SANTA CRUZ
WORLD SURFING RESERVE
This book is dedicated to the Santa Cruz Surfing Museum and its many volunteers, who since 1986 have devoted themselves to honoring local surf history by collecting and displaying an engaging and educational array of videos, print media, surfboards, wetsuits and other artifacts. Housed in the Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse, overlooking the legendary waves of Steamer Lane, the museum preserves Santa Cruz’s rich surfing heritage for future generations.
Growing up in Santa Cruz as a surfer was an incredibly fortunate experience. I rode my first waves at the Rivertown on an inflatable mat, along with my parents and three brothers. This was back before Boogie Boards, and some days there’d be as many as 40 mat riders out there macking around, hating a ball. It was a magical time to be a kid, and the sense of magic only intensified as I grew older and came to discover that Santa Cruz was awash in great surf spots—one liquid playground after another.

Eventually my brothers and I talked our parents into buying a longboard from a guy named Otto, who operated a surf shop near the base of the wharf. We spent endless hours taking turns on that old log at Cowell’s. I’ll never forget the feeling of gliding across the bay on that heavy missile, absolutely filled with adrenaline while gazing up at the coastal range and its redwood forests running to the sea. Once I caught a bit, Indicators offered long, carveable walls for a quarter mile over a forgiving sand bottom. Up the point, you’ll find old-school chargers air-dropping into drawer, 15-foot, second-reef lefts. Across town, Pleasure Point also serves up a smorgasbord of options with an army of kids grooved coming from Serret Peak to Capitola. The waves here don’t have as much power in the Lane, but they make up for it with the huge range of choices: the alight shot rights at Serret Peak, the snappy little bowl with a wall at First Point, the long, flowing walls from Second Peak, and the longboard-friendly rollers of 38th Avenue (which can transform into a rifling barrel on a big south swell). Beyond that you have Randy-like stumps from the Hook down to Capitola, especially on a pumping swell. Between Steamer Lane and Pleasure Point is Midtown, also known as the city’s banana belt. It doesn’t have the long point waves, but it does offer the occasional gem, most notably the San Lorenzo Rivermouth. It may not break every year, but when it works—with a spitting peak that churns out draining rights and lefts—local surfers rejoice. If all this variety isn’t enough to make a surfer, father and devoted local, I'm heartened to see that so many people appreciate how special this coastline is, and grateful that some of my peers have put in the hard work to have it declared a World Surfing Reserve. Now, when I watch my own sons playing on these waves, it comforts me to no end to realize that their kids will someday be able to do the same.

No matter who you are, Santa Cruz has a wave that stretched between Natural Bridges and New Brighton, coming home. But regardless of where I go, I always look forward to returning to this wave, this place, to catch waves with my kids and the whole community. As a surfer, father and devoted local, I'm heartened to see that so many people appreciate how special this coastline is, and grateful that some of my peers have put in the hard work to have it declared a World Surfing Reserve. Now, when I watch my own sons playing on these waves, it comforts me to no end to realize that their kids will someday be able to do the same.
WHAT IS A WORLD SURFING RESERVE?

World Surfing Reserves (WSR) is an effort to identify and preserve the world’s most outstanding surf zones and their surrounding habitats. Drawing upon models established by UNESCO’s World Heritage Program and National Surfing Reserves Australia, WSR’s board of international experts forges partnerships with local surfers and environmentalists to select, enshrine and help protect valuable and historic surf spots.

Each WSR goes through four phases: nomination, selection, enshrinement and management. Eligibility is based on a strict set of criteria: quality and consistency of the waves within the surf zone; the area’s environmental richness and fragility; the spot’s broader significance to surf culture and history; and local community support. Once a site has been selected and prioritised, the WSR board helps locals form a council to draft a management plan that will enable them to act as ongoing stewards of the reserve.

World Surfing Reserves is first and foremost a public-awareness program—a way to communicate the essential value of a surf break to its local community and the rest of the world. Each WSR is also designed to provide locals with a well-publicised tool they can use to protect their favorite surf spots for decades and centuries to come.
Santa Cruz has earned the sheltered status of a World Surfing Reserve because of its diverse mix of surf breaks, its pervasive and deep-rooted surf culture, and its thriving but fragile coldwater habitat.

Most surfers who’ve spent any time in Santa Cruz agree that the quality, consistency and aesthetic appeal of its waves make it the best all-around surf town in the continental United States. The reserve’s seven miles of serrated coast features more than a dozen quality spots—from one of the West Coast’s best beginner breaks to a heaving deepwater peak where big-wave legends train. The wide array of points, reefs and beachbreaks suck in Pacific swells from all directions, and the prevailing winds blow favorably year-round.

