EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ARTIST RESIDENCIES ON LOCAL LAND STEWARDSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF THE SITKA CENTER FOR ART AND ECOLOGY

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By
Jorie Lynne Emory, B.A.
Arts Policy & Administration Graduate Program

The Ohio State University
2009

Masters Examination Committee:
Dr. James H. Sanders, III, Advisor
Dr. Wayne Lawson
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Confronted with ecological urgency, many artists are increasingly addressing environmental and place-based issues in their work. Place-based artist residencies can provide support to artists, researchers, and writers whose work engage and negotiate a land stewardship, or performance of ecological ethics. What, then, is the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship? How do artists challenge the public to reconsider their relationships with places? In this thesis, I address these and other related questions through a case study of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology in Otis, Oregon, focusing on the Crowley Creek Collaboration, a multidisciplinary, place-based residency project. This thesis examines the organizational dynamics of an artist residency and considers how a local community engages in a residency-initiated exploration of place.
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VITA

2009..................................................MA, Arts Policy and Administration Program, Department of Art Education  
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

2005..................................................BA, Art (Art History & Studio Art)  
Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA

2008, Summer..................................Intern, Arts Programming  
Urban Arts Space, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

2007 – 2009.....................................Graduate Administrative Associate, Development Department  
Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH

2003 -- 2005.................................Director  
Student Access Gallery, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA

FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Arts Policy & Administration
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Laura Doyle
Pete Owston
Paul Katen
Corrina Chase
T. Allan Comp.
Katie Brehm
Bob Deason
Eddie Huckins
Jalene Case
Eric Vines

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Our personal relationships to history and place form us, as individuals and groups, and in reciprocal ways we form them. Land, history, and culture meet in a multicentered society that values places but cannot be limited to one view. (Lippard, 1997, p. 9)

How do our personal relationships to place affect our roles as land stewards? How do artists challenge the public imagination of “place”? These questions are central to my thesis and exploration of the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship. I define land stewardship as the thoughtful performance of an ecological ethic. As Aldo Leopold wrote in A Sand County Almanac: "A land ethic, then, reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land" (1970, p. 258). Land stewardship occurs both formally and informally across scientific and humanistic disciplines. By performing as stewards, artists have the incredible opportunity to reflect and act upon their relationship with the land.

Recognizing that artists need time and space to create new work, organizations around the world have developed residency programs to provide
artists with resources and support. Significantly, residencies offer artists opportunities to be creative in and about place. According to Caitlin Strokosch, Executive Director of the Alliance of Artists’ Communities,

Residency programs have always had a strong sense of place. Every one of them is so different in terms of their sense of place...It’s not just the buildings; it’s not just the natural environment. It’s all of these things and how they intersect. (personal communication, March 19, 2009)

Artists-in-residence often are inspired by, respond to, and interact with the local place of their residency. Some programs specifically encourage these interactions by fostering and facilitating place-based exchange and dialogue within their local ecology and community.

Institutional artist residency structuring and programming differentiates them from other arts organizations. By inviting different artists to live and work for short periods of time, residency programs can serve as active laboratories of creativity. When residencies encourage ecological and community interactions on organizational and programmatic levels, they demonstrate a commitment to local ecological stewardship. Such a standpoint recognizes that the residency institution is geographically situated and has a stake in the local ecology and community. This thesis asks: *What is the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship?* By conducting a case study of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology and their multidisciplinary residency project, the *Crowley Creek Collaboration*, I seek to better understand the advantages and disadvantages of an artist residency program that works on land restoration projects.
Characteristics of Artist Residencies

In this thesis, I discuss artist residencies as programs in nonprofit arts organizations. I will review their resident artist selection processes and explore programs involving artists of all media. These residencies uniformly offer housing, studios, and financial resources, as well as opportunities to engage the local community through collaborations, exhibitions, and/or performances.

*Nonprofit Arts Organizations*

Non-profit institutions are organizations designated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as charitable, cultural, and/or educational under subsection 501(c)(3) of the IRS tax code. Nonprofit arts organizations, such as artist residencies, do not distribute earnings to shareholders, as would a for-profit corporation, but reinvest funds into the programming and maintenance of their institution (IRS *Charities and Non-Profits*, 2008). According to Res Artis, an international service organization for artist residencies, there are a wide variety of arts organizations, tertiary institutions and artist-run initiatives that host residencies. For the purposes of this research, I am narrowing the scope of artist residencies to those that operate as nonprofit arts organizations and consider residency activities the organization’s primary function.

Successful nonprofit organizations are characterized by a number of qualities, which require continual assessment: a viable mission, a business-like board, and a professional staff (Brinckerhoff, 2004, p. 16). The mission of a
nonprofit arts organization defines the practice and purpose of the organization, guides constituency development, and clarifies the value of the organization in the community (Alliance, 2005a, p. 51).

According to McDaniel and Thorn (2005), organizational stability is connected to the dynamic balance between a number of elements which include leadership, vision, and process. They contend, “Professional leadership is the basis of continuity of any arts organization” (pp. 23-24). A thriving artist residency program relies on its professional staff, which often includes an executive director who is hired by the board, and professionals in the areas of development, marketing, and programming.

The vision and mission of the artist residency must be commonly understood by the professional staff and board, and be clearly articulated to the funders and community. McDaniel and Thorn argue, “There is no such thing as organizational values, only personal values of leadership,” and that the values of the professional leaders ought to be held so deeply and openly that the organization becomes inextricably intertwined with them in such a way that the organizational culture reflects their values (p. 24). As a nonprofit arts organization, the professional staff and board of artist residencies must work together to continually serve their mission as they create programming, determine their selection processes for artists, leverage funding, maintain facilities, and engage the local community.
Competitive Selection Process

Artist residencies generally select artists through an application procedure that is open to artists, with, or without deadlines. In a competitive application process, artists generally submit documentation or a portfolio of their work, curriculum vitae, an artists' statement, and a project proposal. Each residency has its own policy of adjudication, many which include peer review and evaluation. A review of Alliance of Artists’ Communities members’ application processes reveals that many residencies, in their selection process, consider:

- Quality of work as demonstrated through the artist's portfolio and practical experience
- The specificity and clarity of artistic goals as expressed through the artist's project description and artist statement
- Demonstrations of past collaborative work with other artists and arts organizations
- The artist's ability to teach and share their expertise
- The degree to which the residency benefits the artist's further development
- Direct connections between the artist’s goals and the residency’s mission, location, and/or programming (Alliance of Artists’ Communities, 2005a).

An application process may take up to six months, sometimes years to complete, before an artist begins his or her residency.

Artists of All Media

Artist residencies serve creative individuals of all disciplines, including visual artists working in all media, and performing artists like dancers, musicians, and actors. Residencies also support composers and choreographers, creative writers like poets and playwrights, architects and designers, scholars, historians,
ecologists, scientists, and more. The Alliance of Artists’ Communities reviews some of the artists that U. S. residencies have served:

You’ve most likely heard of the artists [residencies] have served, and some of the works that have been created there: Quentin Tarantino’s *Reservoir Dogs*, Aaron Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*, Gregory MacGuire’s *Wicked*; Ruth Reichl’s *Comfort Me With Apples, Tender At the Bone*, and *Garlic and Sapphires*; Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*; Michael Chabon’s *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*; Allen Ginsberg, David Sedaris, Marcel Duchamp, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Robert Rauschenberg, James Baldwin, John Lennon, Truman Capote, Bill T. Jones, Spalding Gray, Leonard Bernstein, Edward Albee, Langston Hughes, Liz Lerman, Sylvia Plath, Gwendolyn Brooks, Bob Dylan, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, and many, many more. (http://artistcommunities.org/about-aac/about-artists-communities)

Sixty-five percent of artists’ communities are multidisciplinary, bringing together not only artists working with different materials and forms, but also encourage collaborations between artists, researchers, scientists, community planners, and health professionals (http://www.artistcommunities.org/about-aac/about-artists-communities).

**Resources**

In the United States, artist residencies provide more than $40 million in direct support to artists each year in the form of stipends, travel allowances, materials and tools, studio space, lodging, and technical support (http://www.artistcommunities.org/about-aac/about-artists-communities).

Depending on the residency stipulations, the levels of support may range from nearly full residency underwriting to any combination of fees and expenses being waived for an artist-in-residence. A residency’s length of time also varies widely,
lasting from one week to several months or years, and ranging from absolute intensity to recurring and intermittent visits to the resident agency.

In addition to the time and resources that a residency provides, many organizations offer artists their first extended visit to a new place, sometimes a radical departure from their own experience or culture. A residency can open doors and create opportunities for the artist to build on in future visits (http://www.resartis.org/index.php?id=91&L=http%3A%2F%2Fen58.). Particularly for artists-in-residence abroad, opportunities exist for complete immersion in another culture, one that may potentially have a significant influence on an artists' work. For example, the Sitka Center developed the Founders' Fund residency for international artists, that Randall Koch, former Executive Director of the Sitka Center describes:

We had the Founders' Fund for artists of international stature that was happening periodically. We were now getting people cycling back into it who had come once and wanted to come back again, and they were important artists, so obviously it was meaningful to them because they wanted to come back after eight to ten years and experience it again, more meaningfully. They experienced it once and it had a great influence on them and they wanted to come again. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

Opportunity for Community Engagement

While artist residencies are commonly considered isolated retreats, more than 90% also have public programming that includes workshops, exhibitions, readings, open houses, and performances (http://www.artistcommunities.org/about-aac/about-artists-communities). The
expectations of both the artist and the residency sponsor may also vary widely. In some residencies, artists may be involved in the daily operations of their host institution, giving talks and lectures, presenting workshops, and engaging in formal teaching. Often times, residency institutions expect an artist-in-residence to exhibit or publicly perform the resulting artwork at the end of the residency period, perform community service, or collaborate with other artists. For example, engaging the public is a central goal of the McColl Center for Visual Art in Charlotte, North Carolina. The McColl Center presents “Art and artists in a way that engages and enriches the public while revealing the creative process through open studios, outreaches, community projects, exhibitions, and educational programs” (http://www.mccollcenter.org/site/nav.cfm?cat=14&subcat=65&subsub=30&CFID=5921650&CFTOKEN=ef4fdca9f8033096-5887604B-8A14-0C97-27C0A252ED1E07DA).

Some residencies make no such demands and provide artists with time to investigate their art practice in the context of a new culture (http://www.resartis.org/index.php?id=91&L=http%3A%2F%2Ff58.). Many residencies offer unconditional hospitality with the artist being free to use the residency for his or her own purposes, without any obligation, however, this model seems more like a retreat.
Site and Context: The Sitka Center for Art and Ecology

The Sitka Center for Art and Ecology is an artists’ community located in Otis, Oregon, a small, rural town on the central Oregon coast. Founded in 1970, it is one of the oldest known artist residency programs to focus on creating art in and about the local environment. The Sitka Center is governed by the Neskowin Coast Foundation, a nonprofit organization, and is guided by the following mission:

The mission of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology is to expand the relationships between art, nature and humanity through workshops, presentations, and individual research projects, and to maintain a facility appropriate to its needs that is in harmony with the inspirational coastal environment of Cascade Head. (Sitka Center for Art and Ecology Resident Resources)

Visual and performing artists, writers, and ecologists from around the world visit the Sitka Center to create new artwork, or may partake in ecological activities through summer workshops, year-round residencies, and site-specific projects, such as the Crowley Creek Collaboration (http://sitkacenter.org).

The Crowley Creek Collaboration (CCC) is an experimental, collaborative project begun in 2003 by artist-in-residence T. Allan Comp to explore the possibilities of a deep investigation of “place.” Comp holds a doctorate in the history of technology and American economic history from the University of Delaware and has worked for most of his career in historic preservation and environmental reclamation. Currently, he works with the United States Office of Surface Mining where he supports local communities dealing with the
environmental and cultural devastation caused by coal mining in Appalachia. Based on this work, Comp has developed several projects across the country (such as the CCC) that have dealt with place-making and collaboration, and the role of the Arts and Humanities in environmental reclamation (http://www.greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=218). My research examines the Sitka Center in general, and the CCC in particular, as an example of direct land stewardship within an artist-in-residence context.

The Sitka Center is an ideal site in which to conduct a case study designed to examine the role of artist residency programs on local land stewardship. Nestled within the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area, a federally protected stretch of pristine coastline which features the geographically prominent Cascade Head and Salmon River estuary, the Sitka Center is surrounded by land that is owned and managed by the United States Forest Service and the Nature Conservancy. The Sitka Center sits on a small parcel in the Cascade Head Ranch, which is the only permitted planned residential development on Cascade Head. The wide variety of land use policies among the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area, U.S. Forest Service, Nature Conservancy, and Cascade Head Ranch creates a dynamic, multilayered web of land stewardship practices into which the Sitka Center introduces artists to interact and respond with creative artwork.
In Chapter Two, I review the literature on artist residency programs and environmental art. Focusing on reclamation art, and how different residency programs approach multidisciplinary projects involving art, ecology, and community, this chapter provides background data informing my case study.
Additionally, I will review the work of artist and historian T. Allan Comp, whose award-winning reclamation art projects continue to build upon his visionary ideas of multidisciplinary reclamation work.

Within Chapter Three, I disclose my subjective position within this research and then discuss my research methodology and design, describing my data collection methods as they have been developed and influenced by previous qualitative researchers. Through interviews, document analysis, participant observation, and participatory photography, this case study seeks to develop a deep understanding of how the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology works and the role it plays in local land stewardship. I will explore why I use qualitative and narrative research, and will situate my use of a single-case study. Lastly, I will describe the timeliness and relevance of this research.

In Chapter Four, I more fully describe the research setting and introduce the research participants. I will present the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology within historical, organizational, and geographical contexts, and describe my interview participants’ roles within the Sitka Center. Drawing from interview testimonies and organizational documents, I present data informing a reader’s foundation for understanding the Crowley Creek Collaboration.

In Chapter Five, I present findings resultant from deeply exploring the development and realization of the Crowley Creek Collaboration, an initiative central to this case study. I will discuss how the Sitka Center seized specific opportunities in order to facilitate a project aimed at profound understanding of a local place through interdisciplinary collaborations. I will look at the planning and
implementation of the Crowley Creek Collaboration, and will also describe its evolution, organizational challenges, and collapse of communication both internally and externally. This complicated set of developments resulted in the project's (un)intended outcomes.

In Chapter Six, I analyze data findings, establishing the overall themes and patterns found in interviewees' testimonies, disclosed in organizational documents, and physically observed as I explored the historical, cultural, and geographic features of the Sitka Center and the Crowley Creek Collaboration. Drawing from the data that is presented chronologically in Chapters Four and Five, I deeply examine thematic elements producing success and/or contentions within/for the Crowley Creek Collaboration and the Sitka Center.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, I conclude this case study with a discussion about the Sitka Center and Crowley Creek Collaboration relationship and its implications for the future of ecological and place-based art and artist residencies. I will suggest the ways in which this research might be valuable to the field and will recommend additional research that might deepen social, ecological, and aesthetic understandings of artist residencies that work toward ecological stewardship. Finally, I will acknowledging the tensions that I experienced as the researcher in this case study and offer the ways the research has impacted me as an artist, environmentalist, and scholar.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW:
ARTIST RESIDENCIES AND ART/ECOLOGY

In this chapter, I review artist residencies and further define the scope of my research on the performance of environmental work within residency organizations. After discussing the types and terminologies of artist residencies, I contextualize the interface of residencies with ecological concern by reviewing the literature on art and ecology, and focusing on reclamation art. Finally, I introduce the work of artist and historian, T. Allan Comp, whose leadership on projects in Appalachian coal mining country has produced celebrated models for creative, post-industrial reclamation.

Defining Artist Residencies

There is an expansive continuum of places, situations, and arrangements wherein artists are given the time, space, and resources to create new artwork. Outside of private, individual, or religious patronage, residency is the most widely-used term that describes the activities within this continuum. Caitlin Strokosch, Executive Director of the Alliance of Artists’ Communities, describes
*artist residencies* as research-and-development labs for the arts that provide time and space where artists can develop new work apart from distractions, public scrutiny and expectations, in environments that encourage experimentation and risk-taking that challenge our ideas (http://www.artistcommunities.org/resource-library/articles/artists'-communities-make-case-for-public-worth). *Residencies* can also refer to an arrangement where “an institution or group invites an artist to visit its facility to showcase not only finished artworks but how he or she created them” (Grant, 1996, p. 12). Kevin Stephens defines *residencies* as:

Schemes in which artists of all kinds—poets, composers, dancers, painters, craftspeople, photographers, film makers, and so on—work outside their ‘normal’ working circumstances and in contact with people who may not be considered an ‘arts audience’ in any conventional sense. (2001, p. 44)

Beyond “arrangements” and “schemes,” *residencies* often refer to the organizations themselves that invite artists to live and practice their art for a period of time, away from their usual environment, allowing them to investigate an art practice by involvement in another cultural, geographic, or ecological community (http://www.resartis.org/index.php?id=91&L=http%3A%2F%2Ff58). *Residency* programs can be opportunities that allow artists to stay and work elsewhere ‘for art’s sake’ (http://www.transartists.nl/about/aboutair.html).

Residencies are also sometimes called *retreats, colonies, collectives, cooperatives,* or school-based *artists-in-residence.* While these terms are often used interchangeably, there are specific connotations and challenges associated with each. The Alliance of Artists’ Communities provides definitions and descriptions of several common labels and advises, “Whichever term is used, it’s
important to have a clear definition and description of what the organization does to follow the organization’s name” (2005b, p. 2). Using these definitions, I narrow the way in which I use the term *residency* throughout this thesis.

*Artists’ retreats* are for-profit businesses that offer people relaxing, private places to dabble in the arts. Often offering art workshops, admission into *retreats* are not based upon a competitive application process. For example, the Sweetland Artist Retreat and Bed & Breakfast in Manchester, Maine promises visitors a “rural, relaxing setting where they can experience the way life should be” (http://www.sweetlandretreat.com/). When applied to residency activities, this term can be problematic because *retreat* is more similar to a vacation than the other terms (like *residency, community or collective*), that describe places where artists go to work (http://www.artistcommunities.org/files/files/Making_the_Case.pdf).

An *artists’ colony* connotes a particular model of institution--rural, isolated, removed from the public--though the term has been used to describe a town or area where many artists have historically gathered (http://www.artistcommunities.org/files/files/Making_the_Case.pdf). *Colonies* typically involve many artists living and working together, for short or long periods of time. An example, the MacDowell Colony, in Peterborough, New Hampshire, was founded in 1907 to provide a space “where artists could work in an ideal place in the stimulating company of peers” (http://www.macdowellcolony.org/about-History.html). The MacDowell Colony
operates much like a residency, except in that many artists, more than 250 each year, are able to occupy and work there simultaneously.

Artists’ collectives and cooperatives both thrive on peer support, disciplinary collaboration, and the prospect of greater exposure through group identity. Keeley (2008) describes collectives as exclusive groups of artists, collectively managed and bound by a similar mission or aesthetic quality (p. xii). Craig (1993) defines artists’ cooperatives as, “any joint or collaborative behavior that is directed towards some goal and in which there is a common interest or hope of reward” (p. 11). Keeley’s examination of artists’ cooperatives shows that:

These groups are based on cooperative management in order to share resources members could not obtain on their own. Artist cooperatives generally have open membership and rely on member dues and volunteer time to manage a space or collection of equipment. (2008, p. 19)

Collectives and cooperatives differ organizationally from residencies in their focus on shared resources, peer collaboration, and collective management.

Although the term artist-in-residence is often used broadly to describe any artist participating in any residency program, there is a significant body of research that deals with artists-in-residence as “direct interactions between artists and students, with their teachers in a school setting” (Silverstein, 2003, p. 10). In this context, the term refers specifically to artists working as visiting teachers in K-12 schools, sometimes in partnership with arts organizations. Artists have acted as performers and demonstrators of their craft, and as mentors to young students with artistic talent (Remer, 2003, p. 69). These types of activities that supplement school’s arts programs, through thematic and/or
disciplinary art classes taught by visiting *artists-in-residence*, are a distinct phenomenon within the Art Education discourse, one which is outside the scope of this research.

When the term *artist-in-residence* appears in this thesis, it refers to an artist participating in a program within a nonprofit arts organization that, through a competitive selection process, provides artists of all media with time, housing and studios, financial resources, and the opportunity to engage the local community through collaborations, exhibitions, and/or performances.

**Artist Residences and Local Ecology**

The inherent qualities of an artist residency—those common characteristics of ample time, space, and resources situated in an encouraging and inspiring atmosphere—easily lend themselves to creative inquiry and response to the local environment. Whether as a solitary retreat or a communal collaboration, in isolated wilderness or the busiest urban centers, an artist-in-residence may create a body of work which directly responds to a given environment. Artists often describe this “sense of place” as being a significant influence in their residencies (Strokosch, 2005, http://www.artistcommunities.org/resource-library/articles/the-convergence-of-art-science). Site-specificity and place-based creativity are often at the heart of thematic programming for a residency. Strokosch states that artist residencies “recognize that they are part of and inseparable from their local ecology, and they
often have a natural connection and commitment to their ecologies” (ibid, para. 7).

Increasingly, as the ideas at the intersection of art and environment expand and develop, many artist residencies are embracing an organizational mission that encompasses a stewardship role towards the local environment. According to the Alliance of Artists’ Communities, more than seventy-five percent of artist residencies are involved in ecological or land-based stewardship activities of some kind. One-fifth of all residency programs, including the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, are located on or adjacent to protected lands (including national parks, nature preserves, and conservation easements), which artists-in-residence may access (http://www.artistcommunities.org/about-aac/about-artists-communities).

The Sitka Center for Art and Ecology is one of a handful of artist residencies throughout the United States and abroad that exclusively support artists whose work deals intimately with nature, local ecologies, and sustainability through traditional and multidisciplinary methods and media. Through their organizational structure, programming, and expectations may vary widely, residencies such as A Studio in the Woods, Art Farm, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, Caldera, and I-Park all provide artists with the resources they need to deeply investigate “place.”

Located on the Mississippi River in New Orleans is Tulane University’s Center for Bioenvironmental Research. A Studio in the Woods is dedicated to preserving the endangered bottomland hardwood forest, and in providing a
peaceful retreat within it where visual, literary and performing artists can work uninterrupted. Programming includes community workshops in the arts and environmental preservation, and an outdoor classroom where school children and university students can experience and study the natural world. A Studio in the Woods fosters both environmental preservation and the creative work of all artists (see http://astudiointhewoods.org/about.htm).

Operating as an artist residency program since 1993 in Marquette, Nebraska, Art Farm offers artists an opportunity to live and work in a rural environment. Working in converted traditional agricultural buildings and experimental structures, resident artists have creative interactions between ideas and the environment (see http://www.artfarmnebraska.org/about.html).

The Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI) supports an artist-in-residence program for artists, filmmakers, writers, geographers, and researchers. Located in the desert town of Wendover, Utah, its residencies usually last between three and eight weeks with residents frequently returning for multiple visits. The main purpose of the residencies are to promote the creation of experimental work in the field, culminating in site-specific work that explores the different cultural, environmental and geographical themes of Wendover and the surrounding salt flat desert. Resident artwork, films, photos, and research are complied into CLUI-curated exhibitions, both in Wendover and at their headquarters in Los Angeles (see http://www.clui.org/clui_4_1/alm/wendapp.html).
Caldera, located in Sisters, Oregon is a catalyst for transformation through innovative art and environmental programs. In fall of 2001, Caldera began awarding residencies to artists and writers in the hopes of supporting the creative process and contributing to the cultural life of the region and the nation. Caldera’s month-long residencies give professional artists the gift of time and creative workspace at their facility in the Oregon Cascade Mountains (see http://www.calderaarts.org/#/page_id=7&article=14/).

New in 2009, I-Park will host an international environmental art program on the grounds of its 450-acre artists’ community in rural East Haddam, Connecticut. The program will consist of two, two-week focused residency sessions comprised of environmental artists, landscape/garden designers, and other visual, music, and performance-based artists whose work engages the natural landscape. Artists will be awarded a grant of $1,200 plus up to an additional $1,000 for reimbursement of travel costs and/or materials. Artists/designers are invited to submit proposals for site-specific works on or about the land. Twelve artists/designers will be selected by a three-person independent panel. Artists will be given space on the land to realize their environmental projects (http://www.artistcommunities.org/news-and-events/news/2009/01/new-environmental-art-residency).

In these brief descriptions of select residencies, I have provided a review of key characteristics and project/residency initiatives that may serve as a basis for comparing and contextualizing in which to place the Sitka Center among peer organizations. Within environmentally-concerned residencies, there exists a
continuum of residency activities and programs; ranging widely from the isolated artist retreat with little community interaction and expectations that resident artists will create new work in response to the natural condition (usually pristine nature) of their surroundings, to a more integrated model where the resident artist is deeply involved in local, ecological, and community-based work. The Alliance for Artists’ Communities, founded in 1991 in San Francisco, is the service organization for the field of artists’ communities and residencies in the United States. Now based in Providence, Rhode Island, the Alliance of Artists’ Communities researches, networks, and advocates on behalf of residency programs, including artist residencies throughout the wide array of environmental artist residency models.

Art/Ecology

Artists have long been investigating and responding to any number of landscapes, land uses, and cultural/social/political/economic qualities of our individual and collective relationships to the land. Environmentally sensitive artwork since the 1960s has been categorized under several names: Land Art, Earthworks, Environmental Art, and Eco-Art, among others (Tufnell, 2006, p. 15). Amidst the subtle differences between these labels there exists an explicit lack of cohesive vision, shared methods or motivations, or common manifesto.

Art historically-speaking, Land Arts and Earthworks emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s as a new wave in art—a direct response to the last gasps of Minimalist sculpture, and an escape from the market-based commodification of
art in the galleries and museums—a more idealistic, open inquiry of the vast expanse of the American West (Beardsley, 1998, p. 13). Since then, art and environment have enjoyed a thriving marriage, deeply theorized, rigorously investigated, and justifiably problematized.

Arts organizations, museums, and scholars are exploring trends in the multifarious, multi-centered field of inquiry that broadly encompasses art, design, ecologies, place, and communities. As Lippard points out:

Human creativity is an integral part of the web formed by land, history, culture, and place. Artists are looking around, more and more, to record what they see or would like to see in their own environments. In addition, they are broadening their horizons by reading in the fields of cultural geography and cultural studies, sociology, folklore and literature. Some have gone beyond the reflective function of conventional art forms and beyond the reactive function of much activist art. The potential of an activist art practice that raises consciousness about land, history, culture, and place and is a catalyst for social change cannot be underestimated... (1997, pp. 18-19)

More significant, relevant, and multidisciplinary than any art historical genre, the issues and ideas that lie at the intersection of art and environment are subject to and inviting of rigorous and creative scrutiny. The internet has become a valuable source of up-to-date information on the development of new art, publications, programs, and conferences, as well as a site for scrutinizing and analyzing new initiatives. Blogs and social networks, in particular, are providing a useful forum for dialogue and outreach.

According to Smudge Studio, an interactive media initiative that mediates the art/environment divide, there is great potential in the “Emerging ‘field | practices’ of land arts + land use interpretation + artists + (built) environments +
design” (http://smudgestudio.blogspot.com/2009/04/its-big.html). In teasing out some characteristics of this emerging field, Smudge Studio has determined that:

It's big. It's big as in ... it's important. Significant. Perhaps revolutionary. And its momentum is only growing. It breeches institutional walls, ways, and habits. It revisions, rewrites, and relocates "boundaries" and "borders." Far from static or definitional, it embraces movement--even elevates it to a research and aesthetic methodology. It is at the forefront of exploring what new ways of thinking and knowing emerge when scientists and artists collaborate. It stitches together disparate geographic communities, ecologies, perspectives and embodied experiences. It engages new pedagogies that assert the pedagogical value of travel combined with the rigors of fieldwork and the primacy of one's own reaction to places and events. Theory isn't enough. This field is in the fieldwork. It is in the doing and in the making. It combines aesthetic and scientific methodologies that flow into visuality and the arts. It takes seriously the material aspects of processes such as research and creative response. (http://smudgestudio.blogspot.com/2009/04/its-big.html)

Significantly, this area of creative inquiry and collaboration between the arts, sciences, and communities is open, unlimited and transdisciplinary. For the purposes of my research, I will adhere to the term art/ ecology to describe this contemporary phenomenon of creative interconnectedness. This term is derived from Crowley Creek Collaboration participant, Eddie Huckins' label artecology. He described artecology as the true blending of art and ecology and:

"The “science of art of science.” That holding this all together is the emotional part of us, the motivations that we may not want to address within the science, but when we really let down our guard, we get more insight than just looking at the hypothesis and the null." (Huckins, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

My interpretation of artecology, for the purposes of this research, is better demonstrated by my own punctuation in art/ecology, which avoids the use of any connecting word (and, or) while acknowledging the ongoing wrestle between the
compartmentalization of disciplines and holistic initiatives that are multi- and trans-disciplinary. *Art/ecology* is a union between artwork and ecological work that deals with disciplinary bias and entrenched modes of valuing and working.

*Reclamation Art as a Performance of Concern*

Reclamation art and land reclamation projects have emerged within art/ecology as community-based, interdisciplinary, and restorative solutions to ecological devastation. Across the United States, there are many places devastated by natural resources exploitation (Carruthers, 2006). Many times, restoration of these sites falls to local communities and governments. Heyd (2007, p. 340) suggests that there are three options for community action after any serious post-industrial degradation of the land: 1) mend the site through reclamation work intended to return the land to some collective idea of a pre-disturbed state, 2) leave the sites in their degraded state for future generations to contemplate, or 3) reclaim the site through work which values aesthetics through design and formal elements and meaning through historical references and community engagement. This final option might be called reclamation art.

Reclamation art are forms that are created to restore the ecological qualities to a site in ways that acknowledges the legacy of its earlier land uses. It has been defined as “both an opportunity to beautify a devastated landscape and as an opportunity to commemorate (through formal intervention) the aesthetic components of post-industrial landscapes” (Malloy, 1997, para. 4).
Multiple terms have been used to describe reclamation projects: 1) bio-remedial works which restore or recover lands, waters, naturally occurring systems and habitats; 2) socially/culturally remedial works which seek to change, inform or mediate cultural/social ideologies and/or beliefs, (Carruthers, 2006); and, 3) ecovention, an artist-initiated project that employs an inventive strategy to physically transform a local ecology (Spaid, 2002, p.1). These three terms describe the conceptual frameworks for land reclamation projects that value collaboration between the arts and sciences, community participation and aesthetics.

Carruthers defines reclamation art as a way of teaching and learning--what it means to work in an instructive/didactic manner--which includes work that embodies a message, or learning which may be any combination of cultural, political, ideological, scientific, or pragmatic. This pedagogical process includes transparency of implementation practices embodied in a reclamation project. This concept is important in the construction and dissemination of a work's meaning, as both a work of restoration and art. Art can convey complex information and inspire populations to solve problems in unorthodox ways (Bower, 2007, http://greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=219).

A critical understanding of reclamation is important within the dialogue of landscape intervention, given there are general critics of reclamation art. Reclamation itself is a contentious topic in terms of how it should be enforced, and who takes responsibility for implementation (Morris, 1980, p. 8). Heyd points out, with suspicion, that reclamation efforts can merely be used to justify future
environmental damage or are a façade for an authentic “nature” (2005, p. 340). Another relevant argument deals with what Katz and Light (2005, p. 157) discuss as “The Artifact Claim.” Katz argues that “the re-created natural environment that is the end result of a restoration project is nothing more than an artifact created for human use.” This criticism of reclamation is actually the goal of reclamation art—the ambition of such art is to create artifacts through process and meaning-making. The reclamation art literature is not concerned with emphasizing the autonomy of nature; it recognizes that reclamation art creates something else entirely, a very anthropocentric sort of artifact. Within the context of reclamation art, reflection and engagement with history and community is paramount as cultural histories are unpacked and new meanings created. The aims of reclamation art are aligned with Suzi Gablik’s ideas of a more participatory, socially interactive framework for art:

The emerging paradigm reflects a will to *participate* socially: a central aspect of new paradigm thinking involves a significant shift from *object* to *relationships*...A new emphasis falls on community and the environment rather than on individual achievement and accomplishment. The ecological perspective does not replace the aesthetic, but gives a deeper account to what art is doing, reformulating its meaning and purpose beyond the gallery system, in order to redress the lack of concern, within the aesthetic model, for issues of context or social responsibility. (Gablik, 2002, pp. 7-8)

Reclamation Projects: The Comp Model

Prominent in the reclamation and reclamation art literature, the work of historian T. Allan Comp is widely recognized as a model of innovation in multidisciplinary approaches to restoration and reclamation. Holding a doctorate
in the history of technology, Comp’s work explores the ways in which art and history, combined with the sciences, can change the way we think about an industrial economy that is destroying the very ecosystems that sustain us, and all life (Reece, 2007, http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/460 para. 32).

Comp currently works for the U.S. Office of Surface Mining (OSM) where he supports the efforts of volunteer watershed groups working for the recovery of Appalachian coal country. In his capacity with OSM and as a community volunteer, Comp has tested his methods of community engagement and multidisciplinary interaction in a variety of contexts: a coal mining community in Pennsylvania, a university campus in Virginia, and an artist residency on the central coast of Oregon. Each of these opportunities have presented Comp with different challenges, and in reflection on them, Comp says:

Sustainable reclamation cannot be just a science project! Lasting solutions to the multifaceted problems of environmental reclamation must be cultural and environmental…A truly collaborative, multidisciplinary approach that engages the arts and the sciences has the power both to clean the water and involve the community in a healing process that continues long after the water is clean.” (Comp, 2008, p. 75)

The remainder of this chapter reviews three of Comp’s multidisciplinary reclamation art projects in order to establish that, in several different contexts, Comp has been developing and implementing a model of reclamation based on an idea that engages art, ecology, and community. Comp’s first major implementation of his idea took place in a community-based project called AMD&Art in Vintondale, Pennsylvania. After that project, Comp began work on
the campus of University of Virginia-Wise though a university-initiated Wetlands Project. Finally, the focus of this thesis, Comp tested his model of multidisciplinary reclamation at the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology as an artist-in-residence.

AMD&Art: Vintondale, Pennsylvania

The Acid Mining Drainage (AMD) & Art project in Vintondale, Pennsylvania—a community-based reclamation art project—combined community-development, history, public art, and natural resources sciences to create a vital public space in the heart of a community. Acid mine drainage (AMD), the effect of unstable acid and metals seeping from abandoned coal mines into streambeds and effectively killing the bottom of the food chain in those watersheds, is one of the most severe water quality issues in the country (Comp, 2004, http://greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=189, para. 6). This relic of coal mining in Appalachia shapes the larger human condition as AMD kills communities, destroys biodiversity, produces rural poverty and fosters hopelessness (http://greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=189, para. 5). Post-industrial rural communities suffer from cultural, socio-economic, and ecological cycles of poverty as a result of corporate irresponsibility and governmental neglect. These often forgotten communities are forsaken liabilities for the coal companies. State and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and communities must negotiate responsibilities for the welfare of the people living there, often reaching no effective and productive solutions. In an effort to
restore land and communities, projects such as AMD&Art have worked to incorporate collaborative creativity in environmental problem solving and AMD treatment.

AMD&Art, founded in 1994 by T. Allan Comp, has been widely recognized as an effective model for other reclamation art projects. The project is based in Vintondale, Pennsylvania, a community whose history has been defined by coal mining, and whose landscape reflects the unforgiving reality of environmental degradation that seems to always accompany coal extraction. Comp's idea was to reclaim toxic former coalmines using science, design, sculpture, and history disciplines, which he hoped would spur community involvement and create a vital public space (Reece, 2007, p. 1). To remedy AMD, the restoration work of AMD&Art utilizes passive treatment systems, a series of ponds that incorporate native plants and limestone that can transform the toxic water, neutralizing the acid in the streams, and returning clean water into the watershed (Comp, 2004, http://greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=189).

Comp's project adheres to Suzi Gablik’s framework of art that is participatory, interactive, pragmatic and dynamic. In many ways, AMD&Art is a response to art that is individualistic, nihilistic, and disconnected from meaning. The single most important component of AMD&Art is the communitarian experience of the collaboration. The entire process of coming together as a community along with experts in the arts and scientists is central to the “art.” AMD&Art challenges the very notion of art for many scholars of modern art, and certainly challenges the community members in Vintondale to broaden their
understandings of art and culture. The project promotes the creative arts through the design of the site, the Litmus Garden tree planting, and two outdoor sculptures, Miners’ Memorial and Clean Slate. Interpretive signs and the Educational Center provide the community and visitors with additional information regarding each aspect of the park.

Comp’s account of the project suggests that community members have truly become advocates of their reclaimed site. In addition to the public art pieces and ecological restoration activities and products, the site contains recreational facilities created at the behest of the community—a community that perhaps initially wanted soccer fields and picnic tables more than the water treatment system, wetlands, and public art (Reece, 2007, http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/460). The rural people of Vintondale, through AMD&Art, have been transformed from a skeptical group of exclusive insiders to a more open community, that is willing to expose themselves to new cultural experiences and opportunities, especially when those experiences celebrate their proud history. No longer is the legacy of coalmining one of compromised community identity (defined by negligent coal mining corporations), but the processes of inclusion, cooperation and collaboration have been internalized by the very residents who now take responsibility for grappling with the ecological liability of AMD into an acknowledged quality of the region.

The people of Vintondale, through AMD&Art, have participated in educational experiences in several disciples. The project initiated dialogue in community planning, design, cultural heritage and preservation, public art, and
ecological restoration. Significantly, participants have an understanding of the possibilities for bridging disciplines in ways that create dynamic community spaces and change processes. AMD&Art has won several prestigious environmental awards including the 2005 EPA Phoenix Award (the first national EPA Brownfields award presented for community impact on mine-scarred lands), and other federal, state and local grants and awards in recognition of the effectiveness of the initiatives.

The issue of access in a community such as Vintondale must be critically assessed. A small, close-knit community, Vintondale was slow to open up to Comp’s ideas (Reece, 2007, http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/460). Much of the literature on AMD&Art has celebrated the project as a success and many Vintondale residents were enthusiastic about revitalizing their community. Comp’s thoughtful and persistent community engagement won everyone over through recurrent community meetings. Many formal and informal community meetings were required to gain full access and the blessing of the community had to be granted before the work could begin on site. The techniques and tactics used by Comp to engage the community in Vintondale illuminate strategies and methods for working with and for gaining access to a community, whether to conduct research or work there. These methods have been further refined and developed to work in subsequent contexts and communities.
AMD&Art is widely regarded as a model for reclamation art projects, and Comp’s subsequent works take shape as variations of this model. As Comp was completing the project with AMD&Art, he was solicited by a colleague at University of Virginia at Wise (UVA-Wise) to test the AMD&Art model in another coal country context (Comp, 2008, p. 69). The challenges at UVA-Wise included creating an AMD water treatment system on the university campus that would engage the campus community and create the opportunity for learning and meaning-making about the coal mining heritage in Virginia.

The UVA-Wise Wetland Project began in 2000 when the Lonesome Pine Soil and Water Conservation District and the Guest River Group began to identify and reduce the impacts of AMD in the Guest River watershed in southwestern Virginia. By 2001, UVA-Wise was identified as potential site for AMD reclamation on the Yellow Creek, which flows through campus and feeds a central campus lake. The project targeted the campus lake and the Yellow Creek, an AMD discharge from a local abandoned strip mine near campus. As a focal point on the campus property, the lake suffered significant water quality and visual problems. The implementation of a model similar to AMD & Art offered Comp the opportunity to again collaborate with artists and scientists, recruiting university faculty, students, community members, and local agencies to remedy the AMD issues on campus (Comp, 2008, p. 69). Ultimately the university would enter partnerships with a number of regional organizations and state and federal
agencies such as the Lonesome Pine Soil and Water Conservation District, Guest River Group, the Department of Mines Minerals and Energy, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Office of Surface Mining, and Black Diamond Resource Conservation and Development, Virginia Department of Transportation, and the Virginia Department of Forestry.

Recognizing the need to engage local stakeholder in the reclamation project, the Lonesome Pine Soil and Water Conservation District and the Guest River Group began developing a Wetlands Project stakeholders group. A series of public meetings were conducted with UVA-Wise faculty to determine the wants and needs of the university and the community. In addition to identifying and wanting to enhance the historical and ecological relevance of the site, the group suggested an interpretive trail that would lead citizens through the transformed environment (2006, http://www.wise.virginia.edu/wetlands_symposium_06/wetlandshistory.html).

Completed in 2004, the resulting outputs of the Wise Wetlands project at UVA-Wise include a passive AMD water treatment system with accompanying signage and native species plantings. Lasting outcomes of the project include a wide range of educational opportunities for the campus community and inclusion of significant references honoring the local cultural significance of coal mining (Comp, 2008, p.71).
Of Allan Comp’s completed multidisciplinary reclamation projects, the Crowley Creek Collaboration at the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology is, by far, the least known. Very little has been written about the project, which took place on the central Oregon coast, geographically and culturally distant from Comp’s more famous work in coal country of Appalachia. Within the context of an intermittent artist residency at the Sitka Center, Comp agreed to “direct an examination of every aspect of a small watershed: its history and ecology, the demands on the water and the land, the interests of the local community in environmental learning opportunities, and the interests and concerns of the local residents, many of whom are also watershed experts of one form or another” (Comp, 2008, p. 73).

This thesis deeply examines the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology and Crowley Creek Collaboration (CCC). The following chapters describe my research design and data collection methods, report the findings of my data collection, and critically analyze these findings in order to better understand how Allan Comp’s previous multidisciplinary reclamation work inform the CCC and, ultimately, what the role of the artist residency is in local land stewardship.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This thesis examines the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship. To better understand the nonprofit, organizational structure of artist residencies and how they are involved in local ecological restoration, I employ a single-case study of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, specifically looking at a multi-year residency project, the Crowley Creek Collaboration, which took place on an educational easement adjacent to the Sitka Center.

In this chapter, I first forefront my position in this case study relying on Alan Peshkin’s (1988) discussion of researcher subjectivity. Next, I define each research method that I use and describe how these qualitative methods interact. I draw on the work of Robert Yin (2009) as a guide in designing this case study on the Sitka Center. Corrine Glesne and Alan Peshkin (1992) inform my interviewing method. I look to Sarah Pink (2007) for guidance on visual ethnography and the use of participatory photography as a research method, and I draw on the work of Jennifer Mason (2002) for direction in developing methods related to document analysis and participant-observation. Finally, I look to
Catherine Riessman (1993) and Bud Goodall (2008) for a foundation of the qualities of narrative research.

Reflexivity and Researcher Subjectivity

I recognize that my role as an investigator in this qualitative case study inevitably affects all aspects of investigation, from the research design to each contact I have with the research participants including emails, interviews, and observations. Each contact I have throughout the study imparts qualities of my subjectivity to the study's participants that may influence or affect their responses and involvement. Alan Peshkin argues that researchers should systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their research, and that if researchers are informed about the qualities which have emerged during the research then they can disclose in their written statement where self and subject became joined (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17).

I recognize that I bring multiple identities to this study—most apparently, I am a young, white, female master’s student writing a thesis in Arts Policy and Administration in Ohio. I am also an artist, art historian, and grant writer. I own property in a small, rural town on the coast of northern California that is similar in many ways to Otis, Oregon. I am an environmentalist interested in pushing the boundaries of innovation in multidisciplinary solutions to ecological restoration and environmental justice. Many of these facets of my personality are revealed in different ways and at different times to my interviewees and informants through the questions I ask and the ways in which I explore new ideas. Recognizing that
some of these and other qualities of my personality and experience create means of approach and entry into a conversation with a research participant, I have followed Glesne and Peshkin’s advice (1992, p. 58) on gaining and losing self—that as a researcher, I ought to manage myself in ways that are instrumental to gaining access and maintaining access throughout the study in a way that optimizes data collection. Ultimately, I feel that the most effective recognition of my subjectivity as a researcher is evident in my genuine interest in this study and the enthusiasm I bring to my interviews and participant observations.

Qualitative Research Methods

This thesis employs a single-case study using qualitative data collection methods, those that are grounded in an interpretivist philosophical position which is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced, or constituted (Mason, 2002, p. 3). A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Single cases are a common design for case studies; and the single-case design is justifiable under certain conditions—including where the case represents a rare or unique circumstance (Yin, p. 52).

A single-case study of the Sitka Center is justified in this research because the case represents a unique circumstance—experimental ecological programming situated within an artist residency. In this research about the Sitka
Center, I examine the organization of the Sitka Center and Sitka Center’s ecological programming, particularly the CCC; and the context includes the relations and interactions between the staff, board, and community, as well as the existing land use policies on the site and resulting impact of the CCC.

Case study evidence can come from many sources and each source is associated with an array of data evidence (Yin, p.99). I examine the Sitka Center from multiple perspectives in order to determine how local, ecological restoration can happen in an artist residency environment: 1) I engaged in interviews with key individuals, such as current and past staff members, board members, community members, artists, and volunteers; 2) I intensively analyzed Sitka Center organizational and historical documents in order to better understand the structure and development of the organization; 3) I became a participant observer during a site visit to the Sitka Center; and 4) I engaged in participatory photography to better understand the CCC project through the eyes of those participants whose work has been central to the project. My research uses these qualitative methods because they are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which they are produced, to examine the Sitka Center and the CCC. I organize and assemble the results of each method to create a narrative of the Sitka Center’s development of the CCC and an assessment of this project as an artist residency focused on local land stewardship.
Interviewing within a qualitative research design provides the researcher with the opportunity to understand why something happened, as well as to better understand opinions, perceptions and attitudes of research subjects (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 65). With these motivations, I conducted approximately twelve interviews with past and existing Sitka Center staff and board members, artists who are in residence at Sitka, and local community members from the Cascade Head Ranch. I selected participants based on their involvement with the Sitka Center, recruiting those individuals who participated most intimately on the CCC. I conducted both phone interviews and interviews in person with arts administrators, community members, artists, and arts advocacy administrators in order to compile a comprehensive narrative of the Sitka Center and the potential for local land stewardship in artist residency programs such as the CCC. Each interviewee was selected to provide testimony to this research based on their vital role in ecological programming at the Sitka Center or their direct contributions to the development of creative multidisciplinary solutions to local land stewardship.

