

DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
School of Architecture and Allied Arts
University of Oregon
Site Planning and Design Studio, Fall 2016
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SANTA ROSA ISLAND RANCHING DISTRICT, CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA

*****IMPORTANT: THERE IS A REQUIRED STUDIO FIELD TRIP
PRIOR TO THE START OF THE TERM (September 17-22, 2016)**

MORE INFORMATION BELOW UNDER "SITE VISIT"



INTRODUCTION

This studio takes place at the Santa Rosa Island Ranching District (Vail and Vickers Ranch), Channel Islands National Park, off the coast of Southern California. The goals of the studio are to provide design vision, concepts and specific design proposals to NPS to advance visitor orientation, way-finding, and site interpretation while respecting and honoring the

character-defining features of this significant cultural landscape. We will work very closely with NPS personnel from the park and the regional office.

BACKGROUND



Santa Rosa Island is the second largest of the four northern Channel Islands, all of which lie in an east west line parallel to the mainland near Santa Barbara, California. It is located 26.5 miles from the closest mainland point, roughly thirty-five miles from the aforementioned city and fifty miles from Ventura, headquarters for Channel Island National Park. Santa Rosa Island measures approximately 53,500 acres or eighty-four square miles and elevations range from sea level to 1,589 feet. Surrounded by the sea, the island is dominated by a ridge of bare mountains with dozens of drainages leading in all directions to the ocean and channel.

The Santa Rosa Island Ranching District is significant as an intact nineteenth and twentieth century California sheep and cattle ranch. Its period of significance is 1873-1955. The vernacular landscape at the Vail & Vickers Ranch on Santa Rosa Island retains historic integrity and is in fair condition.

Island Chumash occupied Santa Rosa Island until the 1820s, carrying on a rich cultural tradition involving food harvest, crafts and trade with mainland tribes. Santa Rosa Island has long been of interest to archeologists and paleontologists who have made excavations on the island since the 1870s. Spanish explorers, notably Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo and Sebastian Vizcaino, recorded attributes of the island during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but left the native occupants relatively unmolested. The rise of the Spanish mission system has been credited with emptying the island early in the nineteenth century. Not until 1844 did two Anglo-Americans, related by marriage to the families recently awarded the island as a Mexican land grant, settle on the island and stock it with domestic animals. This marked the beginning of Anglo-American occupation that has lasted to this day. Livestock ranching is considered to be the oldest industry in California. The missions, pueblos and presidios of early Alta California kept herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. A demand for hides and tallow in the eastern United States and Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century brought income to Mexican land grantees and settlers of various backgrounds. The focus of the cattle industry changed with the Gold Rush and statehood, eliciting a need for beef and dairy products,

while a continuing need for wool only increased with the Civil War. The cattle industry bloomed especially in Southern California on the Mexican-era ranchos. A drought in 1863-64 devastated the state's livestock industry and contributed to the breakup of the ranchos while fostering, with the aid of rancher-influenced land laws, huge corporate cattle- and feed-raising, slaughter and marketing operations. The sheep industry faltered and largely failed by the turn of the century. However, the cattle industry continued to grow and has contributed in a major extent to the state's agricultural economy for more than 150 years.

STUDIO PROGRAM

This studio will address key and important activities, in close cooperation with the National Park Service.

1. **We will learn how to document and record cultural landscapes**, using the Main Ranch of Santa Rosa Island Historic District as our case study. This work will conform to established NPS cultural landscape guidelines, and will add to the baseline inventory of character-defining features that contribute to the significance of this cultural landscape. These will be small group projects.

2. **We will develop detailed design proposals** to advance visitor orientation and way-finding, and site rehabilitation within the Main Ranch. These will be individual design projects. Additional information will be discussed during the field visit in September.

While our design efforts will be focused on Main Ranch cluster of the historic district, our investigations and analysis will include the natural and cultural context of the entire island.

In addition, the studio will consider and include: NPS policies, procedures and guidelines; design precedents, both within and outside of the parks; cultural and ecological contexts at multiple scales; various materials; appropriate modes of representation and presentation; design at multiple scales

STUDIO GOALS

The studio has three broad goals:

1. Understand the current landscape conditions and resources at the Main Ranch. The studio will include detailed instruction on established NPS techniques and tools to understand and document cultural landscapes.

2. Develop both broad visions and detailed plans for sensitive and appropriate design at this important cultural landscape, with particular respect for its significant history and continued use by NPS personnel and visitors.

3. Closely coordinate these efforts with our project partners in the National Park Service.



STUDIO PARTNERSHIP

This studio is directly supported by the National Park Service Pacific West Regional Office and Channel Islands National Park. We will meet and work closely with NPS staff. These partners include Laura Kirn, Chief of Cultural Resources Channel Islands National Park; Yvonne Menard, Chief of Interpretation and Public Information Officer; and Vida Germano, Regional Cultural Landscapes Inventory Coordinator. Other NPS personnel will join in our discussions and assist in this project.

SITE VISIT

There is a **required** studio site visit during the week of September 17-22, 2016. The exact details for this trip are still being discussed but it will be within this timeframe.

We will fly from Eugene to Los Angeles, then shuttle from LAX to Ventura, and take a boat to Santa Rosa Island.

NPS will provide funds to cover all travel, lodging and meals for this trip. We will be staying at housing on the site.



RESOURCES

All studio documents and resources including schedule, maps, planning documents and important websites will be posted to the course folder on the AAA Server.

EXPECTATIONS

In addition to the usual requirements of studio participation and timely project completion, the field trip to the site is required. Studio schedule and format for submission of final work will be discussed in studio. All work will be submitted in both digital and analog formats.

This is a rare opportunity to directly impact the future of an important unit of the National Park System, and develop skills in cultural landscape work and site design. The studio requires a trip to the site during zero week (the week before classes begin in the fall), and **all expenses will be covered by the National Park Service.**

***** Once plane tickets are purchased they cannot be refunded, so please consider this requirement very carefully before registering for this studio.**

For more information: <http://www.nps.gov/chis/planyourvisit/santa-rosa-island.htm>