Santa Cruz’s surf roots date back to 1885, when three Hawaiian princes rode hand-hewn redwood planks in waves breaking near the San Lorenzo Rivermouth—the first documented surf session on the American mainland. A small but devoted core of local surfers kept the sport alive through the first half of the 20th Century, but it wasn’t until surf fever swept from coast to coast in the 1960s that surfing became forever woven into the very fabric of the community. In the decades since, innovative Santa Cruz surfers and manufacturers—from wetsuit designers to surfboard shapers—have influenced wave riders worldwide.

Today, Santa Cruz is home to thousands of surfers, many of whom are devoted to protecting the coast from the ongoing threats of coastal developers and inland polluters. The success of these coastal stewards is evident to anyone who ventures near the coast here on a day when the sun is out, the wind is right, and a solid swell is running. From Natural Bridges to Capitola, the surf zone brims with hundreds of shortboarders and longboarders, groms and geezers, heroes and kooks—all vying for sets in the cool, green, kelp-rich sea.
A long time ago, in a decade far, far away, during a time called the Nineties, the City of Santa Cruz got swept up in a silly-serious debate with the City of Huntington Beach over which town deserved the official title of Surf City. Huntington Beach had its arguments. Santa Cruz had its arguments. In the end, the legal team prevailed, but not due to a lack of strength on Santa Cruz’s claim.

Anyone who knows anything understands that Huntington Beach has history on its side—from Jan and Dean to Chuck Dent to the Op Pro to Brett Simpson. But anyone who knows anything also knows that Santa Cruz has the surf on its side—and no small amount of history: from 19th Century Hawaiian princes to 21st Century vermin.

The surfing coast of Santa Cruz faces south, and the boundaries of the World Surfing Reserve (from Natural Bridges to Opal Cliffs) encompass about six miles of that coast as the seagull flies, and maybe a mile farther as the Prius drives. They are six or seven miles of that coast as the seagull flies, and maybe a mile farther as the Prius drives. They are six or seven miles of that coast as the seagull flies, and maybe a mile farther as the Prius drives. The surfer at Natural Bridges to Opal Cliffs is where a big piece of California surf history went down. On July 19, 1885, in the waves that broke at the east end of what is now called Main Beach, those Hawaiian princes were the first people in mainland America to be seen “surfboard swimming” on planks of wood.


Santa Cruz has the surf on its side—and no small amount of history: from 19th Century Hawaiian princes to 21st Century vermin.

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Any surfer worth his salt knows that California’s coastline, from any direction—and Santa Cruz will make good a point. It sits with its feet in the cool of the Pacific Ocean and its face in the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash. And almost exactly in the middle of the sun that arcs from Salinas to the green flash.

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In Santa Cruz, the ’50s were a colder shade of golden. The big, heavy hardwoods that went so well at Cowell’s were phased out by the balsa chips coming up from Southern California, and then by foam. Boards were down to 9 feet and 30 pounds—enough to support a man but light enough to allow women and kids to pick up the sport. The shorter, more maneuverable boards opened up new spots and new possibilities, from Mitchell’s Cove to the Wild Hook: long, peeling, high-performance waves that were perfect for the surfing and surfboards of the time. Santa Cruz surfing is all about variety, and during the 1950s, local surfers like the Van Dyke brothers, Mike Winterburn, George Olson, Rich Novak and a happy few others were joined by southerners like Ricky Grigg and Peter Cole—who were in school at Stanford—and Pat Curren, Buzzy Trent and other future big-wave legends from down south who loved the muscular walls of Santa Cruz. Big days at Steamer Lane were considered a master’s degree before going to Hawaii for a PhD in the “heavies.”

In 1959, Jack O’Neill laid one of the cornerstones of the surf industrial complex when he moved his family and his small but growing wetsuit business from San Francisco to Santa Cruz, where the weather was butter and the surf friendlier. O’Neill’s original product was neoprene-lined bathing trunks he made to keep from freezing his balls off while bodysurfing Ocean Beach. Now in Santa Cruz, O’Neill moved into longjohns, shortjohns and jackets. “I was just trying to support my family,” he would later say. O’Neill had good timing, because 1959 was the year Columbia Pictures’ Gidget looked back on the Golden Years around Malibu and effectively ended them, lighting the fuse of surf culture that would explode in the 1960s. While most of the surf culture boom of the ’60s was focused on Southern California—the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, Malibu and even Huntington Beach—the surfing population also grew in Santa Cruz, and with it came shops, manufacturers, clubs and contests. Santa Cruz and competitive surfing had a shaky relationship out of the ’60s and into the ’70s. In 1969, vandals pushed the scaffolding for an amateur contest over a cliff and then refused to clear the water when competitors for the first heat paddled out, calling them “goose-stepping pigs.”