My interviewee recruitment process began with a preliminary phone call to Jalene Case, Program Manager of the Sitka Center, to inquire about the feasibility of conducting a case study of the Sitka Center. Jalene then recommended several key individuals involved in the CCC, many of whom in turn suggested additional individuals that I should contact. This selection method—
making one contact and using recommendations to work from there--is commonly known as snowball sampling (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 27). This selection method was helpful as I met more and more possible interviewees, many of whom were eager to become involved in my research. This eagerness, however, led to the unauthorized forwarding of my emails to additional, prospective interviewees, some of whom had not been properly introduced to my research protocols or me. This resulted in widespread confusion about my intentions and even my legitimacy as a researcher. An email thoroughly (re)introducing my research protocols early in the recruiting process was necessary to assert my intentions as a qualitative researcher to all the prospective interviewees. Ultimately, any misunderstandings were clarified and I was able to recruit all of the key prospective interviewees and schedule either a phone interview or an interview in person, during a planned site visit to the Sitka Center in March 2009.

Interviews are essential sources of case study information and should take form as guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, p. 106). In this case study, I employed both in-depth interviews and focused interviews. Yin defines in-depth interviews as those that are conducted with key informants that make inquiries about facts as well as opinions and insights. Yin defines focused interviews as those that are open-ended, conversational, and likely to follow a set of open-ended questions in order to corroborate facts (Yin, p.107). My interview questions focused on 1) gathering general organizational knowledge about the Sitka Center; 2) uncovering past and current relationships between individuals,
the Sitka Center, and the community; 3) revealing the story of the CCC; 4) identifying successes and failures of the CCC; and 5) discovering other insights into the individuals experiences related to the Sitka Center—allowing each person to tell their stories and describe their perspectives of the relationships between the Sitka Center and ecological stewardship (see Appendix A for list of open-ended questions).

Document Analysis

I critically analyzed all available organizational and historic documents related to Sitka Center ecological programming, including those related to the CCC. When conducting documentary analysis in qualitative research, it is important to recognize that documents are "constructed in particular contexts, by particular people, with particular purposes, and with consequences—intended and unintended" (Mason, 2002, p. 110). Organizational and historic documents about the Sitka Center have revealed important and relevant information about issues, decisions, and outcomes concerning ecological stewardship and the CCC. These documents also identified key stakeholders of the Sitka Center and the CCC, their intentions, motivations, observations, and opinions. In this study, I interviewed a small group of individuals who have been, or currently are highly invested in the Sitka Center and the CCC, and many of these informants are the very authors of the documents I have analyzed. According to Yin (p. 103) the most important use of documents in case studies is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources. I compared data in order to validate and
corroborate information between interviews and documents. Critical document analyses have yielded rich, contextual data that further illuminates issues, decisions, and outcomes on interpersonal, organizational, and community-wide levels.

Documentary sources can take many forms and their collection should be carefully planned (Yin p. 101). I have collected a number of documents from the Sitka Center and from individuals involved in the CCC. Concerning the Sitka Center, I examined founding institutional documents, mission statements, artist-in-residence resources, conference presentations, and organizational marketing materials. Concerning the Sitka Center’s development and execution of the CCC, I examined land use and management plans and policy documents related to Cascade Head Scenic Research Area and Cascade Head Ranch, conservation and educational land easements, CCC project proposals, CCC participant observations, and internal emails and memoranda. I have requested documents from the current staff at the Sitka Center and from former staff and board members that may elucidate the Sitka Center’s role in local land stewardship. Additionally, the Sitka Center maintains an on-site library that houses organizational, historical, and local resources. Private, organizational, public, and electronic documents are available for critical analysis in this research, and I examined these documents carefully, keeping in mind the intended and unintended functions that each one performs. In a preliminary exploration of CCC documents, I identified many public documents and reports, some clearly censoring particular issues and points of view concerning community
involvement in the project. Key perspectives may be suppressed in these documents and I realize the importance of understanding the ultimate function that this censorship serves, as it assists my understanding the data these documents present, and the data that is omitted.

Participant-Observation

Participant-observation is a special mode of observation in which the researcher assumes a variety of roles within a case study, including participation in the events being studied (Yin, p.111). I was able to engage in participant-observation during a visit to the Sitka Center in March 2009. During this visit, the Sitka Center served as my host, providing me with accommodations in an artist residence for four days. I met and interviewed many of the recruited interviewees for this study over the course of my visit. Additionally, I observed the Sitka Center staff and current artists-in-residence.

I engaged in meaningful participant-observation during a group hike from the Sitka Center campus, along Crowley Creek, and down to McKee Meadow, the primary CCC site. The hike was coordinated by Paul Katen, Sitka Center neighbor and former CCC participant, and Randall Koch, former Sitka Center executive director. Both Paul and Randall were enthusiastic about this study and wanted to coordinate a reunion of CCC participants to hike through the site. I joined a handful of CCC participants, current Sitka Center staff, and artists-in-residence in a hike along the creek into the meadow, observing the natural
environment and discussing the changes that have taken place there since the CCC terminated.

Invited to participate in this hiking event, I did not need further permission to access this activity in my capacity as a researcher and visitor of the Sitka Center. Mason, however, notes that researchers must negotiate a continuum between complete participant and complete observer, and understand the implications of selecting a position (Mason, p.92). I have chosen to maintain a flexible position on this continuum, one that is adaptable to the situation while ever aware of my own reflexivity.

*Participatory Photography*

Documenting the site at the Sitka Center is an important undertaking in this thesis, because it is the natural environment that inspires the work of Sitka artists-in-residence, and in particular, the CCC. Drawing on the work of Sarah Pink (2007), I engaged my research participants in documenting the CCC through collaborative, participatory photography. In collaborative photographic research, it is common to ask participants to photograph aspects of their experience in order to demonstrate what is important to them (Pink, 2007, pp. 88-89). During interviews, I asked participants if they would be willing to lead me on a guided tour of the CCC site and take some photos with my camera, an easy to use point-and-shoot digital camera. In choosing this technology, I have been thoughtful about the ways in which different technologies impact the research context. According to Pink, researchers must consider the cultural, social,
practical and technical aspects of using different technologies in their research (Pink, p. 48). I initially wanted to make a collaborative video documenting the CCC group reunion tour. However, I quickly decided that it would be more practical and less invasive to use still photography, especially considering my rather novice video-making skills. Grappling with different technologies, I decided that the easiest way to document the site and capture the CCC participants’ views of the site would be using a small digital camera, one with which most people are comfortable and have experience. My hope was that participants would take straightforward photographs to show me features of the site that they thought were important, reaffirming information that they conveyed in their interview. The photos, in digital form, were easy to share electronically. I emailed participants their photos and solicited captions or brief anecdotes for the photos. I also took photographs documenting the site from my own perspective, which I caption with my field notes and observations. The photos illustrate this case study, which may become a resource for future Sitka Center staff, board members, artists, and visitors.

Narrative Research

Catherine Riessman contends, “Narrativization tells not only about past actions but how individuals understand those actions, that is, meaning” (Riessman, 1993, p. 19). This case study is shaped largely by the stories of the research participants, the organizational story of the Sitka Center, and the programmatic story of the CCC. In the design of this research, I recognize that
narratives convey meaning in significant ways. I use interviews, document analysis, participant observation, and participatory photography as the methods of distilling data. I do this by piecing together and layering the context, series of events, and interpersonal exchanges that have occurred at the Sitka Center and the CCC. Riessman contends that storytelling is what we, as researchers do with our data, and it is what our informants do with us (Riessman, p. 1). My task is to solicit the important stories about the Sitka Center and the CCC and enmesh, corroborate, and scrutinize them to best understand the organization’s structure, relationships and programs.

The analysis of my data will take an interpretivist turn as I retell participants’ stories in ways that are meaningful and illuminate the role of artist residencies on local land stewardship. Goodall states that as researchers, “Narratives are our ways of knowing… We construct a truth, but not the only truth. We represent reality; we don’t reproduce it” (Goodall, 2008, pp. 15, 23). My hope here is to construct compelling and powerful layers of narrative that represent the reality of the Sitka Center and the CCC by giving voice to interview participants and directing renewed attention to historical and organizational documents.

Research Significance

In recent years, environmental art and sustainability in art have enjoyed increased attention as a topic of interest in national conferences (The Art and Environment Conference in Reno, NV, 2008); institutional initiatives (The Center
for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art, 2009); in university art education (Land Arts of the American West MFA program—a collaboration between the University of New Mexico and University of Texas, 2000-present); and web presence (greenmuseum.org, RSA Arts and Ecology). Furthermore, there are several artist residency programs like the Sitka Center that are solely dedicated to supporting the creation of environmental art (The Land, The Center for Land Use Interpretation, and For-Site).

New research on artist residency programs in general is especially timely considering the creation of a new National Endowment for the Arts funding category for artist communities in 2009. For the first time ever, federal grants will be used specifically to support artist residency programs. When coupled with the recent increased momentum of art that deals with or responds to environmental issues, I feel that environmental artist residency programs are in a unique position to grow and benefit from increased visibility and interest.

My goal is to learn how the Sitka Center has developed programs that directly involve ecological stewardship and how they might provide a model to other artist residencies that are interested in developing residency activities concerned with local land stewardship.

Institutional Review Board Exemption

This research complies with the Office of Responsible Research Practices at The Ohio State University. It is considered exempt by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) under Category Two, as it constitutes:
Research involving the use of ... survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
  a. information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; AND,
  b. any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

No person under the age of eighteen was interviewed or observed during this research. Proof of exemption was made available to all recruited research subjects. Confirmation of my completion of the Certified Institutional Testing Initiative training may be found in Appendix B and the full IRB exemption in Appendix C.

My interviews were conducted either over the phone or in person and all conversations were audiotape recorded. In compliance with the IRB, I have obtained informed consent to participate from each interviewee, which they demonstrated by signing a consent form prior to our interview. Furthermore, I explained the options regarding participant confidentiality, requesting each participant’s consent to be explicitly identified and quoted in this and any future research on this topic thereof. I also explained that participants have the option to remain anonymous and unidentified in their responses. All participants agreed to be explicitly identified and quoted in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE SITKA CENTER FOR ART AND ECOLOGY

In this chapter and in Chapter Five, I present and initiate analysis of data that collectively are useful in answering my thesis question: What is the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship? Here, I describe the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology within geographical, historical, and organizational contexts, and provide the background information that is necessary to thoroughly understand the unfolding of the Crowley Creek Collaboration in Chapter Five.

The Sitka Center experienced a period of profound transition from 2005 until 2008, during which time the board and the staff changed structures and re-evaluated the mission, programming, and community involvement. I draw from interview testimonies, organizational and historical documents, and participant-observations in explaining these events and relationships.

Key Informants

Many of the individuals who played integral roles within the Sitka Center have engaged in this case study. I introduce each participant here, establishing their functions within the Sitka Center, as based on their interview testimonies.
Caitlin Strokosch

Caitlin is the Executive Director of the Alliance of Artists’ Communities. In this role, she shared her expertise on the management, research, and advocacy of artist residency programs. Caitlin is especially familiar with the Sitka Center and the Crowley Creek Collaboration given her connections to T. Allan Comp, who served on the board of the Alliance of Artists’ Communities in the past, and Randall Koch, who, as the former Executive Director of the Sitka Center, was very involved in Alliance activities. (Strokosch, personal communication, March 19, 2009)

Randall Koch

Randall served as the Executive Director of the Sitka Center for fifteen years (1991 to 2005), after having served on the board of the Sitka Center for three years. As a studio painter, it was important for him to be involved in the local arts organizations. For three years before coming to the Sitka Center Randall ran the local Cascade Head Music Festival and worked with many Sitka Center board members in that position (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009). Randall is an essential voice in my thesis given his long-term leadership at the Sitka Center and his direction of the Crowley Creek Collaboration.
Laura Doyle

Laura and her husband, Jack Doyle, have been homeowners at Cascade Head Ranch for over 15 years. Her family began taking workshops at the Sitka Center almost 20 years ago. They became very involved in organizations in the Cascade Head area, first at the Sitka Center, and then as homeowners on the Ranch. Jack Doyle served on the Sitka Center board for roughly six years, from 1997 until 2004. Laura worked at the Sitka Center as the Program Manager from late fall 2002 to late early 2007. Her intimate knowledge of the Crowley Creek Collaboration informed my investigation.

Pete Owston

A retired forester, Pete became involved with the Sitka Center as a board member after he moved to the Ranch full time in 1997. He always considered himself the “token ecologist on the board because most of the board members were more art-oriented,” and he was more oriented toward ecology and natural sciences (Owston, personal communication, March 28, 2009).

Paul Katen

For 32 years, Paul has owned the house next door to the Sitka Center, and has always had “some interactions, some good, some bad, at various times with Sitka. But having lived here now for just about 10 years full time, I've really come to enjoy interacting with Sitka to a large degree” (Katen, personal
communication, March 28, 2009). Paul has served as an informal handyman on the Sitka campus, on an as-needed basis. Additionally, Paul’s involvement as the President of the Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council, where he describes his role as a networking one, “I meet people, know people, try to bring people together” (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009). As the President of the Cascade Head Ranch District Improvement Company (also known as the Water Board), Paul was accountable to the homeowners of the Cascade Head Ranch.

**Corrina Chase**

Corrina is the Coordinator at the Salmon Drift Watershed Council. In this position, she does everything from teaching high school classes, writing grants, conducting water quality lab work, connecting with partners, managing and designing projects, and doing fieldwork, such as tree planting. Corrina grew up in the area, and took some classes at the Sitka Center as a child. She was not directly involved with the Crowley Creek Collaboration, but has been involved in activities that have been directly impacted by the CCC. She returned to the Cascade Head area after finishing graduate school to work on the Lower Salmon River Plan, which is a project she thinks was “helped by the CCC. We were able to take a lot of the recommendations and stuff and plug it in. And then the Watershed Council started to implement the restoration aspects” (Chase, personal communication, March, 27, 2009).
T. Allan Comp

T. Allan Comp (Allan) first became aware of the Sitka Center after meeting Randall at the annual Alliance of Artists’ Communities conference in 2002. Allan was presenting his work on AMD&Art at the conference, which was organized around the theme “The Future of Creativity.” Randall introduced himself and the Sitka Center to Allan, and asked whether he would be interested in working on some kind of collaborative place-based investigation of the Crowley Creek and McKee Meadow near the Sitka Center campus. Together, after some planning, Randall and Allan decided that the most interesting way to approach something around Crowley Creek would be to create an intermittent, but long-term, residency for Allan in order to put together an interesting project, the Crowley Creek Collaboration (Comp, personal communication, April 7, 2009).

Katie Brehm

After finishing an undergraduate degree in landscape architecture, Katie moved from Michigan to Oregon for three-month internship with the Crowley Creek Collaboration. She stayed on two more months to finish writing up the final project document, and then began as an Americorps Vista volunteer under the direction of Paul Katen in January of 2005 until 2006. In her role, she worked closely with chief artist-in-residence, T. Allan Comp and Randall Koch to conduct historical research about the Crowley Creek Collaboration site and to engage the
community and handle public relations (Brehm, personal communication, March 27, 2009).

Bob Deason

Bob works as a professional hydrogeologist in Pennsylvania and has collaborated with Allan on several projects. He joined the AMD&Art project in Vintondale, where he contributed sound guidance in the development of passive water treatment and restoration. Bob again joined Allan in subsequent reclamation projects, playing a minor role at University of Virginia-Wise Wetlands Project, and then traveling to Oregon to be a part of the Crowley Creek Collaboration (Deason, personal communication, March 19, 2009).

Eddie Huckins

In the 1990s, Eddie worked with the Nature Conservancy and had spent some time on projects restoring habitat for Oregon silver spot butterfly on Cascade Head. During this time he became familiar with the area and familiar with the Sitka Center for Arts and Ecology. Later, in 2003, while working for the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) out of Newport, Oregon, Eddie became acquainted with Sitka Center neighbor Howard McKee who was soliciting advice on planting trees on his property along Crowley Creek (Huckins, personal communication, March 29, 2009). Eddie’s vision of the potential for a restoration project was a significant stimulus for starting the Crowley Creek Collaboration.
Jalene Case

Jalene is the Sitka Center Program Manager and administers the workshop program and the artist-in-residence program. Overall, she is in charge of the day-to-day operations on the Sitka Center campus. Jalene is relatively new to the Sitka Center, having joined the staff in 2008, after the Crowley Creek Collaboration ended.

Eric Vines

Eric joined the Sitka Center as the Executive Director in January 2008. He was drawn to the Sitka Center by the job posting’s description of the mission, which he recalls:

Was to help people expand their relationships between art, nature, and humanity. I am a science guy. I don’t have much of an artistic background, but what they were looking for in that job was somebody who would help Sitka grow to the next level of their development. (Vines, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Location and Setting

If a sense of “place” is inextricably connected to an artist’s experience while in residence, it is exceedingly important to first understand the “place” of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology in order to fully value how and why they have come to play a role in local land stewardship.
Located on the Oregon Coast, north of Lincoln City, the Sitka Center is a small campus of studios and residences (Figure 4.1), sitting on .65-acre, within view of the Pacific Ocean, and overlooking the protected Salmon River estuary (Figure 4.2).
In addition to the campus, Sitka Center holds access rights to the nearby McKee Meadow through an educational easement granted by Howard McKee (Figure 4.3). The Sitka Center operates within and among several different types of land use policies. Federal and state land use policies create layers of regulation and protection which significantly influence and affect programming and operations at the Sitka Center.
The United States Forest Service (USFS) established the Cascade Head Experimental Forest in 1934 for scientific study of typical coastal Sitka spruce-western hemlock forests found along the Oregon Coast. The 11,890-acre forest stands at Cascade Head have been used for long-term studies, experimentation, and ecosystem research. Research in this area significantly enhances biological and ecological knowledge concerning forest health, endangered species, and salmon habitat restoration.
In 1974, an act of Congress established the 9,670-acre Cascade Head Scenic Research Area that includes the western half of the Experimental Forest, several prairie headlands, the Salmon River estuary to the south (Figure 4.4), and contiguous private lands (Figure 4.5). The Scenic Research Area designation prevents land development encroachment, and encourages ecological and environmental research and education activities. The purpose of this Area, the first to be federally designated as a Scenic Research Area in the United States, is to:

Provide present and future generations with the use and enjoyment of certain ocean headlands, rivers, streams, estuaries, and forested areas; to insure the protection and encourage the study of significant areas for research and scientific purposes; and to promote a more sensitive relationship between
Katie Brehm describes the development of the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area:

The group of people who were living here in the 70’s got together and decided that they wanted to make sure that this area didn’t become over developed. So they went to Congress with a beautiful document asking them to protect it under certain rules that they outlined in this planning document. It passed and it was the first ever area that was protected for scenic research and it remains its Congressional designation, so the only way it could be changed is another Act of Congress to undo it. It was a good thing for protecting this area for sure, otherwise it would be very, very developed with homes and it’s not, it’s wonderful wildlife habitat and it’s scenic, which is the main reason why it was protected. (personal communication, March 27, 2009)

The Cascade Head Scenic Research Area Inventory Summary recognizes the Sitka Center as a “facility whose expressed purposes are education for all ages” (1975, p. 24). However, there are regulations within the legislation, meant
to prevent congestion and traffic and impose certain limits on the number of people allowed to congregate within the Area, which, at times, constrains Sitka Center events to small attendance workshops and events onsite (Brehm, personal communication, March 27, 2009). These regulations are not uniformly understood and interpreted. Corrina Chase, Coordinator at the Salmon Drift Watershed Council, expressed that:

I think you are supposed to consult the Forest Service if you have a group of over thirty or something like that. Group sizes are discouraged from being over ten. But, I think, Sitka Center has classes here with that many people all the time. (personal communication, March 27, 2009)

Understanding and upholding the guiding principles of the Cascade Scenic Research Area remain an underlying basis of challenges and opportunities for the Sitka Center.

The Siuslaw National Forest and the Pacific Northwest Research Station of the USDA Forest Service manage the Cascade Head Experimental Forest and Scenic Research Area jointly. The USDA Forest Service encourages research use of these areas (http://www.fsl.orst.edu/chef/). Direction for the Scenic Research Area encourages scientific study while promoting a sensitive relationship between humans and their environment (http://www.fsl.orst.edu/chef/index.htm). Research partners in these areas shape how a “sensitive relationship” may be defined, informed by each organization’s own land ethic perspective. The Nature Conservancy, state and private universities in Oregon and Washington, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Agriculture, National Aeronautic and Space
Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and National Marine Fisheries Service have each played a significant role in conducting research on Cascade Head. These research and education functions provide a purposeful framework for the Sitka Center's mission through the years.

The Cascade Head Experimental Forest and the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area have contributed to diverse and concentrated coastal research (http://www.fsl.orst.edu/chef/index.htm). In 1980, the entire area was designated a Biosphere Reserve as part of the United Nations Biosphere Reserve system. Biosphere reserves are sites recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program, which identifies innovative and demonstrative approaches to conservation and sustainable development. Biosphere Reserves share their experiences and ideas nationally, regionally and internationally within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Currently Cascade Head is one of 531 sites worldwide (http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=4801&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

**The Cascade Head Ranch**

The Sitka Center is located within the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area and, more specifically, the Cascade Head Ranch, a low-density housing development designed and built in the 1960s and 1970s. Mike Lowell, entrepreneur and developer, purchased 450 acres, dividing 300 acres for sale to the Nature Conservancy, and planning the remaining 150 acres in three sections:
residential, community, and educational (Ferris, 1993, p. 76). Homebuyers were attracted to the privacy and natural beauty of the Cascade Head, and appreciated that the plans for the Ranch were to only develop twenty percent of the 150 buildable acres. Over the years, homes, a community building, a swimming pool, and a private boat launching ramp have been constructed in the Ranch, which operates much like a private neighborhood. Laura Doyle, longtime Ranch homeowner and Sitka Center board member describes Cascade Head Ranch as a “destination resort” (personal communication, March 30, 2009). Laura continues in describing Ranch homeowner demographics, “There is not really any kind of diversity here in any particular way. The diversity is in how they relate to the place. Upper-middle class professional, reasonably well off, typically very well educated, most people are local Oregonians” (personal communication, March 30, 2009). Most of the homeowners are absentee, using their Ranch house as a second home and living there only part-time. Year-round occupation and operation makes the Sitka Center unique among their Cascade Head Ranch neighbors.

