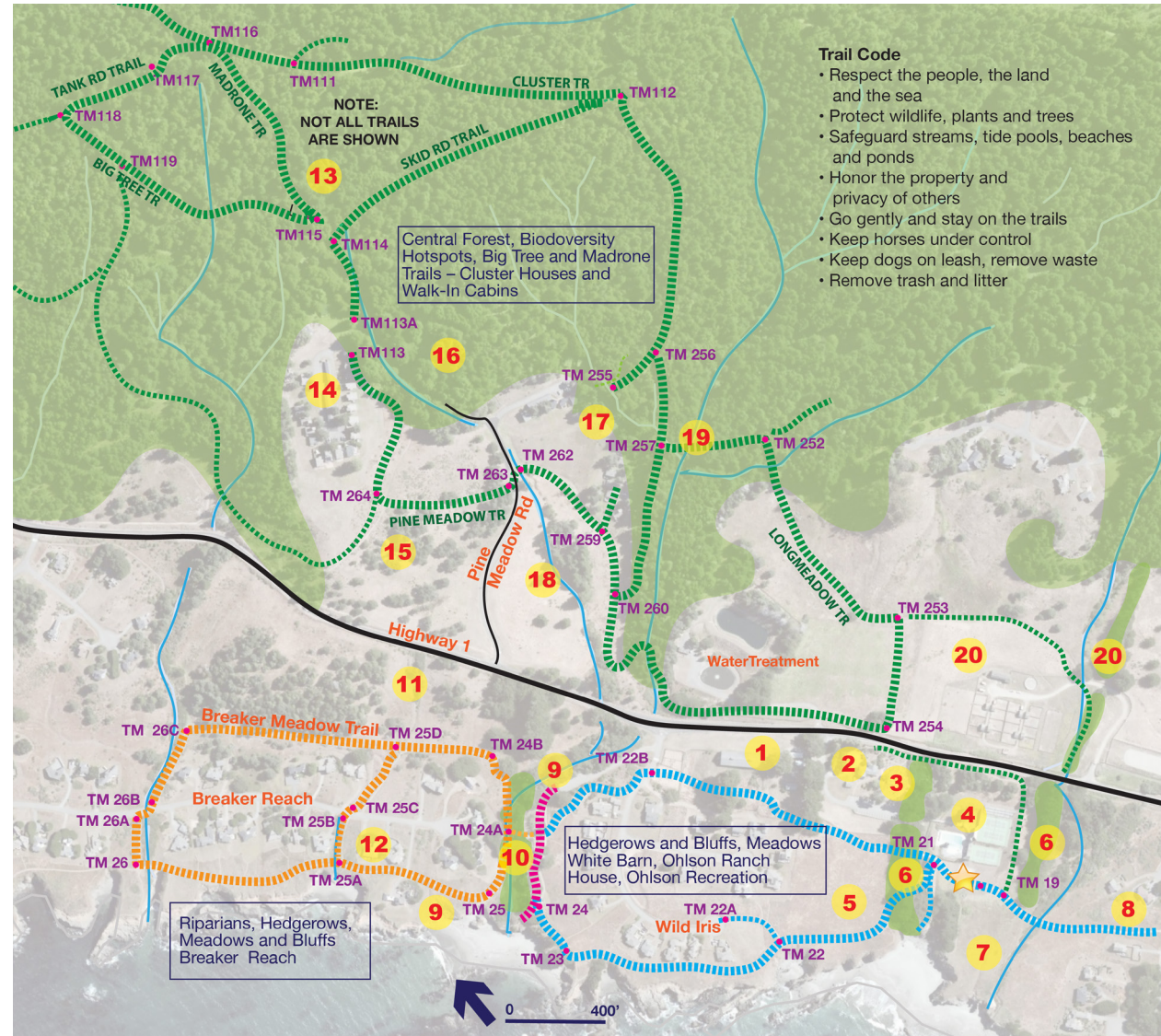
The area of **Breaker Reach**, includes the Stengel Creek Riparian, and the Stengel Beach Bluffs. Trails are easy-to-moderate. They include the Stengel Beach Public Access and Bluff trails, and Breaker Meadow Trail. Stair access to Stengel Beach is closed.

The **White Barn/Ohlson** neighborhood affords an architectural tour that spans 140 years, reminding us of the ranching history on this land and demonstrating place-making through the integration of architecture and landscape. Trails are easy-to-moderate. Below the Ohlson pool, trails lead to the Ohlson Ranch and Ohlson Recreation Meadows. The stair to Ohlson Beach is long and steep and delivers you to a vivid, distinctive world.

