NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

School of Architecture and Allied Arts

Paramount Ranch

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Prof. Robert Z. Melnick, FASLA
University of Oregon
Department of Landscape Architecture
LA 489/589 | Fall 2015

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ANGE
PRODUCE

PREFACE

This project is one of an on-going series of studios as part of a cooperative agreement between the University of Oregon and the National Park Service. Paramount Ranch, a popular visitor destination, is in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, west of Los Angeles and north of Malibu, CA. It is a popular attraction for those interested in the history of film making, as well as hikers and equestrians.

This was a challenging project, as Paramount Ranch is recognized as a cultural landscape based on its role in the history of filmmaking from the 1920s to the present. While it was mostly used for film sets during the golden age of movies, it is today an active site. Coupled with this is Paramount Ranch's role as an important recreation area, attracting over 300,000 visitors per year. It is a rare opportunity, surrounded as it is by other sites in the Recreation Area as well as acres of single-family housing developments. While Paramount Ranch is an oasis of open space, it cannot be viewed without considering its context in the Los Angeles region, and its historic context in one of the fundamental cultural industries in our country and the world.

This studio included graduate and undergraduate students in landscape architecture and historic preservation, requiring that they learn from each other, as well as from historic sources, NPS cultural landscapes studies, and documentation of current use.

The students and I offer special thanks to NPS staff who provided us with on-site guidance, important information, and the responses to endless inquiries, as well as their insightful critique of work throughout the term. Their participation and assistance was invaluable in so many ways.

It is our hope that these design ideas and treatment proposals will serve NPS staff well as they continue to protect this significant cultural landscape.

Robert Z. Melnick, FASLA
Professor of Landscape Architecture

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HISTORY & CONTEXT

With the rise of vertically integrated movie studios in late 1920s Hollywood, many motion picture companies sought out proprietary parcels of land to film outdoor scenes. Until this time, most studios either spent large sums to rent properties, or filmed outside gurerrilla-style, obtaining no rights or permits. The mild Southern California climate lent itself to year-round outdoor filming, and the large areas of undeveloped land around Los Angeles led movie studios to seek outdoor lots in their own backyards. With the boom in popularity of the western genre, studio backlots were unable to provide the wide-open undeveloped spaces in which to film. Historical epics and battle scenes also required spacious outdoor locations to film.

Paramount Studios was one of the predominant motion picture studios from the mid-1920s into the 1940s. Following popular convention, Paramount produced films and quickly and efficiently as possible, and a total of 162 movies were filmed at Paramount Ranch between 1927 and 1943, when Paramount Pictures sold the property.

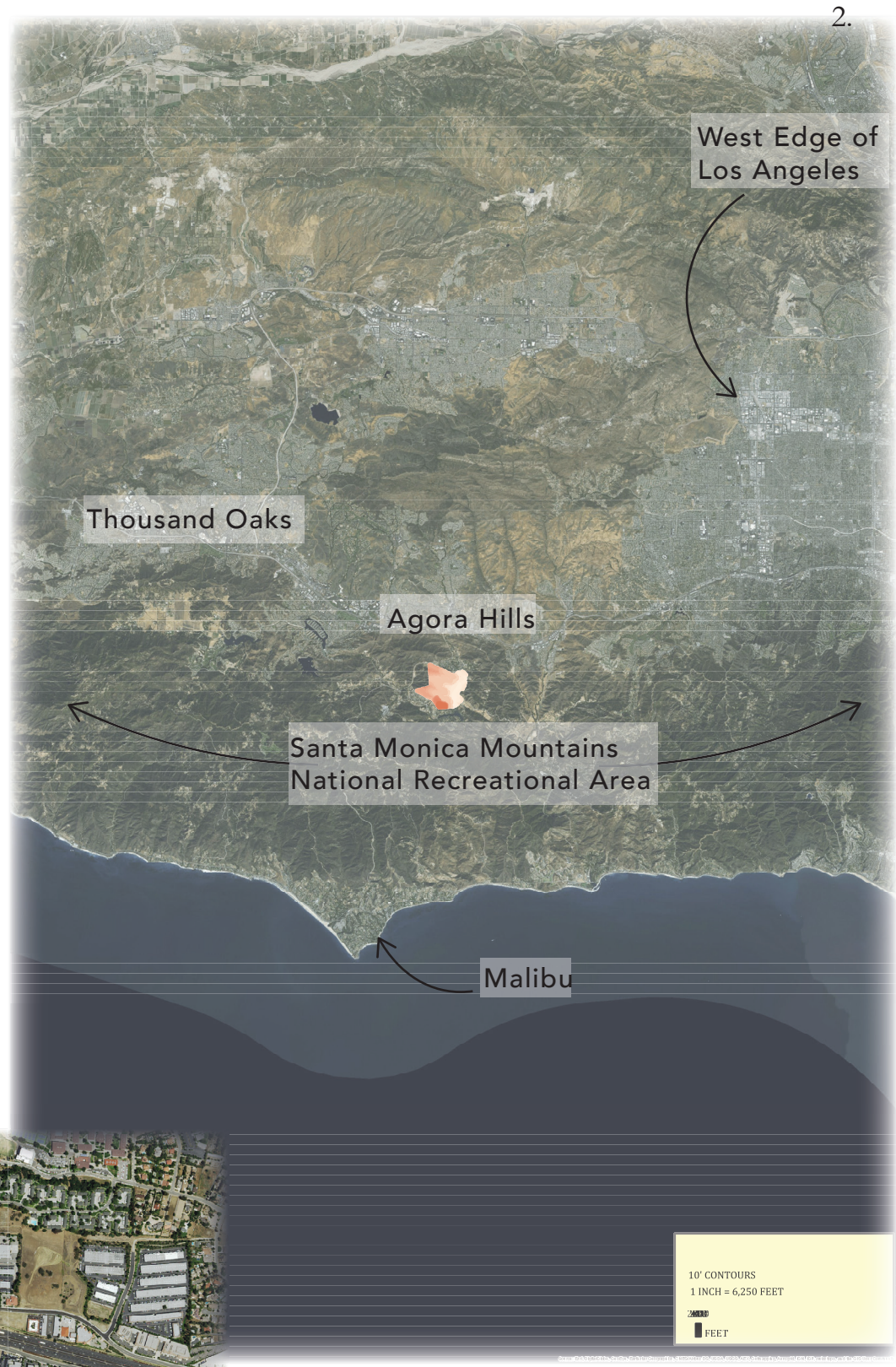
Many motion picture companies quickly sought to develop their own Southern California movie ranches, the earliest in 1912; with the heyday ending in the 1950s. Not all movie ranches were equal, but "Paramount built an extensive infrastructure - including a headquarters area, furnished with water, electricity, telephone, and sewage system - and a production facility, complete with set construction and prop storage buildings, a livestock barn and corrals, that created a production-oriented facility at the ranch that was an important counterpart to Paramount's central production studio in Hollywood."

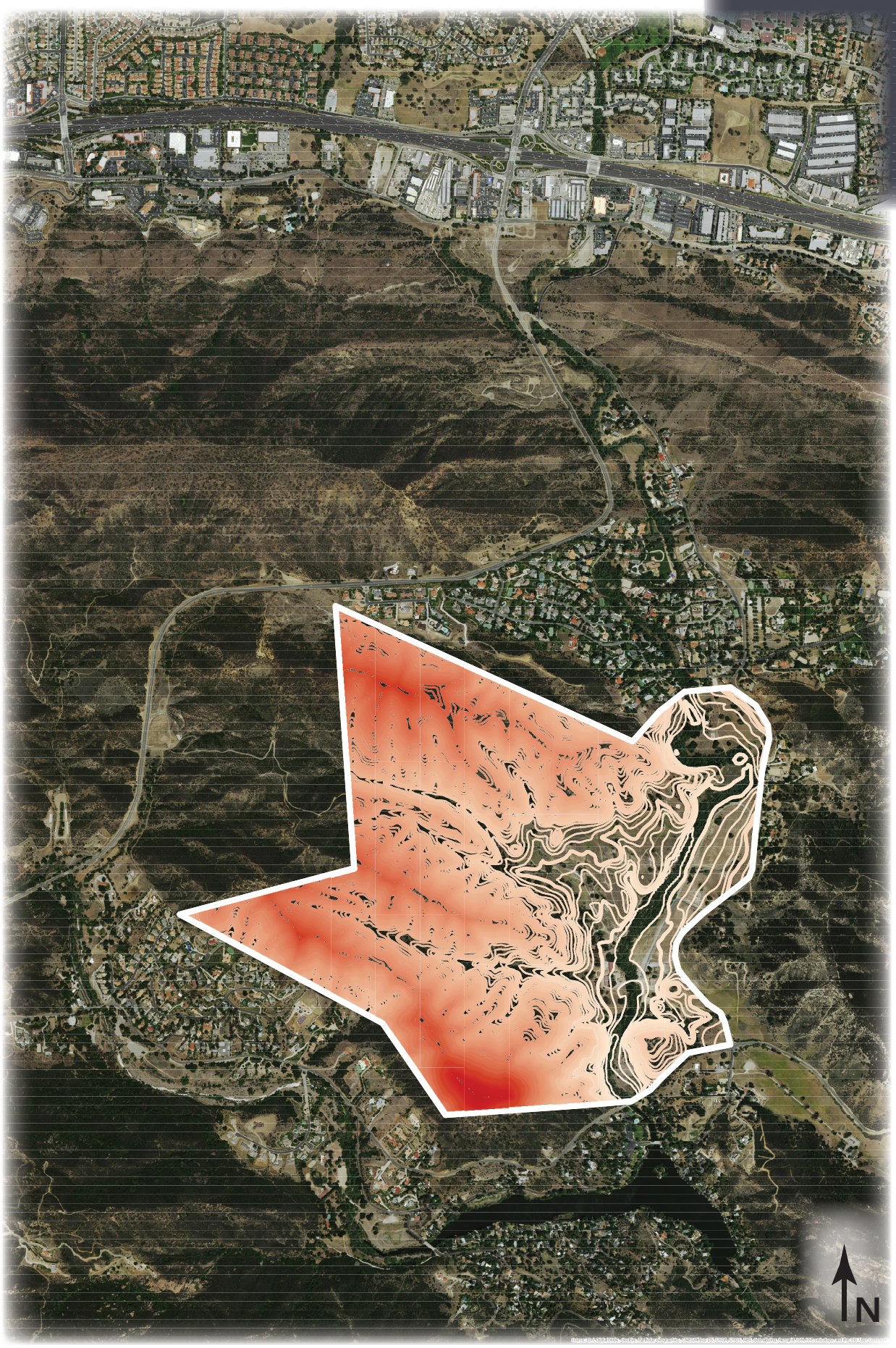
However, it was the diversity of the landscape that made the Santa Monica Mountains an ideal backdrop for the film industry. Paramount Ranch's variety of scenic qualities, landscapes, plant communities, and natural features offered a myriad of scenery available to represent outdoor landscapes nearly anywhere in the world

Paramount Pictures sold the property in 1943, but continued filming at the ranch for several more years. Several long-standing sets were removed at this time, and a new era of recreation and television filming began. In 1953, Paramount Ranch was sold to William Hertz, who constructed a fictional "Western Town" at the location it stands today.

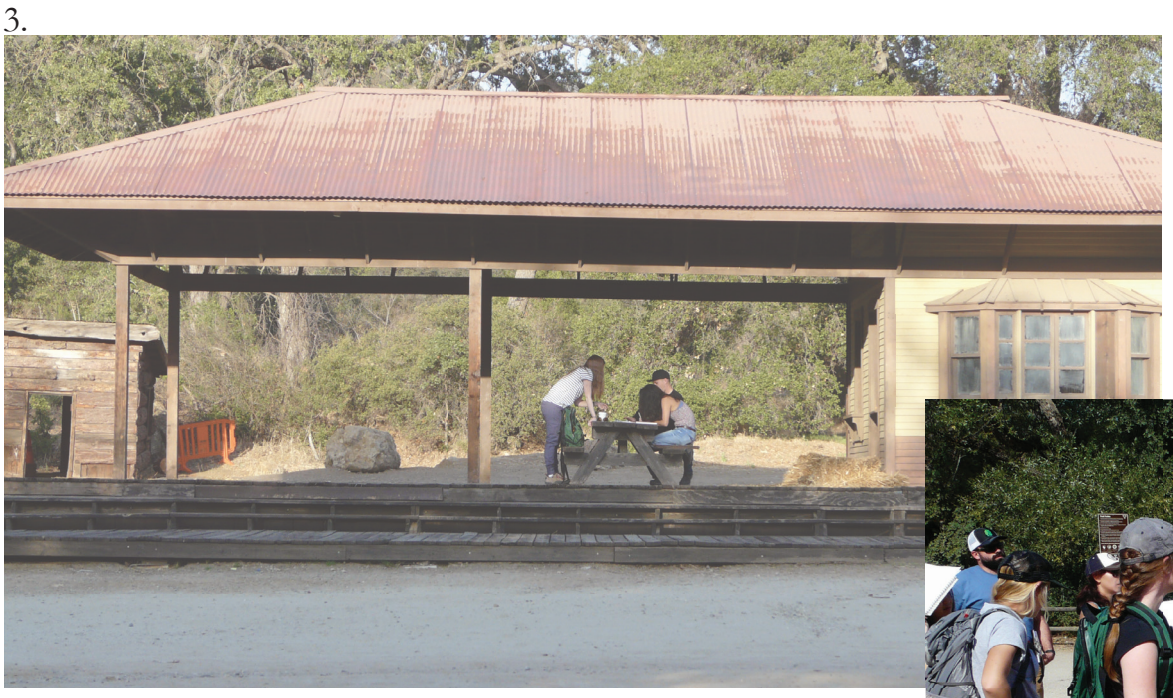
Paramount Ranch was sold again in 1955, and renamed Paramount Sportsman's Ranch. A track for car racing was built in 1956, and though abandoned only two years later due to high driver fatality, remnants from the racetrack exist today and remain an integral part of the current landscape. A summer camp for boys, Camp Longhorn, constructed a swimming pool, basketball court, and cabins southwest of the current Western Town in 1958.

The National Park Service acquired Paramount Ranch in 1980, along with several parcels to the east of Cornell Road to protect the historic viewshed from the ranch. Through its integration into the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, both film and television production have continued at Paramount Ranch to this day.


West Edge of
Los Angeles
Thousand Oaks
Agora Hills
Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreational Area
Malibu
10' CONTOURS
1 INCH = 6,250 FEET
FEET


N

3.





SITE ANALYSIS







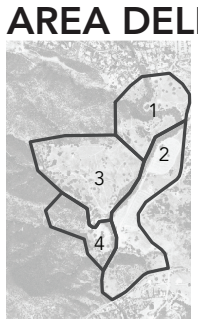


SCALE: 1" : 250'
0' 100' 300' 500' 700' 1000'

DETAIL AREA



AREA DELINEATION



1. North Gate Area
2. Entry Area
3. Marco Polo Set Area
4. Western Town Area

LEGEND

CIRCULATION TYPES

- Public Drive
- Contributing Road
- Race Track
- Dirt Road
- Trail

STRUCTURES

- Contributing
- Non-Contributing
- Important Set Site

VEGETATION TYPES

- Chaparral
- Oak Savanna
- Riparian

Paramount Ranch

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Site Analysis
LA 489/589

Entry Area: Photographic Analysis



Paramount Ranch Sign



Paramount Ranch Entrance



Racetrack Looking Towards Longhorn Building



Racetrack Looking Towards Underpass



Racetrack



Racetrack Underpass



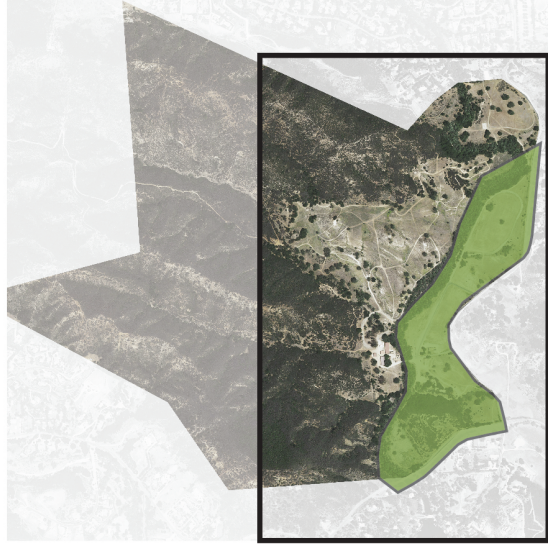
Longhorn Building



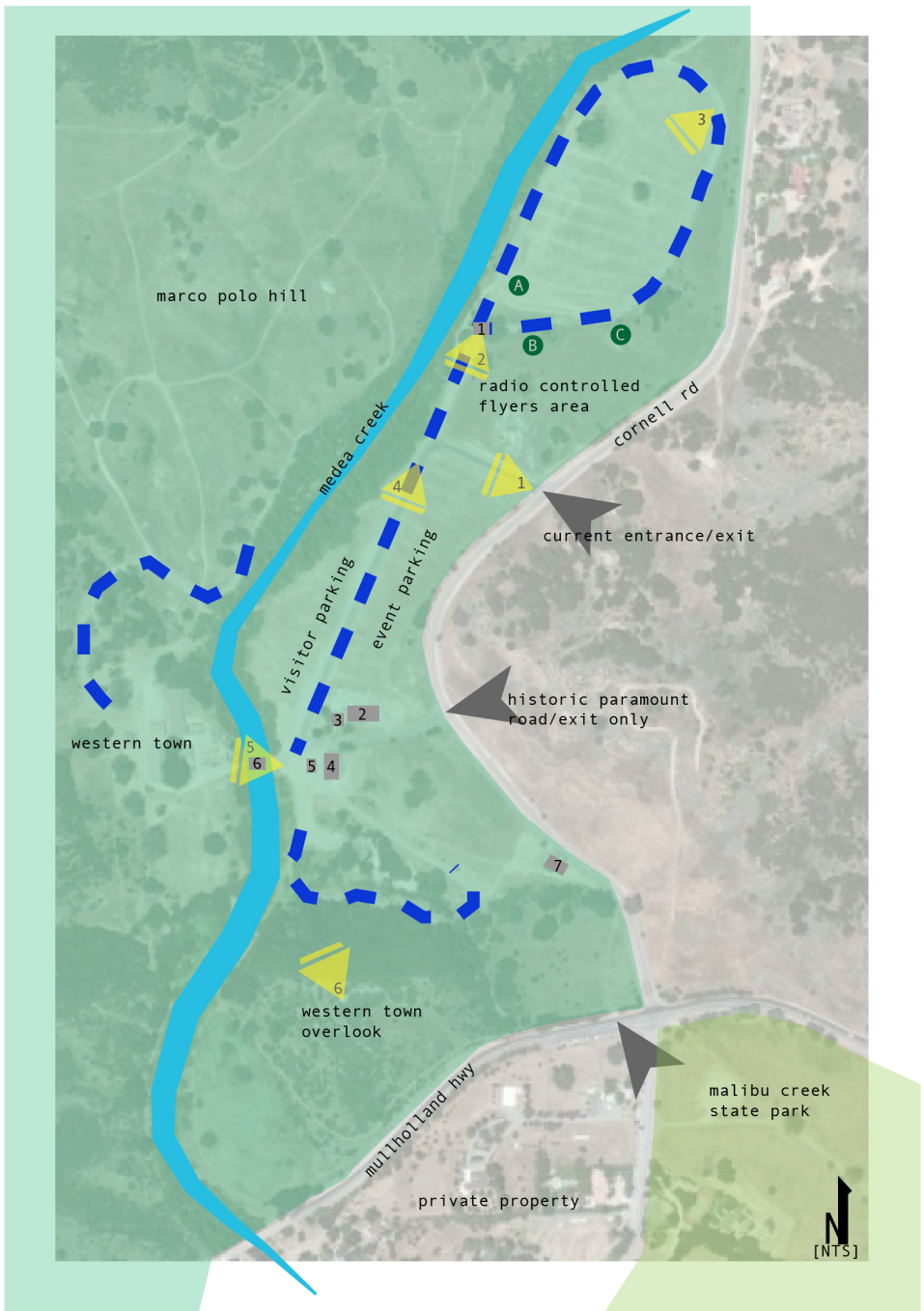
Western Town Overlook



DETAIL AREA



Entry Area: Site Analysis



cultural landscape boundary

state park property

remains of historic racetrack

existing infrastructure

1] historic underpass
2] longhorn building
3] restroom
4] mill/carpenter shop
5] shuttle stop
6] medea creek bridge
7] caretakers lodging