The Cascade Head Ranch Homeowner’s Association governs the Cascade Head Ranch and holds covenants by which the Sitka Center, and residents, abide (Sitka Center Resident Resources). These regulations are found in the “Cascade Head Ranch Rules,” which visitors to the Sitka Center are provided. Sitka Center Resident Resources also includes provisions regarding many operational functions of living in the Ranch. The Cascade Head Ranch District Improvement Company handles public works and water treatment for the
entire Ranch community, including Sitka Center’s small, .65-acre campus. Sitka Center is beholden to the Cascade Head Ranch for their water supply, electrical power infrastructure, and roads (Sitka Center Resident Resources). Sitka Center’s relationships with these groups have been deeply affected by programmatic decisions over the years. Many of these issues will be presented in Chapters Five and Six.

The Nature Conservancy

Since the sale of Mike Lowell’s land in 1966, the Nature Conservancy has remained an active neighbor on Cascade Head, protecting rare and endangered plants and animals. The Nature Conservancy maintains the Cascade Head Trail (Figure 4.6), which passes near the Sitka Center and the site of the Crowley Creek Collaboration on its way to the edge of Cascade Head. A regional tourist destination, the Nature Conservancy Cascade Head Trail attracts over 10,000 visitors each year. Visitors are encouraged to hike in groups of ten people or fewer and to contact the Nature Conservancy if they observe site damage caused by camping, hunting, or vehicles (http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/oregon/preserves/art6796.html).
A Brief History of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology

In 1970, after visiting Cascade Head, Frank and Jane Boyden left their teaching positions at the University of New Mexico to start a new arts organization for young artists (Figure 4.7). A young artist himself, Frank understood that graduate students would benefit from some sort of organized space outside of the university where they could continue working while transitioning into their professional careers (Boyden, 1993, p. 87). With the help of friends and local community members, Frank formed a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation, the Neskowin Coast Foundation, which offered informal hands-on art and science experiences and education at the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology.
He arranged temporary studio spaces for summer programming until Mike Lowell
donated a permanent site on Cascade Head Ranch in 1971. Lowell had, in the
eyear stages of planning the Cascade Head Ranch, resolved to include an art and
ecology center that could bring young voices, educators, and artists to the Ranch
(Ferris, 1993b).

From the early days of the Sitka Center, programmatic emphases have
been placed on both art experiences and ecological education. Early classes
engaged students of all ages in visual arts of all media: drawing, photography,
painting, filmmaking, and ceramics. Additionally, Frank made use of his own
training in biology and the natural sciences in teaching classes on intertidal
systems (Boyden, 1993, p. 87).

Partnerships with universities and other educational organizations yielded
results that both advanced and impaired the development of the Sitka Center. In
the summer of 1972, Frank solicited architecture and design students from the
University of Oregon to design site and building plans for the new home Sitka
Center. After raising money to pay these students, Frank and his team enjoyed a
productive summer, laying the groundwork, literally, for the future of the Sitka
Center (Boyden, 1993, p.88). Other fruitful partnerships were formed between
the Sitka Center and Mount Angel College, Portland State University, and the
Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

Though the Sitka Center was growing, by 1975 the organization faced a
$4,000 budget deficit. In order to shake the deficit, Frank made an agreement
with Linfield College, conferring control of the Sitka board to the College, and in
return, Linfield College paid off all of Sitka Center’s debt (about $6,000) and had a beach campus at the Sitka Center (Boyden, 1993, p. 88). Linfield’s participation in Sitka Center activities was not welcome by the neighbors of the Cascade Head Ranch, especially on the occasion of the Linfield student marching band visit to the Sitka Center. Complaints from local homeowners about traffic and noise filtered through the Cascade Head Ranch, resulting in the first of many formal and informal conflicts that would take place between the Sitka Center and both individual homeowners and the Cascade Head Ranch Homeowner’s Association. Linfield College and the Sitka Center dissolved their partnership, effectively ending programming specifically targeting college students at the Sitka Center.

By 1977, the Sitka Center was under the direction of Virginia Morgan, who worked to repair relationships between the Sitka Center and the Cascade Head Ranch, as well as increase programming. Perhaps she was too ambitious, when, after she proposed building a dorm and housing for instructors, the homeowners of the Cascade Head Ranch again became upset, thinking that the Sitka Center was encroaching (Boyden, 1993, p.89).

In 1979, the Sitka Center welcomed their first artist-in-residence, Laurie Kovack, who later became the Sitka Center Executive Director. About the residency program, Frank Boyden writes:

The residency program was an enactment of what Jane and I really wanted to see happen at Sitka. Now we have people coming from all over the world. The quality at this point is very, very high—young people, older people, scientists, biologists, ornithologists. (1993, p.89)
What began as a rather loose organization offering a hodge-podge of classes in the visual arts has, over the last thirty years, become a highly regarded art center offering a summer workshop series of great breadth and an internationally-recognized residency program that provides time, space, and resources to artists and ecologists year-round.

Organizational Structure

The Sitka Center is operated as a public educational project of the Neskowin Coast Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c) corporation founded in 1970. Governed by a volunteer board of eight trustees who work with an Executive
Director, the Sitka Center operates two programs: a summer workshop series and a residency program.

The revenue generated by the workshop comprises the Sitka Center’s only earned income. The Sitka Center relies on a strong mix of funding sources, Eric Vines says:

The biggest thing that Sitka needs is financial stability. The way that we are funded, we have earned income that makes up a third of our total costs. And then we have another third that is covered by grants and donors and then another third that comes from our big fundraiser in November. The grants and donors piece is really tenuous and every year we are scrambling to try to make up this $150,000 funding gap by asking people of money and writing grants. (Vines, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

The Sitka Center for Art AND Ecology

Sitka Center, through a meandering of claiming, naming, and remembering, obligates in name to mythic, political, and scientific imagination, accreted over many centuries and borne south with the seeds of the Sitka spruce… appearing on the mid-Oregon coast after the last ice age. The Sitka-Tree metaphor takes a wide arc in the river of meaning. It is a floating sign, an intermediary, bearing imaged meaning, place to place. Names, like seeds, seeking fertile opportunity for new beginnings. (Beauchamp, n.d., part 1)

The very identity of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology lies in its name. A brief dissection of the name of the organization suggests the possibility for blurred boundaries within the priorities of the Sitka Center. Sitka references the surrounding Sitka spruce (Picea sitchensis) forest type on Cascade Head. Center indicates that this place is somehow organized around a focal point or gathering place. Art references the types of activities that happen in the studios on Sitka Center’s campus, including painting, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics, and
creative writing, among many others. And—the very inclusion of and indicates that the Sitka Center is focused on art, as well as ecology, and that there is a distinct boundary between art and ecology. I address this tension in Chapter Two, when I coin the term art/ecology in response to Eddie Huckins term, artecology.

The Sitka Center board and staff have often considered the significance of their name and what it means to “do more art” and “do more ecology.” Randall Koch points out:

As appropriate to this place, at Cascade Head, one of the important, distinguishing aspects is to pursue art and ecology in this particular place, and interpretively, of this particular place. During probably 12 of those 15 years [of my tenure as Executive Director], it was pretty much exclusively Sitka Center for Art. The ecology thing was kind of through osmosis... In the last 2 or 3 years of my tenure, the board actually said, "This ought to be either Sitka Center for Art or we need to really investigate the ecology part of this." So we held a retreat of sorts and invited a number of people who had been involved over the years to come and say “Should this be Sitka Center for Art and Ecology and how are we doing that and what would that mean? Should we commit to it and then figure out how to make that meaningful?” Ecology had political implications. It wasn't clearly understood by people what ecology meant, whether it is a scientific understanding or the relationship of all systems period. Or what that really meant and what a risk that was or not, to have that term continue and be. What would it mean to honor it? Would we become an environmental advocate? That grappling went on and so the board committed to holding with the name and making a greater commitment to ecology. (Koch, March 29, 2009)

The Sitka Center’s focus has always been on supporting artists. Programming geared towards ecology and the natural sciences has occurred significantly less frequently. The residency is called an artist residency, not an ecologist or scientist residency. The tension, for an organization named for Art and Ecology,
is something that the board and staff recognize. Pete Owston remembers the board identifying this issue as an important one:

I think the whole board turned to think more about ecology during my tenure, but I don’t think it was necessarily any of my doing. I tend to be a quiet person, particularly in board meeting situations. I'm not all that vocal. I don’t think I swayed many people. It was just the time. There were other people on the board who, while they weren’t professional ecologists, still had a strong interest in that. It was kind of one of the board issues, if we are going to call ourselves an art and ecology center, we darn well ought to do some ecology, rather than just giving it lip service. A little while before the Crowley Creek project started, we had a retreat for a couple days, and that was one of the major topics. Well, are we going to get serious about ecology component, explore different ways of doing it? (Owston, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

In order to get serious about ecology, the board had to assess Sitka Center programmatic priorities. Laura Doyle recalls that, in January 2003, there was a board initiative to “do more ecology.” She recalls:

There was a very strong arts element to both the residencies and the workshops, and some big constituencies around that, but they [the board] were kind of aware that they wanted to focus on location and differentiate themselves as an institution around this art and ecology...There was kind of a renewed, board-level statement about the importance of place, a board-level statement about doing more on ecology. Nothing ever happened with that document, there was no more workshopping it. There was no more, it just was there and life went on. And in little detailed ways people tried to be more ecological. (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Being more ecological could have carried a variety of political, sustainable, and/or social implications. The Sitka Center interpreted “being more ecological” as reconsidering the ways in which place influenced their work.

Out of the new board-mandated initiative to incorporate more ecology into programming at the Sitka Center, came new ideas, approaches, and
partnerships, including the Crowley Creek Collaboration, which I will describe in detail in Chapter Five. The outcomes of these new, more ecological programs had radical effects on the Sitka Center, resulting in a drastic turnaround in the approach toward ecological programming, which I will analyze in Chapter Six. Eric Vines describes the current understanding of art and ecology at the Sitka Center:

The interaction of the ecology piece of it, the current way that the board is thinking about ecology is that we do not need to explicitly be out there trying to fix, redo Crowley Creek, do stream restoration or save forests. There are plenty of organizations that are good at that and have specialists focused on that area. What we are trying to do is allow the ecology of this place, place-based art, to influence how artists and individuals see the world and also to find ways for artists to give back to nature. (Vines, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Mission

As a mission-driven nonprofit arts organization, the board and staff of the Sitka Center look to the mission for guidance in all activities and operations. It reads:

The mission of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology is to expand the relationships between art, nature and humanity [emphasis added] through workshops, presentations, and individual research projects, and to maintain a facility appropriate to its needs that is in harmony with the inspirational coastal environment of Cascade Head. (Sitka Center for Art and Ecology Resident Resources)

The interpretation of this mission by the board and staff is an important facet of my research because herein lies the concern about the appropriate scope of activities that the Sitka Center can undertake. In “expanding the relationships
between art, nature and humanity," the board and staff must clearly understand what each of these terms mean and the relationships that connect them. As I asked each interviewee how they interpreted the Sitka Center mission, I realized that there are many different ideas of how art, nature, and humanity related to the Sitka Center programs, and that these interpretations have shifted over the past fifteen years.

Education has always been an important factor within the mission of the Sitka Center. According to Pete Owston, “There’re a couple missions. One to help educate people about art and ecology. And then also to give opportunities for young artists, particularly to grow and have an opportunity to both work by themselves and interact with other artists” (Owston, personal communication, March 28, 2009).

In the re-examination of the Sitka Center mission around 2003, and a board initiative to incorporate more ecology into programming, the center’s mission expanded to more deeply explore the meaning of ecology. Out of this, the Crowley Creek Collaboration developed as a real performance of the Sitka Center’s commitment to ecology. Randall Koch describes this shift:

It meant that there would be a substantive function for the residency and it would be a model or demonstration of how artists, scientists working together could reveal something different than would normally be revealed. So, that was a new, and to me, valuable way to have the Sitka mission become more real and less fluffy in how to engage in this place. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

However, through the realization of the Crowley Creek Collaboration, and the resulting outcomes, the board and staff have again revisited their
commitment to ecology. The have reevaluated the role that ecology will play in the Sitka Center, just last year opting for a mission that minimized ecology and focused on helping people find their core, creative selves through the arts. Eric Vines, upon beginning his tenure as the Executive Director, asked the board to revisit the mission and vision. He states:

For a long time the mission has been to enhance the relationship between art, nature, and humanity, and to maintain facilities appropriately to the needs of Cascade Head. In my opinion, that is a great vision for what we are trying to accomplish, but it’s not a mission. A mission is something that you can put a flag in the ground and say, “Yes, we’ve done it, and now we can move on to the next thing.” So we looked at the vision of the organization and what we came to is a purpose for why Sitka exists is to help people find their core, creative selves [emphasis added]. That’s new, just a year ago. And then the mission is to create a self-sustaining model that others can replicate. What is interesting about that is why Sitka is here and what we are trying to work on as a mission is not to make Sitka huge and international, it’s to create an example for others to make this kind of a program exist in another place. (Vines, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

In 2008, the board amended the Sitka Center’s bylaws. The mission remains unchanged in this document, with a focus on expanding the relationships between art, nature and humanity through workshops, presentations, and individual research projects. Eric’s interpretation of the mission (helping people find their core, creative selves) is an informal one, adopted by the Sitka Center staff. It is more goal-oriented than past interpretations and reflects a shift away from the collaborative nature of projects like the CCC. Jalene Case reflects on the new interpretation of the mission: “Our mission is to help people find their core creative selves through expanding their relationship between art, nature and humanity [emphasis added]” (Case, personal communication, March 30, 2009)
This hybrid between the old mission and the new mission is more art-centric and personal than previous statements and is now the touchstone in guiding Sitka Center activities and functions.

Staff

Figure 4.8: Sitka Center Organizational Chart, 1991-present

The Sitka Center has operated under the administration of a small staff since its founding in 1970. Always led by the Executive Director, the Sitka Center expanded to require the assistance of a Program Manager, Business Manager, and the fundraising expertise of a Development Director. Through the 1980s, the Executive Director was a part-time position, until Randall Koch stepped into the title and expanded the role into a full-time position in 1991. Randall was responsible for all programming areas.

Before I hired Eric Switzer, I worked with the Development Committee and I did the development work... I also did all the program development, as I knew the artists having practiced in the arts community for twenty years at that time. (Koch, personal communication, July 6, 2009)
Randall continued in this role for fifteen years, growing the organization in many ways. Figure 4.8 illustrates Sitka Center staff during and since Randall’s tenure. He recalls:

When I got involved, it was a $35,000 organization. [The programming] was quite a bit smaller. There were 35 workshops during the summer... So now there are 80-some workshops and 8 residencies. More than double in that way. And the budget went from $35,000 to, when I left, it was between $500,000-$600,000. And the campus during my tenure went from, between remodels and additional buildings, we almost went through every building during that time, either upgraded or added buildings. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

After Randall left the Sitka Center in 2005, there was a series of staff changes and interim employees.

The guy they hired after Randall, [was], in every possible way, the absolute opposite of Randall, which turned out not to be a very good idea. Randall brought some wonderful qualities, so the opposite was not exactly what was needed. But they [the new staff and board] headed off in a direction that was totally away from anything ecology. (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Corrina Chase recalls:

So Ran[dall] quit, which was a big loss. And the director that they hired after him... had a strong business mindset, probably good intentions, but in terms of the atmosphere and interactions and other factors, he basically caused a pretty big mess. Fortunately, the person that they have now (Eric Vines) is pretty great. (Chase, personal communication, March 27, 2009)

Since 2008, Eric and Jalene, with the help of an office assistant, comprise the staff of the Sitka Center. The staff manages the facilities on campus, plans and administers the summer workshops, and is involved in the residency application process and attending to the artists during their residencies.
Board

The Sitka Center board governs the organization and hires the Executive Director. According to the Nesikowin Cast Foundation bylaws (revised, 2008), the Sitka Center is governed by a board consisting of at least three directors and no more than twenty directors. The board has varied in size over the years, swelling to fifteen people during Randall’s tenure. The board has been drawn from a wide variety of professions and disciplines, mostly from the Cascade Head region and from Portland. Striking a balance in board leadership that represents a strong interest in local issues, expertise in art and ecology, and strong staff relations has been a struggle at times. Randall Koch describes the board at the time of the Crowley Creek Collaboration:

[At this time, the board] was Portland-centric. There was no one on the board who was on the Ranch, except for Jack Doyle. Other people had summer homes here or were in Portland. I think that the separation and communication between the board and myself, which was a conversation with the board President every Wednesday, and monthly board meetings, which is pretty frequent. It was still a disconnect from what they saw as the future of the organization. It played out that way too. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

After Randall’s departure, the board underwent substantial restructuring and turnover. According to Eric Vines:

The board restructured before I got here, went from fifteen people to six, very closely held... They all have had a long-term relationships with Sitka, some as artists, some as students, one representing ecologists, one previous employee, and we have one founder, Jane Boyden, on the board. Sarah Greene is the President and ecologist and she has been here for several years and was here through the transition. Darle Maveety, who has been taking classes here for 20 years and really represents the workshop side of
things to make sure that the quality there is—she takes 20 workshops over
the course of the season, so she is, more than anyone else, a representative
making sure that the workshops are looked after. Carol Riley who is a former
instructor. They are people who are really invested in Sitka’s success and
stability. They are terrific to work with. Laura Doyle used to be an employee
and she is now our treasurer, former Techtronics employee. A great group of
people. One thing that I like on a board is to have some disagreement, to
have some debate, and they are good at debating, but not taking it
personally, and then coming to a consensus and moving on to the next thing.
They are a really well functioning board. (Vines, personal communication,
March 30, 2009)

Currently, the board consists of eight members, and besides the
individuals that Eric mentions, there are: Janine Stanton, a former program
director at Oregon Health and Science University; Pat Thompson, an art student;
and Marlys Pierson, retired director of Oregon Health and Science University

Programming

The Sitka Center administers programming in primarily two areas: a
workshop program and a residency program. “Creativity and ecology are
integrated into both workshops and residencies as individuals explore the
surrounding lands as part of visual, writing, or scientific projects” (Sitka Center for
Art and Ecology Resident Resources).

The Sitka Center website promotes a third aspect to Sitka Center
programming:

Special Projects, which explore the surrounding natural environment as part
of visual, writing, or scientific projects related to study of coastal ecology.
These projects may be integrated into workshops and residencies, occur as
studies and restoration of the Cascade Head and lower Salmon River
watershed. These projects reflect a core aspect of Sitka’s mission and are a vital component of Sitka’s participation in its local community. (http://www.sitkacenter.org/1-0.html)

Special projects occur intermittently as the opportunity arises. However, sometimes special projects fall under the auspices of the Workshop Program or the Residency Program. Because the programmatic boundaries are not clearly defined, special projects are carefully considered by the board and staff.

**Workshops**

The Sitka Center’s Workshop Program offers classes in various artistic and natural science issues each year from April through October. Classes last from one to five days, and cost from $50 to $495. All instruction takes place in one of the Center's four studios or outdoors in the nearby surroundings. Workshops are usually for students ages sixteen and older. Subject matter includes drawing and painting, book and paper arts, journal and nature writing, woodcarving, photography, fibers, printmaking, calligraphy, sculpture, and the natural sciences and ecology. Instructors are teachers, artists, and scientists recruited regionally, as well as nationally (http://www.sitkacenter.com/2-0.html).

**Residencies**

The Sitka Center Residency Program provides artists, writers, and natural science scholars the opportunity to conduct their work while deeply engaging with the environment of Cascade Head (Sitka Center for Art and Ecology
Resident Resources). Up to five residents at a time work and live on campus for up to four-months free of charge in either eight-week or fifteen-week time periods (http://www.sitkacenter.org/3-0.html). The Sitka Center Artist Residency Program fits the defining criteria identified as central to my examination of artist residency programs in Chapter One. It is operated within a nonprofit arts organization. Residents are selected through a competitive process that welcomes artists of all media to apply. The Sitka Center provides residents with housing, studios, and financial resources, as well as opportunities to engage the local community through collaborations, exhibitions, and/or performances. The remainder of this chapter examines the Sitka Center Residency Program in light of these criteria.

**Within a Nonprofit Arts Organization**

The Artist Residency Program is fully supported by the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology. Significant support for Sitka Center’s Residency Program has come from The Collins Foundation and the donors to the named residency funds. An Institutional member of the Alliance for Artist Communities, Sitka Center also receives support from the James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission, and hundreds of donors and members (http://www.sitkacenter.org/3-0.html). Additionally, earned income from the Workshop Program and Sitka Center’s annual fundraiser, the Sitka Art Invitational help offset the expenses associated with a Residency Program offered at no cost to residents.
Competitive Selection Process

Selection of residents is by competitive peer review, based on the specific applications and field. An important condition in the applicant’s materials is a demonstrated understanding of somehow incorporating the significance of “place” into their work. Laura Doyle says:

I think there was also more attention to the selection of residents and their project statements, and more weight given to people whose projects and intentions could best be fulfilled in this place. My husband Jack was the residency committee chair for the board up until this last year, even after he was off the board. He was the person who did the residency selection process and did a lot of the hosting. The simplest example, if somebody applied for a residency and said they really wanted to do women’s rights, and even if they might be amazing artists, they needed to have something in the statement that related to the place. (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Jalene Case reflects on the current selection standard:

I wouldn’t say [we are looking for artists interested in] environmental issues, per se, but I would say we definitely, when we are looking at artists for the Residency Program, we want to know how they will connect place—meaning the nature, the environment, ecology—with their work. So it doesn’t always have to be a direct connection. It can be an indirect connection... We definitely want to see a connection. (Case, personal communication, March 27, 2009)

Artists applying for residencies must submit a project proposal, resumé, letters of recommendation, and a portfolio to the Sitka Center up to a year in advance to be considered for a residency.
Artists of All Media

The Sitka Center welcomes visual artists, writers, and ecologists working in many different media to apply for residencies. Aside from an open invitation to apply for all artists, from emerging to professional, the Sitka Center maintains several themed residencies in specific disciplines. In 2003, Members of the Oregon Coast Recorder Society raised almost $50,000 to establish a music residency for professional recorder performers and composers at the Sitka Center. Each October, two artists are invited to learn about the process of etching with master printer Julia D'Amario in the annual Jordan Schnitzer Printmaking Residency. Support for this residency is provided in part by Jordan Schnitzer and the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation.

Resources

The Sitka Center provides artists with the time and resources they need to find their core, creative selves. In welcoming residents to the Sitka Center, Jalene Case tells them:

You’ve been accepted and while we appreciate this project that helped to become accepted, we are not holding you to that. So this is your time to do what you want with it. Of course they want to make some kind of project, but we are not holding them to that project they used in the application process, mainly because we know that the environment will affect their process and we want them to use this time how they need it. (Case, personal communication, March 27, 2009)

Each resident is given a private studio and separate private fully furnished living quarters with full kitchen according on the needs of each particular
resident. Internet/email access is available throughout the Center, including in Hale Research Library, a resource open to all visitors.

