

June 29, 2009

Dear Sea Ranchers, Community Members and Visiting Friends

Many of you have asked for a clarification of the term "Mitigated Negative Declaration:" and whether this would be something that is favorable for the Sea Ranch Lodge Expansion Project.

Even though the terminology sounds ominous, the Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA) adoption of the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration at the July 23rd hearing would be the favorable and the desired result for the Sea Ranch Lodge Expansion Project. In essence, if the BZA approves the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration with the adoption of the mitigation measures that the Lodge has already agreed to, then the BZA will be declaring that the proposed Sea Ranch Lodge Expansion Project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

This would constitute important progress in our Sonoma County governmental approval process and our compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). During the last two and a half years, the Lodge has provided Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) with extensive reports prepared by professionals in the fields of biology, archaeology, geology/soils, hydrology/water quality, traffic and other matters. The desired result of this extensive research is that PRMD prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

As a bit of background, one of the main purposes of the CEQA is to inform governmental decision makers and the public about any potential significant adverse environmental effects of a proposed project and to identify ways that environmental issues can be avoided or reduced to a less than significant adverse impact level through the use of mitigation measures. Under CEQA, the analysis of a proposed project may take the form of a Negative Declaration, which is a report describing the reasons that a proposed project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. A Negative Declaration is prepared when the lead governmental agency finds that there is no substantial evidence that a project may have a significant environmental effect. A Mitigated Negative Declaration is a Negative Declaration that includes mitigation measures that the lead governmental agency has determined are sufficient to reduce any potential adverse impacts to a less than significant level.

We hope that the foregoing information provides sufficient clarification. We at the Sea Ranch Lodge continue to be grateful for all your supportive efforts on our behalf.

Greg Hagin
General Manager