set locations

A] grandstand
B] salem town
C] german street

views/vistas



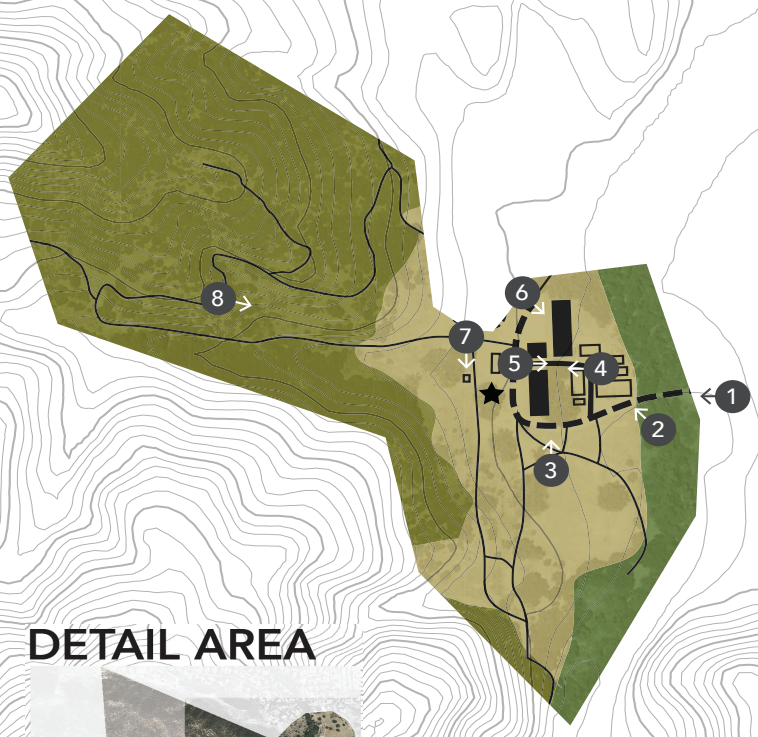






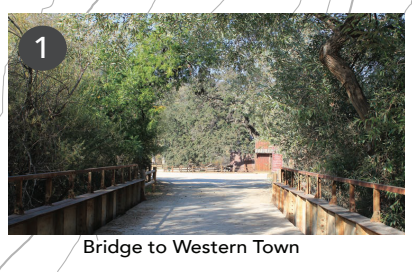


Western Town Area: Photographic Analysis



DETAIL AREA





Bridge to Western Town



Building Materiality



Grand Oak and Drainage Ditch



Western Town Looking West



Western Town Looking South



Pavilion Building

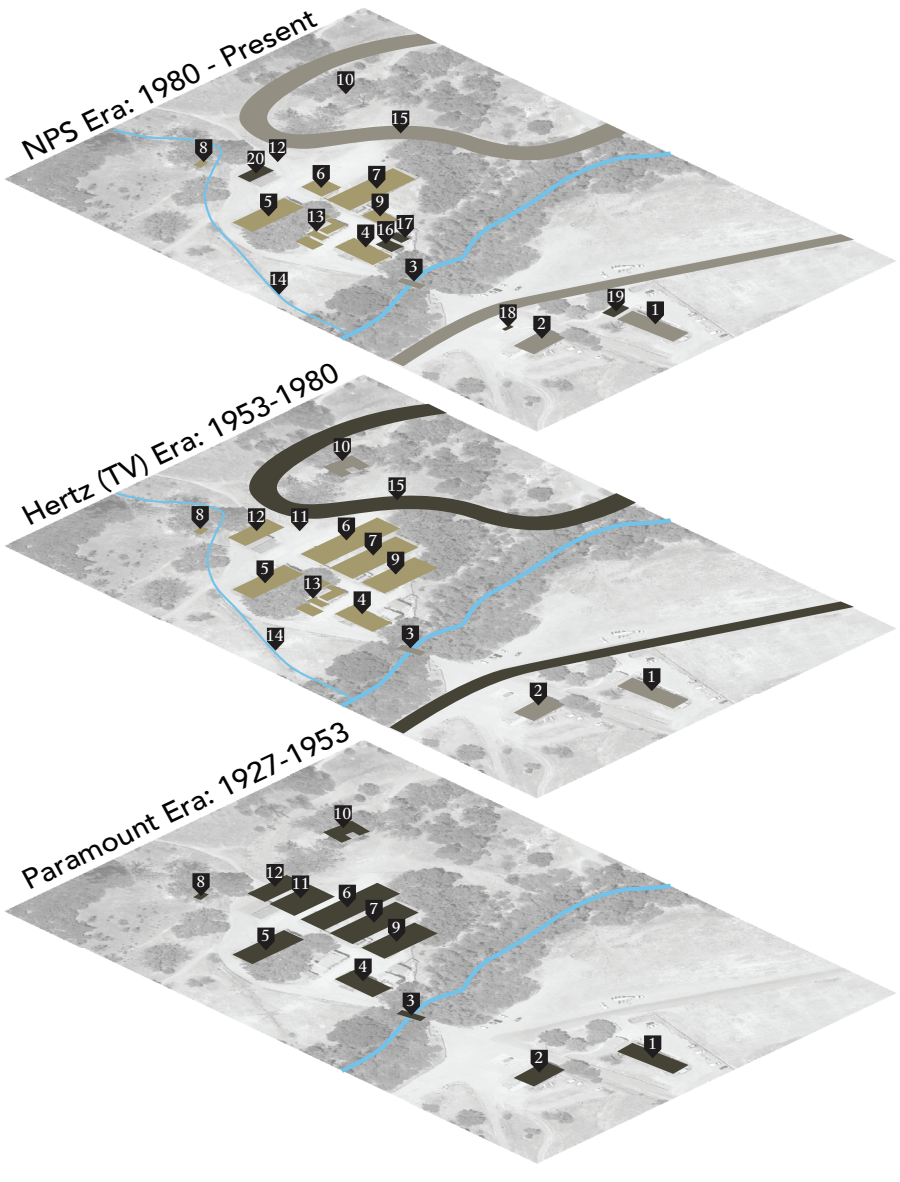


Unnamed Shack



Western Town From Coyote Wash Trail

Western Town: Changes Over Time By Era



NPS Era: 1980 - Present

Western Town is adapted for visitors and film projects while attempting to preserve its general character.

1. Longhorn Building - modified
2. Mill Building - modified
3. Bridge - relatively unchanged
4. Marshal Building - modified
5. Livestock Barn - modified
6. Pavillion - modified
7. Shed 1 - modified
8. Log Cabin - modified
9. Saloon - modified
10. Caretaker's house - removed
12. Unidentified Shed - removed
13. Rooms, Hotel, Jail - built
14. Coyote Wash Diversion Ditch - remains unchanged
15. Racetrack - decays
16. Mining Store - built
17. Ranger Residence - built
18. Bus Stop - built
19. Restrooms - built
20. Train Station - built

Hertz (TV) Era: 1953 - 1980

Western Town is refaced by Hertz. Shift from Movies to TV production and other uses.

1. Longhorn Building - relatively unchanged
2. Mill Building - relativley unchanged
3. Bridge - relatively unchanged
4. Marshal Building - modified
5. Livestock Barn - modified
6. Pavillion - modified
7. Shed 1 - modified
8. Log Cabin - modified
9. Saloon - modified
10. Caretaker's house - relatively unchanged
11. Unidentified Shed - removed
12. Unidentified Shed - modified
13. Rooms, Hotel, Jail - built
14. Coyote Wash Diversion Ditch -built
15. Racetrack - built & retired

Paramount Era: 1927 - 1953

Western Town is established as base of opperations for the ranch as Paramount begins to shoot on site. Buildings are utililitarian in construction and purpose.

1. Longhorn Building - built
2. Mill Building - built
3. Bridge - built
4. Marshal Building - built
5. Livestock Barn - built
6. Pavillion - built
7. Shed 1 - built
8. Log Cabin - built
9. Saloon - built
10. Caretaker's house - built
11. Unidentified Shed - built
12. Unidentified Shed - built

Marco Polo Set Area: Photographic Analysis





Paramount Road heading towards Marco Polo Hill



Sugarloaf Mountain; view from Bwana Trail



View from Backdrop Trail of Cornell Rd. & parking lot



View facing SSW from Backdrop Trail of an unnamed hill



View NNW on Backdrop Trail



Hacienda Set Site

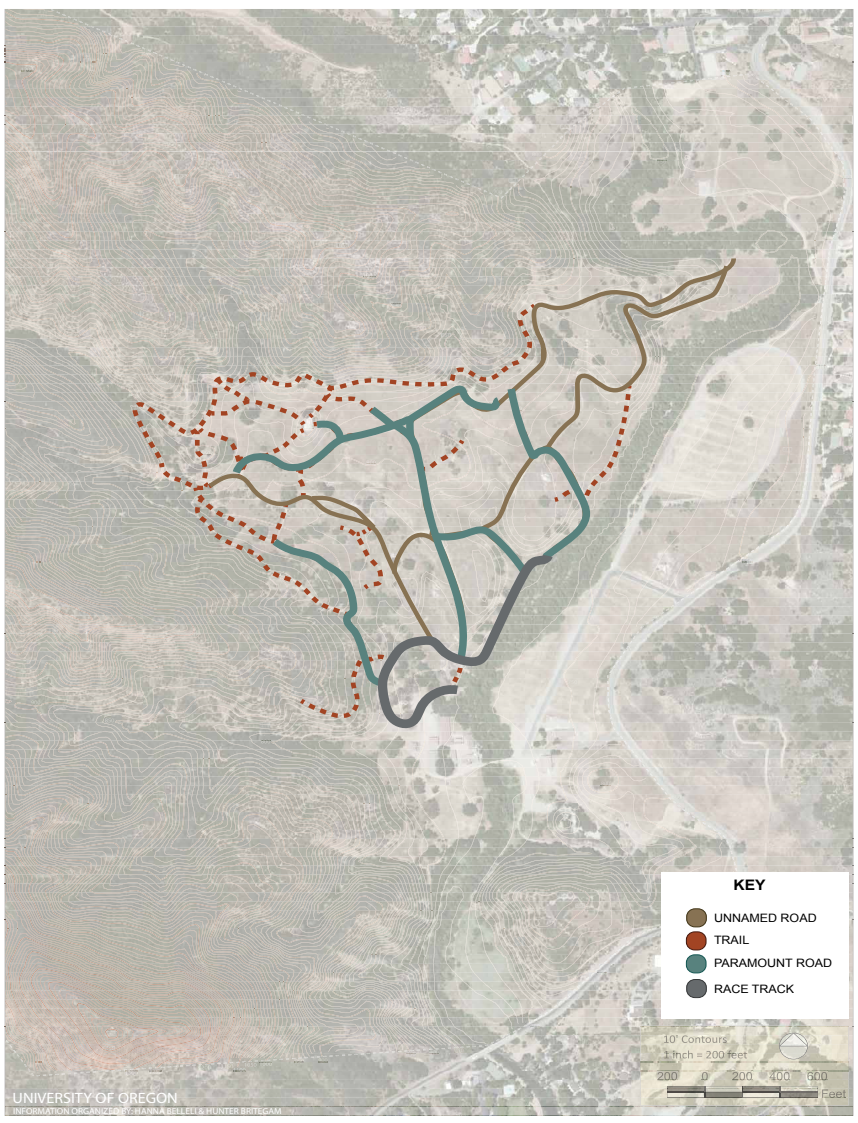


Lady Face; view from Medicine Woman Trail



Social trail up Marco Polo Hill; facing NNE

Marco Polo Trail System Heirarchy



North Gate Area: Photographic Analysis



North Gate Parking Area



View Looking West From North Gate



View Looking North to Suburban Development



View Looking North From Bwana Trail Junction



View Looking East at Riparian Corridor



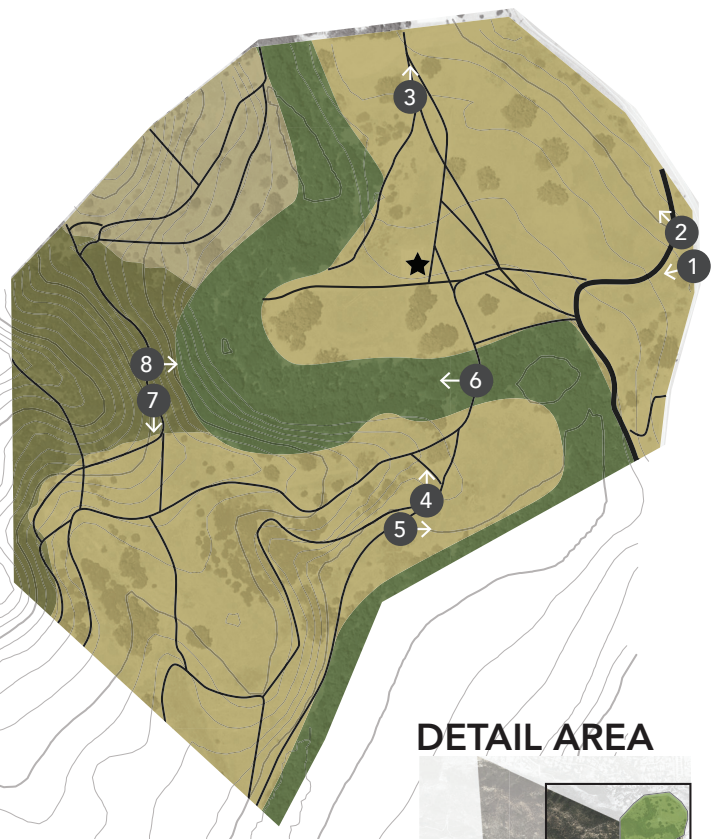
View of Creek Inside Riparian Corridor



View of Chaparral Looking South Toward Sugarloaf



View Looking East from Chaparral Toward Cornell Rd.



DETAIL AREA



Significant Site Characteristics

"Ebb Tide" Film Set



"Ebb Tide" Film Poster from 1937



Promo Shot on Set Location at Paramount



Frances Farmer

Chaparral Habitat



Scrub Oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*)



Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)



Spiny Ceanothus (*Ceanothus spinosus*)

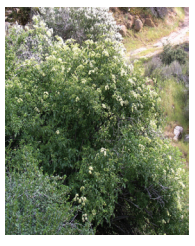
Riparian Habitat



Arroyo Willow (*Salix lasiolepis*)



Mule Fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*)



Mexican Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*)

Oak Savanna Habitat



Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)



Purple Needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*)

9.










PARAMOUNT RANCH
Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area

DESIGN INTERVENTIONS AND PRESERVATION TREATMENTS

STRATEGY: INTERPRETIVE TRAIL



Stories resonate with people because they understand how stories work - there is a logical flow of sequenced events, they create suspense and they have emotional resonance.



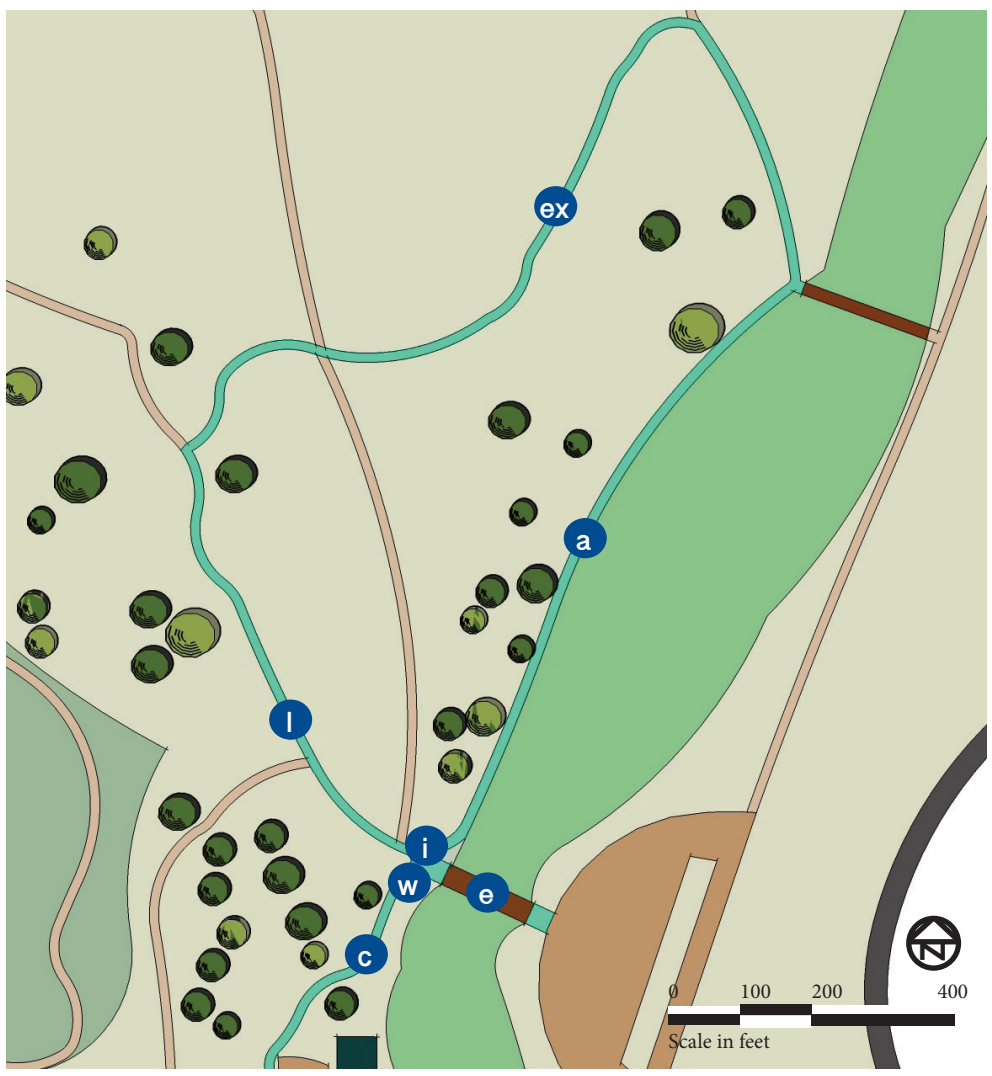
Surprises create a feeling of getting an unexpected reward - there is often a stronger response to getting unexpected rewards than when there is anticipation of getting a previously known reward.



Shiny things allow for visual interaction and interpretation - these visuals help distribute information, provide context, and enable tactile learning opportunities.

Theory Source: Dirksen, Julie. *Design for How People Learn*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2010.