Residents work in the rustic, yet accommodating, studios on campus. The Boyden Studio was the first building on campus. Built in 1972, and remodeled in the 1990's, it is a 1500-square-foot multi-use space. The Edelman Studio is a 550-square-foot space that was remodeled in 1994. The Smith Studio was built in 1996. The 800-square-foot studio is most often used as a printmaking studio, and it contains a Ray Trayle press and other equipment appropriate to printmaking. The Sculpture Studio, built in 1999, is a 500-square-foot studio with kilns, potter's wheels, power tools, and storage space for glazes, clay, tools, woodworking tables and equipment.

**Opportunity to Engage the Local Community**

In exchange for living and studio space, each resident is asked to provide a negotiated amount of community service on behalf of Sitka. Community service may take the form of lectures in the community, research for the organization, teaching in local schools, etc. Each resident is encouraged to discuss options for community service with staff upon arrival (http://www.sitkacenter.org/3-1.html). All residents perform the community outreach during their stay, some offering free exhibits and lectures on campus, presentations to area schools or community groups, and/or conducting scholarly research for local educational institutions. According to Jalene Case:
We require community service, and that can be whatever appeals to them. So we have a list of ideas and we talk with them to find out where their interests and passions lie and we connect, or give them the information to connect, with local resources to offer their services. (personal communication, March 27, 2009)

Additionally, residents may engage the local community of Cascade Head through an open house/studio at the end of their residency and during monthly potlucks with the Cascade Head Ranch. Jalene continues:

The other sort of event that we have while they are here is at the end of the residency period. We have an open house. That is a time that we can present the work that they have been doing here to the community and it is a celebration and its free and we advertise it in the local newspapers and our website and e-letter. So these two things are also connected with the local community here—the Cascade Head Ranch. The people who live here have a potluck once a month and they are invited to go to that. So, there are things that are available to them, and also the community of residents who live here. So they can connect as little or as much as they want to with those resources. (personal communication, March 27, 2009)

This chapter has presented, in detail, the research participants, location, history, and organizational structure of the Sitka Center in order to create a foundation upon which I will examine the Crowley Creek Collaboration in Chapter Five. Issues concerning board and staff relations, mission drift, programmatic evaluations, and community interaction will be presented in Chapter Five and further analyzed in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE CROWLEY CREEK COLLABORATION

This chapter builds upon the background information about the Sitka Center in order to fully describe the Crowley Creek Collaboration as it relates to my research question: what is the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship. Using interview testimony, internal organizational memoranda and emails, and one participant’s photographs, I retell the story of the development and realization of the Crowley Creek Collaboration (CCC). I do not attempt to re-present a summary of the CCC’s findings--that information exists in a report compiled by T. Allan Comp and Katie Brehm in 2005 called The Crowley Creek Collaboration: A Report on a Sitka Residency Project. Rather, I critically read this summary of the project, along with other organizational documents, and review these to better situate this project and how it has affected the Sitka Center. I will discuss the CCC in light of my research question, foreshadowing and initiating analysis of themes that will be further analyzed in Chapter Six.

The CCC was a multidisciplinary project initiated by the Sitka Center staff, local community members, and artist/historian T. Allan Comp that explored the various methods and perspectives for understanding land use, history, the
natural and biological sciences, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Organized as an artist residency, the CCC in many ways, departed from typical programming at the Sitka Center. In the CCC, Randall saw the potential for a new model of residency at the Sitka Center, one that invited artists to deeply explore the cultural, historical, and ecological aspects of the McKee Meadow. Allan’s residency departed from traditional Sitka Center residencies.

Specifically, the way that I saw it functioning was, that if we created a template for what our responsibility was on this property that then the residencies would include a position that was responsible to that piece of property and what its future was. It might be the Crowley Creek Residency, and each year, we’d have one of the positions be responsible for going into the record of what had been created so far, what problems existed and would they be willing to take their residency time to try to solve one of the issues that was evident through monitoring of the property. What we had accumulated for data as a baseline, what we had concluded, what we thought might happen there, and then what other observations they could note in the six to nine months or year or whatever, or two years, three years, five years, since we initiated the study. What was going on there that they could observe? What issues did that bring for them to grapple with? How would they solve that problem? Who would they engage to help solve that problem? Would it be scientists or other artists or the landowner and a physicist? Who knows? I wanted the residency position to be a problem-solving role. It changed it from simply being here and going, “This is so beautiful. I have to respond to it,” to “I am coming here to help solve a problems and deal with some issues that have become evident.” How evident? You’d have to come here to find out, and then you’d respond. That position could be held by either an artist or a scientist or a geomorphologist. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

An experiential approach of land stewardship transpiring within an artist residency program, the CCC tested Allan Comp’s multidisciplinary, collaborative model for deeply investigating the historical, cultural, and ecological features of a local landscape, the McKee Meadow (Figure 5.1).
Revisiting the Mission

The Sitka Center for Art and Ecology has had an organizational history that recognizes its own programmatic bias for the arts. By 2002, the board and staff had initiated a renewed commitment to incorporating “more ecology” into workshops and residencies. The board and staff were open to new ideas, and seemed especially receptive to project ideas that were ecology-focused, stabilized funding and enhanced constituency diversity. The CCC developed out of this ecology initiative; it seemed to be the right project at the right time.
Opportunities and Serendipity

A number of events, people, and ideas came together in a rather fortuitous manner to begin the CCC (Figure 5.2). An encouraging atmosphere within the Sitka Center for ecological and interdisciplinary projects combined with the development of philosophical and logistical frameworks that supported a project like the CCC. Randall Koch infused the project, from the start, with a thoughtful set of values that were inspired by writer Gary Snyder’s discussion of the *palimpsest*:

Our place is part of what we are. Yet even a “place” has a kind of fluidity: it passes through space and time—“ceremonial time” in John Hanson Mitchell’s phrase. A place will have been grasslands, then conifers, then beech and elm. It will have been half riverbed, it will have been scratched and plowed by ice. And then it will be cultivated, paved, sprayed, dammed, graded, built up. But each is only for a while, and that will be just another set of lines on the palimpsest. The whole earth is a great tablet holding the multiple overlaid new and ancient traces of the swirl of forces. Each place is its own place, forever (eventually) wild. A place on earth is a mosaic within larger mosaics—the land is all small places, all precise tiny realms replicating larger and smaller patterns. (Snyder, 2003, p. 29)

Randall interpreted from Snyder that artists and scientists could be engaged in residencies that would create and re-create meanings about place that “reveal different things through their discipline and then that would influence the next resident” (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009). Having the opportunity to meet Gary Snyder and present his ideas about a new kind of artist residency was significantly meaningful to Randall:

So I told him about the idea we were trying to do and how the quote about the palimpsest was my inspiration. The idea would be to unravel and understand this place through different disciplines, therefore the different layers could be
peeled away and then we could put it back together, understanding where it was going and then that would help guide the plan. If there was going to be a plan moving forward, it should be as informed as possible and not as imposing as all the previous incarnations of management had been... To have the understanding and blessing of Gary was important for me artistically. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

Figure 5.2: Factors that led to Crowley Creek Collaboration

With a mandate from the board to develop a programmatic strategy that addressed several identified commitments, as well as a personal vision to expand the meaning of residency at Sitka Center, Randall Koch seized two key circumstances to develop what would become the CCC. The first involved building a relationship with Sitka Center neighbor, Howard McKee. The second was recruiting Allan Comp to join the project as an intermittent artist-in-residence and project manager.
A respected architect and planner, Howard (deceased, 2007) owned property near the Sitka Center that encompasses the 25-acre McKee Meadow and the span of Crowley Creek just upstream of where it joins the Salmon River. Significantly, the Crowley Creek is the final tributary of the Salmon River before it flows into the Pacific Ocean; it is a crucial habitat for salmon spawning. While the entirety of Howard’s acreage lies within the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area and is subject to those affiliated laws, it is not a Cascade Head Ranch property and exists outside of Ranch policies.

Howard’s own commitment to conservation was demonstrated in the long process he endured around this time of changing the zoning on his property from its historical past in agriculture to a future as protected open space. Laura Doyle remembers:

Howard [was] trying to change the zoning of his land from agricultural to conservational, which was a huge battle for him. The part of the conservation, the interest in creating a conservation easement, was an interest in promoting... educational use... So he was the one who approached Sitka about offering educational access to his site. (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Howard’s conservation zoning on McKee Meadow carried an educational imperative that complemented educational aspects within the Sitka Center’s mission. In early 2003, Eddie Huckins, working for the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District, met Howard McKee while consulting about restoration work on Crowley Creek. Eddie recalls:

During my conversation with Howard McKee, he had expressed interest for using his land in some sort of an educational sense for science education. So, in talking about his plans for the creek, I said, “Well, we can take a couple
days and have this all done. We can plant. I have the money. We can come in and stick some sticks in the ground and go on down the road. Or, how do we use this as an opportunity to engage Sitka Center into maybe expanding beyond arts into some ecology? And to address some of your desires for science education, allow Sitka Center the use of your property.” (Huckins, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

After informal conversations between Howard, Eddie, and Randall, and with the support of Sitka founder Frank Boyden, the Crowley Creek Collaboration was an idea with momentum. Howard wrote about the early work plan of the Crowley Creek project:

It has an educational focus so workshop participants can learn (by doing) about watershed restoration. I will be offering the farmhouse (for 9/mo. a year) to a “scientist-in-residence” so there will be a research professional on site. Positions will rotate among professionals that Sitka selects. (McKee, personal communication, March 26, 2003)

Howard eventually granted the Sitka Center an educational easement in 2005 allowing access to the McKee Meadow in order to conduct studies and bring volunteers to develop and implement restoration plans (Easement Agreement, 2005, pp. 1-2). Reflecting on Howard’s interest in building a relationship with the Sitka Center, Randall Koch recalls:

We had the landowner cooperating and wanting us to do it and granting actually a document, an educational easement to be on the property to carry on activities under the auspices of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology. We would take responsibility for the activities of any participants on the property. It wasn’t just a free for all. It would have to be programmatically driven, but we would have permission to do that work. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)
Equipped with programmatic ideas and a place to explore them, Randall, Howard, Eddie and some other board members met to decide a direction and a project leader. Eddie recalls his own words at the meeting:

I think we need someone who really has worked in the world of arts blending with ecology... Who would that be? And I said, "I have not a clue. But if we are interested in going forward, I have a feeling we will find out in short order who that person really should be." (Huckins, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

In short order, Randall met T. Allan Comp at an Alliance of Artists’ Communities conference, where they discussed the possibilities of an arrangement in which Allan would become the project manager of a place-based, restorative residency that deeply investigated Crowley Creek and the McKee meadow. Allan explains his intentions going into the project:

I was interested in seeing whether this idea that I’d developed and worked with in AMD&Art project and the Wise Wetlands project, of bringing multiple disciplines to bear on some sort of watershed restoration project, was transferable to someplace other than coal country, which was the only place where I’ve worked. Would the environmental problems be so different, or the community context be so different that it really wouldn’t be transferable? (Comp, personal communication, April 7, 2009)

Allan’s stated intentions for the project reveal that his primary interest in his Sitka Center residency was testing the transferability of place-based solutions to environmental restoration. Allan and Randall agreed to explore Allan’s model, the multidisciplinary idea that had been so successful in AMD&Art and the University of Virginia-Wise Wetlands Project, in the McKee Meadow along Crowley Creek.
CCC Proposals

Throughout the project, various CCC participants created proposals and report documents summarizing the project’s objectives (Figure 5.3). I have reviewed documents written by Randall, Laura, Allan, and Howard, each attempting to identify the CCC’s mission, plan, stakeholders, activities and outcomes through correspondence to each other and in more formal project proposals. There are several drafts of project proposals, both formal (intended for the board and public) and informal (internal memoranda) dated between 2003 and 2006 that describe the actions and intentions of the CCC. Laura Doyle recalls, “That project (CCC) evolved, and I wrote a couple of the early proposals for what it was. Like, ‘Ok, maybe it’s this.’ And I’d write it up. Or ‘Maybe it’s that.’ And nothing that actually happened was in the way that I wrote the proposals” (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009). A critical reading of these proposals reveals how the project’s participants were continuously trying to understand the goals and outcomes, which shifted over time. Even the title of the project itself evolved several times, reflecting the changing intentions and interpretations of the project. A chronological overview of this evolution is the most straightforward way to explore the development of the CCC.

An undated residency proposal, written by Allan, describes three principles for the project, which at that time he called the Science and Arts Collaboration on Crowley’s Creek (SAC/3). The first principle, “Science is necessary, but not sufficient, in environmental reclamation,” called for the
inclusion of the arts and humanities in environmental restoration. The second principle, “Greater engagement creates better solutions,” identified public involvement as a critical need in reclamation. The third principle, “We must work with nature to create a sustainable approach,” relies on ecological values like diversity, reciprocity, and adaptation in order to create an interconnected systems approach to reclamation that is informed by art, science, and history (Comp, n.d.).

In April 2003, the Crowley Creek Project Proposal identified the mission, overview, stakeholders, and activities for the CCC. The mission of the project was “To develop the Crowley Creek site as a base for environmental learning and research and as a demonstration of watershed restoration processes” (Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, 2003). The project was proposed as a phased, multi-year project. Phase I, a planning phase, included an inventory of stakeholders, ranging from Howard McKee and the Sitka Center, to the Cascade Head Ranch, the U. S. Forest Service and local schools, as well as an inventory of the site at McKee Meadow. Phase II, a fundraising and integration phase, called for implementation of Phase I and programmatic development within Sitka Center workshops and the residency program. Phases III and IV assessed and evaluated the project for long-term sustainability (Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, 2003).

In December 2003, Randall wrote a document he called the Footprint Project, wherein he provided a brief overview of the recent Sitka Center mission evaluation and the development of a collaborative, artful, and ecological project.
that might yield a “Process that would help any land use project be more comprehensive and deliberative in its understanding of what that land was and what the basis of uses could reveal so its greatest potential could be realized” (Koch, 2003). Based on a dedicated funding stream model like Sitka Center’s Jordan Schnitzer Printmaking Residency, this new residency project could eventually be sustainable through an endowment. In a project proposal titled *Footprint Project*, Randall proposed that capitalization for the new project would not exceed the existing residency budget. However, the project would require changes in the structure of the staff, specifically his increased attention as the Sitka Center Executive Director, up to 25% of his time, to work with stakeholders and the community on this project (Koch, 2003).

By January 2004, Allan wrote a letter to the Sitka Center staff expressing his gratification with the Sitka Center Board in agreeing to move forward with the project, despite the “promises, promises” nature of his proposal. He acknowledged the need for a full project proposal in order to generate external financial support. Additionally, this letter noted that Allan’s residency was, in practice, a collection of residencies managed by Allan. Allan proposed inviting individuals from various professional disciplines to visit the Sitka Center over the course of two years to make observations of the site at McKee Meadow, which would later be synthesized and ultimately result in a final document describing the entire process. (Comp, personal communication, January 7, 2004)

Additionally, on January 7, 2004, Laura Doyle drafted a new project proposal. The *Proposal for Crowley Creek Residency at Sitka Center for Art and*
Ecology defined Allan Comp’s role in the project as the Land Art Principal Resident. This proposal described the initial phase of the project (2004-2005) as a time for collaboration between ten residents as they:

Examine the Crowley Creek watershed, past and present, through the lens of their disciplines as they work together and with watershed stakeholders to propose a future for the watershed...Principal land art resident will recruit nationally known residents with land art project experience and cross-disciplinary perspectives. (Doyle, 2004, p. 1)

The proposal also stated that the Sitka Center would host and facilitate the Land Art Residency Program in a way similar to other focused residencies such as the Jordan Schnitzer Printmaking Residency, provide seed funding to initiate and plan the program, but expect that the Land Art Residency would become self-sustaining on external funding in the long term (Doyle, 2004, p. 1).

Laura’s project proposal identified some projects that could be associated with the Land Art Residency, stating:

Land art projects, because they take place in the real world, often uncover needs and barriers associated with one or more stakeholders that must be addressed if the project vision is to be implemented. It’s expected that residents’ independent study will uncover and assess these before the end of the initial phase. Sitka, the residents, and stakeholders will work together to identify, prioritize, and take steps to address these as they are identified. Possible ‘associated projects' connected to Crowley Creek include: Cascade Ranch water treatment plant intake issues; Three Rocks Road culvert; art and environmental education needs and barriers in local schools, etc. These ‘associated projects’ will be planned and managed separately from this proposal and the success of the Land Art Residency project is not dependent on their completion [emphasis original]. (Doyle, 2004, p. 3)

Laura’s proposal identified the sites, as associated projects, that would become contentious as the CCC progressed. This proposal marks a distinct turn in the
way the project had, until that time, been planned. The vocabulary changed to incorporate terms such as “Land Art.” Laura expresses a clear vision of the project, defining the role and responsibilities of the Sitka Center, the Principal Land Art Resident (Allan), and the paid intern (an Americorps Vista volunteer). The initial phase timeline saw the project through the end of 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>T. Allan Comp</td>
<td><em>Reclamation and Renewal: A Residency Proposal</em></td>
<td>Identified guiding principles for a Sitka Center project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>Sitka Center for Art and Ecology</td>
<td><em>Crowley Creek Project Proposal</em></td>
<td>Identified project mission: To develop Crowley Creek site for educational learning, research, and demonstration of watershed restoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2003</td>
<td>Randall Koch</td>
<td><em>Footprint Project</em></td>
<td>Highlighted project’s value as a comprehensive and deliberative model for land use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2004</td>
<td>T. Allan Comp</td>
<td>Untitled letter to the Sitka Center staff</td>
<td>Noted that Allan’s residency would be a collaboration of many residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2004</td>
<td>Laura Doyle</td>
<td><em>Proposal for Crowley Creek Residency at Sitka Center for Art and Ecology</em></td>
<td>Identified some “associated projects,” highlights collaborative nature of the project to explore the past and present of the watershed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure: 5.3: Crowley Creek plans and proposals

The Collaboration

By April 2004, the project had officially been named the Crowley Creek Collaboration and plans were underway for individual participant visits to Sitka Center (see Figure 5.4 for a project timeline). In May 2004, Allan and Randall
met with some of the CCC participants to discuss the project and walk through the McKee Meadow. In his first report on activities for May/June 2004, Randall wrote:

After meeting each other and hearing about each person’s background and interest in the project, we took a walk on the land. During that walk we looked at a variety of options for the issues inherent in this project. Understanding the history of the stream’s path and efforts to control that path, looking at the indicators for the health of the stream to support the Salmon run; understanding the steps it would take to design and construct a building on site (this is a big issue that went smoothly in this meeting); and hearing about options for water intakes for the water system that exist in practice and are used by the Forest Service. (Koch, June 11 2004)

Allan describes the way the collaboration took shape:

We ended up realizing that the way the project sort of unfolded was to identify a bunch of folks as resources and then get each of them to spend individual time in that place and each of them had to prepare a report or a statement about the values and opportunities that they saw as an individual from their disciplinary perspective in that site, that project on Crowley Creek. (Comp, personal communication, April 7, 2009)

Katie Brehm recalls how collaboration participants were chosen:

There was a whole list that Lea [Redmond] and Allan had compiled before I arrived of experts that were in a variety of disciplines from across the nation. Some of them were local; some of them were not at all local. You know Bob Deason was the geologist and there was a landscape architect, Kathy Poole, who I believe was from the East Coast too, but there were some West Coast folks from up and down the West Coast. Charley Dewberry, the fish biologist, and some other local experts were involved. But it was sort of very much a hodge podge of people. (Brehm, personal communication, March 27, 2009)
Allan Comp intended for the CCC to test his collaborative model from AMD&Art and the Wise Wetlands Project. His plan was not outcome-driven, but rather a plan to gather individuals from many different disciplines (landscape architecture and design, hydrogeology, photography, forestry, ecology, watershed management, fisheries biology, history, etc.) to explore several issues about McKee Meadow.

The questions that we ask are essential to the cultivation of the context that lends itself to collaboration. Here are our guiding words for project team members: From your unique perspective, what are the values you see in this place? How could you, or others, act on behalf of those values? How might
you give those values expression? How might those values be expressed in a public way? (Koch, 2005, p. 2)

2004 and 2005 saw the CCC participants visit the Sitka Center, make their individual reports that summarized and explored ideas about the McKee Meadow, and finally, in October 2005, gather as a group to discuss the entire project. Allan writes in the CCC final report’s introduction:

For nearly three straight days in October, with fifteen of us in constant conversation from morning through evening, we had a great time. We were all equally well informed by all of our reports and the great research from interns and Vistas, we all brought individual perspective and experience to the table freely, and none of us were reluctant to speak... We started with a careful review of the research, split into a pair of breakout sessions to hammer out basics, reconvened to discuss results and implications, met as a group to talk over educational possibilities and partnerships, and then implementation, then broke into four writing teams to get our decisions down clearly and ready to present in a public meeting at the Otis Fire Hall. (Comp, 2005, p. 5)

The conclusions that were uncovered in the October meeting were compiled into the *Crowley Creek Collaboration: A Report on a Sitka Residency Project*, a sole, public documentation of the project that is available at the Sitka Center Library and online. (http://www.sitkacenter.org/ccc/CCCreport_condensed.pdf) The report describes the natural and cultural history of the site, the local ecology, flora and fauna, property ownership and historic land use. The report also presents the CCC’s conceptual framework for intervention and land stewardship for the site. In the report, Allan and his team conclude that “Three R’s”: Removal, Remembrance, and Recovery, are the CCC’s most important commitments to the site.
We seek to Remove only what we have put into place that no longer works very well or that no longer fits with the values we bring in 2005 to this land. The creek has been managed to stay off the meadow, but it will not be managed that intensively, if at all, in the future, and while the old road culverts worked most of the time, they won’t for much longer, so we need to Remove that old idea for water passage and create a new way for stream and tide to interconnect and flow unrestricted and safely. Agriculture is no longer wanted on this small plot, so we Remove the driveway, Remove the barbed wire...

We also need to Remember. We want to be able to be reminded of the good lives that earlier inhabitants had on this land when it was a farm and kids gathered wild plants to sell for candy money. We want to Remember the hard work it took almost every time there was a storm to get the stream off the pasture and back in the channel, to Remember the science experiment and the poem of a young friend of this land, and to Remember the generosity toward all of us inherent in conservation easements, open space conversions, educational easements and so much else. And we need to Remember what we are doing now, to consistently monitor and record, to photo-document and webcast, to make sure we leave our own memory of what we have done. Recovery will then follow in our footsteps, we have only to wait. The next big storm or the one after, the first big tree that falls, the next beaver that comes to stay, all of these will bring Recovery of this place – not back to some mythical “wilderness” state, but to what it wants to be now and in the future. It will do that because we have Removed what we see as past interventions no longer appropriate to our contemporary values and Remembered with great respect those that helped create this place and this community and those that locked up this land for all the rest and now we wait, knowing Recovery is already underway. (Comp, 2005, pp. 27-28)

(Un)Intended Outcomes

The Crowley Creek Collaboration: A Final Report on a Sitka Residency

Project, read in tandem with CCC project proposals and organizational documents creates a narrative of the project that provides readers with a history but fails to emphasize the significance of certain issues and key stakeholders. Through interviews with CCC participants, I was able to better understand some underlying problems that may have only become clearly evident in hindsight.
Problems with community engagement and communication, combined with project planning ambiguity and dysfunctional Sitka Center board and staff relations led to complete breakdown in the project and within the Sitka Center. I present these problems here and further analyze several key issues in Chapter Six.