The **forest and terraced meadows** east of the Highway offer a variety of landscape and architecture discoveries. Forest trails are moderate-to-difficult with some steep terrain and uneven footing.

### 1 Knipp-Stengel Barn

The Knipp-Stengel (White) Barn served as inspiration to early developers with its simplicity of design and rural character. It deteriorated with age and lack of maintenance. Fortunately, it was saved by a group of volunteers who realized the importance of preserving this connection to our past. It is one of four Sea Ranch structures placed on the National register of Historic Places. A group created out of this effort still exists today and proudly call themselves "Barnies." Historic buildings give people a sense of place as they define or evoke what is unique about a particular location.



The Barn was built in the 1880s by Adam Knipp and Christian Stengel. Stengel's uncle William Bihler, with his partner Charles Wagner, were very successful San Francisco butchers. They began buying land in Sonoma and Napa Counties to raise their own beef. In 1855 they bought about 10,000 acres including today's Sea Ranch. In 1857 Bihler bought out Wagner. Realizing he needed help, he invited his nephew to come west. Bihler, an avid horseman, acquired a prized horse and requested another horseman, Adam Knipp, to bring the stallion west. Knipp and Stengel eventually took over the ranch and built their home on the ridge to the east. The two were extremely successful and worked the property until they retired around 1904.

### 2 Ohlson Ranch House

The four Ohlson brothers and their mother purchased The Sea Ranch property in 1941 and raised sheep on it. The Ohlson Ranch House was built by Elmer Ohlson for himself and his wife Bertha in 1953. The Native Plant Garden is in an appropriate spot as Bertha was an avid gardener. The Ohlson Ranch House now contains our library and a meeting facility. At one time there was a museum in the building. In 1953 another ranch house was built by Ed Ohlson. This is today's Del Mar House. He lived in this house with wife, daughter, son, and another brother, Chester. A fourth brother, Ernie, stayed in Annapolis and ran their operation there. The Ohlsons sold the ranch to Oceanic Properties around 1963.

### 3 Native Plant Garden

The Native Plant Demonstration Garden displays native plants to inform Sea Ranchers about plants that are indigenous to The Sea Ranch and that are fire-safe and drought tolerant landscaping for private lots. Approved plants are labeled throughout the garden. The trees and shrubs of the Garden and Ohlson Ranch House provide good habitat for local birds. Lines on the trees are evidence of the Red-breasted Sapsucker. The small woodland creek is used by birds and other wildlife.

### 4 Ohlson Recreation Center and Starred Site

The buildings of the Ohlson Recreation Center, and the pool and the tennis courts are outstanding examples of architecture and landscape in one integrally connected configuration, using the properties of each to reinforce the other. The Ohlson Recreation Meadow to the west provides outlook from the pool. The grounds around the Recreation Center are used for volleyball and picnicking. Related successfully to the existing hedgerow, topography, and structures, the Starred site offers the opportunity to meet future needs and changing interests and activities.

### 5 Ohlson Ranch Meadow

About half of the former pasture and track has been retained as open meadow, spreading to the ocean from the parking area in front of the Ohlson Ranch House. This meadow provides a splendid common overlook across grasses to the bluffs and to the ocean. It is viewed by many members from the Ohlson Ranch House and the parking area, and it merits recognition as one of the more prominent and visible meadows on The Sea Ranch.

### 6 Ohlson Hedgerows

Ohlson Hedgerow is between the ranch house and the Recreation Center. It consists of two segments: from Highway 1 to the Ohlson complex driveway and from the driveway to the bluff and Ohlson Beach. This hedgerow forms the south boundary for the Ohlson

Ranch House Meadow, and it acts as a windbreak for the Ohlson Recreation Center. Ohlson Creek runs through the upper segment of the hedgerow south of the Native Plant Garden and Ohlson Ranch House. The upper and lower segments, when paired, create a visual gateway for entry to the Recreation Center and pool. The lower segment was replanted in 2006 on the windward side of the original trees. This can be seen while passing through the hedgerow, on the way to the Bluff Trail. The second Ohlson Hedgerow, a thick stand of Monterey cypress south of the Recreation Center, is a younger hedgerow planted by the developer. It shelters the tennis courts. The entire Ohlson complex was planned and designed around the hedgerows, which dominated the landscape of the area at the time.