But not everyone in Santa Cruz was adverse to competition or media coverage. In 1969, Roger Adams became the first Santa Cruz surfer to make the cover of Surfer magazine and a leading competitor on the Western Surfing Association AAAA circuit. In 1971 he finished second to Dru Harrison at the Santa Cruz 4A Invitational—now known as the “Cold Water Classic.” It is said that those who really experienced the ’70s in Santa Cruz shouldn’t be able to remember them. That may or may not be true, but of all the surfers, surfboards, ideas and trends coming out of Santa Cruz from 1970 to 1979, the one with the most lasting impact was the surf leash. Beginning in the late ’60s, a loose affiliation of Santa Cruz surfers that included Steve Russ, Pat O’Neill, Roger Adams and Michel Junod began experimenting with a variety of techniques to keep their boards from getting slaughtered by the rocks. “I broke three boards in a day surfing the Santa Cruz harbor,” Pat O’Neill would later say. “Back then the ding repair factories were busier than the surfboard factories.”

The first surf leashes were made of surgical tubing attached to suction cups on the nose of the board.
School, in the parking lot and at parties, in the water
also had funny nicknames: Condor, Flea, Skindog, college education in small- and big-wave surfing, from
Chris Gallagher and Adam Replogle.
Collins, Anthony Ruffo, Shawn Barron, Jason Collins, next crew of surfers: Peter Mel, Darryl Virostko, Ken
Van Dyke brothers and Karl Gallagher blazed paths
and Dave Schmidt, Vince Collier, Greg Bonner, the
versions of the modern aerial. Surfers like Richard
even a few decades ahead of his time – including early
boards and was doing things that were many years and
Reed. Thin, fast and creative, Reed rode paper-thin
of town. The most innovative among them was Kevin
to their boards. But the leash benefited experienced
ability. Anyone could surf anywhere, and before long,
ages on smaller days.

Throughout the ‘70s, for the first time, Santa Cruz
surfers began to make names for themselves outside of
town. The most innovative among them was Kevin
Rue; thin, fast and creative, Rue rode paper-thin
boards and was doing things that were many years and
and eventually conquering the heavies at Steamer Lane
spot an hour north in Half Moon Bay.
and, later, at Mavericks, the now-legendary big-wave
and clear skies all the way to the Salinas Valley, ride
you should do: On a solid west swell day with offshore
waves and clear skies all the way to the Salinas Valley, ride
your bicycle from one side of town to the other—from
opening is symbolic, because today Santa Cruz stands as
a world leader in several crucial facets of surf culture: big-
wave bravery, small-wave trickery, surfboard innovation,
and cold-water protection.

Almost exactly 100 years after those three Hawaiian
princes first rode hand-carved redwood planks in front
of well-dressed beachgoers, the Santa Cruz Surf Museum
opened—the first of its kind on the U.S. mainland. That
opening is symbolic, because today Santa Cruz stands as
a world leader in several crucial facets of surf culture: big-
wave bravery, small-wave trickery, surfboard innovation,
and cold-water protection. Unlike Huntington Beach, which has officially
trademarked the term “Surf City,” Santa Cruz has never
tried that hard to sell itself as a surf mecca. But if you’re a
visiting surfer and aren’t yet sold on the place, here’s what
you should do: On a solidswallow day with offshore
winds and clear skies all the way to the Salinas Valley, ride
your bicycle from one side of town to the other—from
Natural Bridges to Privates—by way of the Rivermouth and
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About Left and Right, and Below Left: Team O’Neill Through the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s. Photographs courtesy of O’Neill. (Below Right): Jesse Colombo. (Photo: Courtesy of Ryan Craig.)
NATURAL BRIDGES

Natural Bridges, or “NB’s” as it’s sometimes called, is as picturesque as a surf spot gets. Long fingers of flat, rocky reef bend northwest swells into well-shaped walls that range from playful to intimidating. On shore, birdwatchers compete with UC Santa Cruz Banana Slugs for towel space on the pristine white-sand beach. At higher tides, the inside section of the wave can produce a slurpy barrel that breaks over a shallow section of reef called the Tabletop, where faltering surfers often end up on dry rock faster than you can say “Westside pride.”