Cascade Head Ranch

The Sitka Center and the Cascade Head Ranch have had a complex relationship since they were both formed in the early 1970s. The development of the Crowley Creek Collaboration brought issues of concern to the forefront, specifically conflicts of interest between Sitka Center board and staff, the Cascade Head Ranch Homeowner’s Association (the Ranch board), and the Cascade Head Ranch District Improvement Company (the water board). Randall recalls asking, “Is the issue the relationship between the Sitka Center and the Cascade Head Ranch? Well, good. Let’s examine that relationship because that is a pretty messed up relationship” (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009). The exploratory nature of the CCC led to critically questioning local land and water use. Typical Sitka Center residency activities in the past had not concerned the Ranch, however the CCC was not a typical residency. According to Paul, the Ranch became concerned about the project once people noticed the CCC’s fundraising efforts.

I think that once the Ranch learned about Sitka putting as much money, or getting grants for the project as much as they did, it really made the Ranch
stand up and take notice about what the heck is going on, and that’s when it really got off track. (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

While the bulk of the CCC’s activities dealt with the McKee Meadow (off Ranch property), the project’s aims of a holistic understanding of the watershed simply could not ignore upstream Crowley Creek as it passes through Ranch property. Pete Owston describes the mounting tension between the Ranch and CCC:

There is always a natural tension between adjacent landowners, no matter who they are. And there is some of that kind of tension here, typical tensions...The situation with the Ranch homeowners was a little different because one of the nice things about Cascade Head Ranch is that there is relatively little development. It is part of a unique federally managed area that includes both federal and private land. The Forest Service has a lot of control over what is done on the private land because of conservation easements [Cascade Head Scenic Research Area designation] that were established in the 1970’s. So, the place cannot be developed to anywhere near the extent that the original developers thought was going to happen here. The people that have places here like it that way and want to keep it that way. So they get a little nervous, and I was one of them. I was on the Ranch board too for a while. So they get a little nervous when there’s talk about things that might bring more people to the immediate area. There was a concern and some rumors afloat that there was going to be a big environmental center down there and there would be more public coming in and that sort of thing. I don’t know if there was any outright opposition, I don’t recall the Ranch board saying, “Don’t do this and we aren’t going to cooperate,” anything like, just general feeling of nervousness that something was going to happen that would be detrimental to the quiet environment of the Ranch. (Owston, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

The CCC’s deep investigation of place caused Ranch homeowners to become concerned that changes might be implemented that would affect the quiet, undeveloped area on Cascade Head.
Sites of Contention

Through interviewing CCC participants and examining the organizational and project documents, I have determined that there are three specific sites within the McKee Meadow and Crowley Creek that became contentious because of the ways in which the CCC engaged them: the Cascade Head Ranch water intake, the historic barn foundation, and Three Rocks Road (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Sites of contention
While these sites are actual places, the controversy behind them reflects and corresponds to communication breakdowns within the CCC, the Sitka Center, and the larger community on Cascade Head.

The data I present here is further illustrated with photographs taken by Katie Brehm. Katie agreed to guide me along Crowley Creek (Figure 5.6) and through the McKee Meadow during my site visit in March 2009. During our tour, Katie and I negotiated the production of images documenting the site with objectives of creating a visual ethnography. In handing her my camera, I asked her to become my collaborator through participatory photography, and take photographs of the places that were significant to her because of the CCC.
Katie’s photographs reveal her perspective of the specific places and issues that have meaning within the context of the CCC.

Cascade Head Ranch Water Intake

Early in the project proposals, the CCC participants identified restoration opportunities within Crowley Creek. The Cascade Head Ranch’s water intake, which supplies all the homeowners on the Ranch with all of their household water, was built just upstream from the McKee property line. A deep investigation of Crowley Creek must also consider the entire watershed, from the headwaters to the Salmon River estuary, and a logical piece of that investigation included understanding the ways in which that water intake apparatus affected the creek below.

As far as our plan and how it would play out with Cascade Head Ranch, and our mission that we were trying to accomplish, which was to understand Crowley Creek as best we could and work towards a conservation plan that would ensure its health as a riparian habitat, salmon habitat, and fulfill Howard’s conservation easement. It has the start at the headwaters and move all the way down the creek. It can’t be 300 yards, isolated, because that’s not what a stream is. A stream, every 60 seconds, is gone, so it has to include all the water that passes through there. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

Paul Katen, a watershed expert, described the intake’s condition:

There’s a need to improve the [Ranch water] intake... Many years ago, I would say ten years ago now, maybe a little longer, the way it was designed had the metal infrastructure with a gate on it, but it was a barrier to fish passage, especially small fish. So ODFW [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife] says, “We want you to put in six inch steps.” So we put in six-inch steps. But when those were redesigned, it no longer was self-cleaning. The way it was previously, we have gates that could swing open and we could open that irrigation gate and it would just sweep out and the rocks would
pretty much go flying out of there. Now, with those fixed steps in there and
before the gate went out, even if you opened the irrigation gate, it wouldn’t
sweep out. It became a problem that we had to bring an excavator in there
every few years after we had a big storm and get the gravel out. Ideally you
want that gravel to go downstream because it is spawning gravel... So CCC
saw an opportunity for a redesign. Again, that was a touchy subject with the
Ranch. (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

Bob Deason, a professional hydrogeologist, proved to be a valuable CCC
participant concerning the Ranch water intake and restoring creek health.

When Bob Deason came in here, he was the hydrologist, started thinking,
“You really might want to start considering wells around here.” Well, the
Ranch had considered wells before and I’m a fan of wells and I really have
tried to push wells around here. But there are some people here on the
Ranch that have a knee-jerk, “Let our water system alone. If you are going to
work, stay off our property. Work down below.” (Katen, personal
communication, March 28, 2009)

As early as January 2004, Allan had identified the Cascade Head Ranch
water intake as an “associated project” of the CCC. He wrote, “Most importantly,
the Cascade Ranch water intake (if they won’t play, I suspect this project will not
really work)” (Comp, personal communication, January 7, 2004). Allan expressed
his concern for the water intake problem as it related to his residency:

The Ranch’s water intake was rather dramatically impacting the way in which
Crowley Creek behaves. If you are trying to do a restoration project on it, or at
least to free the creek so it can do its own thing, which is in large part what we
ended up recommending, that water intake becomes a major issue. (Comp,
personal communication, April 7, 2009)

Since the conclusion of the CCC, natural processes are allowing McKee
Meadow and Crowley Creek to return to a more unmanaged state. Trees are
falling, altering the historically managed channel of Crowley Creek (Figure 5.7).
Additionally, severe storms are accelerating the geo-morphing of the creek and meadow.

In one especially heavy rain, the Cascade Head Ranch water intake was partially destroyed. Floodwaters overwhelmed the intake, blasting the structure downstream. Paul describes it:

Now that the damned thing’s been blown out of there, we do have to look at a redesign. We are probably going to have to go to get a grant to go do it. We want to make it gravel-friendly, fish-friendly, so the gravel moves on through, the fish can get up and down. When CCC mentioned it, it became touchy. (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)
During my hike with Katie Brehm, she continually expressed astonishment over the changes in the creek and meadow as a result of the storms. Her photos of debris from the water intake (Figure 5.8) and new gravel beds in the creek (Figure 5.9) demonstrate that these signs of change are significant to a CCC participant.
Figure 5.9: Gravel in Crowley Creek (Brehm)

*Historic Barn Foundation*

Environmental interpretation for visitors in the surrounding Cascade Head Scenic Research Area is intentionally subtle and self-guiding (USFS Cascade Head Scenic-Research Area Inventory Summary, 1975, p. 24). The idea of building any kind of structure, from rudimentary rain shelter to state of the art interpretive center, on McKee Meadow was a concern among many CCC and Sitka Center stakeholders. Allan recalls:

I am not a big fan of big buildings to begin with, and, at least as I remember, no one in there [CCC] was recommending that we run in there and build a big structure. Howard was kind of interested in building something when he was still alive, but no one else was. So what we were looking at was very low key, passive, interpretive signage and stuff like that, that would enable people who might walk along that trail and read little signs posted on the railing of the trail.
as you look out over the creek. Or if there were walks to be developed within
the meadow itself, would be temporary and changing because the meadow
itself would become that as well. And so anything that might be installed
would be more temporary instead of some big, permanent thing. All of us, at
least in the planning team, were much more interested in that sort of tread
lightly on the land approach than we were in some big interpretive building.
That was never part of our plan. (Comp, personal communication, April 7,
2009)

Randall describes his and Howard’s ideas for the barn site:

Howard had some ideas [about building on the property] because he had the
footprint of the barn and he had been told by the Forest Service that the
footprint is there, you can build anything within that 65’x75’ footprint. He
asked if it had to be placed there, and they said that as long as it was that
footprint, it can be placed out of that specific context, especially if it becomes
evident that’s a floodplain. “We wouldn’t expect you to be limited to the
floodplain.” Howard had talked about, in the upper meadow, out of the
streambed and up that hill to the east; there is a big cleft that opens up in that
hillside that a lot of erosion has happened. He said, “it would be interesting to
have something up here. What do you think that could be?” So of course my
mind could run wild. That’s a dangerous thing to say, what could be here?
What could happen here? I said, “Well, maybe you could develop something
that was residency specific to this Crowley Creek Residency. It would be a
Sitka Center residency, but it would take place there, it would be within
walking distance [to Sitka Center campus]. The research station or library
might be here, but that might be a place where someone might have a small
place to have presentations or something there for small groups who had
come to the property and then they would come to the shelter to learn about
the property. Who knows what it could be?” But Howard was a master
planner for Bandon Dunes. He planned cities in the Middle East. He was a
senior partner at Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. It’s not like here’s some
wacky, off the wall idea guy. Bandon Dunes was a successful business
venture within two years of being built. You can’t expect Howard not to think
about what will happen with the 65 or 75 footprint on his property. (Koch,
personal communication, March 29, 2009)
Katie’s photo of the barn foundation (Figure 5.10) illustrates the site where some participants thought a future structure could be built. Potential uses for the site included Sitka Center workshops and a gathering place for hikers. Paul remembers:

They were talking about possibly using the old barn site down there to put a building in. As it turns out, that could have never happened anyway because of the conservation easements down there, but they were actually talking about overturning that. And that’s when things started getting maybe a little bit too far. (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

The suggestion of building in McKee Meadow alarmed many local residents. Many of the CCC participants remember the situation in different ways; some recalling a strong urge to build, and others remembering that building was never
an option. The building of any kind of structure on the historic barn foundation in McKee Meadow would be regulated by the U.S. Forest Service, in accordance with the policies of the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area. There was never any structure built, and there is not any interpretive signage in the McKee Meadow about the CCC.

*Three Rocks Road*

![Three Rocks Road Bridge over Crowley Creek](image)

The southern boundary of McKee Meadow is Three Rocks Road (Figure 5.11). The only road accessing Cascade Head Ranch, Three Rocks spans a small bridge over Crowley Creek’s current channel and has one small culvert further down the road to allow more drainage from the Meadow down into the
Salmon River estuary. Considering the CCC’s findings that Crowley Creek will likely move out of its historic channel and meander naturally across the Meadow, it has been suggested to take out the bridge and culvert and build a viaduct, raising Three Rocks Road entirely above the southern end of McKee Meadow.

Eddie Huckins describes the road:

We have Three Rocks Road that crosses a bridge and an undersized culvert. We were looking at what would happen with Crowley Creek if left in its natural condition, it potentially would flood out the road. Would we want to just replace the road culvert or would there be the opportunity for a small viaduct? Something that would span the creek and its connection to the estuary to where humans would not be impacting its function and structure. (Huckins, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

As a Ranch homeowner, Paul Katen recognizes the impact that Crowley Creek has on accessing his home. During heavy rains, Crowley Creek floods over the road.

The creek is going to move in the future. So it would behoove us. Right now there is no money, but maybe at some point in the future, there will be money to put another bridge on that side, or much larger culverts, and/or remove the power lines, break up the road, and near where the two creeks hit the road, put a passage between those two so that water can connect between the two. Now it flows over the road. When it went over to the other little culvert where all the sediment is built up, it flowed over the road for a while last year because it couldn’t go through there. And enough water could wash the road out, which would be detrimental. (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

Building a viaduct on Three Creeks Road as it passes McKee Meadow would be a hugely expensive and ambitious project, requiring coordination and funding from several levels of government and local community engagement. By
starting the conversation about a viaduct, the CCC facilitated what has become
an ongoing dialogue about the natural and managed states of Crowley Creek.

The three “associated projects” of the CCC: the desire to redesign the
Cascade Head Ranch water intake system, the idea of building a structure on
McKee Meadow, and the proposal of a viaduct on Three Rocks Road had each
upset various CCC stakeholders. The Cascade Head Ranch homeowner’s main
concern was, and continues to be, maintaining a quiet and undeveloped way of
life on Cascade Head. The successfulness of a project like the CCC lies in the
necessary full support of the organization’s board and the engagement of the
local community. Instead of support and engagement, the CCC experienced
board and staff disagreements and confusion and bad publicity via rampant
rumors in the community. Katie Brehm describes her role in managing public
relations:

When people say, “What are you going to do?” and you say, “We don’t know.”
People get really scared. There was just this sense that there was something
unknown that we were up to and you couldn’t really say, “No, we only want to
do this. Don’t worry, we aren’t going to do this.” Because we didn’t really
know what we were going to do. We couldn’t really say yes or no and it made
people really nervous and very suspicious. The local community-
homeowners, private landowners, but also other people too. You are also
making connections with watershed councils and with Forest Service and
local schools. When you come to them and… it’s nice to come to somebody
and say, “What do you do? What would you like to see here?” People really
appreciate that, but then sometimes after awhile goes by and they are
wondering what you are doing. They want to say, “Why do you want me to be
involved and what’s your goal?” and you say, “To find out everything there is
know.” And people are like, “Wow, that is really scary.” They don’t want it. The
scientists, some locally, were even suspicious that we didn’t have the right
people involved or if you want to do that, then this is the person you need to
see, and maybe we hadn’t talked to that person yet. Ok, well, let’s get them
involved, but then they said, “Well, what do you want to do?” It was outside
the box, and so it made people a little suspicious. Not the multidisciplinary
nature, but the fact that we were gathering all this information and we couldn’t say to do this. We said to do what needs to be done. To do what we will decide to do after we get all the information. We didn’t have a set of goals except to gather all this data and to get all these perspectives. Those were our goals. (Brehm, personal communication, March 27, 2009)

Sitka Center Board and Staff

By autumn 2005, Allan Comp was ending his residency at the Sitka Center and planning the CCC final report. Many of the CCC’s “associated projects” had, by that time, become touchy topics between the Sitka Center staff, Sitka Center board, and the Cascade Head Ranch board. Randall’s vision of an artist (or scientist)-in-residence where participants would become true stewards of the land in McKee Meadow, creating and accumulating data about the land in a re/de-constructive palimpsest-like fashion was not supported by the Sitka Center board. The transition from the past residency model was not an easy one for the Sitka Center board and staff to implement, resulting in unaligned expectations between Randall, Allan, and the Sitka Center board. Laura explains some of the confusion that surrounded the new residency model:

One incompatibility of the whole thing was that it’s just going to be just like a regular residency program, except that it’s going to be big, have a lot of people, and Allan is going to take the residence and manage it. That model would have said that all Sitka does is provide a place, and Allan just does his thing like a regular resident with the same level of expectations. There is this very simple “business as usual” vision versus the vision of there’s this incredibly cool thing that’s going to leave a legacy and have some kind of impact on the community. I think that part of the problem, between both the board and Randall, they couldn’t reconcile, "Oh, it's just a residency for the good of the art world" versus “it’s really going to have an impact and change us. Change the Ranch. Change the land, Change Sitka.” (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009)
Within this new residency model, Randall and the Sitka Center board were not always in agreement about how to best manage the artist-in-residence.

In the last year, they came more and more to their own conclusions without talking to me about it. I feel the greatest disservice to the organization was that if they were going over here and they didn’t bring me with them, how was I supposed to run the organization? In the areas of creating policy, which is their responsibility, that’s how they are supposed to influence what happens... This was kind of where the board started going... they had asked me to fire T. Allan Comp because they didn’t like him and they thought he was inflaming the Cascade Head Ranch, and I thought about it and I said, “Here’s what I asked Allan to do. He is doing that work. If his personal manner is disagreeable to a body that I am actually not responsible to, which is the [Cascade Head Ranch] board, and yet I can stay within the rules and the papers we have written to honor the commitments and the agreements that we have made, I don’t see the grounds for me not having Allan continue in his position. You may not like it, but I am the program person and it’s my responsibility to run the program. These are the decisions that are my decisions and not yours. You have hired me to do this, these are the reasons that I am making these decision, which I think are credible and reasonable. I disagree and I am not firing him.” So, you can see where things were going... At some point along the line, I can only assume, that the board started losing faith in me or the project and became upset that I didn’t drop it, that I wouldn’t fire Allan. They didn’t like Allan because he is pretty presumptuous and very East Coast in his manner and I was leveling with Allan, saying, “You are not playing well with others as far as this board is concerned.” (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

Allan recalls his own uneasiness as the Sitka Center board challenged his residency given their community relations concerns:

Again, this is supposed to be an artist residency. It was supposed to be my opportunity to really explore whether this could work out as a transferable approach. Hanging onto that opportunity was something I was quite interested in doing. And I think we actually did it. (Comp, personal communication, April 7, 2009)

Relations continued to break down between the Sitka Center board and Randall and by September 2005, Randall wrote to Allan:
It has been a rough go of late, and all the warts and callous are pretty exposed. I am tracking back to how I got involved in all this, what my vision was...you have had the disadvantage of running this project from afar, and thus perceive this project in a different light than those who are living here day to day. (Koch, personal communication, September 21, 2005)

In addition to board and staff disagreements about the residency model, tension had mounted about fundraising, both for the CCC and for Sitka Center general operations. The board was also dissatisfied with the large amount of time that Randall had committed to the CCC. Randall recalls:

In the months leading up to this whole thing, I had the board on one side, totally committed to it, and then chickening out and saying, “There was no way we can do this. Forget it. We can't afford it.” And Allan and I going, “Listen, don’t bail on the whole project. We'll get it in at $40,000. We’ll raise the money so just stop worrying about money.” I committed to the board that the other programs were going to make their goals and we were not going to lose money as an organization, or lose the discipline that we had already created in fiscal management. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

Despite the board’s concern that the CCC would absorb too many financial and personnel resources, the CCC did not create a budgetary deficit. At the public presentation of the *Crowley Creek Collaboration: A Report on a Sitka Residency Project* in October 2005, Howard McKee presented Randall with a $15,000 unrestricted gift, saying: “The board is to be commended for undertaking the experimental Crowley Creek project and affirming its commitment to Sitka’s ecology mission” (McKee, personal communication, October 9, 2005). Randall recalls:

At the end of that meeting Howard McKee handed me a check for $15,000 to make the $40,000 budget. So, that's the kind of guy Howard was. He even disagreed with the process, but he engaged in it and understood both sides of
the issue and he understood the report of what it was, from the process that created it, and he said, “Job well done” to me. So, I don’t think he is gracious enough to be, or gratuitous enough to be patronizing, I think that he would not have done that unless he felt that, for what it was, it was realized. Another thing was at the end of 2005, within a month, they had their financial reports together [showing] that we had made budget that year. So we fulfilled the Crowley Creek budget and we fulfilled our operating budget that year, somewhat miraculously. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

In late October 2005, Randall submitted his resignation as Executive Director of the Sitka Center, thus beginning a mass turnover in board and staff at the Sitka Center. Randall says of the staff turnover, “They were gone within six to nine months, they all left. It was very unfortunate and probably the hardest thing that has happened to me ever” (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009). Similarly, the board size reduced to less than half of what it had been during the CCC.

2006 and 2007 proved to be rebuilding years for the Sitka Center. With continuous changes in the staff and a reevaluation of the board’s commitment to the mission of art and ecology, the CCC became a project better left buried in the organizational past. However, some individuals, Randall Koch and Paul Katen especially, remain interested in discussing a future for the project. My own initial request to engage the Sitka Center in this research seemed to revive an interest in (re)evaluating a project that may hold lessons for the future of collaborative stewardship in an artist residency.
Positive Impacts

Despite the breakdowns in board, staff, and community relations, CCC participants think that the project on the whole was a success, yielding several positive outcomes. Randall believes that:

There are really some great ways that this project helped redefine our relationship with Cascade Head Ranch and provide them with some really critical information that they will need over time to correct their water system. All those things have come true. Their water system is wiped out. Paul, obviously, courageously went and spent his own money trying to find wells. Bob Deason, I think, maybe had a better approach to it, but no one engaged him about where the seams in the geology are here that hold the clear, clean water and not the iron-rich water. But I thought those were all things that we were trying to do responsibly to help the Ranch and not threaten the Ranch in any way. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

Additionally, CCC participants Corrina Chase, Katie Brehm, and Laura Doyle were involved in the U. S. Forest Service’s Lower Salmon River Plan, a restoration project developed on the heels of the CCC. Katie recalls:

The project we did with the Forest Service, the model was to bring in five grad students and over the course of the summer we met with the community every two weeks, for eight or twelve weeks. We said, “Here is what we found out. Here is what we are thinking.” We have sketches and big maps and the community members said, “Well, you can’t do that because of this.” They’d draw on the maps. “Oh you forgot there’s all those pink salmon in there.” You get all this local knowledge. We go back and do all these things and talk to so and so. I kind of thought it was more successful in terms of bringing the community onboard because you were going to them, knocking on their doors, as opposed to bringing in experts from the outside. (Brehm, personal communication, March 27, 2009)

Since the Sitka Center no longer conducts programming related to the CCC, other groups have stepped in to continue some of the collaboration’s recommendations. Paul Katen says, “Most of what happens down in the McKee
Meadow now is triggered by the Watershed Council” (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009). Corrina Chase leads volunteer groups in tree plantings and brush clearing:

The Watershed Council had a couple volunteer days working at Crowley Creek. One was the initial planting and then we came back about a year later. But, we have had a natural resources crew come through—students from the Career Tech charter high school—not funded through our Watershed Council, but funded though different ways, and every summer they have done a lot of work at Crowley Creek...I did the leadership after [Katie Brehm] did, and I’ve done that for two years. We are planning on doing it again this year. So we check on all the plantings, do a lot of blackberry clearing. (Chase, personal communication, March 27, 2009)

To conclude, the CCC was a complex, experimental residency aimed at exploring the natural, ecological, historical, and cultural characteristics of the McKee Meadow and Crowley Creek. Several factors debilitated the project, including board and staff misalignments of project goals, conflicts of interest, and outright community discomfort about the process. Results of these factors contributed to the project’s termination, the complete turnover of the Sitka Center board and staff, and a new interpretation of its mission. In Chapter Six, I will further discuss and analyze these factors and results of the CCC as they relate to the ways in which artist residencies play a role in local land stewardship.
CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS

In Chapters Four and Five, I presented data that introduce the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology and the Crowley Creek Collaboration (CCC) and concurrently initiated thematic analysis. Here, I further examine critical themes within the context of the Crowley Creek Collaboration in order to better understand the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship. This chapter analyzes the forces that shaped the ways in which the CCC was designed, implemented, and received. Both internally and externally, the project experienced communication breakdown and tension stemming from skepticism about inviting outsiders to contribute to the project. Within the Sitka Center, several organizational characteristics affected development and execution of the CCC (Figure 6.1). The evaluation of Sitka Center’s mission by the staff and board, as well as how they defined residency both influenced and were affected by the CCC. Interaction—personal and professional relations—between the staff and board also shaped the way the CCC worked.
Figure 6.1: Internal processes that impacted the CCC

In the community, the CCC was poorly understood and actively opposed by some, while promoted and supported by others (Figure 6.2). Impeding the whole process, deep engagement with the local community was never achieved. Many of the homeowners on the Ranch lived elsewhere fulltime, and only visited their (second) homes during vacations. Some CCC participants experienced difficulties in maintaining transparency in their dealings with other organizations. Several members of the community were wary of inviting outsiders to participate in a local, place-based project. Three sites associated with the CCC became especially contentious, resulting in open criticisms of the project.
I begin this chapter with a reminder that my analysis is informed only by the data I collected, and that readers recognize that my perspectives on the Sitka Center and the CCC might be different had I deeper engagement and longer periods of study. Many of my interviewees and data sources have known each other personally and professionally for many years. I do not know nor do I attempt to report the intricacies of those interpersonal relationships to which I am not privy. In agreeing to be identified and quoted in this case study, I accept that interviewees may have shaped their responses to avoid personal or professional controversy. With these limitations in mind, I present an analysis of the data collected; an analysis that attempts to avoid prescription and yet I still offer my suggestions for future residencies in Chapter Seven.
Conflicts of Interest

CCC participants often found that they had to manage various conflicts of interest. For this case study, I interviewed many individuals who have served multiple organizations in the Cascade Head area in some capacity, many times simultaneously. Working as staff or as a board trustee, individuals have been involved in the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, the Cascade Head Ranch Homeowner’s Association, the Cascade Head Ranch District Improvement Company, the Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council, the Nature Conservancy, the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District, and the U.S. Forest Service. These organizations each hold their own land stewardship values and conduct business in very different ways, and some participants experienced conflicts of interest in serving multiple organizations.