INTERPRETIVE TRAIL DETAILS



Length (l) — The proposed trail length is a loop measuring 6/10 of a mile

Accessibility (a) — The proposed trail will maintain ADA accessible standards

Entrance (e) — The entrance will provide a sense of arrival and key info

Information (i) — The trail will provide only essential orientation information

Connections (c) — The trail will provide connections to most areas of the site

Wayfinding (w) — Simple and direct signage will improve wayfinding at the site

Exhibition (ex) — The outdoor art exhibition will enable creative interpretation

OUTDOOR EXHIBITION GOALS & PROCESS

Experiencing art in an informal, spontaneous, unintimidating yet meaningful way

- Create a juried competition system for site specific installations with selected theme
- Invite visual artists, designers, architects, landscape architects, lighting artists, performance artists and others to participate
- Ask participants to propose an integration of art with the environment and the selected interpretive theme
- Encourage a diverse array of materials, techniques and styles
- Gather a selection committee to narrow submitted proposals & provide an honorarium to approved artists to develop a detailed proposal and budget
- Assess final submissions & offer exhibition participation to approximately 6 artists
- Create an opening festival weekend to promote trail and exhibition; have exhibition of selected theme on display for 6 months to 1 year.
- Repeat process with new interpretive theme

Theory Source: Hinson, Tom. "Insight/On Site." *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 78, no 6 (1991): 246-271.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

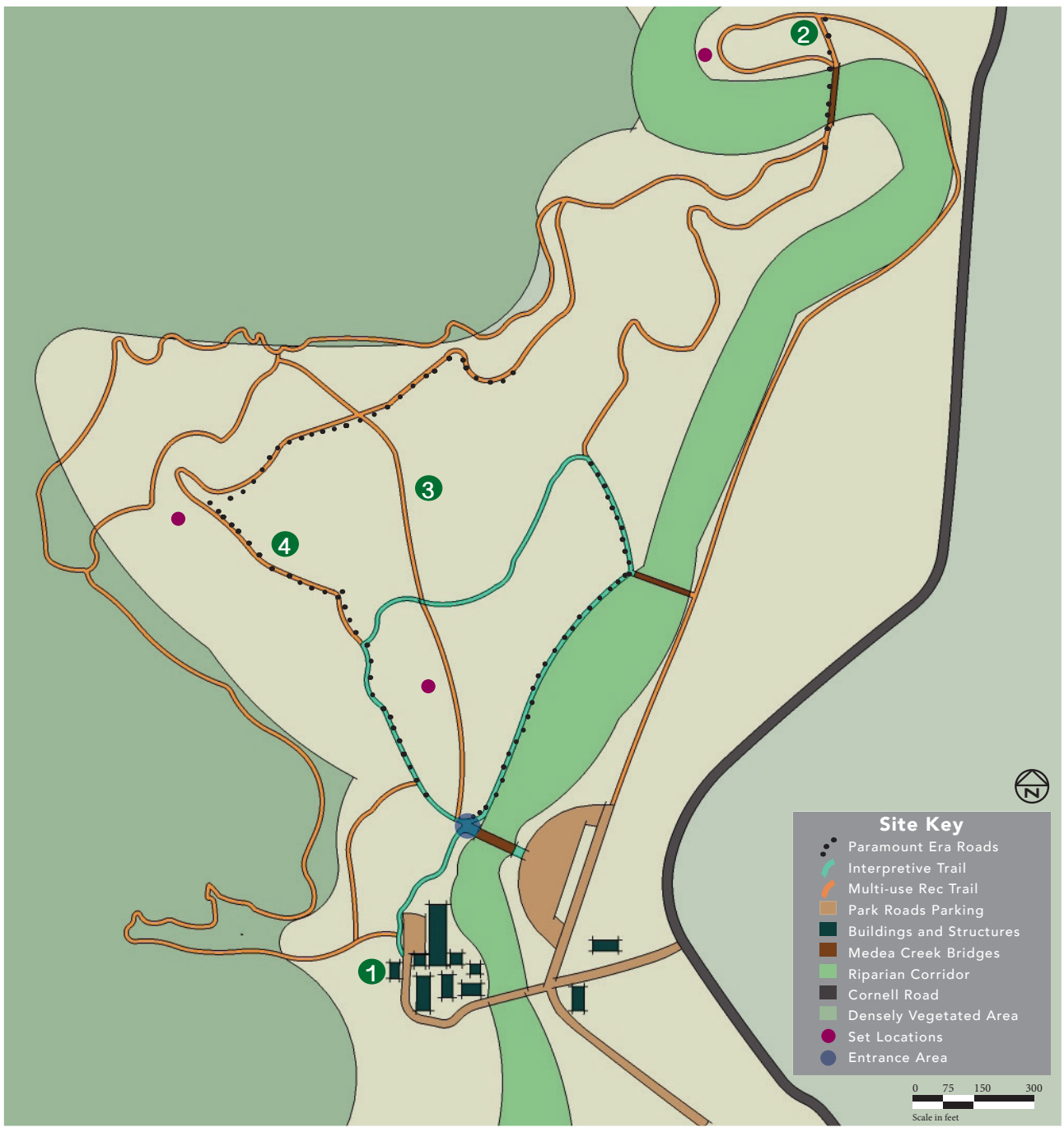
SITE OPPORTUNITIES — Address site interpretation & improve wayfinding

PROJECT PROPOSAL — Interpretive trail with dynamic, changing themes conveyed in outdoor art exhibitions

DIVERSE HISTORIES — The “untold stories” will address the complex and layered history of the site

PROJECT PURPOSE — This project provides a framework to carry out diverse interpretive themes within the site

SITE PLAN: UNTOLD STORIES



HISTORIC RESOURCES









- Paramount Ranch is a 680 acre rural historic landscape
- The arguable and recorded period of significance (POS) is 1927-1943 when the site served as Paramount Studio Ranch
- Limited POS does not acknowledge and interpret layers of history
- Landscape features convey the site’s changes in use over time
- Natural site features full of interpretation potential: constructed buildings, set remnants, natural vegetation, landforms, and land use patterns

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Untold Stories
Rawson Baylor-Pino

Site Analysis

One aspect of Paramount Ranch seen as problematic is the overgrowth of, and lack of care for, Medea Creek. Water quality is impacted daily by neighborhood runoff, fecal matter of horses, as well as sedimentation caused by visitors eroding the creek banks and erosion from flash flood events. The aim of this project is to provide a toolbox of potential implementations that can, over time, help improve the water quality of Medea Creek, while reducing habitat fragmentation and ultimately be able to attempt introduction of native species.

Management Species



California Red-Legged Frog
Rana draytonii

Needs a variety of habitats to complete different life stages. Desires slow moving or standing streams, deep ponds, and pools near tall vegetation; cool, wet areas.



Purple Needlegrass
Nassella pulchra

Historically helped support native tribes and ranchers, limits invasion by non-native species which helps native oaks, and has a dense fiberous root system which reduces erosion.

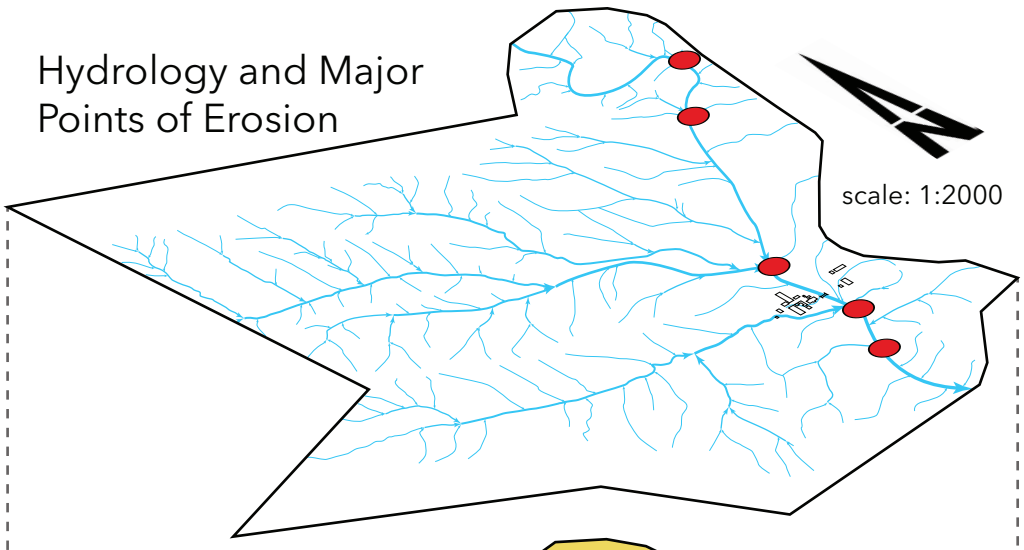
Goals

Preserve and integrate historical elements with modern concerns and uses
Restore and maintain ecological diversity
Enhance recreation and usability

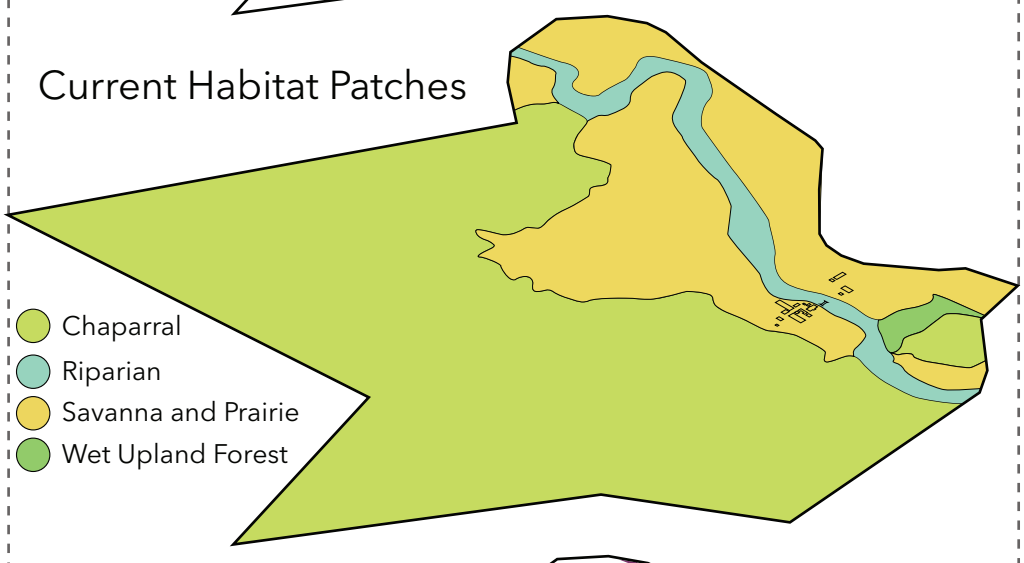
Strategies

Restore historical creek
Reduce habitat fragmentation by consolidating trails
Provide additional parking that minimizes impact on nature

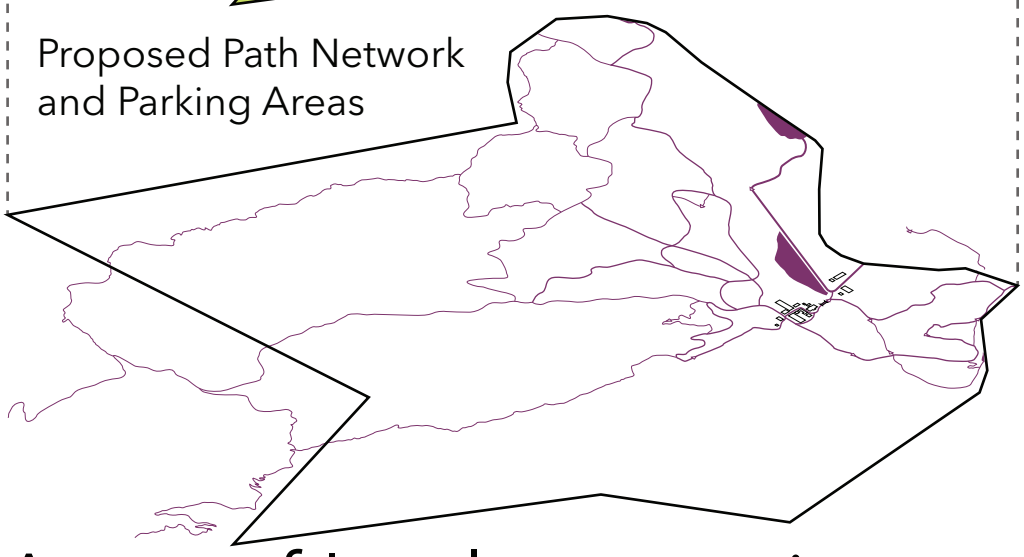
Hydrology and Major Points of Erosion



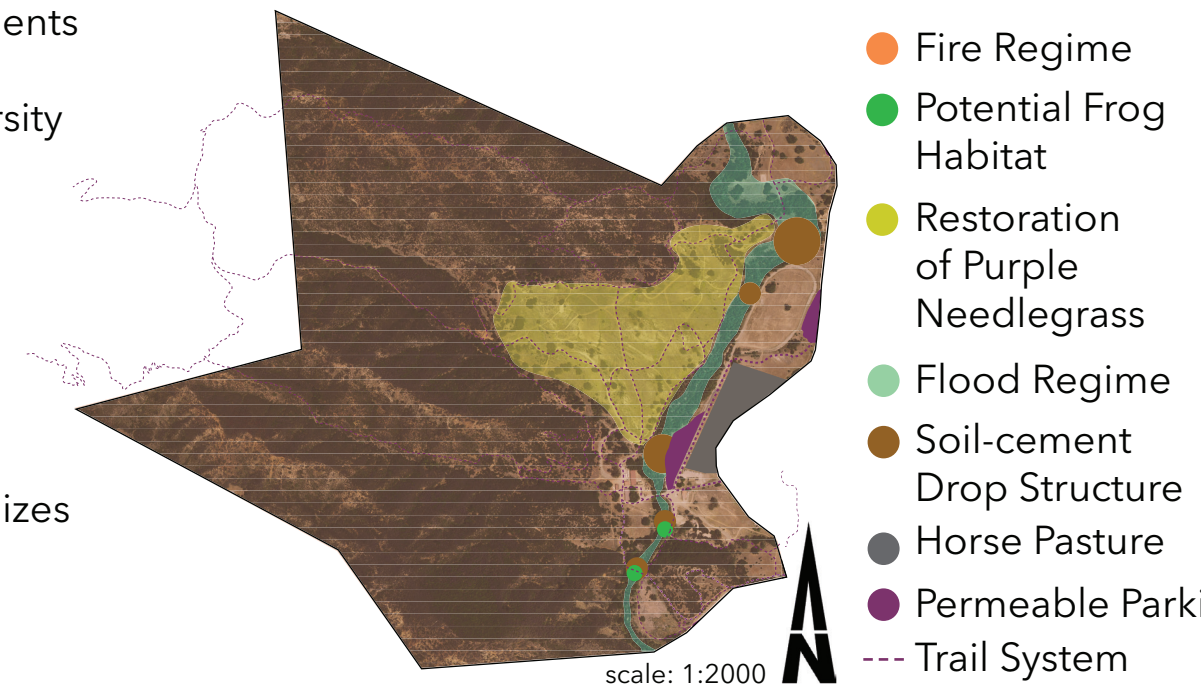
Current Habitat Patches



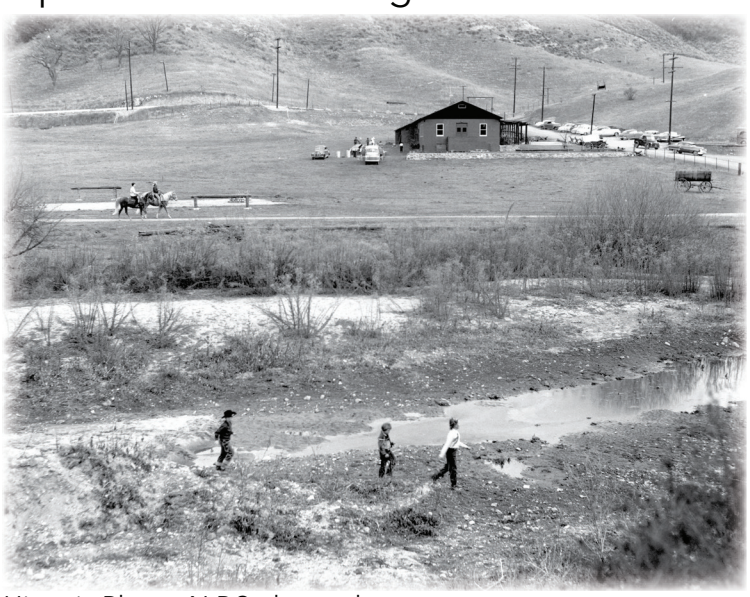
Proposed Path Network and Parking Areas



Areas of Implementation:



Riparian Zone Looking East



Historic Photo: N.P.S. date unknown

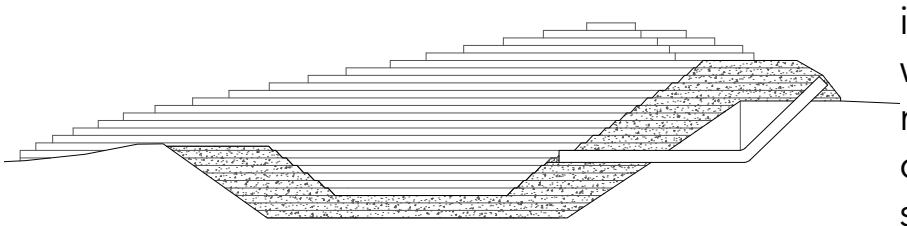
Riparian Zone Looking West



Current Photo: Hanna Belleli September 2015

Management Toolbox

For Medea Creek:



Drop Structure: Constructed of soil-cement, this sturdy implementation reduces effects of flash flood events while acting as a safe, pseudo-natural bridge for mountain bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians to cross without disturbing the creek banks or stirring up sediment by walking through the creek.

Permeable Pavers: Using an implementation such as this allows hydrologic and vegetative cycles to continue their normal processes relatively undisturbed while allowing for necessary infrastructure to accommodate increased vehicular use during planned events. These pavers help reduce erosion, allow water to infiltrate with minimal runoff, and when vegetated, help catch oils and mitigate effects from vehicular drip.



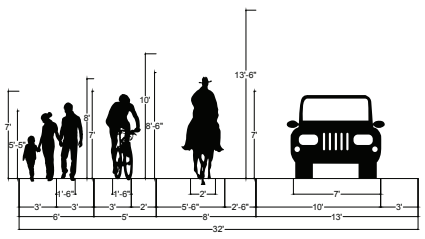


Flooding: Used in tandem with the drop structure, flooding of Medea Creek at key locations helps slow the water, allowing the newly formed wetland to perform infiltration and evaporation processes which help clean the water and remove excess nutrients that cause eutrophication. Flooding in the northern areas of the site will allow for longer residence time and will provide a cleaner flow downstream.

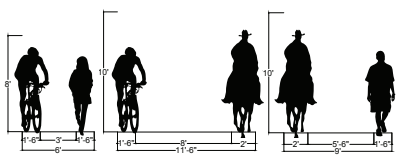
For Savanna, Prairie, and Chaparral Areas:

Burning: Despite being heavily frowned upon by citizens, the habitats found at Paramount Ranch are fire-dependent, meaning they require fire for survival. Areas that go long periods without fire are highly susceptible to increased fuel load from continued death of vegetation, increasing the risks of when a fire may occur. Educating the surrounding community and implementing small-scale burns should be a good start to reinvigorate the landscape.

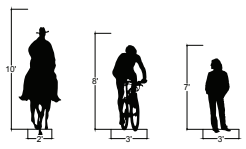




Primary Path:
multiple-track,
high traffic



Secondary Path:
multiple-track,
medium traffic



Tertiary Path:
single-track,
low traffic

Pathway Reconfiguration: The current trail system highly fragments the landscape and cuts through areas that are seemingly unimportant to the history of the site. It is proposed that many of the social trails be blocked by some means, perhaps downed wood and appropriate signage may be most successful, in order to restore the habitat patches. Reccommended clearances based off various path-designing manuals used when designing for interactive user groups.

Visions of the Future:

Entrance Area Looking South



Medea Creek Looking North



National Park Service

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Ecological Ranch
Hanna Belleli













Rehabilitation Treatment Proposals

Rehabilitation allows for continued or new compatible uses while retaining historic character. Treatments need to recognize the population growth, and subsequent increased visitation, from adjacent communities by adding new use areas, increasing accessibility in the evening hours through improved lighting, and protection of contributing features.

Circulation

Consolidate existing trail system to recall historic Paramount Era patterns, viewsheds, and improve ease of navigation through prarie restoration, route ranking, and surface treatments.

- Replace missing historic stream crossings by installing compatible pedestrian crossings.
- Install wood pole fencing similar to existing fencing to discourage informal trails in combination with education and enforcement.
- Address culvert modification near

Western Town

Define both the ‘stage’ and ‘backstage’ production areas through distinct ground treatments and rehabilitation plan to clearly convey two different sides of Paramount’s heritage: the era of significance and continued production.

- Repair and maintain historic studio production buildings according to the Secretary’s Standards while allowing for facad modification.
- To ensure authentic preservation of the production heritage, employ production designers for facade maintenance and rehabilitation consultation.
- Consider improving condition of at least one studio structure to allow visitor access.
- Remove unnecessary features such as sheds to allow visitor access around buildings for a better sense of facades versus pre-existing structures.
- Help to ‘set the stage’ by installing contemporary trash, furniture or lighting features outside of Western Town core.
- Protect and maintain the historic bridge as a contributing structure - this may include repainting, application of protective coatings, and/or rust removal.

Vegetation

Prioritize maintenance of character-defining landscape features - valley oak, prairie graminoids, and contributing ornamentals.

- Special attention for the isolated valley oaks due to their contributing status, prominence, protective shade, and ecological benefits.
    - Remove any competitive saplings
    - Replenish new oaks
    - Consult ecologist regarding replenishment
    - Consider fire management

Set Locations

Distinguish physical historic set locations through hardscaping which blends into the landscape without inhibiting views, provides erosion control, and provides public access patio space for events, picnics, or simply a place to rest under the shade of valley oaks.

- Different color or material combinations can reveal set foundation locations apart from spaces between structures.
- Clearly identified historic set locations provide siting for interpretive materials.

Statement

The goal of this cultural landscape treatment plan is to provide treatment recommendations that will preserve the integrity and character of the site's film heritage while allowing for the continued use as a working production location and recreation destination.

Design Objectives

Defining Places

Rehabilitation will preserve studio heritage and improve historic interpretation by defining the physical space associated with different historic periods.