Type of wave: Righthand reef-point.
Bottom type: Rock reef with sand mixed in on the inside.
Best tide: Medium to full.
Wave conditions: From W to NW swells.
Wind conditions: Prefers little to no wind, stronger NW winds blow it out.
Wave height: 3 to 15 feet.
Surf type: Semi-challenging to reef grinder.
Surfing ability: Advanced.

SAVE THESE WAVES

The Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve encompasses more than 20 surf spots, from soft user-friendly rollers to heaving black-diamond peaks. Here’s a look at five of the most legendary.

SANTA CRUZ WORLD SURFING RESERVE

SAVE THESE WAVES

JOSH LOYA. PHOTO: COURTESY OF WILLIAM HENRY.
STEAMER LANE

Steamer Lane was named for the steamships that would thread their way through its offshore reef during the 1930s. It has been Santa Cruz’s central surf spot for more than 70 years now, and is one of California’s most consistent spots, comprised of four different breaks. The Point is directly under the Lighthouse and is best on a summer south or southwest swell. Lost boards almost invariably bash into the rocks at the Lane, which is why the surf leash was invented here. The Slot is a right section on the inside of the Point, and is an excellent performance wave. Middle Peak is a two-way peak that breaks farther out on big swells, with a meaty left and softer right. It’s a shifty, powerful, challenging wave that many have used as a preparation for Hawaiian and Mavericks. All of the big, disorganized energy washing in from Middle Peak rolls forward and re-forms into a long performance wall at Indicators. A perfect wave for modern, high-performance surfing. Indicators will also throw out a round barrel when it’s in the mood.

Type of wave: Right reef and point, with a left at Middle Peak.
Bottom type: Kelpy rock reef, with occasional sandbars as the seasons and tides ebb and flow.
Best tide: In general, a lower tide coming up is best, although usually variable on most tides.
Wave conditions: From S to SW to W/NW/N, extremely consistent.
Wind conditions: Prevailing northwestern wind blows offshore, east and south winds blow onshore.
Wave height: 1 to 15 feet plus.
Surf type: Gentle to thunderous.
Surfing ability: Intermediate to advanced.
COWELL’S

On the inside of Lighthouse Point sits Cowell’s—one of the best beginner breaks in the world, possibly second only to Waikiki. It’s not uncommon to find as many as 200 people in the water on a nice day: locals, visitors, Banana Slugs, Varmen, Vals, surf schools, rippers, trippers, SL/Perps, grommets and surfagomans. Cowell’s has been the incubator for Santa Cruz surfing since the 1920s. Its long, easy rollers were perfect for the unwieldy hardwood boards of the early 20th Century, and in the intervening decades many generations of Santa Cruz surfers have taken their first steps here before branching out to Steamer Lane, Pleasure Point, the Hook and beyond.

Type of wave: Soft, user-friendly rights.
Bottom type: Sand with some rock reef.
Best tide: In general, the lower the tide the better.
Wave conditions: From SW to W/NW/N swells; normally needs larger swells to break.
Wind conditions: Mostly protected from prevailing northwest wind, east and south winds blow onshore.
Wave height: 1 to 6 feet.
Surf type: Gentle.
Surfing ability: Beginner heaven.

MATT MAKUDA. PHOTO: COURTESY OF PATRICK TREFZ.
PLEASURE POINT

Pleasure Point concentrates a variety of breaks over a third of a mile of kelpy rock reef. A consistent wave that is open to swell from just about any direction, the point offers something for everyone. At the top, Rockview/Suicides is a right breaking off rocks into a sandy cove. Sewer Peak is the Black Diamond spot—a fast bowly right and a gnarly left off the main, powerful peak. Sewer Peak isn’t the longest wave along Pleasure Point, but it’s the most challenging and also the most competitive. First Peak is a longer, high-performance wave with a tight takeoff area and a mix of aggressive shortboarders and performance longboarders. Second Peak is a longboarder’s paradise and also a good place for intermediate surfers to work on their skills without getting in everyone’s way. On big days there is a Third Peak, and on the biggest days it is possible to ride a wave from outside First Peak all the way through to the wave known as Insides or 38th Avenue. On small days, 38th Avenue is a gentle beginner wave, but on bigger days, it transforms into a high-performance shortboard haven.