One individual who recalls having problems with serving more than one organization is Paul Katen. As the President of the Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council, Paul brought networking experience and watershed expertise to the CCC, eventually supervising Katie Brehm’s Americorps Vista position. As a Cascade Head Ranch homeowner, Paul also added an important neighborly perspective. However, his role as the President of the Cascade Head Ranch District Improvement Company ultimately created a significant conflict of interest that may have shaped his involvement with the CCC. Paul was not clearly communicating the aims and concerns of those multiple constituencies he served as a CCC participant, Ranch homeowner, and water board president. As
a result he helped exacerbate Ranch fears when they discovered the
successfulness of the CCC’s fundraising. According to Paul:

> From that point on, things just got on the wrong track with the Ranch. It could have been a phenomenal, a really interesting project. But they had a knee-jerk reaction. “We don’t want this whole thing. We don’t want you putting an ecology center down there.” (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

The main issue that needed clarification between the Sitka Center and the Cascade Head Ranch District Improvement Company was the depth of the CCC’s inquiry, and specifically that an investigation of Crowley Creek would involve the entire watershed, including the Cascade Head Ranch’s property and their water intake system. Randall Koch discusses his assumption that CCC participants were informing their associated organizations about CCC activities:

> So then when we talked to Paul about it, and then the [Cascade Head Ranch District Improvement Company] kind of backhandedly found out about it, they were really pissed off because they felt that this was going on behind their back, that they should have been informed up front. I assumed that Paul, being the President of the board, was informing the board. I thought that it was a reasonable thing that if you engage the President, it was his responsibility to inform the board, not ours. He was the head of the board. So that was apparently incorrect (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009).

Recognizing that several CCC participants were involved in multiple organizations, the Sitka Center board and staff might have addressed the obvious conflicts of interest among CCC participants and created a policy on the project’s onset that might have ensured greater transparency and more open communication. Furthermore, Sitka Center board and staff might have found it beneficial to engage those individuals in leadership positions within the Cascade
Head Ranch and Cascade Head Ranch District Improvement Company, and perhaps could have formally recognized them as community consultants for the CCC, and/or clearly outlined their roles as community representatives.

Although Paul’s responsibilities to different organizations and projects led to some problematic assumptions, his ongoing interest in the CCC’s work has produced some of the only enduring actions in McKee Meadow. Pete Owston says of Paul:

He was in both camps, if you will, because Paul has been really active in volunteer efforts on the Ranch and the Sitka Center, and of course he has some background in this area. So he was directly involved in the Crowley Creek project as he kind of managed the Vista volunteer that was helping with the project, and of course he is deeply involved in the Watershed Council. It was a natural kind of position. It was probably Paul who made that happen [the Watershed Council implementing CCC recommendations] because of his roles. (Owston, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

Paul remains a strong proponent of the CCC. As I began preliminary inquiries for this case study, Paul was quick to reply with useful information and has been an excellent source of information on the current status of the McKee Meadow. Here is an excerpt from an email Paul wrote to CCC participants last winter, updating them on recent happenings in the slow evolution of the land:

From:  Paul Katen  
Sent:  Tuesday, January 06, 2009 1:34 AM  
Subject:  Crowley Creek Update- Bob got it right

We had something on the order of 5.5 inches of rain Dec 31-Jan 1 which raised havoc on the Coast. The Crowley Creek watershed was no exception. An unbelievable amount of gravel and debris moved down with the water.

Attached are several photos showing the McKee meadow on Jan 2nd at which time flows had come down considerably. However, you will see that Crowley Creek did get jammed up with gravel and debris at 2 of Bob’s
Release points sending a portion of the Crowley flow out into the meadow. Even today (1/5/09) there was still flow in the meadow, but we did get more rain last night and are getting some again tonight.

Also shown in the photos is that the dam(n) gate at the CHR intake was wiped out. We are presently looking at a new design, which is long overdue and out of necessity.

Three Rocks Road was covered with water and mud when the 2nd culvert could not handle the flow going to the West side of the meadow, but there was no permanent damage.

GREAT WORK TEAM YOU REALLY CALLED IT ON THE POTENTIAL RISKS. (Katen, personal communication, January 6, 2009)

Paul was able to move past the conflicts of interest he experienced to become an advocate for implementing CCC recommendations on the site, and this work is now executed mostly through the Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council or the U. S. Forest Service.

I would like to see it picked up. I try to keep a few communications going, but there is really not a lot going on and it needs somebody to somehow champion, pick up the pieces and try to go with it. Maybe just a volunteer, try to get some of these things that are spelled out in the report, get some of these things done. To get the wheels turning should not take a lot of effort, especially since the Forest Service now is putting a tremendous amount of money into the whole Salmon River estuary, trying to get it restored to a completely naturally functioning estuary. (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

During my site visit to the Sitka Center, Paul guided a tour of the McKee Meadow for me, Pete Owston, Randall Koch, and one of the current Sitka Center artists-in-residence. Although most of my fellow hikers intimately knew the Meadow and could have easily described the important features of our tour, Paul took the lead in thoroughly explaining the significance of changes happening in
McKee Meadow and Crowley Creek, highlighting how these changes more or less were aligned with CCC findings.

Outsiders and Locals

A common concern in the discourse of artist residencies is the artist’s level of involvement in the community. The CCC is a unique situation because it not only comprised principal resident T. Allan Comp interacting with the local community, but it also brought other project residents to the Sitka Center to participate in a collaboration and interact with the Sitka Center residency model and with the community. Levels of collaboration occurred in the CCC, including a collaborative model that promoted joint understanding between the arts and the sciences. Implicitly, because of the inherent characteristics of a residency, collaborations occurred between outsiders (Allan Comp, Bob Deason, Katie Brehm, etc.) and locals (Randall Koch, Laura Doyle, Pete Owston, Howard McKee, the Cascade Head Ranch, etc). Allan Comp says:

> Artist in the community is always a sort of interesting thing to be. They like to have the community come listen to the artist pontificate, but when the community can tell the artist what the community wants, [it] is a whole different issue. (Comp, personal communication, April 7, 2009)

CCC participants valued Allan’s collaborative model in various ways. Allan describes the model:

> If you look at the list, probably two-thirds of the folks were locals. Those disciplines that were from the outside were brought in because they had a perspective and context that was not available locally... So bringing that kind of larger perspective in was part of what I wanted to do. It is easy to tunnel into local, but if you do only that, you put on some blinders that you really
don’t want to wear. It was helpful to the overall project that we mix up the local expertise that was there, which was quite considerable, but not as wide-ranging as I wanted that project to be. (Comp, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

Even Allan, himself, walked a fine line between outsider and local. While he has spent significant time on the Oregon coast, his career has focused on watersheds in Appalachia. In interviews, I observed an underlying suspicion of Allan and his model of bringing in collaborating experts from around the country. Corrina Chase says, “I probably would have worked harder to get local expertise and local artists, especially because we have such good resources here” (Chase, personal communication, March 28, 2009). Laura Doyle recalls Allan’s collaborators:

These other people, his friends from all over the country, were going to come and spend a weekend with their families. They were a bunch of nice people, but they would fly in for a weekend, have dinner, walk around in the field, and present their thoughts... And then after each of them had done this, they all met to pool their knowledge. And a lot of the controversy about this was kind of, Randall couldn’t exactly explain and neither could Allan why these particular people were visiting, other than Allan really liked them, and couldn’t explain what they were doing, other than talking to each other. (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Misunderstandings of Allan’s collaborative model led to confusion, even among the most involved Sitka Center staff and CCC participants. Allan’s role as the principle resident may have been more effective in clarifying his vision had he been on site more permanently. Allan relied on Americorps volunteers to conduct much of the CCC’s community outreach in his absence. This arrangement seems less effective than in his previous projects, where he personally engaged the local communities. The participants local to Cascade Head wanted to involve the
valuable artistic and scientific resources right in their own community, while Allan, as the principal resident, brought in past collaborators, such as Bob Deason, an expert hydrogeologist from Pennsylvania who worked on AMD&Art. Bob recalls his experience as an outsider:

There may have been people who felt that “Why are they bringing some guy from Pennsylvania when there are hydrogeologists in Oregon?” I would not be at all surprised if somebody said that. But nobody ever said it to me, and everybody I dealt with there was great. I was just myself, which is what I always do. Geology is pretty much geology. Different geologic terrains require different solutions to problems. But nevertheless, it’s all a part of what we know. I don’t think there was any sort of a stigma because I was from Pennsylvania, and certainly nobody was discourteous or uncooperative because of the fact. (Deason, personal communication, March 19, 2009)

Bob’s recommendations to fix the Cascade Head Ranch water intake and dig for wells was supported by Paul Katen, who has invested his own money to explore that idea on behalf of the Ranch.

Planning and Communication Breakdown

In Chapter Five, I presented interview testimonies, organizational documents, CCC proposals and reports that described the evolution of the CCC. A close inspection of these documents, and the official *Crowley Creek Collaboration: A Report on a Sitka Residency Project*, reveals a lack of clarity and a failure to communicate the project’s aims. Multiple ways of approaching the CCC made it difficult to develop one single planning tool that could then be communicated uniformly to CCC participants and the local community (Figure 6.3).
Moreover, the project gained complexity in the ways participants negotiated these approaches. Laura Doyle wrote many of the project’s proposals. She reflected on the overall process:

Well, let me just say that this project was fraught with lack of focus and lack of definition and lack of consensus and lack of understanding all over the map, Or maybe it was that there were too many different understandings. (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

There are no fewer than six different versions of project proposals, many of which were also summarized and re-interpreted by other CCC participants.

The early proposals included site development plans, but as the project
progressed, development on-site became complicated due to regulations in the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area policy, the McKee conservation easement, and some uncooperative neighbors on the Cascade Head Ranch. Communicating the project’s aims proved difficult as the project narrowed from a broad exploration of place with the potential for artful reclamation, to an extremely passive and more ephemeral collaboration.

The enduring and public documentation of the CCC is the *Crowley Creek Collaboration: A Report on a Sitka Residency Project*, which does not discuss the evolution of the CCC or the internal and external turmoil caused by the project. Allan says of the report:

The big conflicts that we could all see in hindsight now, were not explicitly present during the project itself. Ran didn’t quit until afterwards. That sort of blindsided me. I thought Ran was going to be there forever. I think a lot of other people did as well. There wasn’t a conscious effort to avoid addressing conflict [in the report]; it just wasn’t appearing that the conflicts were as deep or as serious as they later appeared to be... My interest was in pursuing this project and keeping the integrity of this project in tact as much as possible. Running around trying to change the recommendations of the team to meet the interests or the needs of the Ranch was not something I was interested in doing at all... We weren’t going to lie, but I wasn’t interested in getting in a fight either (Comp, personal communication, April 7, 2009).

The integrity that Allan strived to maintain served his intention for the project, i.e. testing his collaborative multidisciplinary model. The essence of the CCC was threatened, in part, because it did not have the full support of its own hosting organization. When the board and staff of a residency institution disagree about programming, the organization ceases to function smoothly. Additionally, the project’s failure to fully engage the local community (the Cascade Head Ranch)
challenged Allan’s collaborative model that appeared to have worked so successfully with AMD&Art in Vintondale, Pennsylvania.

The final report offers few recommendations for the site, stating, “Our recommendations are limited in number and scope because we wanted to work with natural forces, not overcome them” (2005, p. 27). While a passive approach regarding interventions in the CCC site was certainly consistent with the values of the collaboration, other factors influenced this decision as well. These factors are best identified by reading the report together with the series of project proposals.

Mission Clarity

The CCC developed out of a Sitka Center board initiative to “do more ecology.” The Sitka Center for Art and Ecology’s board and staff have often struggled to find a balance between artful programming and ecological programming. More than a singular art or ecological program, the CCC was an innovative enterprise that attempted to bridge the gap between Art and Ecology (art/ecology) through interdisciplinary inquiry into place.

Many interviewees in this case study noted a deficiency in ecology-focused programs at the Sitka Center and felt that the CCC fulfilled a need for programming that dealt with local ecology. The board and staff of the Sitka Center have struggled with implementing a mission and organizational name that balances Art and Ecology. Additionally, there was a strong urge to perform both Art and Ecology (art/ecology) in a meaningful way. The collaborative nature of
the CCC was designed to bring artists (of several disciplines) together with ecologists (of several disciplines). Ever mindful in its commitment to the mission of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology—to expand the relationships between art, nature, and humanity—the CCC integrated each of these three components into a residency.

Shaped by the controversies surrounding the CCC, Sitka Center board and staff interpretation of the center’s mission has shifted to a more superficial expansion of the relationships between art, nature, and humanity. Since the CCC ended, and the Sitka Center experienced significant board and staff turnover, a new focus and interpretation of the mission has emerged. Minimizing the role that ecological programming plays in the Sitka Center, the current board and staff now focus on helping people find their core, creative selves. This new focus is more individualistic, art-centric, and demonstrates how Eric Vines and Jalene Case are developing Sitka Center residencies and workshops. The implication of this new mission shift is that Sitka Center programs focus on helping people develop their own formal art-making skills and spiritual sense of self, which seems to reinforce a Modernist concern for individual genius. Artists-in-residence and workshop participants seem to visit the Sitka Center to be inspired by the local scenery and create art as a response to that inspiration. The CCC perhaps pushed the boundaries beyond simply making art depicting Cascade Head, to creating an artful process for place-exploration, inclusive of ecological, historical and cultural qualities.
The Artist Residency Model

Inviting T. Allan Comp, who was so successful in AMD&Art, to participate in a residency that tested his reclamation art idea, was a vast departure from past residencies at the Sitka Center. Randall, inspired by Allan’s presentation of AMD&Art, saw the potential for similar work in the Cascade Head and invited him to participate in a residency. However, Laura Doyle did not connect AMD&Art with what the CCC could become:

The AMD&Art thing was so different. It was like a restoration project. Huge damages in a blue-collar community. The comparison of the out of work, blue collar, ex-mining community, with this one here, which is mostly retirees and a lot of wealthy vacationers, there was no comparison. The amount of restoration, we are in the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area, we can’t do anything without huge amounts of review, all kinds of review. (Doyle, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Indeed, there are many differences between Allan’s projects at AMD&Art in Vintondale, Pennsylvania, University of Virginia-Wise, and the Sitka Center (Figure 6.4). There were similarities too, such as the collaborative nature and multidisciplinary approaches, but each of these projects took place in different contexts, with varying degrees of community interaction. While the CCC, Wise, and AMD&Art each examined a watershed issue, the degree of required restoration differed greatly among the three sites.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community involvement</th>
<th>Degree of Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMD&amp;Art</td>
<td>Appalachia, rural, legacy of mining</td>
<td>Deeply engaged</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of VA-Wise</td>
<td>Appalachia, college town, legacy of mining</td>
<td>University initiative</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitka Center: CCC</td>
<td>Oregon Coast, rural, absentee community, tourist destination</td>
<td>Difficult to engage</td>
<td>Very passive, more observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 6.4: Comparison of AMD&Art, University of VA-Wise, and CCC

Allan describes the differences between these projects:

The context was a bit different. AMD&Art was something I started, created a nonprofit to sort of be the project and after I moved to the Office of Surface mining about 1999, I was a volunteer Executive Director who ran that project until it was completed... For the Wise-Virginia project, that was really part of the work that I do with OSM, provide support to watershed groups, so that project was sort of built around the work that I do anyway. So, again, there was no cost of the project for me to actually get there. It was just a sort of additional workload for me, which I was quite happy to absorb, because I thought it was a very interesting project. Way beyond coal country, in the Pacific Northwest, there is no way I could support that through my office work, so it became something I had to do independently and an easy way to do that, or the way Ran and I worked out to do that, was to create that intermittent residency. (Comp, personal communication, April 7, 2009)

In AMD&Art, Allan led the project as the Executive Director, personally overseeing the project and building community support and project ownership through direct engagement. As a resident at the Sitka Center, he did not have the same control over the CCC, nor did he have the personal experience or
professional network on Cascade Head that may have eased public relations
tension as the CCC progressed.

As an intermittent Sitka Center resident, Allan worked on the project part-
time, mostly from across the country. Working with many collaborators (as he did
in his past projects), Sitka Center board and staff members, and local community
members, Allan created an entirely different residency model than the Sitka
Center had implemented before. Caitlin Strokosch identifies the struggle that
many residencies face in this situation:

The interface with the local community and the artists is something that a lot
of residency programs struggle with because their main operation is to run a
residency that is kind of a retreat style model, that is really isolated from the
public. That can be a challenge when you have artists who want to do
projects in the community, and the residency program itself may not be used
to working with the local community. (Strokosch, personal communication,
March 19, 2009)

Allan discusses residency models:

I think largely its due to residencies and their standards, in a stereotypical
form at least, are places isolated from the real world where artists can have
refuge and are free to do their own work. That’s the kind of old, traditional
model. There are some that seek a lot more engagement between artists and
the surrounding communities, but not really very many. Even then, that’s the
kind of institutional thing, and then with individual artists, they always want to
work with the community in that they tell the community what they ought to
do. But sort of listen to the community and give that community their own
aspirations is a whole different ballgame, and you don’t see that ballgame
played very often. I work with small little communities a lot, and I don’t think
it’s a problem of bringing in outside people, I think it’s a problem of the
attitudes of some kinds of outside people to community engagement. (Comp,
personal communication, April 7, 2009)

In a traditional residency model, the residency staff selects artists, based
on a competitive application process. The artist benefits from residency
resources in order to make new artwork. Allan was invited to participate in a
more untraditional way, originating from Allan and Randall’s meeting at the
Alliance of Artists’ Communities conference. Once Allan began developing and
implementing the CCC, it became clear that he was not completely free to create
his work. The Sitka Center board charged Randall, as the Executive Director,
with managing Allan. Laura recounts:

When there were problems, they’d go to Randall and say, “What are you
doing? Fix this. And he’d say, “This is a residency project. We don’t control
the residents, what they do.” Which is kind of what they wanted because the
residency programs here... Sitka provides space; they aren’t in charge of
content. Residents bring their own content. So, there was a lot of confusion
about that. A lot of the plans mixed incompatible rules and expectations
around what this project was going to do, what impact it was going to have
and how much was it going to cost. A lot of the assumptions of what that was
going to be turn out not to be the case. (Doyle, personal communication,
March 30, 2009)

The task of having to manage a resident’s activities was an unusual one for the
staff. For the most part, Sitka Center residents are free to use their residency
time as they like. However, when Allan’s residency began concerning the local
community, the Sitka Center staff and board had to establish whether it was
reasonable to interfere or restrict the residency activities to some degree. Allan’s
temporary residency created lasting interpersonal and inter-organizational
conflicts that justifiably required attention and remediation. Randall firmly
defended Allan’s residency to the Sitka Center board, which ultimately led to
irreparable damage to his working relationship with the board and poor
community relations between Sitka Center and the Ranch.
The CCC put the Sitka Center on the brink of developing a new model of artist residency, one that deeply examined the space between art and place, encouraged interdisciplinary collaboration, and sought community engagement. Had Randall been successful in instituting a permanent, site-specific residency model in McKee Meadow, the Sitka Center programming and mission would be quite different than it is now. Current residents do not often engage with McKee Meadow in their artwork, preferring instead to work in the studios on the Sitka Center campus. The McKee educational easement that was granted to the Sitka Center is not often utilized in any meaningful way by residents; the current focus on the “core, creative self” in the Sitka Center culture harks back to a more traditional residency model of retreating from social, cultural, and ecological forces to be creative, rather than advancing critical inquiry and transformation on these fronts.