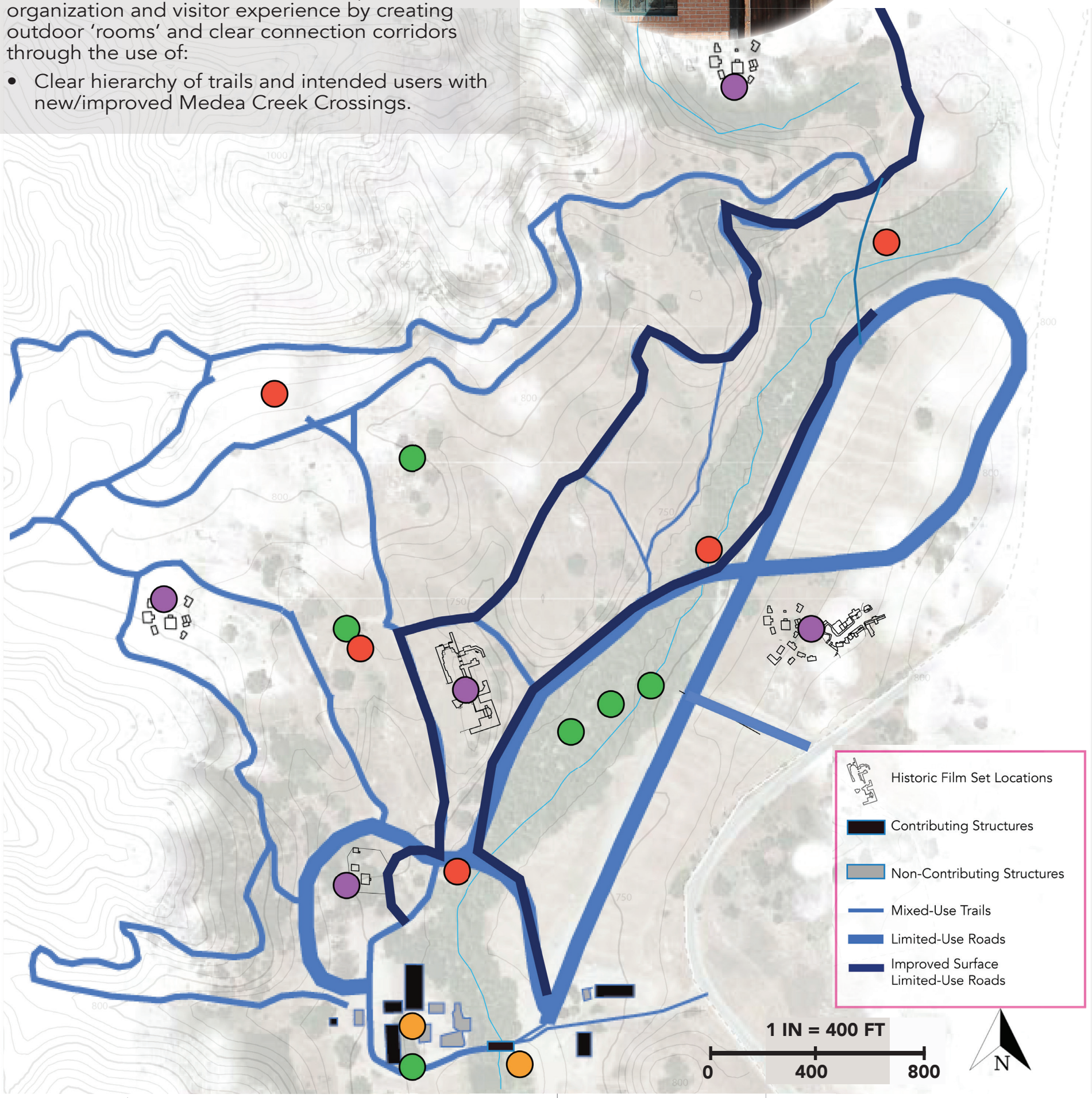
- Intact, contributing structures will be protected while non-contibuting facades are allowed to be changed pending park staff review.
- Historic locations of sets and non-existent will be distinguished through ground surface treatments.

Coherence

Rehabilitation will contribute to the spatial organization and visitor experience by creating outdoor 'rooms' and clear connection corridors through the use of:

- Clear hierarchy of trails and intended users with new/improved Medea Creek Crossings.





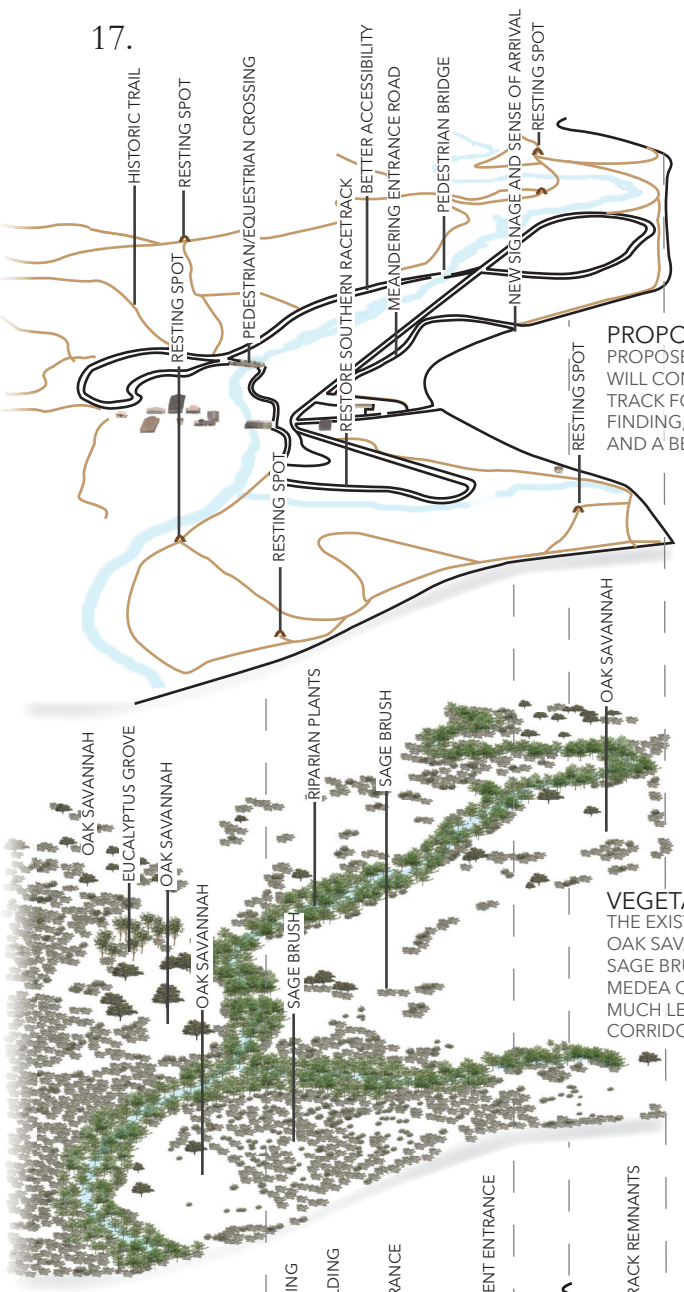
Paramount Ranch

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A Working Landscape: Studio Ranch Rehabilitation

Rodney T. Bohner



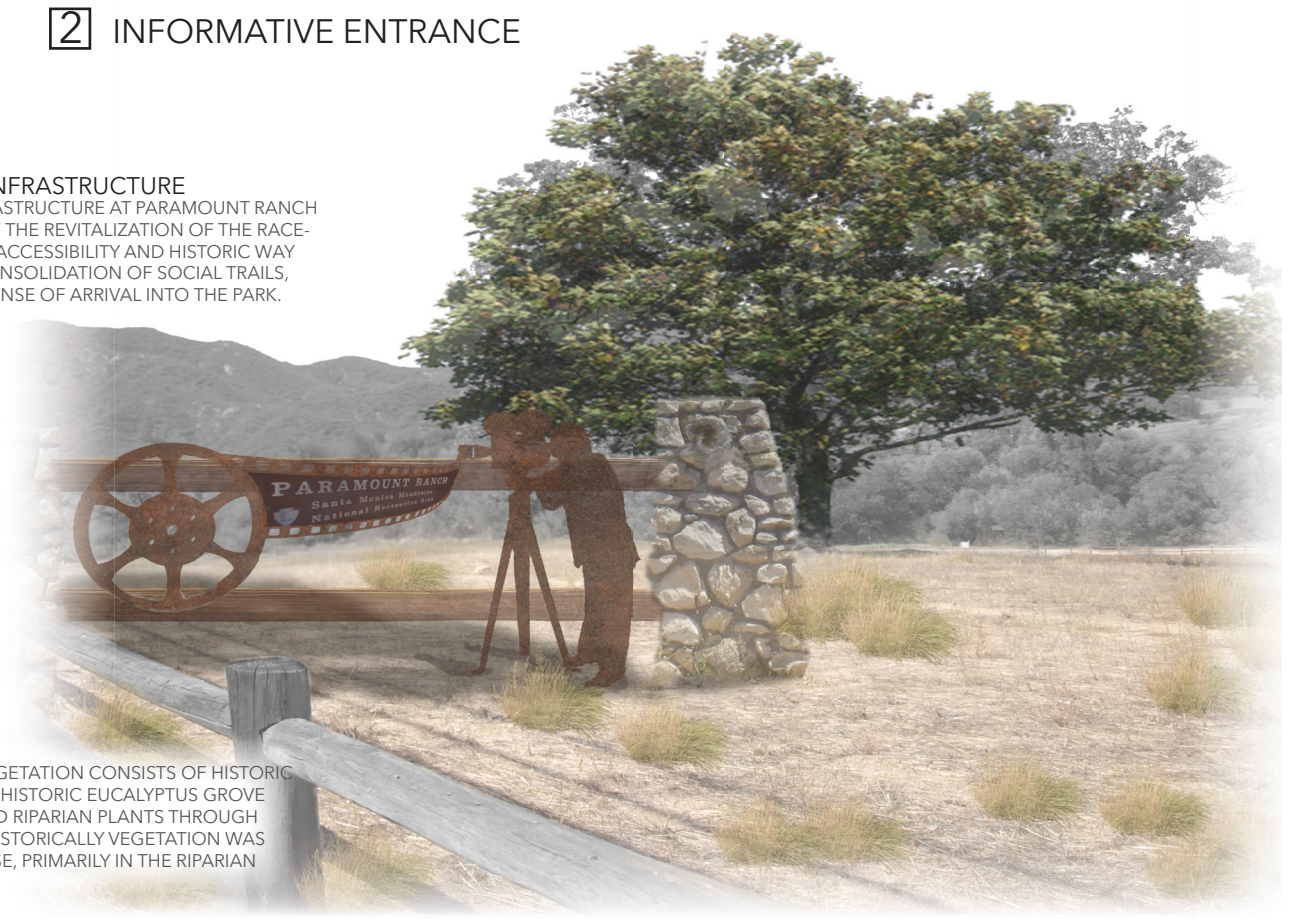
2 INFORMATIVE ENTRANCE

PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE

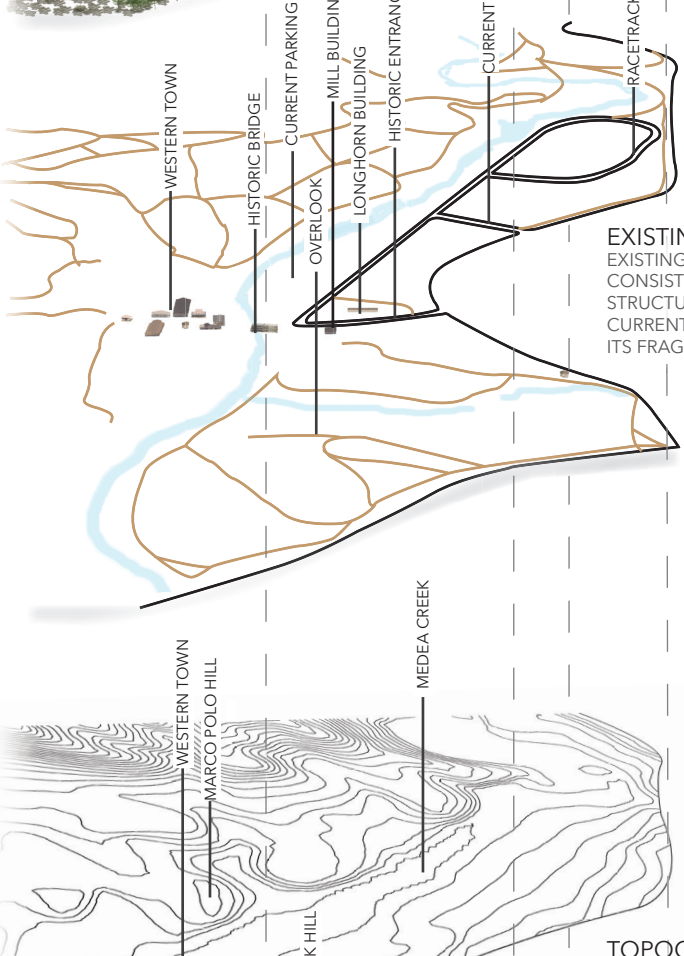
PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE AT PARAMOUNT RANCH WILL CONSIST OF THE REVITALIZATION OF THE RACE-TRACK FOR ADA ACCESSIBILITY AND HISTORIC WAY FINDING, THE CONSOLIDATION OF SOCIAL TRAILS, AND A BETTER SENSE OF ARRIVAL INTO THE PARK.

VEGETATION

THE EXISTING VEGETATION CONSISTS OF HISTORIC OAK SAVANNAH, HISTORIC EUCALYPTUS GROVE SAGE BRUSH, AND RIPARIAN PLANTS THROUGH MEDEA CREEK. HISTORICALLY VEGETATION WAS MUCH LESS DENSE, PRIMARILY IN THE RIPARIAN CORRIDOR.



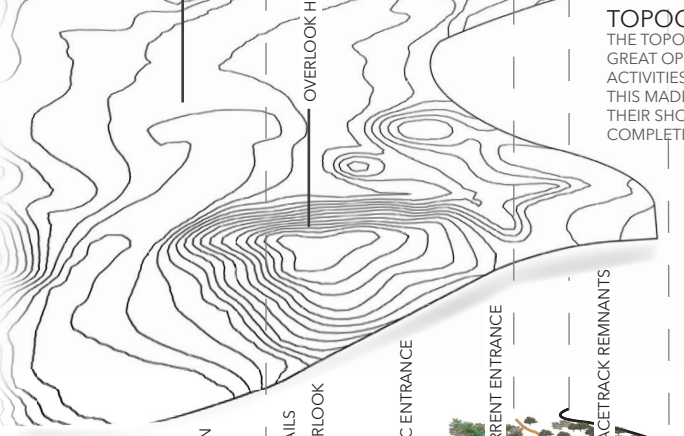
3 REHABILITATED RACETRACK



EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AT PARAMOUNT RANCH CONSISTS OF MANY HISTORICALLY CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES AND PATH/ ROAD SYSTEMS. WITHIN THE CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE, THE RANCH ALSO STILL HAS ITS FRAGMENTED RACETRACK AND HISTORIC ENTRANCE.





TOPOGRAPHY

THE TOPOGRAPHY ON SITE IS DIVERSE AND OFFERS GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FILMING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES. BECAUSE OF THIS DIVERSE TOPOGRAPHY, THIS MADE IT EASIER FOR FILM MAKERS TO PLACE THEIR SHOT AND MAKE IT LOOK AS IF IT WERE IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PLACE THAN CALIFORNIA.

4 RACETRACK FINISH LINE



EXISTING CONDITIONS

PARAMOUNT RANCH HAS BECOME DISCONNECTED WITHIN ITS OWN CONTEXT. A SERIES OF RANDOM TRAILS, CRUMBLING REMNANTS OF A RACE TRACK, AND A WESTERN TOWN BUILT TO BE ON THE SET OF FILMING SITES, NOT BUILT TO BE PERMANENT. THERE ARE ALSO A NUMBER OF HISTORICALLY CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS AND TRAILS ON SITE TO BE PRESERVED.



1 ACCESS TO PARAMOUNT RANCH



PARKING WITH ADA COMPLIANT RACETRACK

EXPERIENTIAL ENTRANCE ROAD





UPGRADED PARKING



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Paramount Ranch

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

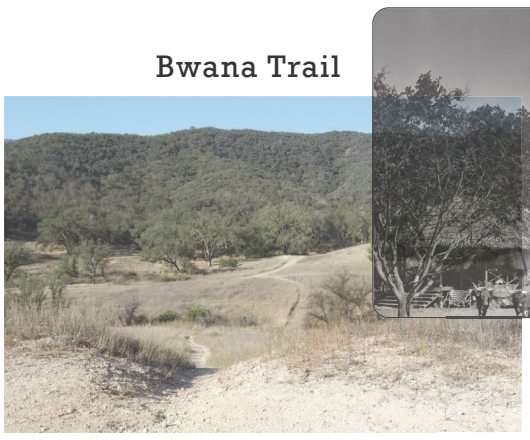
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Access: Paramount Ranch
Hunter Britegam

The historical threads that form Paramount Ranch are currently hidden by the lack of sufficient onsite interpretation.

This creates an opportunity to provide people with a visually engaging experience that is accessible to the diverse range of visitors that frequent the park.

The installations utilizes the history of the site in order to draw attention to the present landscape, creating moments of discovery and forging bonds between visitor, site and history.