Type of wave: Right point and reef breaks.
Bottom type: Kelpy rock reef, with sandbars that come and go.
Best tide: Medium tides are generally best, although usually surfable at most tides.
Wave conditions: From SW to W/NW/N swells, consistent.
Wind conditions: The northwest winds blow side off shore, although strong NW winds can blow out the top of the point. Thick kelp outside the breaks provide significant wind protection.
Wave height: 1 to 15 feet
Surf Type: Easy to semi-gnarly and everything between.
Surfing ability: Beginners to superstars.
THE HOOK

Back in the ’50s, or maybe it was the ’60s, this spot at the end of 41st Avenue became known as the Wild Hook. Some say that name came from the fast, curling waves that were a challenge to the longboards of the day. Others say the name came from the thick kelp that would “hook” the deep skegs of the time. Regardless, what modern surfers now know as the Hook is the top of a point that runs all the way down to Capitola. That entire point is divided into the Hook, Shaka’s Cove, Pinto’s and Trees. The Hook itself has three breaks: First Peak, Second Peak and Third Peak. What was a beloved longboard wave in the 1960s is now a beloved performance wave for 21st Century shortboarders, but longboarders like it, too. Alaia flyers rave at the place, because without fins, they don’t have to worry about all the kelp.

Type of wave: Right reef and point.
Bottom type: Kelpy rock reef, with sandbars that come and go.
Best tide: In general medium tides are best; low tides cause skegs to catch kelp, and high tides swamp it out.
Wave conditions: From SW to W/NW/N swells.
Wind conditions: The Hook is more protected from the wind than Pleasure Point. The northeast winds coming out of the Santa Cruz Mountains blow offshore. South winds wreck the place.
Wave height: 0.5 to 12 feet.
Surf Type: Playful to challenging.
Surfing ability: Intermediate to advanced.
SITUATED ALONG THE northern edge of Monterey Bay, a little more than an hour’s drive south of San Francisco, the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve lies within the coastal waters of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Covering 276 miles of shoreline and 6,094 square miles of ocean (larger than Yellowstone National Park), this federally protected area extends, on average, 30 miles from shore. At its deepest point, the sanctuary reaches down 12,713 feet, or more than two miles. It is our nation’s biggest marine sanctuary.

The Surfing Reserve encompasses about seven of the sanctuary’s 276 miles of coastline, including world-renowned right-hand point breaks Steamer Lane and Pleasure Point. In all, some 200 square surf spots—point, reef, and beachbreaks, both famous and lesser known—fall within the reserve’s boundaries. South-facing, Santa Cruz is well-protected from Central California’s prevailing northwest winds while also open to any swell direction except extreme north. Most of its beaches are overseen by California State Parks, the City of Santa Cruz, and Santa Cruz County.

At Steamer Lane, surfers run past barking sea lions as they hustle toward the gladiator-like proving grounds where wave energy converges with abruptly sloping bedrock reefs. Here, world-class peaks are born. Often compared to those of the North Shore, these waves owe their existence to a fortuitous confluence of geology and oceanographic processes. The inner continental shelf near the reserve consists of flat sandy areas, faults, boulder fields, and complex bedrock ridges, the amalgamation of which provides the foundation for prolific marine ecosystems. Each spring when the northwest winds blow, cold, nutrient-rich waters rise up out of submarine canyons, nourishing lush growths of marine algae and surface plankton blooms. These provide sustenance for many invertebrates and fish, a key food source for cetaceans (whales, dolphins, porpoises), pinnipeds (seals and sea lions), and sea otters. Numerous species of sharks also inhabit the region, including blue, mako, and whites reaching more than 20 feet in length.

Santa Cruz is also home to the nation’s largest kelp forest, 33 marine mammal species, 94 seabird species, 345 species of fishes, 4 species of turtles, 31 phyla of invertebrates, and more than 450 algae species. An estimated 20,000 gray whales pass by Santa Cruz each December during their annual migration from Arctic feeding grounds to their calving grounds off the Baja peninsula. Blue, humpback, and killer whales are also frequently spotted off the coast. A total of seven species of whales are found in local coastal waters, including the less frequently seen minke, beaked, and fin whales.

Within the city limits, 30 miles of watercourses, creeks, and wetlands support diverse natural habitats, transport storm water, and protect water quality. Local flora and wildlife depend on no less than twelve habitat types for their subsistence. These range from aquatic to salt

**ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SANTA CRUZ**

**BY KELLY VANDER KAAY**

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The sinuous channel that cuts across the bedrock ridge appears to have formed by erosion, possibly during a period of lower sea level; the abrupt change in water depth over this channel causes the gaps between Steamer Lane’s second and third peaks. The vertical exaggeration is 5x.