Engaging an Absentee Community

The CCC, by design, deeply explored the cultural, historical, and ecological features of the McKee Meadow and Crowley Creek, resulting in external tensions with local landowners over specific sites within the project. Further complicating these tensions, many of the homeowners in Cascade Head Ranch are absentee, only using their Ranch home part-time. And Allan too was largely an absentee resident, further complicating accountability for the project. Randall Koch talks about the differences in community between AMD&Art and the CCC:
[Allan] had that village [Vintondale, PA], instead of Cascade Head Ranch, a bunch of absentee people. I mean, there was nobody to engage, just a bunch of empty houses and the ones that we did engage were the leadership who don’t live here either. So, AMD&Art had the benefit and the challenge, more challenge initially, of having the community embrace something that became theirs. Here, you had Howard, a very knowledgeable and headstrong landowner. There was no village. Cascade Head [Ranch], which was holding on to its own stuff and not seeing any benefit to them at all, as far as they were concerned. You had the Sitka board, who initially embraced, and then rejected Allan, so they weren’t helping at all. (Koch, personal communication, March 29, 2009)

The political and financial interests of the Cascade Head Ranch residents constituted a powerful adversary to the exploratory nature of the CCC. By posing questions about Crowley Creek and how the Ranch uses that resource, the CCC revealed unsustainable water management practices that negatively affected salmon habitat downstream. By calling attention to this water system, the CCC threatened the Ranch’s entire water infrastructure. The Cascade Head Ranch District improvement Company, who manages Ranch infrastructures, interpreted the CCC exploration as a potential violation of their property rights. The very idea that a property owner can abuse their land in ways that will absolutely affect other property users within a watershed demonstrates a land ethic that does not value interconnectedness and ecological systems; and yet, this is the dominant land use policy of industrial, extractive, natural resource management companies. When examining a watershed, one considers all the land that drains and flows down into a creek or river. When searching for the source of ecological concern, one need only look upstream.
Paul Katen, one of the few full-time Ranch residents, says of his fellow Ranch homeowners (part-time and vacationers):

They think everything is going to be fine if you don’t touch anything. But it’s not. It’s work to keep things the way they are, to keep things operating. People don’t necessarily realize when they come out for their two weeks in the summer. (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

Paul’s assessment of part-time Ranch inhabitants’ and vacationers’ cognizance of Ranch infrastructure and local ecosystems reveals that perhaps these residents do not have a full understanding or appreciation for the day-to-day issues of the local area. The sites and associated projects that the CCC explored, particularly the Ranch water intake, may have not been fully understood by the Ranch community because many of these people visited their Ranch homes so infrequently. It is reasonable to conclude that they became upset when they learned that a local arts group was making recommendations for a complete overhaul of their water system, using specialists from the East Coast. With a poor understanding of the CCC process, the Ranch homeowners could only jump to their own conclusions. A key piece of the CCC was to engage the local community and help them understand the process, but how do you engage an absentee community? The CCC could have found a welcoming community with a built-in support system of like-minded, well-educated, eco-savvy advocates had more Ranch residents understood and joined in the process. Thoughtfully written communications, directed media approaches such as e-newsletters or social networking, and/or features in the local and regional
press may have been successful strategies to engaging absentee Ranch
homeowners.

**Outcomes and Impacts**

The outcomes and impacts of the CCC still echo through the decisions
and performances of the Sitka Center (Figure 6.5). The CCC, despite its
problems within the Sitka Center and in the local community, was a powerful
experience for its participants. Many of these participants contributed their
scientific expertise to a project that operated very differently from any traditional
science-based inquiry. Paul Katen describes his experience:

I’m a scientist and unfortunately I’m not that broad-minded, but when I get into
sitting around a table with these people who think so far outside the box. I
think, “Oh, this is great”...[The process of collaboration] truly was a high point.
I think that conference that we had here in October of 2005 was the high point
because we had...energy. This room was...full of energy. Great ideas. People
wanting to see things done. (Katen, personal communication, March 28, 2009)

Besides the valuable lessons learned from collaborating, the CCC also
created an entry point for educational opportunities, maybe not for the Sitka
Center, but for other, affiliated groups, such as the Salmon Drift Creek
Watershed Council. Corrina Chase, especially, values these opportunities:

I think for me, one of the most special things about Crowley Creek is that it is
such a good site for education. It’s got all of these different ecosystems and
habitat types in one location and it’s easy to access without damaging things.
You can show people beaver dams and estuary mud flats and salt spray
meadows and Sitka forests. Everything is right there. Mud flats. With a
parking lot and a bathroom. What more could you ask, right? (Chase,
personal communication, March 28, 2009)
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<th>Issue</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Implication</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation of Sitka Center mission</td>
<td>Institutional change to focus on core, creative self</td>
<td>Diminish ecological and collaborative programming</td>
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<td>Sitka Center redefines <em>Residency</em></td>
<td>CCC unsuccessful in fully developing a new model of place-based residencies</td>
<td>Other residency programs are developing new models of place-based residencies</td>
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<td>Sitka Center Board and Staff relations</td>
<td>Complete turnover of the board and staff after the CCC</td>
<td>The Sitka Center was overwhelmed by the CCC, among related organizational failings</td>
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<td>Local community members skeptical of outsiders participating on a local ecological issue</td>
<td>CCC project residents participated to their capacity with the project's plan. Outsiders generally did not encounter negativity while on site</td>
<td>Deep sentiments of local ownership (of issues, property, ideas, and processes) dominate in the Cascade Head area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple understandings of the process, intermittent aims and objectives</td>
<td>Multiple proposals, inability to define and communicate the project effectively</td>
<td>Many different, sometimes aligning ideas for the project created opportunities and threats, possibly necessarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites of contention</td>
<td>CCC observations and predictions now proving accurate, Ranch must reconsider their water intake after severe storms destroy their system</td>
<td>Findings from the CCC were informed and farsighted</td>
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<td>CCC Participant experience</td>
<td>CCC was a powerful process for participants, especially for those in science disciplines</td>
<td>Collaborations are valuable ways to experience other disciplines and one’s own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational opportunities</td>
<td>Drift Creek Watershed Council uses CCC recommendations in their education programs in McKee Meadow</td>
<td>CCC recommendations are valuable to the groups who are able to implement them</td>
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Figure 6.5: CCC outcomes and implications

If the CCC’s final recommendation was to design a thoughtful, long-term plan that passively observes and documents the changes that will inevitably take
place as time passes in McKee Meadow, then perhaps the project was a success. According to Bob Deason:

At Sitka, you have more of a long-range plan. What we came up with for Crowley Creek is, here’s what we want to happen, here’s what should happen, and if we just sit back and wait, it’s probably going to happen. You could intervene if you wanted to, here and there, and speed the process up. Again, I got an email from Paul this winter they had a big flow, and the stream jumped its banks and broke loose into the meadow, right exactly where everybody thought it would. And so, from that perspective if it just does that a few more times, the stream will in fact jump out of that ditch that its in and relocate itself into the middle of the meadow and they will be forced to redirect the flow through some newly installed culverts, or they will lose the road. The stream itself has, on its own behalf, forced humans to make the change, for lack of a better term. (Deason, personal communication, March 19, 2009)

Predictably, turnover will happen on the Sitka Center staff and board, and Ranch homeowners will likely one day move away or leave their home to their children. But the land is there forever; changing, at times slowly, and at other times very dramatically. The educational and conservation easements on McKee Meadow will continue to guide stewardship for the land, and the Sitka Center may need only look to the CCC as a foundation for stewardship actions it could consider in the future.
In this chapter, I reconsider the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship. Stepping back from my data and analysis, I discuss the value of this research, both for the Sitka Center and for the field of artist’s residencies. I discuss the latest developments in T. Allan Comp’s work and make recommendations for future research. Finally, I reflect upon my own subjectivity and conclude with some closing thoughts on the purpose of this case study and my findings.

I began this thesis with two additional questions in mind: “How do our personal relationships to place affect our roles as land stewards?” and “How do artists challenge the public imaginary about places?” As my research progressed, I developed many new ways of thinking about these questions, which in turn helped me think about artist residencies and local land stewardship in new ways and draft potential answers to my query. Finally, I discuss what I believe determines an (un)succesful performance of one’s ecological ethics through land stewardship.
Considering Relationships to Place

Our experiences are often defined by the relationships we have with place. These relationships, in turn, influence our interest and ability to be good land stewards. Utilizing a range of policy tools, we perform our ecological and environmental ethics. The ways in which we use policy tools, such as land use zoning and easements serving conservation and education functions, demonstrate our values and ethics. These tools are just as powerful and can be as manipulative as mechanical and physical tools in their bulldozing and constructing of places.

Place and landscape shape our personal, collective, and/or organizational memories. We create and save documentation such as deeds, maps, and surveys, not only to colonize and claim ownership, but also to perhaps better understand the built environment and cultural landscape. As organizations and individuals we document significant events for future generations to both learn from and memorialize. These events, whether painful or pleasant, shape our perception of place and interpersonal power dynamics. Land use, as a tool of performance, is both subtle and provocative in its unavoidable shaping of the landscape. Documentation of man’s impact on place is recorded on its surfaces and can be considered as palimpsestic data that could inform our future (in)actions.
Readdressing the Idea of Reclamation

Land reclamation is a necessary process in the production-consumption cycles of industrial capitalism. On one hand, it can be a noble endeavor that remedies the environmental devastation of natural resource extraction, processing, and disposal. On the other hand, reclamation can constitute thoughtless and poorly designed restoration projects that do not account for the cultural and historical character of a community. As I have learned through this research, reclamation is most successful when the community feels engaged in the process and takes ownership of a project. Additionally, reclamation is most successful when collaboration and multidisciplinary values are embraced as essential to the process. Problematizing and critically assessing reclamation will continue to be a worthy research topic so long as industries and people continue to pollute and degrade land in communities.

As a human species, developing sustainable ways of productively living with(in) places may not only be an aesthetic and ethical imperative, but one of survival for our planet. We rely on scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements (which of course require creativity in their development), but perhaps it is the artist who can best help us understand our relationships to these advancements. By challenging us to reconsider where we are and how we got here, artists can provoke us to dream of new, more sustainable futures.
The Role of the Artist and Artist Residencies

Contemporary artists have the opportunity, and I argue, the moral and ethical responsibility, to engage and challenge public perception and actions concerning social and environmental issues. In creating thought-provoking art about place, artists incite people’s questioning of their relationships with those places, challenging them to more deeply consider the ranges of dominant, conventional, historical, and sustainable uses of land. Within this space of questioning, people may reconsider the roles they are willing to play as stewards of the land and in their development of ethical relations with each other and those generations yet to come.

Land reclamation must not be the exclusive domain of scientists. Performing as stewards, artists too can take advantage of the incredible opportunities to consider and act upon a population’s collective relationship with the land. Artists can bring a valuable voice to the reclaiming process, one that is creative in its problem-solving strategies and aesthetically-sensitive in its design. Thoughtful, community-oriented projects can build excitement and momentum when artists collaborate with scientists, and reclamation activists engage those communities (re)shaping places.

In the United States, there are few funding and support mechanisms available to individual artists to create new work. In providing resources necessary for artists to create new work about place, residencies could provide a great service to society. Residencies, in their mission, aim to support the work of
artists, providing them with time, resources, and space to be creative.

Residencies that, in their mission, focus on supporting artists who address environmental issues, could assume a particularly advantageous position in guiding the development and creation of art that incites critical and deep thought about human relationships to place, and specifically those places where residencies occur.

Value of this Research

As a researcher, I am interested in sharing the lessons learned at the Sitka Center while studying the Crowley Creek Collaboration (CCC). I have compiled and recounted the very personal stories about an organization, a project, and the individuals who continue to work towards shared goals concerning art, ecology, and community. Providing full disclosure, the individuals I engaged in this thesis openly shared their stories with me, those that I have attempted to present fairly. I hope that in turn this research sparks productive dialogue. Acknowledging the Sitka Center’s organizational and programmatic history and directions for the future, I additionally hope that the lessons learned here are useful to other artist residency programs that deeply investigate their own places.

Value for the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology

The conduct of this case study hopefully has called attention to the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology as an example of a residency program that is
organizationally and culturally reinvesting in a meaningful engagement with the local ecology. Their address of local issues has been demonstrated through the CCC residency program, an initiative which deeply explored historical, cultural, and ecological features of a local watershed and provoked members of the community to address their relationships with it.

More than simply an examination and analysis of programming, this research may be of value in its interrogation of the ways in which organizations and communities negotiate change, engage in critical self-reflection, and remember, document, and talk about themselves. The Sitka Center’s core group of stakeholders, comprised of staff, board members, and neighbors, have shared their understandings of the ways in which the Sitka Center operates, is organized, and has changed over the years. The construction of my interview questions and the resulting interview transcriptions serve as an oral history of the Sitka Center and the CCC. When considered along side organizational documents, one can begin to gain a more comprehensive view of the ways in which the Sitka Center understands itself. My reading of these understandings were presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six of this thesis.

My hope is that the Sitka Center views this research, including my humbly-offered analyses and recommendations, as a jumping off point for critical dialogue about the ways the organization’s past has unfolded, and in turn will consider new forms of community engagement and programs that might advance the cause of art and ecology through new residencies in the future.
Value for the Field of Residencies

This thesis may potentially be of value to other artist residency programs and to residency networks and advocates. An example of how a residency can facilitate an intensive exploration of place, my research about the Sitka Center and the CCC offers valuable lessons about organizational learning, mission focus/drift, and community, board, and staff relations. Sitka Center staff and board members candidly shared the lessons they learned through grappling with difficult issues, such as what to do when a resident’s project offends the neighboring community, or how best to perform an institution’s mission. I hope that sharing these lessons with the field challenges other centers to consider new ways of performing productive place-based artist residencies.

Significantly, recounting the CCC’s processes has provided constructive insight into the value of multidisciplinary collaboration. Artist residencies have traditionally supported individual artists, often times re-inscribing public perception of their encouragement of an egocentric individualism in the arts. The CCC, however, supported a collaboration of artists and scientists in which no single individual completely dominated the project. While Allan Comp served as the principle resident, his process was one that could have cultivated cooperation and valued inclusion. Allan’s reliance on friends and valued colleagues from past collaborations, though aligned with CCC project objectives, seems to have alienated a community who is deeply proud of its local scientific expertise and artistic resources.
A worthwhile lesson for the residency field is that there is value in supporting groups of artists working together and collaborating with groups from other disciplines and communities. This may be a different residency model than the field is accustomed to, but it constitutes a promising model that could be explored in other contexts. Moreover, this case study challenges residencies to more deeply consider how they leverage and evaluate engagement with their local community. The failure of the CCC to find an effective way of negotiating Cascade Head Ranch engagement ultimately led to programmatic and organizational collapse. The success of future place-based residency programs will, in large part, depend on how effectively they engage the local community of landowners, residents, and nonprofit and governmental organizations, as well as the investment and buy-in of all the board and staff stakeholders based on clear communication.

Considerations for Future Research

I entered into this research cognizant of the vast literature on environmental art. The necessarily narrowed scope of a thesis required that I thoughtfully present only the information most relevant to answering my research question: *What is the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship?* In this section, I consider opportunities for future research on ecological and place-based art and artist residencies.

Much has been written on the art historical genre of Earth Art, and with increasing frequency, art critics and scholars in the fields of art, geography,
community planning, landscape architecture and design are exploring contemporary artists who deal with environmental issues. The field of what I call art/ecology is itself experiencing a burst of activity, and scholarly research on these recent developments will need to be conducted. Furthermore, a critical self-analysis of the field could reveal shortcomings and opportunities for moving into new directions and greater depths of place-based engagement.

There are opportunities for academic research on artist residency programs concerning an array of issues. Additional case studies of individual residency programs or organizational analyses similar to those I have undertaken could yield a better understanding of particular place-based issues addressed by artist residency programs. Research is needed that explores such issues as nonprofit board governance, development and fundraising, and community engagement within place-based artist residencies. Operated as a nonprofit arts organization, residencies must find an effective balance between staff management and board governance. New research on the dynamics between a residency board and staff may yield examples of best practices responsive to specific residency needs and concerns. Nonprofit residency programs must successfully fundraise in order to have their revenue streams provide support to artists and maintain their facilities. Additional research on fundraising strategies could illuminate successful strategies and tactics, especially during times of widespread economic challenges. Finally, in the field of artist residencies, further research is needed that explores the ways in which residencies engage their local communities. This research could generate new models of outreach and
meaningful connections between artists in residence and local community members.

I reviewed several artist residencies in Chapter Two that support artists exploring environmental, geographic, and ecological issues. Among them, I expect that the Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI) will continue to push the boundaries in its residency programs, having recently opened the Gulf States Logistics Site and Field Office in Houston. The site, not clearly a part of CLUI’s Wendover Residency Program, provides workspace, storage, and access to Houston’s urban waterways where artists can investigate and respond (http://www.clui.org/clui_4_1/lotl/v32/e.html). A focused study of its residencies, their impact on the environment, and the community, could potentially be of great value to the field.

Recent Projects by T. Allan Comp

In this thesis I explored the prior site-specific work of Allan Comp in order to contextualize how the CCC, as a residency, aligned with these projects. The field might benefit from future research concerning his work, both in its residency impact and community engagement processes. Continued research on Allan’s work may produce a better understanding of why his multidisciplinary collaborative model works better in some contexts than in others. It may also reveal underlying organizational and interpersonal impediments to restoring places, communities, and relationships. Building on his experience at the Sitka Center, Allan has become involved in the Western Hardrock Watershed Team.
and the North Fork River Improvement Association in Paonia, Colorado. Allan
says of the project:

[I’ve] taken what we’ve done with the CCC and applied it one more time to a
very different environment with obvious changes so that it would work there.
In this case, the [North Fork River Improvement Association] board wasn’t as
conflicted about all the different things going on, liked the idea of connecting
community to the river, which was the sort of mission that we decided we
wanted to accomplish. And it’s going full steam ahead. (Comp, personal
communication, April, 7 2009)

Allan’s work on the Paonia River Park is a community-based initiative to create
public access to and interest in the local Paonia River. An in-depth investigation
of this project, informed by my thesis on the CCC, could be an excellent
extension of the research base on Allan’s reclamation work.

Reconsidering Researcher Subjectivity

I engaged in this research at the Sitka Center at an opportune time.
Sufficient time had passed and interpersonal and political wounds were not too
fresh, but also not so distant that key participants had all moved away or lost
touch. Individuals have had some time to reflect on their involvement with the
Crowley Creek Collaboration, and new leaders are just getting started in creating
the future of the Sitka Center. Organizational and historical documents exist and
were easily accessible, which provided me with a veritable treasure chest of
data. People are still interested in the CCC, and they are interested in
reconsidering what happened. I am honored to play a role in the CCC story,
while also recognizing the tensions that my research may have produced. In the
presentation and analysis of data, I grappled with how to claim the ways in which this research is valuable, while still acknowledging the tensions I experienced as a researcher. I have been challenged by critically presenting and analyzing the thorny issues that I have uncovered in this research, and hope to have met this challenge in a balanced manner.

I began this case study naively, not anticipating that I would uncover the many problems that happened during the course of the CCC. Even in my preliminary research, the underlying interpersonal and political tensions extant at the center were not apparent. Much of the public record and media coverage of the CCC did not address Sitka Center organizational conflicts or those acts of what appears to have been community obstructionism that hindered the project. It was not until I began talking with my interviewees and collecting information on the CCC that I was able to discern some of the spaces of tension that strained the project and continue to plague the Sitka Center’s reputation and relations with the community.

Recognizing that the academic and applied fields of art/ecology and artist residencies are small, I have wrestled with my own (dis)comfort in critically addressing problematic viewpoints, histories, processes, and interpretations. This research has kindled my professional and academic aspirations, and I hope that it serves as a springboard for my participation in the vital discourse surrounding the relationships between art, ecology, and community.

I intended to explore the role of artist residencies in local land stewardship using the Sitka Center’s CCC as an example of how a residency can be effective
in the performance of ecological ethics. What I found was an organization that had been deeply invested in its local community and ecology but now appears to be retreating from that community in order to support individual artists’ pursuit of their core, creative selves. I conclude that despite many problems, the CCC was able to effectively perform a stewardship role by challenging the local community on Cascade Head to question their own understandings of art, collaboration, and place. Unfortunately the center’s current emphasis on the personal creative self could be seen as an abandonment of the stewardship role that the center has historically encouraged. Sitka Center programming seems now retreating from, instead of advancing, the field of place-based residencies and critical inquiry of place.

Given public attention to climate change, habitat destruction, dying oceans and devastated watersheds, there may be far greater public value served by addressing these crucial environmental concerns than in retreating to the safety of personal preoccupation with formalist aesthetic works. I recognize that residency institutions serve artists by providing them the time, space and resources necessary to create new work and personally develop as creative individuals; however, artists make art in, not apart from, society and place. Place-based artist residencies that encourage, even challenge, artists to reinvest their creative talents and processes for a greater public good seems more valuable at this critical juncture for our planet. If this study helps a reader reconsider their own relationship with place, valuing of multidisciplinary collaborations, and understanding of the role of artists and arts organizations in their address and
engagement of local community and ecological concerns, then it will have served its purpose.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Interview Questions for Arts Administrators
• Describe the Sitka Center’s (SC) mission and how the SC carries out the mission.
• How has the SC participated in past land restoration activities?
• How did the Crowley Creek Collaboration (CCC) develop?
• How was the CCC funded? Is this a unique funding situation from other activities at SC?
• What is/was your role in the CCC?
• How does the SC work in partnership with neighboring landowners and has the CCC strengthened and/or weakened any of these partnerships?
• How has the CCC been evaluated?
• How would you like to see the CCC continue?

Interview Questions for Community Volunteers
• How/why did you become involved in the CCC?
• What is/was your role in the CCC?
• How would you like to see the CCC continue?

Interview Questions for Resident Artist
• How is the CCC different from/similar to previous reclamation art projects, specifically AMD+ART and UVA at Wise?
• Considering the significant literature on the “Comp Model” developed at AMD+ART, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the implementing the Comp Model in the CCC?
• What advantages and/or disadvantages have you experienced in working on a reclamation project within an Artist In Residence (AIR) program?
• What is/was your role in the CCC?
• How were your work and ideas received regarding the CCC?
• How would you like to see the CCC continue?

Interview Questions for Arts Advocacy Administrators
• Have you seen any specific trends in environmental AIR programs?
APPENDIX B

COMPLETION OF CITI TRAINING
CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Human Research Curriculum Completion Report
Printed on

Learner: Jorie Emory (username: emory.7)
Institution: Ohio State University
Contact Information: Department: Arts Policy and Administration
Phone: 614-292-2563
Email: emory.7@osu.edu

Group 2:

Stage: Basic Course. Passed on 07/17/07 (Ref # 1144579)

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<td>HIPAA and Human Subjects Research</td>
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<td>Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects</td>
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<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>07/17/07</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI participating institution. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI course site is unethical, and may be considered scientific misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Course Coordinator

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APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION
February 5, 2009

Protocol Number: 2009E0051
Protocol Title: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF ARTIST RESIDENCIES IN LOCAL LAND STEWARDSHIP, James H. Sanders III, Jorie Lynne Emory, Art Education
Type of Review: Request for Exempt Determination
ORRP Staff Contact: Cheri M. Pettey
Phone: 614-688-0389
Email: pettey.6@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Sanders,

The Office of Responsible Research Practices has determined the above referenced protocol exempt from IRB review.

Date of Exempt Determination: 1/30/2009
Qualifying Exemption Category: 2

Please note the following:

- Only OSU employees and students who have completed CITI training and are named on the signature page of the application are approved as OSU Investigators in conducting this study.
- No procedural changes may be made in exempt research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, instruments, enrollment numbers, etc.).
- Per university requirements, all research-related records (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for a period of at least three years after the research has ended.
- It is the responsibility of the Investigator to promptly report events that may represent unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This determination is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378.

All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the ORRP staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Cheri Pettey, MA, Certified IRB Professional
Senior Protocol Analyst—Exempt Research
REFERENCES


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