Bwana Trail



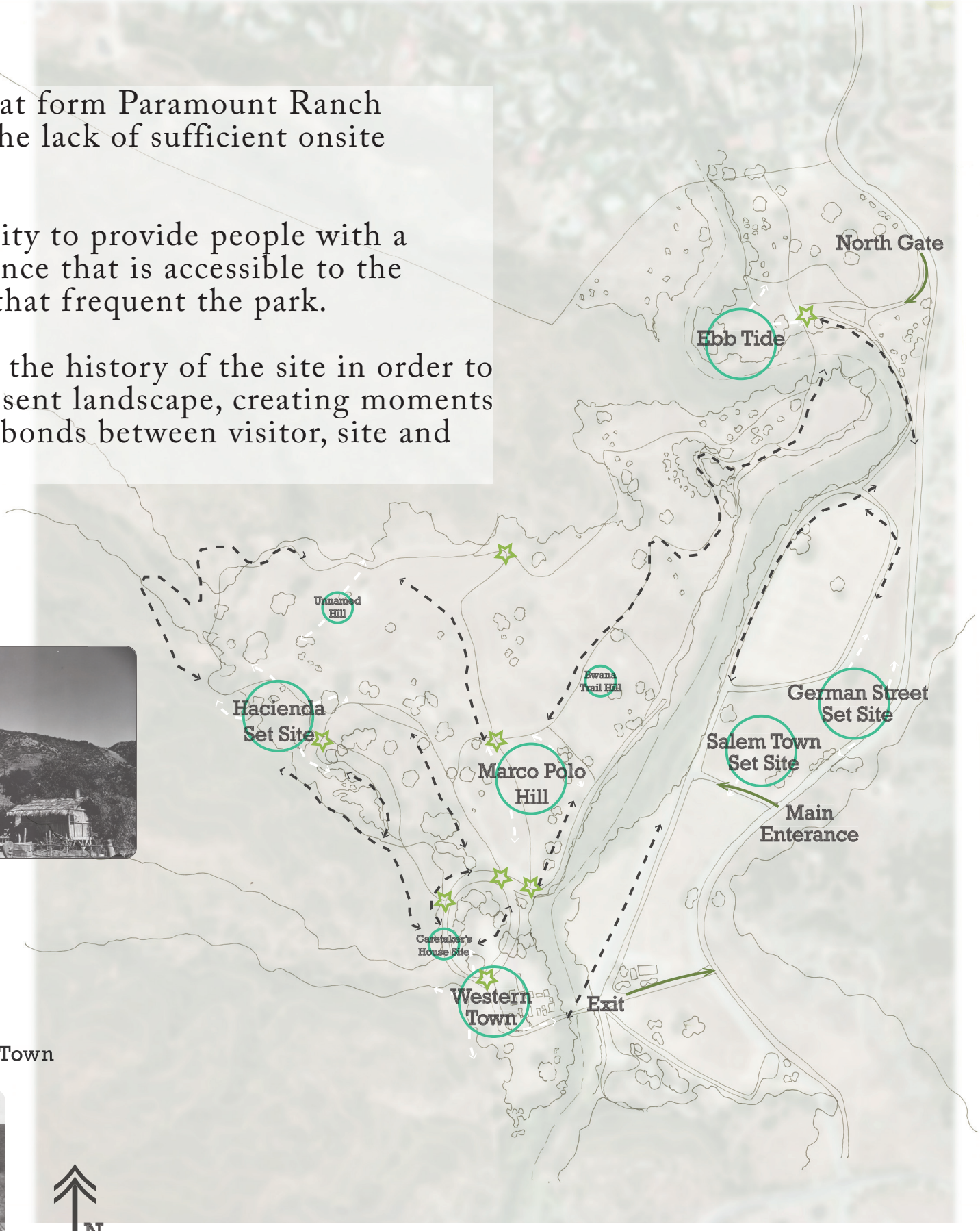
German Town



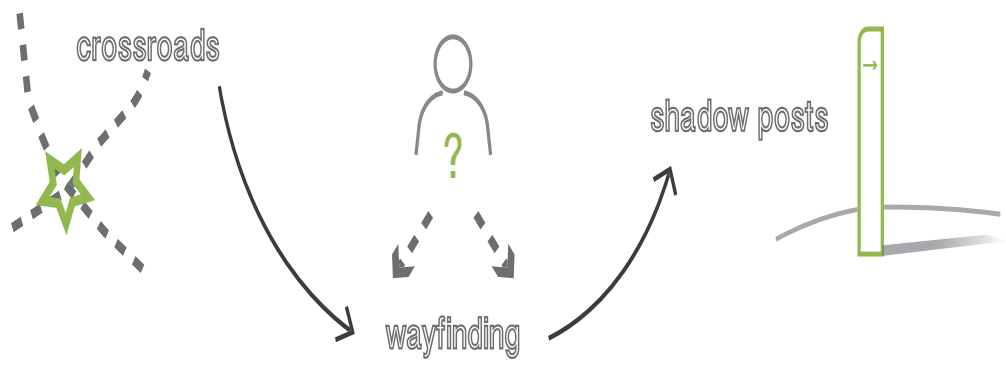
Hacienda Set

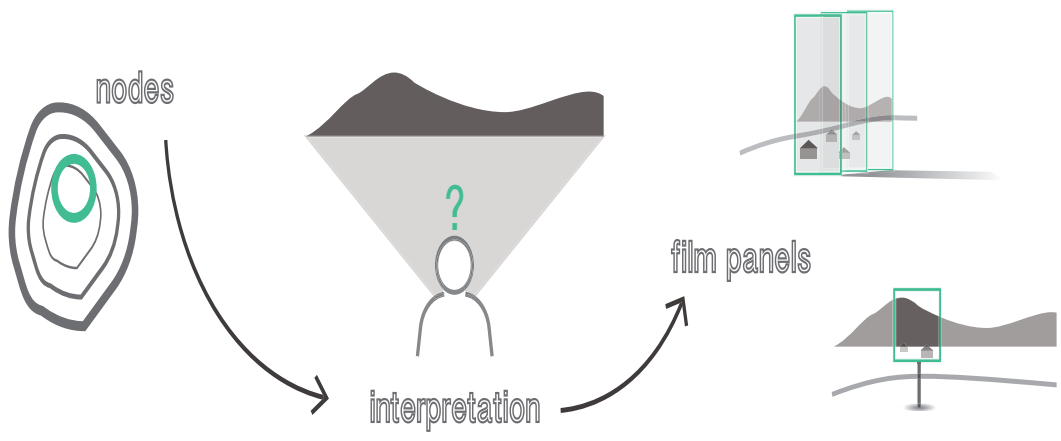


Western Town

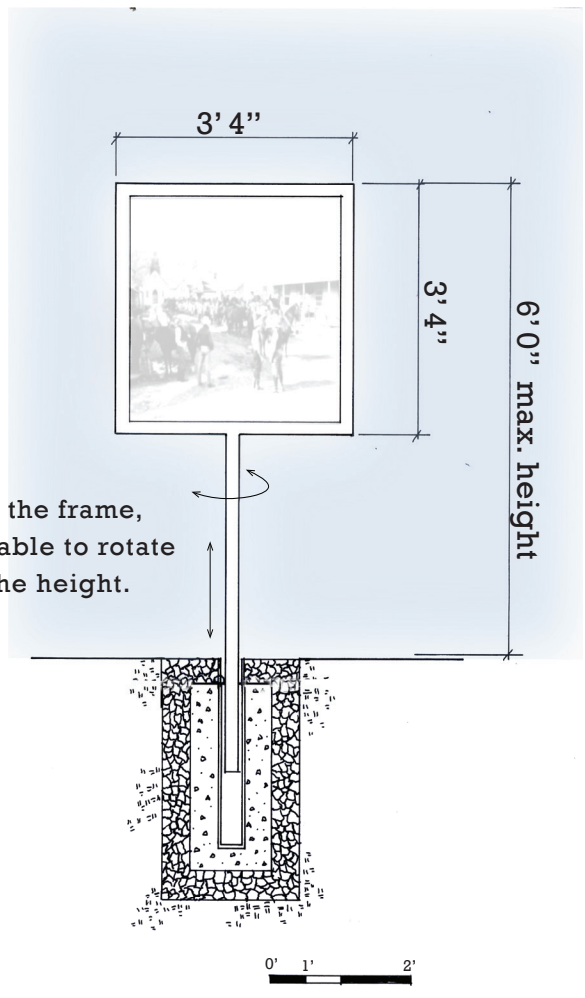


Opportunities for interpretation and wayfinding can be found at key crossroads and nodes (set sties, points of interest, etc). Once identified, one of the three designs can be used to address the particular needs of that specific location.





Section



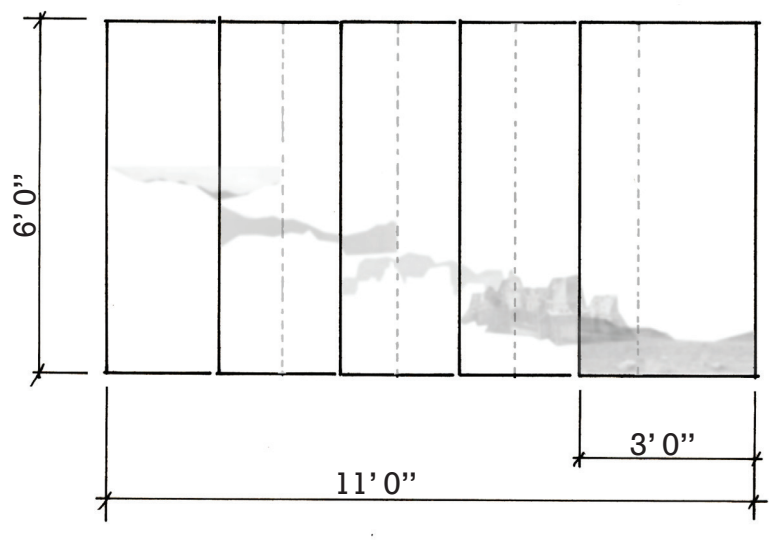
By grasping the frame, visitors are able to rotate and adjust the height.



The tempered glass film panels are etched with historical photos. They offer visitors an active interpretive experience. By moving themselves around the piece, or by moving the panel, the landscape of the past merges with the present.

Plan View

Section



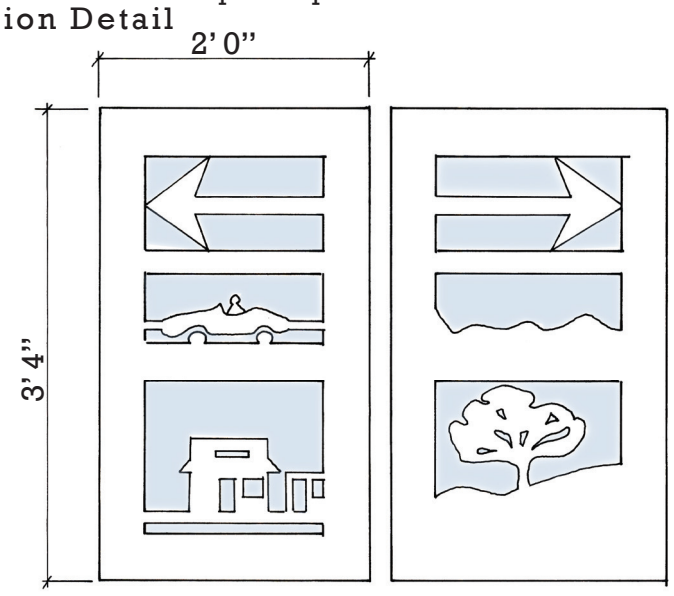


Corten steel panels project shadows onto the ground plan as the sun moves across the sky. Not only a wayfinding system, these panels harken back to shadow puppetry as a predicessor to film.

Plan View

The angle of the panels can be adjusted based on the specific crossroads and the optimal position to catch the sun’s rays.

Section Detail





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Through the Looking Glass:
Revealing the Landscape Through a Historic Lens

Bryn Davis

21.

QR Codes

A type of barcode that when scanned by the camera on a smartphone opens a link, usually to a URL or other information.

Step 1: Download a QR Code Reader App





Step 2: Open app and Scan QR Code

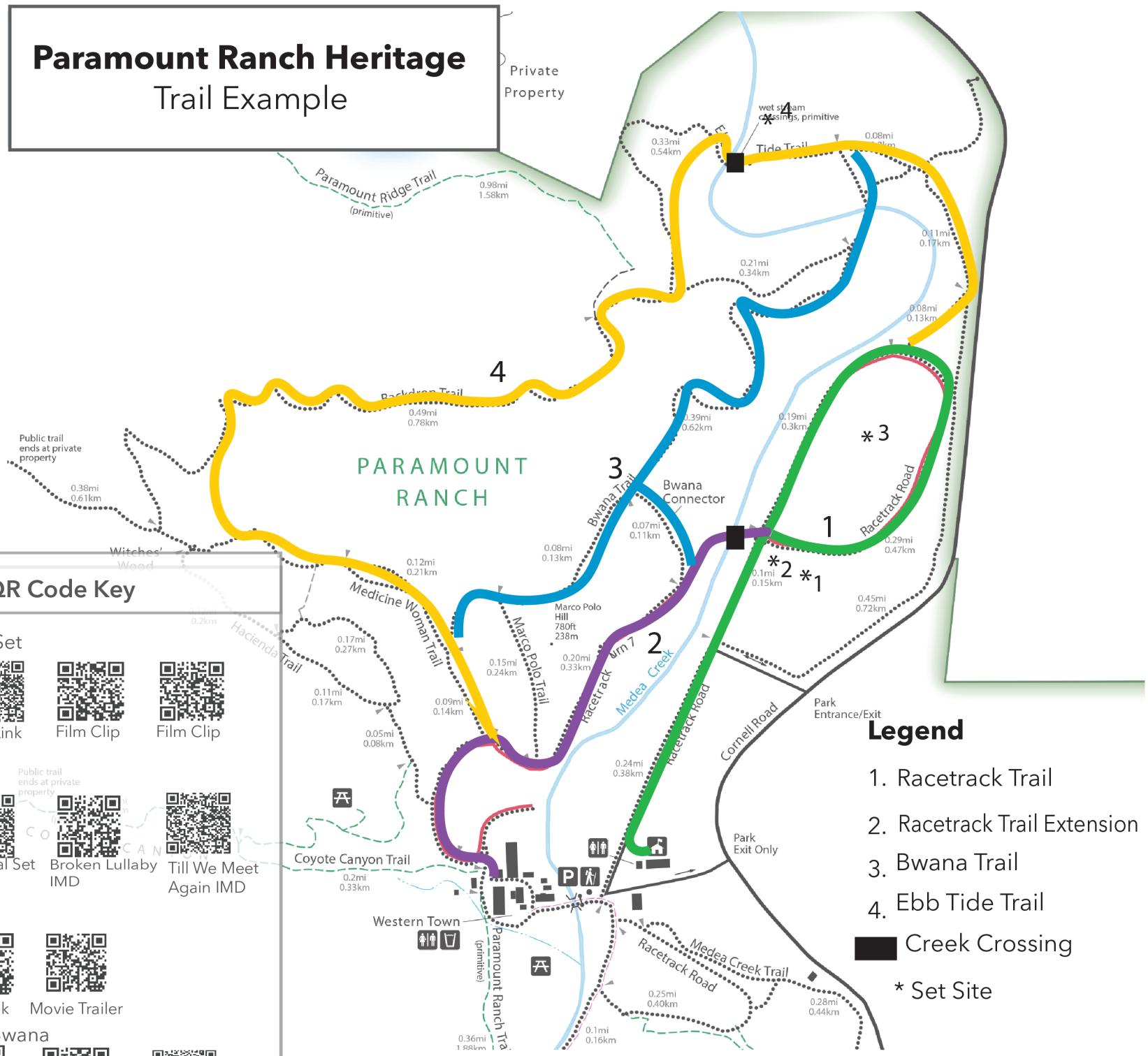




Step 3: QR code opens link. Above is an example of what the viewer would see when a QR code is scanned from this project.



Paramount Ranch Heritage
Trail Example



QR Code Key

1. Maid of Salem Set

Google Drive Folder | IMD Link | Film Clip | Film Clip

2. European Set

Includes Two Movie Folders | General Set Photo | Broken Lullaby IMD | Till We Meet Again IMD

3. Van Helsing

Google Drive | IMD Link | Movie Trailer

4. Ebb Tide and Bwana

Legend

1. Racetrack Trail
2. Racetrack Trail Extension
3. Bwana Trail
4. Ebb Tide Trail

Creek Crossing

* Set Site

Project Explanation

This project was designed to be an example showing one possibility of interpretation at Paramount Ranch. Digital media was selected to interpret the film history to minimize the negative impacts on the natural and cultural landscapes, versus more traditional physical forms of interpretation. QR codes were selected as the example form of digital media for this project, though development of a mobile device application will promote diverse user accessibilty.

QR codes were linked to set sites at Paramount Ranch. Images, film information, and film clips are all examples of information attached to the QR codes in this project. A film heritage trail example was created to show the feasibility of linking an app to a set of walking trails, allowing for the experience of the natural landscape and culutral landscapes.

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Digital Media Interpretation
Savannah Herrell

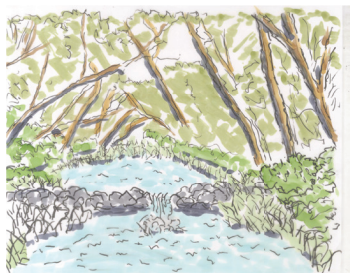
(1) IMPROVING WATER QUALITY AT MEDEA CREEK

CURRENT CONDITIONS



- Once seasonal creek is now year-round from suburban runoff
- Water is slow-moving, polluted and stagnant--elevation change takes place over long distance (30 ft./6,000 ft. = 0.005%)
- Smell and appearance of water repels visitors, takes away from historic scenery

PROPOSED CONDITIONS

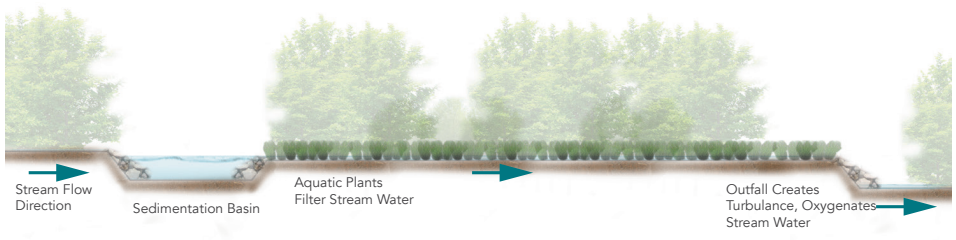


- Intercept polluted runoff and treat with constructed wetland as it enters site
- Use weirs/drop structures to create turbulence and oxygenate water; reduces algal growth in water

CONSTRAINTS: Design interventions must not compromise historic integrity of landscape; alterations of watershed must be done in respect to preserving historic views.

OPPORTUNITIES: Water treatment design interventions can be constructed where water enters the site, concealed by riparian vegetation; water can be treated before it flows through historic vistas.

CONSTRUCTED WETLANDS MODEL



(2) VISTAS: Then and Now

HISTORIC (circa 1940)



- Riparian Corridor as Accent in Foreground
- Sweeping Views of Savanna Dominant in Landscape

CURRENT



- Riparian Corridor Dominates Foreground
- Savanna Obscured by Riparian Corridor

CONSTRAINTS: Riparian corridor vegetation obscures views, but offers shade to reduce algal growth on creek water and provides habitat for wildlife. Removing it to restore historic views is also costly.

OPPORTUNITIES: Instead of removing vegetation, it can be periodically thinned to recover historic views while maintaining valuable wildlife habitat.

(3, 4) EQUESTRIAN TRAILS & WATER QUALITY

CURRENT CONDITIONS



- Current policy allows horses to enter water in various locations throughout site
- Equestrian traffic causes erosion along stream banks
- Manure further degrades water quality, makes creek less appealing to other park users

PROPOSED CONDITIONS



- Implement new policy to keep horses out of water or only in designated areas
- Install bridges to accomodate equestrian crossing that prevents manure from entering water, yet visually appealing that it could be used in a film set

CONSTRAINTS: Equestrians are a major user group in park; design interventions must not compromise historic viewsheds on site.

OPPORTUNITIES: Create designated area for an equestrian ford; other crossings must be done by bridge. Bridge can be designed to be used for filming, and concealed in riparian vegetation to preserve historic viewsheds.

TRAIL SYSTEM

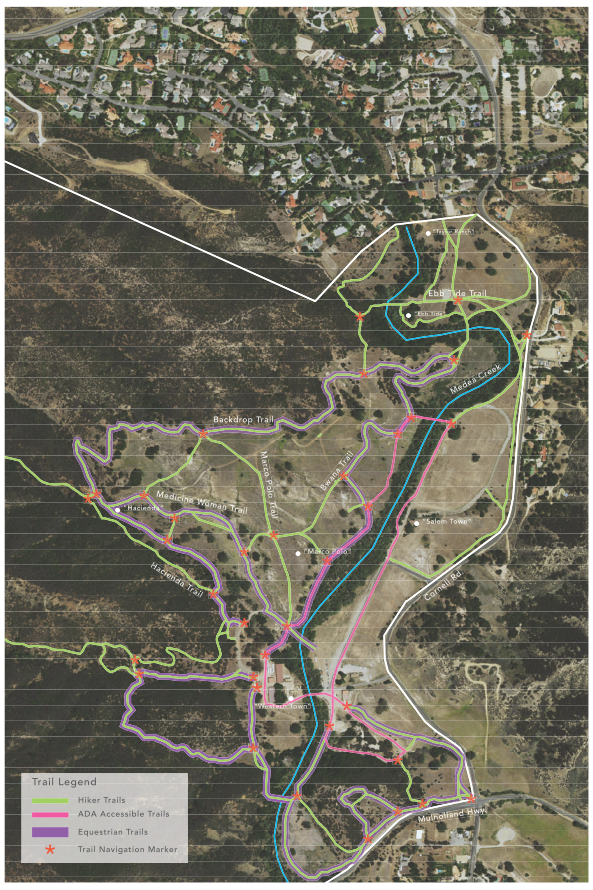
- Current trail system lacks accessible options; redundant social trails slice up landscape and degrade environment; and offers limited opportunity to interact with and cross the creek
- Proposed trail system offers an ADA accessible loop; simplifies the overall trail routes; designates specific equestrian routes to reduce environmental damage and user conflict; and uses low-impact signage to improve navigation throughout site



Low-Impact Navigation Marker

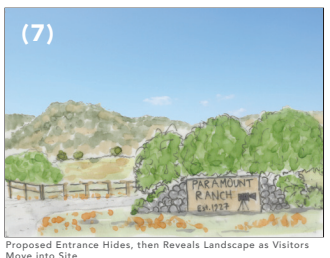


Current Trail System

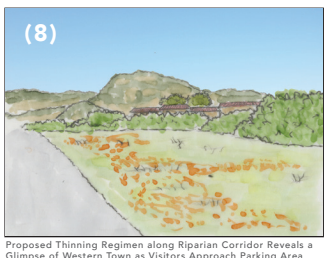


Proposed Trail System

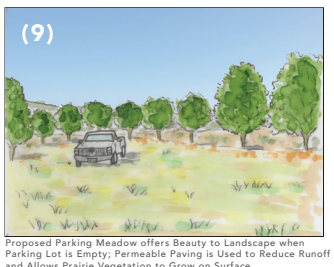




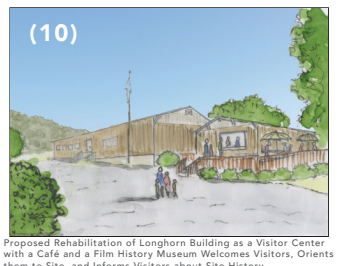
Proposed Entrance Hides, then Reveals Landscape as Visitors Move into Site



Proposed Thinning Regimen along Riparian Corridor Reveals a Glimpse of Western Town as Visitors Approach Parking Area



Proposed Parking Meadow offers Beauty to Landscape when Parking Lot is Empty; Permeable Paving is Used to Reduce Runoff and Allows Prairie Vegetation to Grow on Surface



Proposed Rehabilitation of Longhorn Building as a Visitor Center with a Café and a Film History Museum Welcomes Visitors, Orients them to Site, and Informs Visitors about Site History



Revitalized

PROTECTING A WORLD APART:
Celebrating the History of Paramount Ranch through Ecological Restoration & Improved Wayfinding

GOALS:

- Restoring Medea Creek as centerpiece to the historic landscape
- Creating navigable & accessible trail system, enabling visitors to experience historic film sites
- Improving entrance, sense of arrival & orientation to Paramount Ranch