Oblique view to the northwest toward Point Santa Cruz. The southwest-trending bedrock ridge is composed of sandstone of the Purisima Formation, which crops out in Point Santa Cruz. The ridge runs more than 4 km (2.4 mi) offshore and forms reefs that focus the waves that break southeast of Point Santa Cruz at Steamer Lane. The irregular pattern of the shallow seafloor to the west of the bedrock ridge is a field of boulders hypothesized to be resistant bedrock concretions eroded from the Santa Cruz Mudstone that crops out west of Mitchell Cove. The break southeast of Point Santa Cruz at Steamer Lane. The irregular pattern of the shallow seafloor to the west of the bedrock ridge is a field of boulders hypothesized to be resistant bedrock concretions eroded from the Santa Cruz Mudstone that crops out west of Mitchell Cove.

The Monterey Bay sea-otter population has decreased annually for the past three years, based on a running average. Nearly driven to extinction by fur traders in the early 1900s, they were designated as threatened by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in 1977. They now number approximately 2,700. The smallest marine mammal in North America, the sea otters are considered an indicator of the health of nearshore marine ecosystems, because they are relatively solitary and thus susceptible to contaminants. Kelp canopies serve as a primary foraging area for many sea otters, which consume kelp grazers like the sea urchin. This, in turn, enhances kelp growth. If other populations decline, urchins and other invertebrates can destroy kelp forests. This results in both increased potential for erosion on shore (kelp absorbs some of the energy of waves and storm surges) and loss of habitat for grey whales, sea lions, harbor seals, birds, and numerous invertebrates and fish.

Well known for the raw beauty of its windswept beaches, sandstone cliffs, and chapparral-covered slopes, Santa Cruz is just as breathtaking above water as it is below.
If surfers won’t save the world, who will? Obama? The G20? The United Nations? Is there some other global network of alert, persistent, environmentally aware individuals who are similarly trained in the art of navigating variables, overcoming adversity, and appreciating the rarities of perfection? Who else will do the work? Who else will uphold the vision?

It’s pretty ironic. Surfing is all about getting away from the constraints of society, breaking free and committing to the rule of natural law—the physics of wave form, the glide. Surfers are conversant with the wild, in touch with the natural world at a time when the natural world is increasingly remote from most people on the planet.

And yet here we are, using words like “criteria” and “nomination” and “enshrinement” and “stewardship.” Creating a chain of World Surfing Reserves may not in itself save the world, but it’s a step in that direction. By acknowledging the worth of a wave and its environs, we open communication between disparate parties that might not otherwise become engaged. And once communication begins, who knows where it will lead?

A WSR that is fully embraced at the local, national, and global levels—where it becomes an asset not merely for surfers and beach-lovers, but for the bioregional community of which it is a part—improves the quality of life of the whole.

The bubble provided by the WSR designation should act as a semi-permeable membrane, enabling sustainable activities while resisting the intrusion of the grosser monoliths of unchecked development, such as landfills, breakwaters and mining operations. The mere existence of the WSR will act as a tactical wedge that inserts itself into every future discussion concerning the destiny of the reserve area.

A WSR increases the chances of environmental synergy, integrating the principles of preservation, sustainability, stewardship, and cultural celebration. It permanently vests a surf spot with an intrinsic (and globally acknowledged) importance that locals already understand but may not be able to articulate.

World Surfing Reserves is about surfers saving the world, one wave at a time. And while it may not guarantee that a beach or a wave will be saved, it does forever commemorate the global surfing community’s demand that it must be.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WORLD SURFING RESERVES AND SAVE THE WAVES COALITION SINCERELY APPRECIATE THE EFFORTS OF ALL WHO HELPED MAKE THE SANTA CRUZ WORLD SURFING RESERVE AND THIS BOOK A REALITY.

Blue Ocean Supporters: Surfer’s Environmental Alliance (SEA), Santa Cruz Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation (75%)
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Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve Coastal Group: Surfer’s Environmental Alliance (SEA), Santa Cruz Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, Save Our Shores, Santa Cruz Chapter, Ocean Revolution, Santa Cruz Surfing Museum.

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For more information on World Surfing Reserves and to support the WSR initiative, please visit worldsurfingreserves.org or contact Save The Waves Coalition at info@savethewaves.org.

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