### 7 Ohlson Recreation Meadow

The Ohlson Recreation Meadow fronts the recreation center reaching to the ocean bluff. The meadow is between a stand of tall bluff cypress and the properties along Albatross Reach, where there is another short hedgerow that gives form to the spaces.

### 8 Binker Barn

The Binker Barn was designed to be a standard plan for lots across The Sea Ranch. Variations of shed-roof additions for porches and bays respond to views, terrain, and privacy needs. With the repetitive plan, redwood cladding, and resemblance to the regional ranch barns, they settle well into the landscape. There are 17 “Binkers” on The Sea Ranch. They are named after an early Sea Ranch Realtor, “Snap” Binker. They were designed by William Turnbull and built by Matt Sylvia. A Binker Barn located in the forest is the earliest single-family dwelling on The Sea Ranch; it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

### 9 Stengel Creek Riparian and Stengel Beach Bluffs

East of Highway 1, extensive forests from the ridge spill down the steep hillside to the terraces and meadows. Creeks cross to the west of Highway 1, and they broaden into wetland areas with dense willow, which is excellent habitat and cover for wildlife. Creeks provide water, food, and corridors for animal travel. Much of this area is defined by riparian rows rather than by cypress hedgerows, with Big Tree Creek at the north and Stengel Creek at the south. The public parking area has salmonberry and wild cucumber vines. Mounds of sticks and leaves indicate the home of a Dusky-footed Woodrat in the forest.

The tall trees above the public parking provide perches for Red-tailed Hawks and White-tailed Kites. Where the bridge crosses Stengel Creek, the area has a big stand of Coltsfoot with large, maple-like leaves, delicate California bee plants that hummingbirds and bumblebees visit, and mission bells, *Fritillaria*, in late spring.

Stengel Creek tumbles down the cliff to the beach; river otters visit this beach, and low rocks accommodate harbor seals. To the north, the cliffs along Breaker Reach are home to an active Pelagic Cormorant colony. Their nests are found in the inlets on narrow ledges. Crevices in the cliffs of the bluff face provide nesting habitat for Pigeon Guillemots, a foot-ball-sized seabird with bright-red feet. Spring flowers carpet the meadows and wet seeps of the bluff. Savannah Sparrows trill from the tall grass, and White-crowned Sparrows are seen all along the bluff.

### 10 Wild Iris Hedgerow

This Signature Hedgerow, planted nearly a hundred years ago, runs along the south side of Stengel Creek. A portion of the original hedgerow was replanted in 2005. Stengel Creek is an especially important wildlife habitat for river otter, deer, fox, and many bird species.

### 11 Breaker Terrace and Meadow

Breaker Terrace extends some 1,500 feet along Highway 1 and descends into meadows and pine plantations. Two upstream waterway branches, marked by deep steep ravines, bookend the terrace: Breaker Creek flows from just north of the upper Clusters. Stengel Creek, at the south end of the terrace, flows from the Central Forest. The TSRA Bike Link traverses a portion of Breaker Meadow.

### 12 Breaker Reach

Unlike in most other areas of The Sea Ranch, Breaker Reach houses parallel the ocean bluff. These houses often obstruct ocean or terrace views from the houses across the road. Monterey Cypress planted between houses block views from the road and other areas upslope. About halfway down Breaker Reach, a riparian corridor crosses the road and separates the private lots. This separation opens a significant view corridor to the ocean bluffs and to the terraces. Another riparian corridor crosses south of Land’s End. These commons allow outlooks in both directions and better interlock the meadows. The bluff meadows gain much of their character from “restricted private” grounds, which widen the sense of the meadow along the bluffs.

### 13 Central Forest

This area of the Central Forest is a biodiversity hotspot with a wide variety of species present at once. The forest supports hiking and wildlife and a local micro-climate. It serves as an important buffer between homes on The Sea Ranch and intensive logging operations to the east. Many of the trails in the area were originally logging roads, now monitored by the Trails Committee. They afford diverse and dramatic views and experiences, an opportunity for quiet solitude, or a challenging aerobic workout. Look for trillium, calypso orchid, fetid adder’s tongue, bear grass (a lily), vanilla grass, and redwood violet. Special status plants like coast lily and fringed corn lily are found in the wetland areas. There are horsetails, deer fern,

red and blue huckleberry, coffeeberry, bishop pine, fir, tanoak, chinquapin, rhododendron and azalea, wax myrtle, manzanita, and more. The area provides protective cover for wildlife movements. Forest owls such as the large Great Horned and little Western Screech Owl might be found in the Forest. The uncommon Olive-sided Flycatcher calls “Quick Three Beers” from treetop perches while the more common Pacific Slope Flycatcher whistles for your attention. Spotted Towhees scratch in the forest duff. The tallest trees sometimes host a nesting Osprey.