INTERVENTIONS:

(1) Treat polluted creek water with constructed wetlands as it enters and exits site
(2) Thin vegetation along riparian corridor, restoring historic views and revealing sinuous creek beauty
(3) Improve access to creek by creating crossings that facilitate interaction with water and overall site
(4) Designate specific equestrian trails to reduce environmental degradation and user conflict
(5) Install low-impact signage to interpret film sites and improve visitor wayfinding
(6) Close redundant social trails to simplify navigation and reduce environmental degradation to site
(7) Redesign entrance to feature historic views of oak savannas, hills and creek as visitors enter site
(8) Redesign driveway and parking, restoring creek views and allowing more space for recreation
(9) Design parking area with permeable paving that becomes a meadow when not in use
(10) Rehabilitate Longhorn Building as a visitor center, welcoming and orienting visitors



GREATER AREA CONTEXT



SAMO CONTEXT



NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



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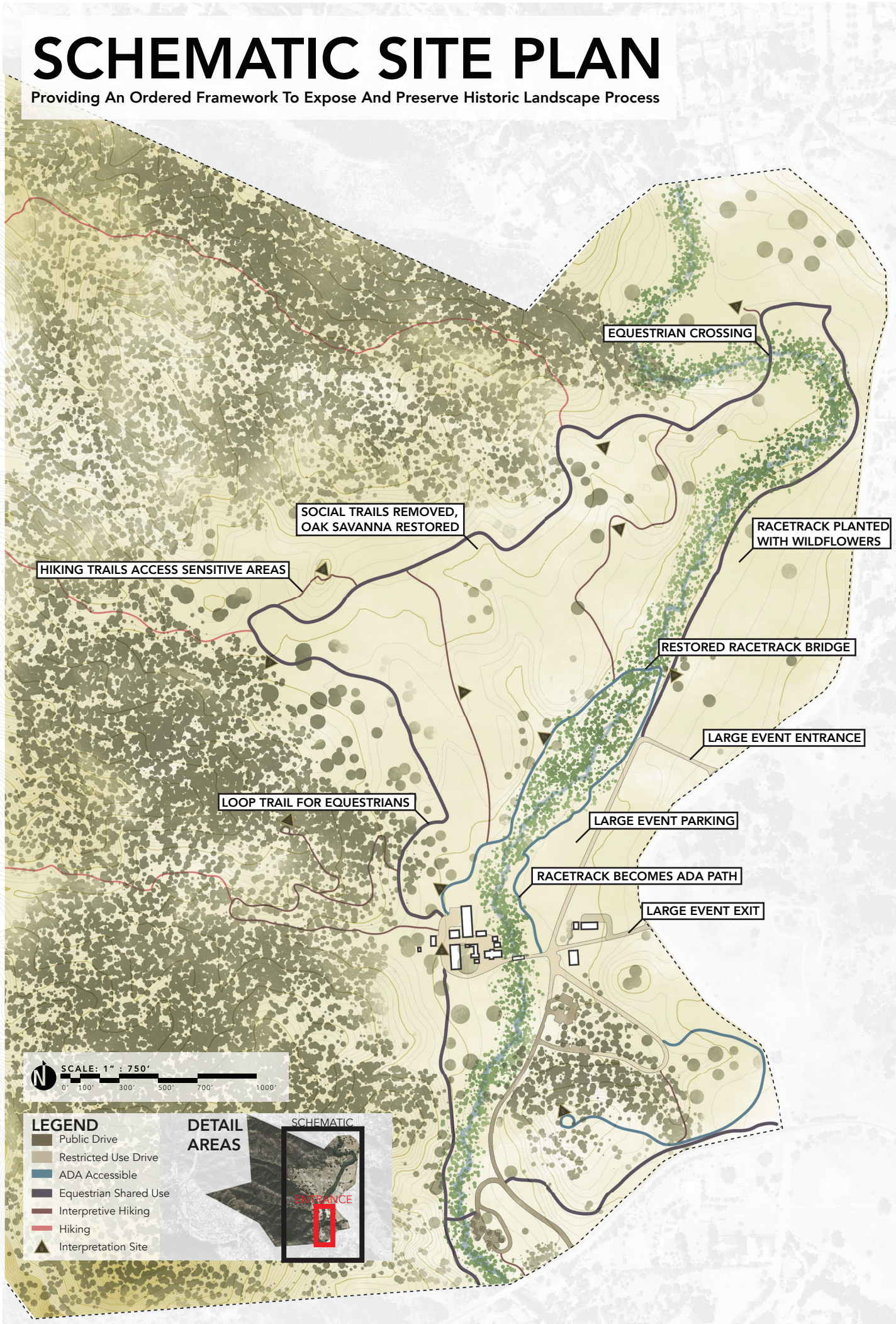
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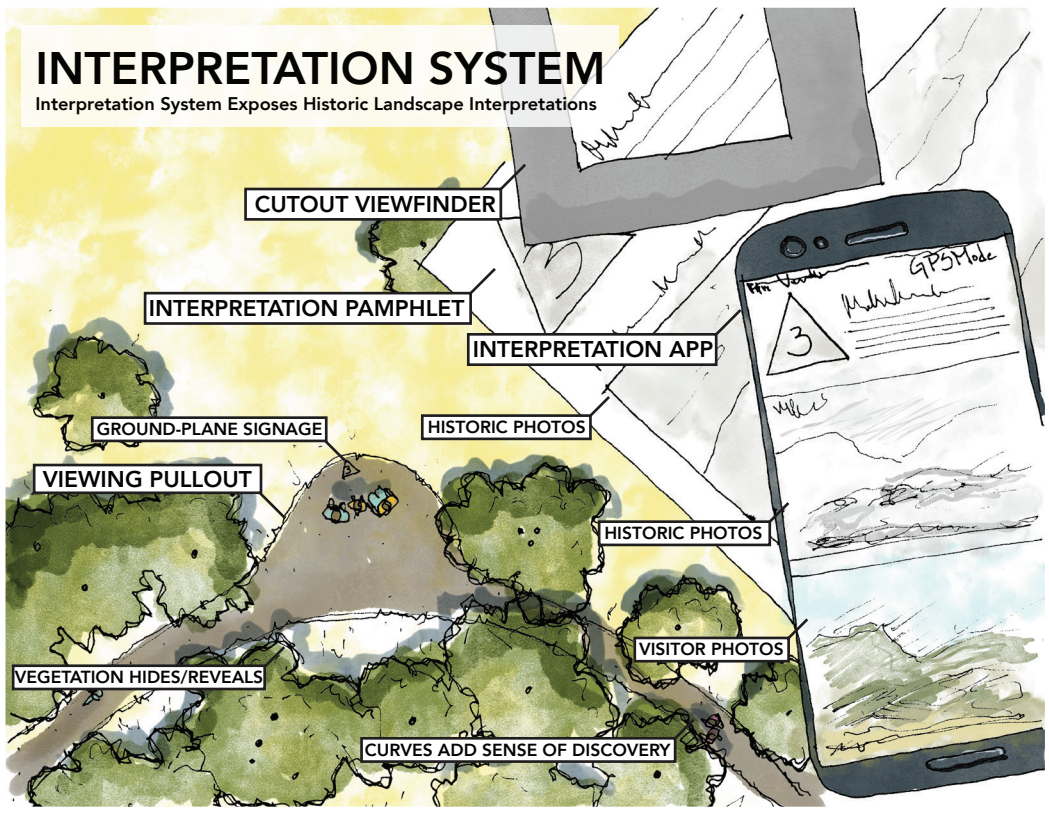
Protecting a World Apart
Zak Johnson

After visitors arrive, an interpretation center would allow visitors to plan what they would like to see and do. The interpretation center should occur where the bus stop currently is, downslope of the longhorn building. Perhaps it would be possible to repurpose and expand the shade structure of the bus stop as the interpretive center. Regardless, shade trees and plantings that set the structure into the landscape and eat away at the expanse of gravel are essential to this area's success. At the interpretation center, visitors can access interpretive materials and find clear, concise maps.

The current trail system is confusing and, without accurate maps, difficult to use to access a specific area efficiently. Shoring up the current trails system based on historic Paramount roads, the racetrack, and points of interest by brushing, signage, and careful monitoring would allow for an efficient network of paths. A short, ADA compliant loop accesses points of interpretation that give a full sense of the sites historic process and character. Equestrian shared-use trails utilize Paramount roads to create a long loop through the landscape, while interpretive hiking trails access more sensitive areas. This hierarchy of trails provides unique experiences of Paramount Ranch to all users without continuing to compromise the character of the landscape.

Interpretation cannot compromise the visual character of the landscape. In most places on site, historical traces of past uses are subtle and require imagination, similar to that of a filmmaker, to remember. Ground-plane signage, in the form of a triangle with an embedded number referencing a pamphlet or app, would point visitors toward significant scenes and invite them to imagine the landscape as a rural Chinese village, African savanna or New England hamlet. To record the racetrack's mark on the landscape without compromising the prairie, removing the asphalt and planting the path of the racetrack wildflowers would capture the energy of that layer of history. Visitors could use a cutout cardboard viewfinder to frame the landscape as it was in historic photographs, or an app could compare a user's photo with a historic photo. Through this process, visitors internalize how the landscape has been interpreted creatively over the last 70 years. The trail and interpretation system personalize the landscape by engaging imaginations and perpetuate the process that makes Paramount Ranch a cultural landscape: Landscape Imagination.



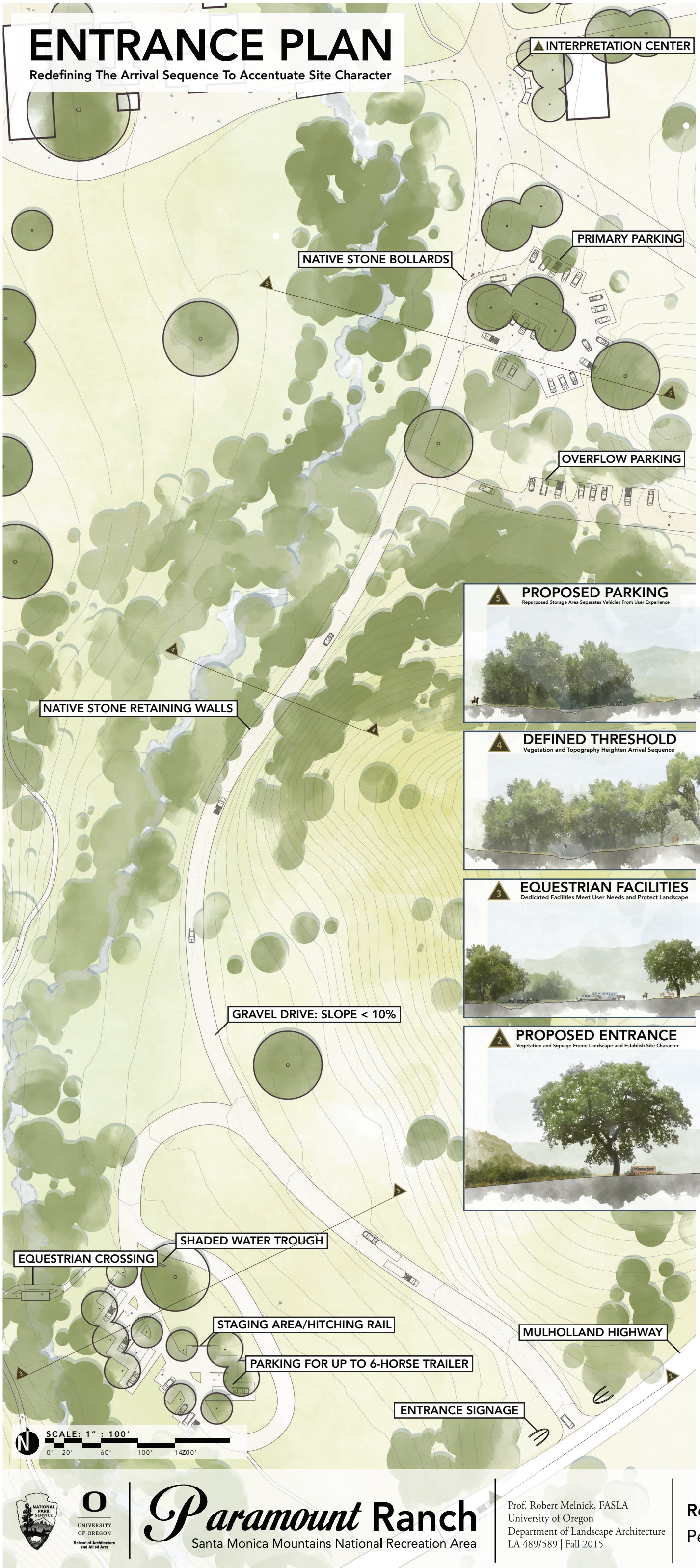






ENTRANCE PLAN

Redefining The Arrival Sequence To Accentuate Site Character



1 CONCEPT: Preserve the historic process of Landscape Imagination by scripting user experience for discovery (interpretation) and improvisation.

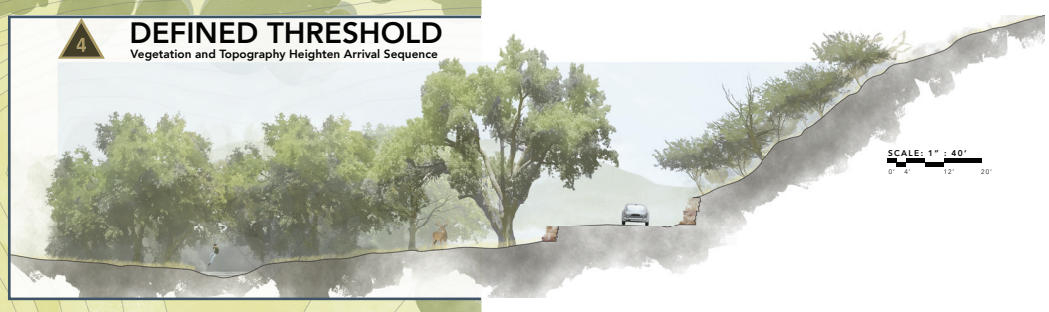
At the heart of what makes Paramount Ranch a significant place is the process of interpreting the landscape creatively. Moving the entrance to heighten the sense of arrival to a significant place, providing dedicated, legible and accessible facilities for different user groups, and creating an interpretive framework that highlights the creative process of Paramount Ranch are the three primary design interventions identified by this project. These interventions would encourage the continuation of Landscape Imagination and protect the unique natural resources that enable this process.

Currently, the entrance sequence to Paramount Ranch completely misses the opportunity to create a sense of arrival, respond to the history of the site, or set the tone of the movie ranch being a special place. By moving the entrance to the south side of the property, off Mulholland Highway, the landscape lends itself to a defined sequence of thresholds that hide and reveal views as one proceeds through the site.

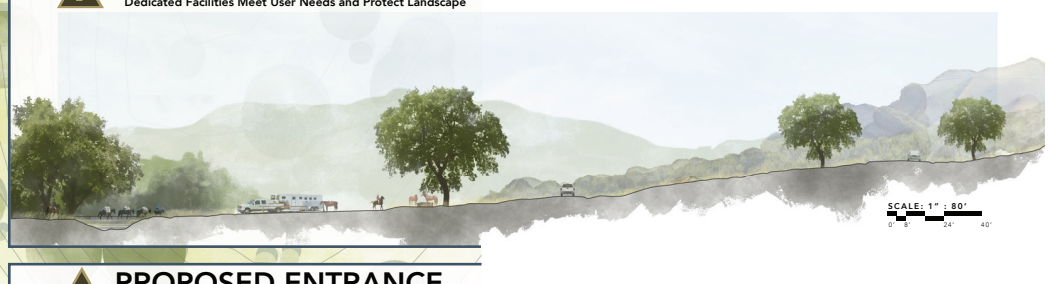
5 PROPOSED PARKING
Repurposed Storage Area Separates Vehicles From User Experience



4 DEFINED THRESHOLD
Vegetation and Topography Heighten Arrival Sequence



3 EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES
Dedicated Facilities Meet User Needs and Protect Landscape



2 PROPOSED ENTRANCE
Vegetation and Signage Frame Landscape and Establish Site Character



The updated entrance serves as a serpentine spine, reflective of the site's topography and hydrology, catering to different user groups' needs. In order to ensure equestrian users are provided for without degrading the site, a specific parking lot with shade trees, hitching rails and a water trough is essential. For other visitors, the proposed parking is located close enough for universal access, but far enough away that vehicles are separated experientially by topography and vegetation. Without this clear separation, the current ad hoc parking leaves no room for a sense of arrival and creates a vast open space of unused or poorly used gravel.

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Paramount Ranch

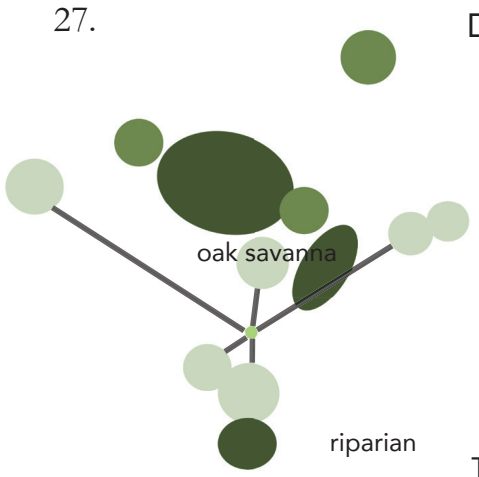
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Re-imagination Through Discovery

Peter Obermeyer

DIAGRAM OF RELATIONSHIPS



Ecological areas
Central Node
Location of view points
Significant film sites

The diagram showselationships between significant areas. Based on their location a central point has been determined will become the location of the central node. Its location has low impact on historical sites.

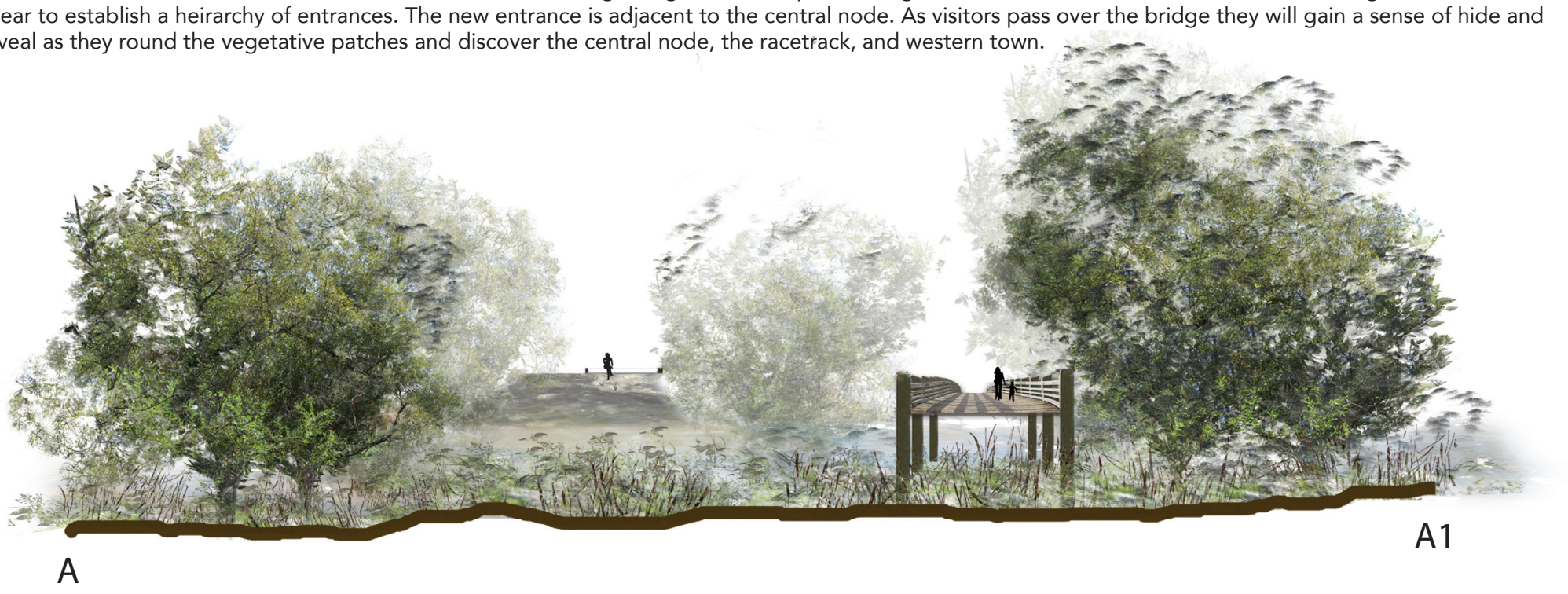
AT PARAMOUNT RANCH VISITORS WILL EMBARK ON AN ADVENTURE THROUGH A MOSAIC OF LANDSCAPES WITH A HISTORICAL FILM OVERLAY. THIS DESIGN EMBODIES A DUAL CONCEPT THAT INTERPRETS THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS THROUGH A LENS OF SPATIAL REPRESENTATION. THROUGH INTERPRETIVE DESIGN VISITORS WILL EXPLORE AND APPRECIATE THE MULTILAYERED DYNAMICS OF THIS COMPLEX LANDSCAPE.

Goals:

-Provide better wayfinding
-Create opportunities for visitors to learn about the history
- Offer a gathering space that orients visitors
- Restore ecological areas

THE NEW ENTRANCE

The new entrance will utilize a social trail to the north that is degrading the landscape. The vegetation will be thinned for viewsheds.The bridge will be wide and linear to establish a heirarchy of entrances. The new entrance is adjacent to the central node. As visitors pass over the bridge they will gain a sense of hide and reveal as they round the vegetative patches and discover the central node, the racetrack, and western town.



PROPOSED CIRCULATION



Circulation design allows visitors to move through the site freely.

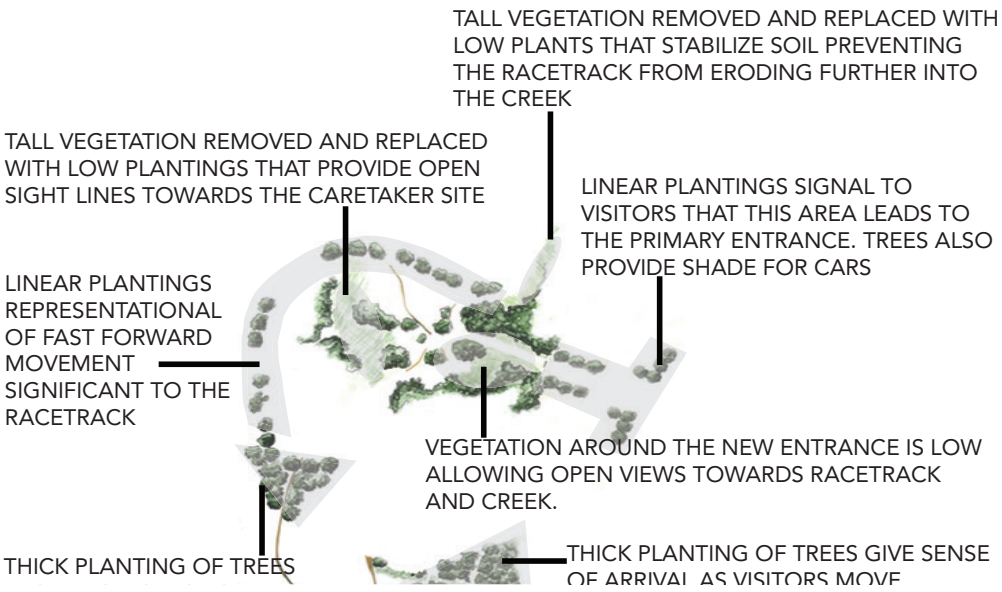
Each additional trail has its own function:
1) main entrance: brings people to a neautral space at Paramount
2) Road forks so that visitors can choose direction and what they want to see.
3) The bridges are now part of a trail system. Allows people to experience the priairie
4) This trail allows people to head past western town and the prairie but still have visual access.
5) This trail continues off the racetrack. and offers experience through chaparral

PROPOSED PLAN AT PARAMOUNT RANCH: THE CENTRAL NODE AND PRAIRIE



PROPOSED VEGETATION

The new vegetation provides functions like shade and stabilization. It also allows open views and symboloically represents historic aspects. Dense plantings offers contrast to the surrounding openness



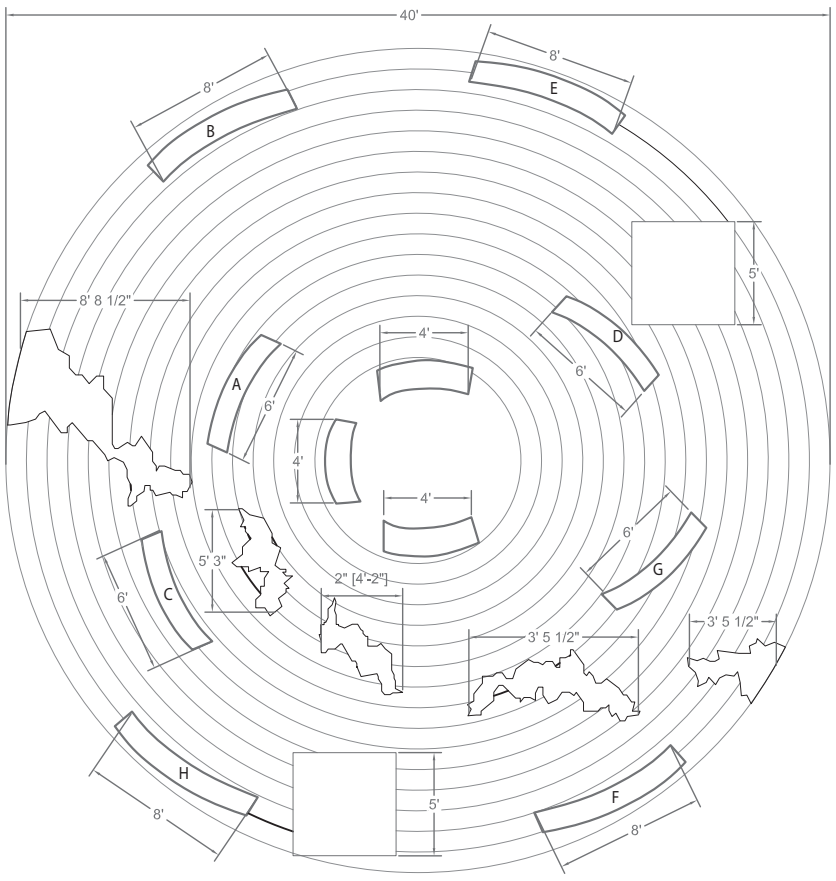
THE PRAIRIE BRIDGES

Presently this southern area of Paramount Ranch is an open field with 3 bridges that serve little purpose. The new design will transform the location into a prairie.Here visitors will cross the bridges within a heavily vegetated space. They will than emerge into the wide open prairie filled with wild flowers and

THE CENTRAL NODE

The shape of a circle has been associated with the notion of equality. In this space everything and everyone is equal.The concept has been applied to Paramount Ranch to bring awareness of other films and there placement alongside western town. Even if the set no longer exists here in this space it is a contributor to the film history. Here visitors get a preview to the story that is Paramount Ranch.

This space can hold a large group of people or be an intimate space. The bench layout create little landscape rooms that provide interest and diversity

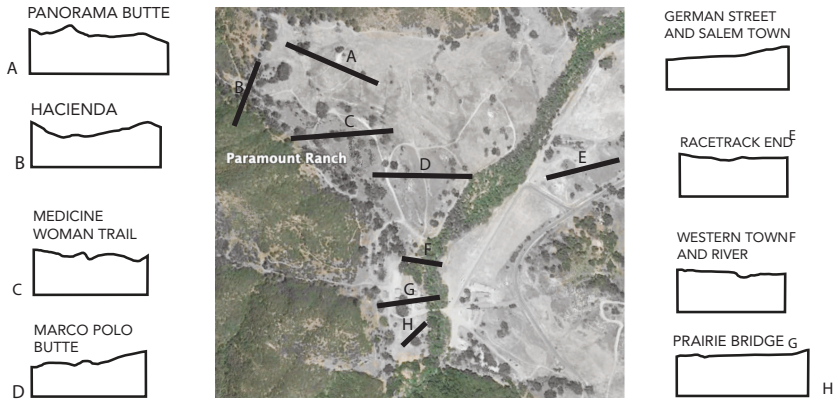


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In contrast to the film history the environmental history is represented by the low plantings that zig zag across the plaza breaking up the hardscape. The planter bed orientation points directly to the end of the racetrack where the vegetation has been opened up to reveal the collision of human history in an environmental context

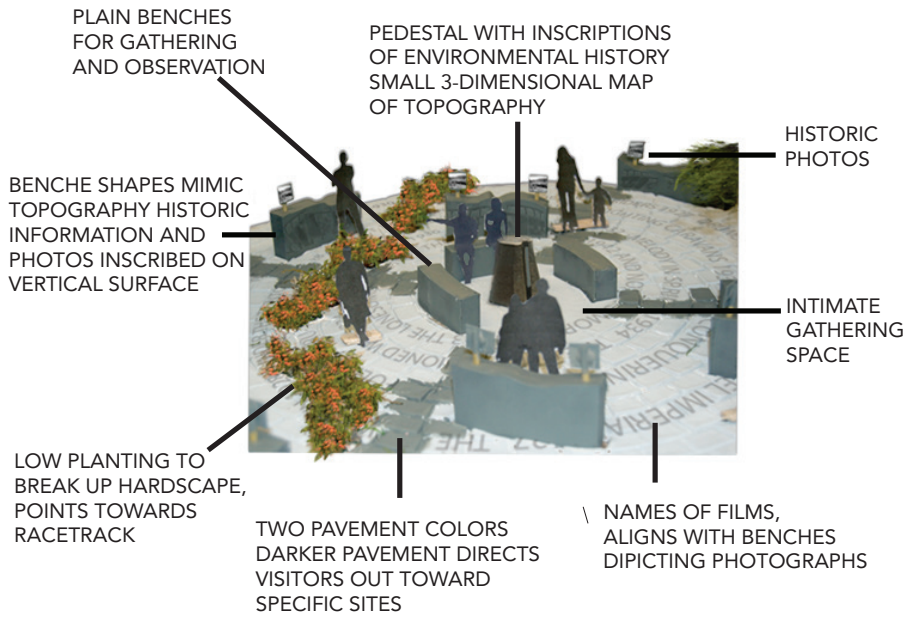
TOPOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

Each bench throughout the plaza mimics theoutlying topography.
The topographic cross sections were selected based on the area's significance to the film history at Paramount Ranch



CENTRAL NODE: CUES OF HISTORY

Design elements prompt visitor understanding of the history. Alignment is key. The interventions described below is aligned to the larger landscape. Names of films align with benches that portray photos. The specific shape and location of benches mirror the sites topography. The colored paving directs visitors towards the represented landscape.



PARAMOUNT UNFOLDING: CENTRAL NODE



THE PRAIRIE EXPERIENCE



PRAIRIE ENTRANCE



B

B1

Paramount Ranch

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Prof. Robert Melnick, FASLA
University of Oregon
Department of Landscape Architecture
LA 489/589 | Fall 2015

Setting the Stage: understanding the story

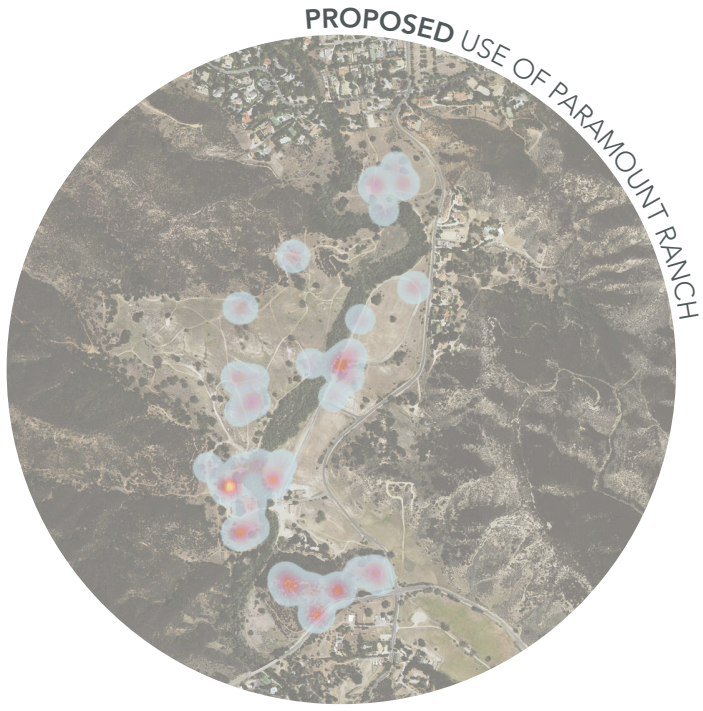
Christine Ransom

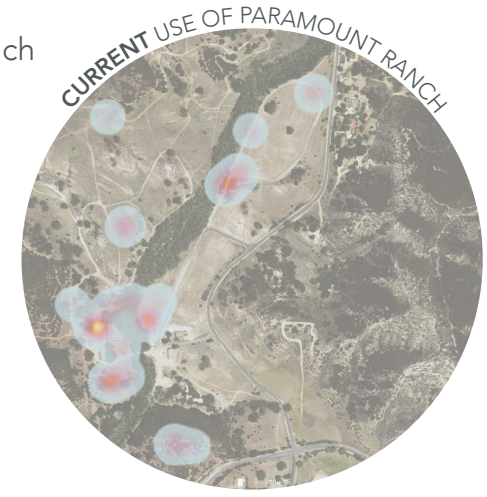
PHYSICAL **ACCESS**

The diverse topography at Paramount Ranch poses a problem for those less able to walk long distances and hike steep slopes. This design allows for all visitors to be able to experience all that the site has to offer.

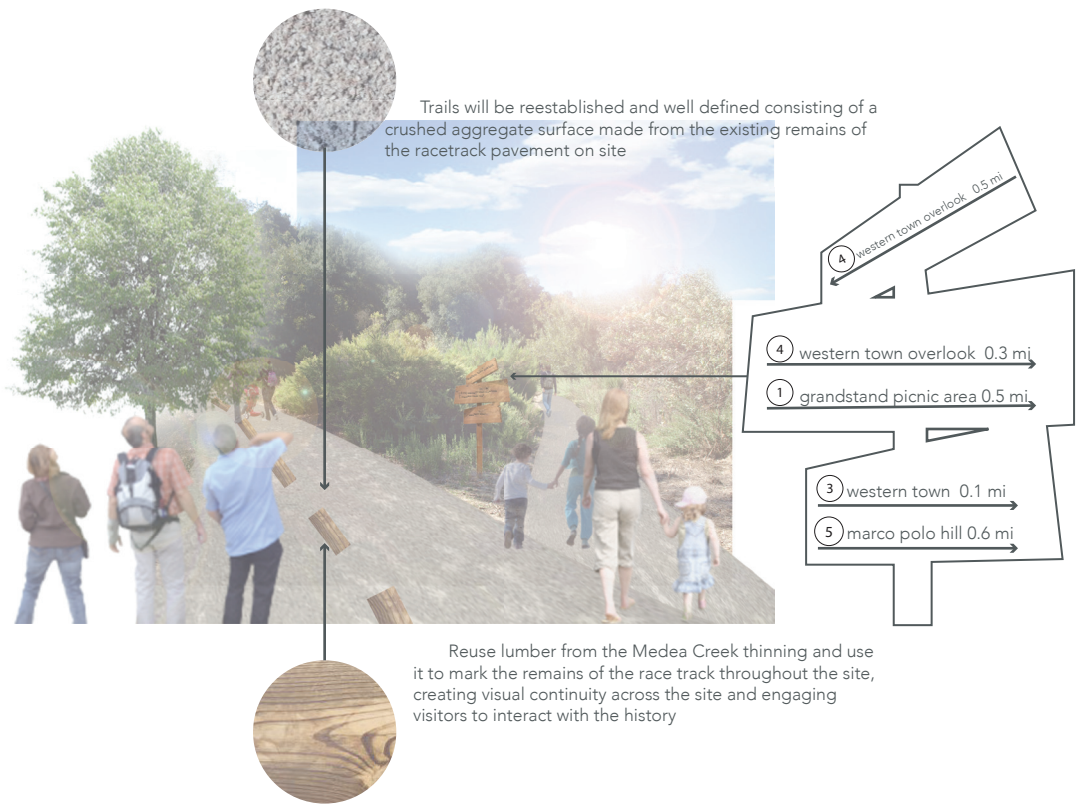
Access to Western Town Overlook has been adapted to be sure that everyone is able to reach this vista and understand and appreciate the complexity of Paramount Ranch as a whole. A small parking lot has been added along Mulholland Highway so every visitor is able to access the overlook regardless of their capability.

Two new bridges that span across Medea Creek were added to increase access between the West and East sides of the site. These additions give visitors more
options of routes throughout the site, allowing each visitor to have a unique and personal experience when visiting Paramount Ranch.





PERSPECTIVE A // South Trail Junction



VISUAL **ACCESS**

Paramount Ranch offers a unique landscape that was utilized to perfection during the golden age of film. The site can be transformed into an African Savanna, a rural Chinese field or small town Colorado.

To fully understand and appreciate the diverse landscape and rolling topography of Paramount Ranch a visit to the Western Town Overlook is a necessary destination for each visitor. The second way this design increases visual access across the site is the addition of two new access points across Medea Creek as well as acute thinning of the riparian vegetation around the creek. Currently the Medea Creek is a barrier between the West and East sides of Paramount Ranch.

By increasing the visual access at Paramount Ranch visitors will be encouraged to explore and engage across the site.

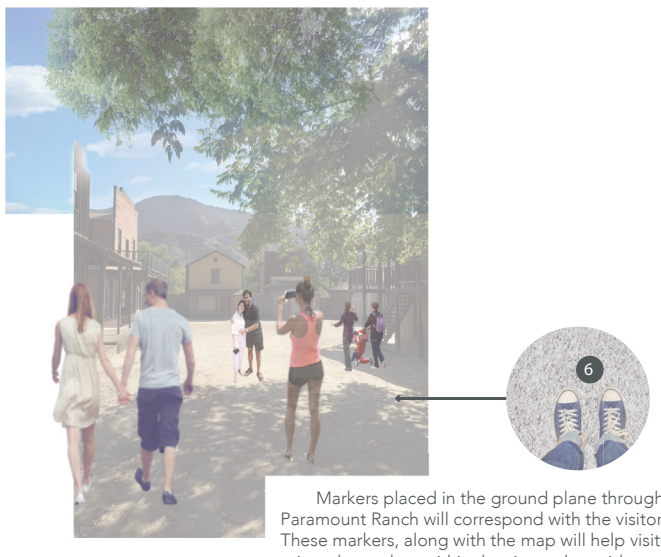
PERSPECTIVE B // Western Town



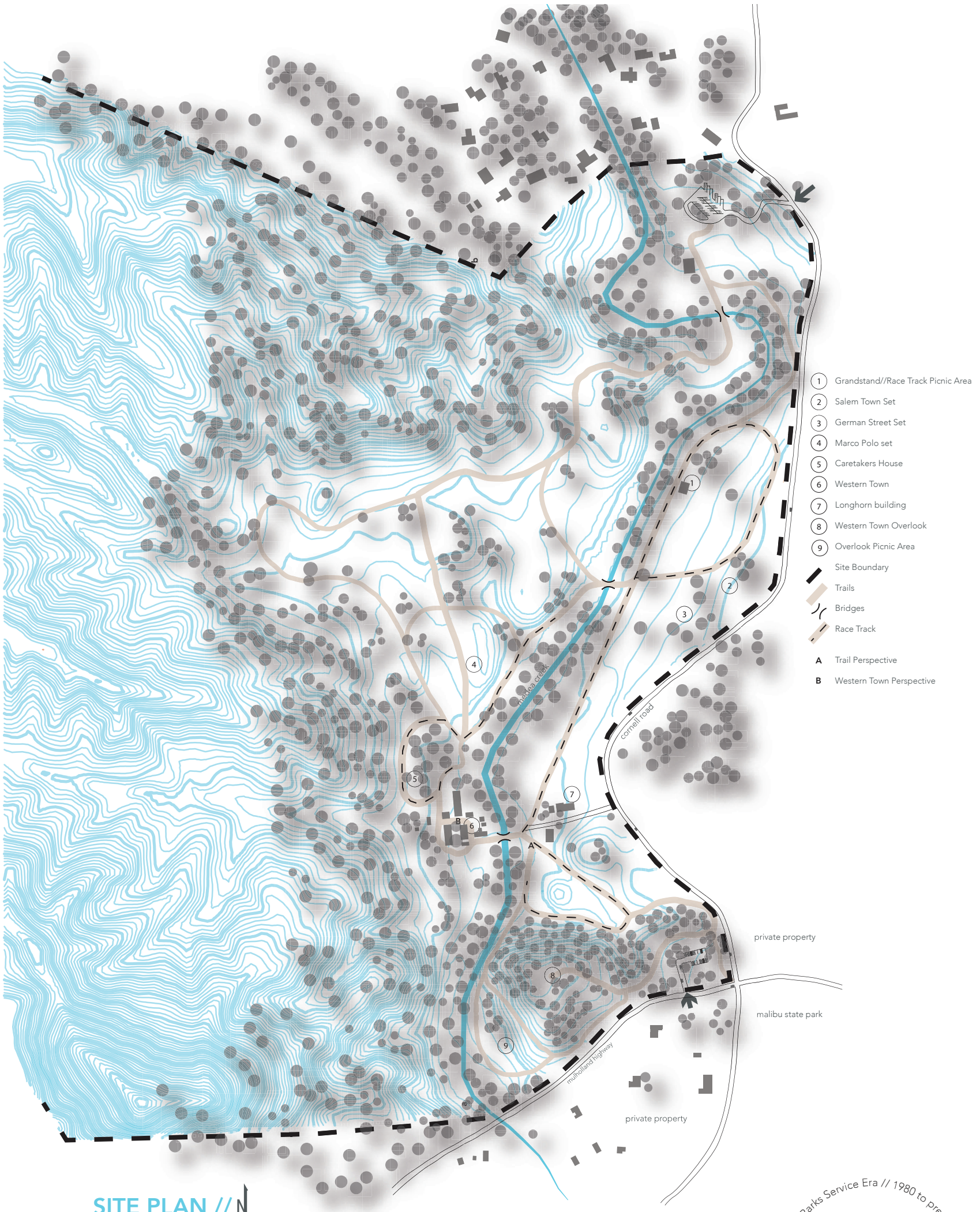
ACCESS TO HISTORY

The site requires a new way to access the rich history that Paramount Ranch has to offer. By utilizing web
mapping technology, visitors are able to engage and explore history more easily than ever before. The web mapping
application provides information and historic images of the different locations within the recreation area.