### 14 Madrone Meadow Cluster Houses

The upper cluster is rows of houses and enclosed gardens that define a large enclosure of commons, a unique place on TSR. The small private lots encircle two large car barns owned by TSRA, providing parking for residents. The houses, designed by William Turnbull, are similar—mostly three-story, with variations to take advantage of views and other site features. A partially paved road behind the car barns serves as a pathway to the southern line of houses and as access for emergency vehicles. Lots are only slightly larger than the building footprint, allowing commons spaces that weave between the units and open views into the meadow and forest.

### 15 Madrone Meadow

Madrone Meadow slopes in terraces toward Highway 1 and north into an arm of the forest. Trees cluster below the terrace and along Pine Meadow road. The Knipp Stengel Barn is a landmark for this area, with view corridors from trails and roads.

### 16 Walk-in Cabins

Obie Bowman was the architect for the Walk-in Cabins. These modest, simple structures received numerous awards, including a Sea Ranch Design Award (1974) and the AIA/House and Home First Honor Award, 1975. Bowman described the cabins: “... simple, unpretentious forms ... covered with natural redwood boards and shingles (that) recede congenially into their setting.”

The Walk-in Cabins are accessible by trail and by Redwood Rise, a limited-access road for use by emergency vehicles and for loading and unloading supplies and equipment. Owners and visitors park their cars in spaces along Pine Meadow Road and walk up a hill to the cabins scattered in the forest.

### 17 White Fir Wood Cluster Houses

The lower Cluster consists of two distinct groupings of houses. Near Pine Meadow, five houses, some attached, extend along the contour of the slope. Along White Fir Road, the car barn and the upper slope form a gateway to the clusters. The second grouping, around the White Fir Wood cul-de-sac, has a large car barn. Houses sit at the edge of the forest and along the ravine.

### 18 Pine Meadow

Pine Meadow is bisected by a prominent riparian passage. It emerges from the forest and empties into Stengel Creek on the west side of Highway 1. Vegetation is particularly abundant along the creek near the middle of the meadow, expanding beyond the bounds of the riparian passage. To the north are a series of steep-banked creeks with side tributaries, allowing for uninterrupted wildlife movement.

### 19 Hugal Ravine

Hugal Ravine was part of the German Rancho, a tract of land granted from the Mexican government in 1846 to Ernest Rufus, a naturalized Mexican citizen. The grant required improvements on the land. Rufus sent a German immigrant, Frederick Hugal, to the property, where he built a cabin and planted an orchard on the slopes near the ravine, above the Equestrian Center. The land was used for raising cattle, donkeys, horses, and hogs from the mid-1800s into the early 1900s. The ravine was used for butchering cattle. A grist mill, an orchard, and vegetable farms occupied the hillsides, across the road from the Knipp Stengel Barn. In the early 1900s, logger cabins lined the north side of the creek in the ravine. Dwellings were built near the ravine by landowners. Hugal’s cabin was near the north end of Rams Horn Reach. Later, just below Rams Horn, Chris Stengel built a larger house made of redwood and exterior boards and battens painted white. There was a brick fireplace, tall, double-hung windows, and a covered porch that ran the full length of the house. A eucalyptus grove was nearby, and portions of it remain today.

After the completion of the transcontinental railroad, Chinese immigrants made their way to the coast. They worked for lumber companies, living in logging camps. Often, they became important members of households as domestic cooks and housekeepers.

Today, about where the orchard once stood, the Central Wastewater Treatment Plant, a component of The Sea Ranch infrastructure, serves the cluster housing, walk-in cabins, and properties on White Barn and Wild Iris.

### 20 Equestrian Center Hedgerow, Stable Meadow

The Equestrian Center Hedgerow consists of two segments. The upper segment extends eastward from the Stables’ eastern fence line. The lower segment is between this fence line and Highway 1. The lower segment was the first Sea Ranch hedgerow to be replanted. The original was removed in 1999 due to disease. The new hedgerow is a tribute to the principle that Monterey cypress trees thrive when they have sunlight, adequate space, and are hardened off by some exposure to wind.