A printed version of the webmap will be provided to visitors to allow visitors without the capability to access the webmap to be able to engage with the history of Paramount Ranch.



Markers placed in the ground plane throughout Paramount Ranch will correspond with the visitors map. These markers, along with the map will help visitors orient themselves within the site and provide an easy way to connect where they are to the history that took place there



SITE PLAN // N



This design achieves a comprehensive and inclusive recreation area that engages visitors to explore by improving the **access** to existing **physical**, **visual** and **historical** features that Paramount Ranch has to offer.

Paramount Ranch
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

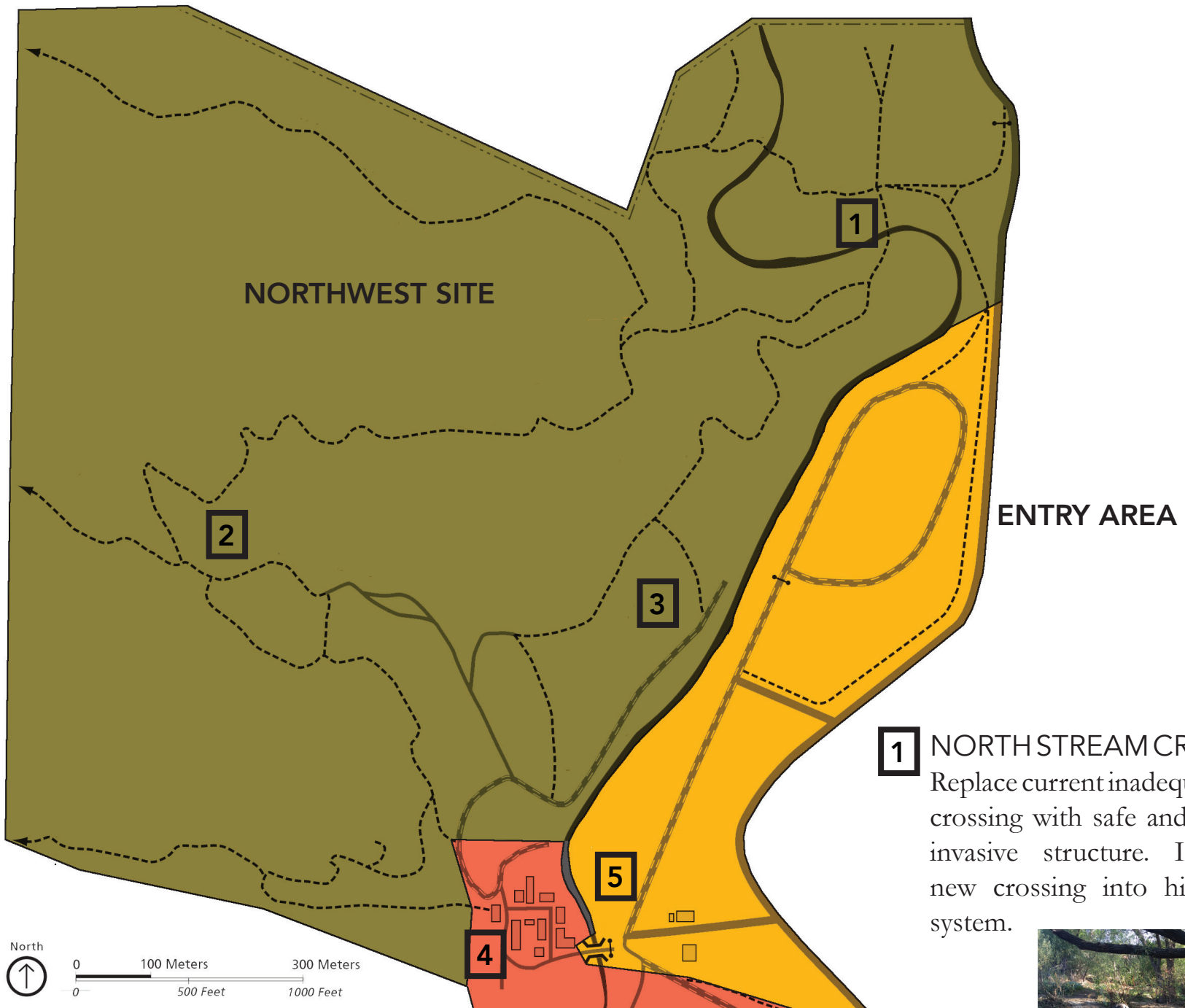
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Accessing Paramount Ranch

Callan Roemer

TREATMENTS

Sample recommendations to responsibly plan for the future of Paramount Ranch as a recreation area and a cultural landscape.



1 NORTH STREAM CROSSING: Replace current inadequate stream crossing with safe and minimally invasive structure. Incorporate new crossing into historic trail system.



2 TRAILS: Streamline trail system, remove defunct social trails, and reroute trails ending in private property. Incorporate Paramount-era roads into trail system, and denote their historical importance as part of interpretation strategy.





3 SET REMNANTS: Research provenance of set remnants and incorporate into interpretation plan. Relocation if necessary is permissible unless they remain in their original location.




4 LOG CABIN: Restore to original historical appearance, based on photographs and movie stills. Stabilize structure and adopt fiberglass preservation treatment strategy.





5 SIGNAGE: Provide signage to highlight the many layers of Paramount's historic sites and trails. Signs should be unobtrusive and sensitive to the landscape so not to interfere with future filming.






GOALS

ACCESSIBILITY

WAYFINDING - UNIVERSAL ACCESS

To provide a dedicated, guided, and intentional experience to visitors of all types.

LONGEVITY

MAINTENANCE - PRESERVATION

To plan for the future of Paramount's dynamic landscape and carefully manage changes over time.

INTERPRETATION

COMMUNICATION - EDUCATION

To effectively illuminate the context and history of Paramount Ranch

CONCEPTS

PERIODS OF DEVELOPMENT

NPS has identified the years 1927 to 1943 as the period of significant events for Paramount Ranch. **To frame Paramount Ranch's history through three periods of development dedicates attention to the many uses of the landscape over time and how future uses of the land can be historically congruent.**

PARAMOUNT ERA: 1927 - 1953

HERTZ-RECREATION ERA: 1954 -1980

NPS ERA: 1980 - PRESENT

INTEGRITY

The Secretary of the Interior defines historical integrity as the authenticity of seven main physical characteristics of a building, site, structure, object, or district. **Evaluating integrity at Paramount aids in understanding the landscape's extant historic features and informs appropriate levels of treatment and changes according to the authenticity of these elements**

SEVEN ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY:
FEELING - LOCATION - ASSOCIATION
WORKMANSHIP - SETTING - MATERIALS - DESIGN

- Paramount Ranch retains its INTEGRITY through aspects like FEELING, ASSOCIATION, LOCATION. and SETTING

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Landscape characteristics refer to the processes and physical forms that characterize the appearance of th a landscape and aid in understanding its cultural value. **Paramount's treatment recommendations are categorized by landscape characteristics to heighten awareness of the features and systems that define the landscape's historic character.**

LAND USE
BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES
NATURAL SYSTEMS & FEATURES
VEGETATION
CIRCULATION
SMALL SCALE FEATURES
SPATIAL ORGANIZATION
VIEWS & VISTAS
CLUSTER ARRANGEMENTS
TOPOGRAPHY

SOI TREATMENT STANDARDS

The Secretary of the Interior denotes four methods for the treatments for historic properties, preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. **Rehabilitation will provide Paramount Ranch with a plan for current and new uses of the site that are historically compatible, while successfully ascribing contemporary values on to the historic**

REHABILITATION: Making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, or additions, while preserving those portions or features which convey its cultural value

The historic Paramount Ranch sign is moved to the South-eastern border of the site. Keeping the sign in good condition instills a pride in Paramount Ranch. This is how it looks from across Mulholland Highway. A sign here helps to publicize Paramount Ranch as well.



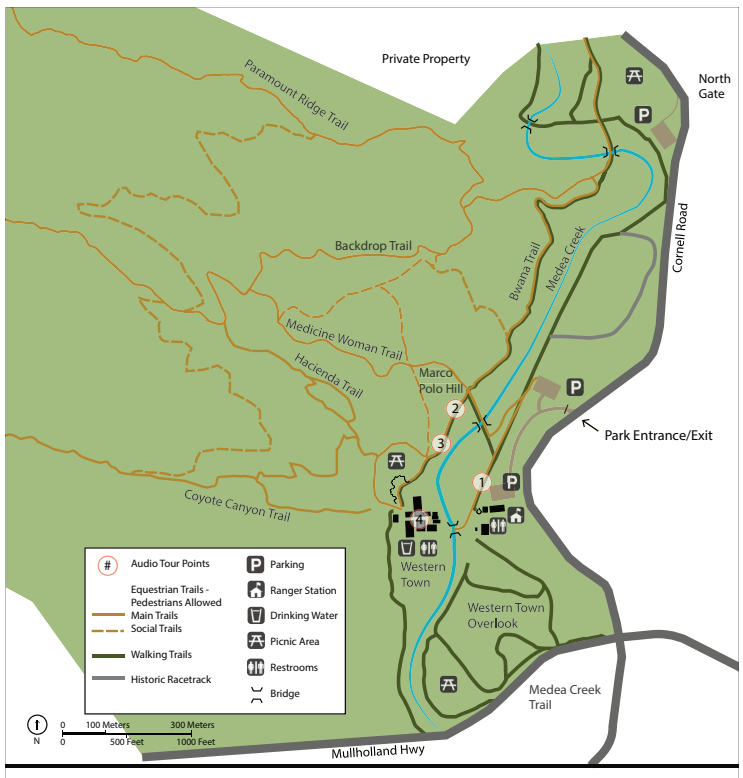


Visitors see the gateway from a distance as they drive along Cornell Road. As they arrive, the gate represents a sense of arrival. Visitors read the name Paramount Ranch and see a subtle hint of the landscape through the topographic line. This entryway design melds the historic and modern, representing the historic, present, and future of Paramount Ranch.

The driveway and parking is a subtle form moving through the natural landscape. It is unnoticeable from Cornell Road but distinct when driven through. The subtlety gives an emphasis to the historic race track. Trees as a buffer between Cornell Road and throughout the parking area are seen as a destination point and provide shade for the parked cars.



For visitors to understand and interpret Paramount Ranch, the map needs to be updated and inclusive to what is there. This map has routes that pertain to equestrians and pedestrians. It shows the points along the walking audio tour and gathering spaces around the Ranch. This is an example of the map provided to visitors upon visiting the Longhorn Building.



Trail Information

Directions to main parking lot (open 8am to sunset): Ventura Freeway (101) to Kanan Rd exit. South on Kanan 0.5 mile. Left on Cornell Way and follow to right. South 2.5 miles, entrance is on right side of road.

Many of the trail names are associated with over 80 years of film and television production at Paramount Ranch.

Audio Walking Tour *0.5 mile* - Create your own vision of Paramount Ranch through the landscape. The captivating audio tour brings history alive with the filmmaker's imagination.

Medea Creek Trail to Western Town Overlook *0.5 mile* - Enjoy a hike between willows and coast live oaks, then a gentle rise through chapparral to be rewarded by a stunning view of Western Town.

Coyote Canyon Trail to Hacienda Trail Loop *1.0 mile* - This hike features vistas of blankets of chapparral and the splendor of a riparian coast live oak corridor.

The Hacienda Trail *0.25 mile* - Named after a film set that featured a hacienda (ranch), this trail meanders along the perimeter of chapparral, and provides a vista of valley oak savannah landscape and surrounding hills.

Bwana Trail *0.75 mile* - The film *Bwana Devil* (1952), used this valley oak savannah as a substitute for the landscape of Africa.

The Backdrop Trail - *0.75 mile* - This trail winds through an area often filmed as a backdrop due to the absence of human-made structures.

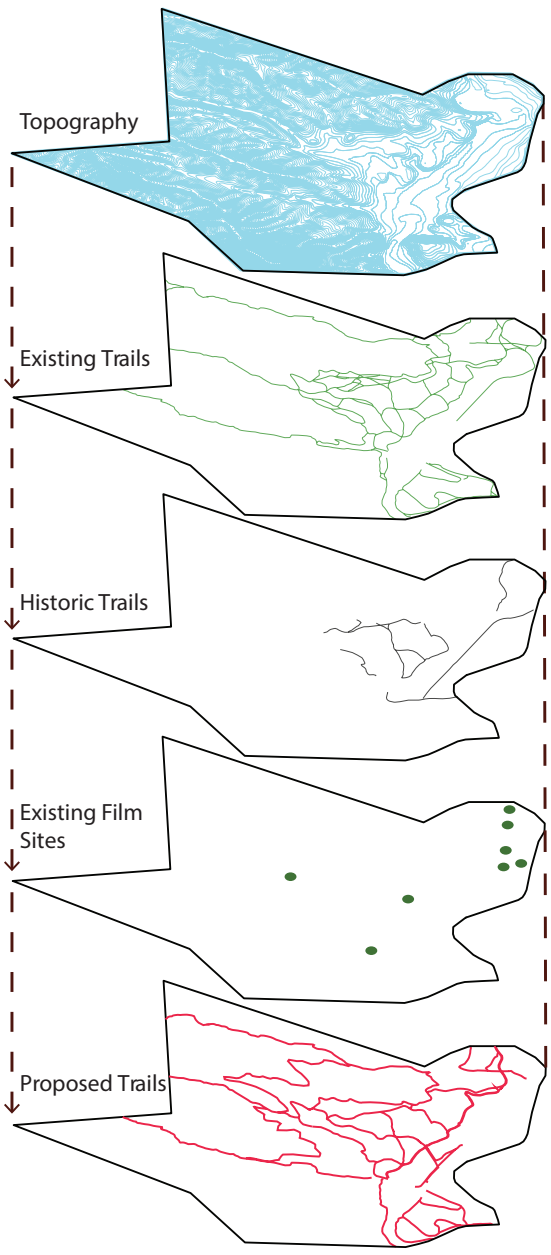
Valley Oak Savannah Loop *2.0 miles* - Combine the Hacienda Trail, Medicine Woman Trail (named for the television show *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman*), Backdrop Trail, and Bwana Trail for a gentle hike around the oak savannah.

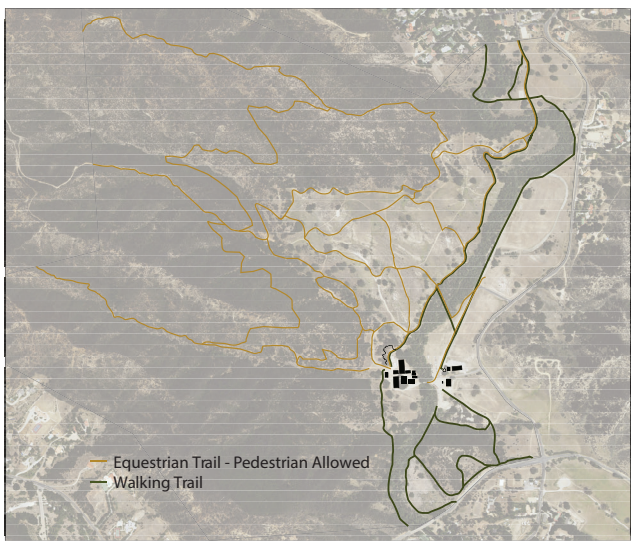
Other landmarks include **Marco Polo Hill**, named for *The Adventures of Marco Polo* (1938), and **Witches' Wood**, where fortune tellers gathered under the oak trees during the Renaissance Pleasure Faire (1970s - 1980s).

Other information about Paramount Ranch can be viewed at the information site near the Ranch's Station.

Equestrian Audio Tour Coming Soon...

* Trail system can change as new films are produced.





The locations in the movies produced on Paramount Ranch range worldwide, from Africa, to Vietnam, to Morrocco, and even the Pacific Islands. These are just some of the examples visitors experience on the walking audio tour.





Audio Excerpt: "Welcome to the Paramount Ranch. I'm (actor/actress name) and I will be your guide on this tour. You're about to embark on a journey through a history of films produced here on the ranch. During the tour, you will hear audio clips of various films. As we begin, please find a comfortable place to stand or sit. There is a shaded area right around the Longhorn building. Paramount Ranch is essentially a canvas bound by natural features. Movie makers have used this site from 1927 till the present to create imaginary settings to take movie goers to different places. As you listen to these clips, take the time to look around at the landscape and use your imagination. It is now your turn to experience this creativity for yourself. Please press play and proceed on the historic race track to a bridge crossing the Medea Creek. You can choose to use the suggested route from the map or explore on your own. As you move through the site, tap the images to hear other audio clips."





* The audio tour will be available via a cellphone app, or device that will be provided to visitors.

Design Statement:

The Paramount Ranch landscape serves as an ever-changing canvas for the film maker's imagination. Through the film maker's vision, we are able to experience scenes from different parts of the world. However, creativity and imagination is something that needs to be fostered for the current visitors of Paramount Ranch. The proposed design invites people to experience this landscape through the filmmaker's eyes. Visitors start looking at the landscape through the entrance. An audio tour that plays clips of various films produced on the ranch is available and helps guide people around the landscape. Gathering spaces help to direct visitors throughout the site. As they embark on a journey through their own interpretation and imagination, visitors will, with their eyes, begin to understand what is unique and special about Paramount Ranch.

Goals:

Guide visitors out into the larger landscape
Help people understand and interpret the landscape and its various uses.
Share with visitors a film maker's creativity.
Preserve memory in the landscape



The bridge across Medea Creek is used for both equestrians and pedestrians. A turn in the path seem like a curtain that opens up to the outer landscape.



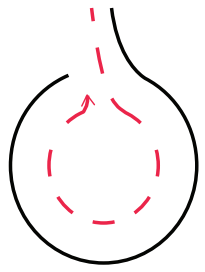
Removing the existing tree to the right, directs the visitors view to the outer landscape away from Western Town. This helps to show visitors there is more to the landscape than they might think. This is the view that visitors will see coming out through the riparian area.



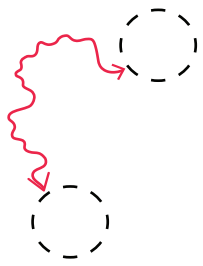


This form invites people to enter in and exit in a fluid way, acting like yet another ribbon in the landscape. This gathering space is more informational and is pocketed within the existing trees. Additional planting is necessary to create a more aesthetic gathering area. Signs are dispersed throughout the space sharing with visitors other information about Paramount Ranch.









The wall is a ribbon through the caretaker's site connecting Western Town to the larger landscape. Visitors are able to see it as they venture through Western Town. The serpentine form emulates the bends and turns of Medea Creek. It grabs their attention and invites visitors to explore the caretaker's site as well as the larger landscape. The winding of the wall creates pockets of landscape rooms. It is built out of the same rock that exists at the caretaker's site today. The wall of both gathering spaces are the same material linking each site with the other. A plaque is posted at the site of the caretaker's home celebrates this part of Paramount Ranch's history.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
School of Architecture and Allied Arts

Paramount Ranch

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Understanding Paramount Ranch through Individual Exploration

Kelsey Wai

35.



