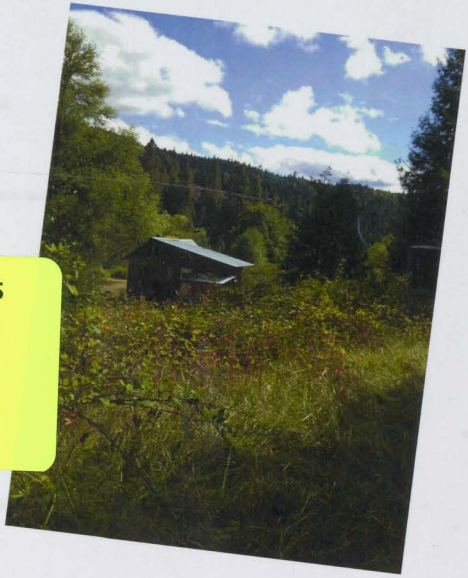
Presenting and Preserving Spaces of Feminist and Separatist Action:

An Interpretive Plan for OWL Farm



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Abstract

This project aims to address issues of preservation at OWL Farm, a women's land collective formed in 1975 by the Oregon Women's Land Trust. Context will be created for both structures and landscape in attempts to balance preservation concerns with the need for greater and continued visibility and use of the land by the women of OWL Trust. As women involved in second-wave feminist action grow older it becomes increasingly important from a preservation perspective to document the history of the organization, its members, and the land that has sustained them. This project will document the resources existing on the land, and synthesize the history of the land's development gleaned from primary document analysis and existing secondary writings. It also will provide a plan for interpretive and communicative materials that members of the trust can use to increase visibility for the organization.

Keywords

Oregon Women's Land Trust
Interpretive Planning
Land Dykes
Women's Communal Living
Separatist/Radical Landscapes

Introduction

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, land based living grew exponentially and came to national attention. Oregon and Northern California became destinations for those wanting to experiment with communal and sustainable living concepts, and during this time many communes formed with varying intent. This spirit survives even today in Oregon where many land based communities still operate in some fashion.

Because many land based communities formed in response to members feeling at odds with societal norms, lands often catered to a specific group of people. These communities were separatist in nature and often had rules governing who would and would not fit into the plan for the community. Dividing lines of religion, gender, and sexuality played a large role in the division of communal endeavors. Oregon has an especially rich history of communal and separatist activity and many different intents came into play when communal living situations were established. One subset of the separatist communities formed during the early 1970s was women's communes.

The highest concentration of women's communities could be found in Southern Oregon. As with all communal lands, there was great variety in women's lands. Some were very small and privately owned and operated by a collective of residents. Others were larger and intended to serve more women. Some attempted to exist off the grid and achieve

self-sustainability while others were supported financially by residents with paying jobs outside of the community.

Issues of race and class ran through these communities and discussions often took place regarding the need to involve more women of color and those who were not able to purchase land on their own. The result of these discussions was the formation of the Oregon Women's Land Trust. The Trust collected donations and researched properties with the intent to purchase open women's land, managed by the trust but held for the use of all women who desired access to land. This setup was different than any women's communal living situation that preceeded it; OWL was the first women's land trust in the country. The hope that a different arrangement of land stewardship would produce a community where all members had equal say regardless of the differences they experienced as part of society at large.

The land purchased still exists as OWL Farm, though it is no longer utilized by large numbers of women or for long periods of time. Many of the buildings suffer from a lack of occupants and regular care-taking and the land itself is subject to misuse and theft in the absence of permanent residents. Because of its unique place in the fabric of Southern Oregon women's communal land, many have documented stories and the history of the Farm. A fair amount of the history collected concerning OWL focuses on the sociological and political aspects of women acquiring land and entering into

communal living agreements, but less exists to document the history and changes of the structures and land that have fostered many women over the last 35 years.

Because the structure of the preservation field privileges structures, landscapes, and their associated people and events 50 years old or older, places like OWL Farm and many spaces associated with the women's movement of the 1970s are not yet eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

While a case could be made that OWL Farm and Southern Oregon women's lands in general represent something important enough to be an exception to the 50 year rule, it seems unlikely to be considered as few properties associated with women's history beyond that of the suffrage movement are recognized as historically important. An additional complication is that very few properties with strong ties to lesbian history are currently recognized or they are recognized while hiding the LGBT associations that they may have. For that reason, documentation of recent and marginalized histories is often left to those involved in movements or those at the local level with specialized interest in the preservation of those stories and places and is in many ways akin to grassroots organizing.

This project addresses preservation related issues at OWL Farm through documentation of the landscape and structures existing on the property. This is done

with the intention of making information regarding the rich history of women's radical separatist endeavors more widely available to people who are interested in examining all aspects of the uniqueness and diversity of Oregon's past and considering the ways in which this history plays a role in the state today.

As women involved in second-wave feminist action age it becomes increasingly important from a preservation perspective to document all aspects of the movement including the creation of radical and separatist communities as these women hold the answers to how structures were changed, when they were changed, and the community needs that were driving these changes. This project will document the resources existing on the land and synthesize the history of the land's physical development gleaned from primary document analysis and existing secondary writings. It also will provide a plan for interpretive materials that can be utilized and added to by members of the Trust to increase visibility for the organization and for the history and continuity of women's lands in Oregon.

Documentation for OWL Farm and other women's communities is happening in many different fields, all with the intention of preserving some important facet of the development of women's land. As interest in continuing the tradition of women's land wanes among younger generations, it is also important to be able to not only document the history, changes, and current state of lands but also to be able to communicate the

results to others and generate the type of interest that may help assure the continuity of OWL Farm.

It is intended that documentation of the physical fabric of the Farm and interpreting the resources will preserve in memory what may not be able to be saved in actuality. The Trust has little time and little money to dedicate to the continued upkeep of existing structures and has little capacity beyond basic caretaking of the main areas of the land. Logging and development interests such as the proposed Pacific Connector Liquified Natural Gas pipeline are also affecting the surrounding area and the habitats and landscape that OWLT aims to preserve in perpetuity through the holding of the OWL Farm land. There has also been talk among some currently involved with OWL Farm in restructuring the intention from a residential community to a place of retreat and gathering for women. All of these factors represent critical turning points in the development of the land.

Southern Oregon Landscape and Settlement History

Concentration of communal lands in Southern Oregon is not merely coincidence. There are many factors that contribute to the desirability of rural lands in the areas most typically associated with communal groups. While many additional factors played into the choice to form land based communities in Southern Oregon, the same set of environmental factors has made Southern Oregon desirable for settlement for many centuries. While there are seasonal challenges presented by the climate in Southern Oregon, the social and economic factors present during the time of the largest surge in land based community building drew people to the area.

Southern Oregon has an extremely varied landscape, making it suitable for all manner of activities. Native people lived in the area for thousands of years prior to their initial contact with white settlers and traditionally subsisted through hunting, fishing, and gathering activities. Southern Oregon was home to many tribes and bands of native peoples including Umpqua, Yoncalla, Molalla, Coos, Coquille, Siuslaw, and Klamath peoples. The varied landscape of Southern Oregon provided many opportunities for hunting, fishing, and gathering foodstuffs such as acorns and camas bulbs.

Some of the first European travelers to set up homes in Southern Oregon were fur traders and trappers, many of whom were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company[1]. The Hudson's Bay Company merged with a number of other fur trading companies with interests in Oregon, including John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company which had established a fort at present day Astoria, near the mouth of the Columbia River in 1811. From this fort, many overland expeditions were mounted, resulting in the exploration of a great deal of land west of the Cascade Range. The initial intention of exploration, beyond identification of new areas for fur trading and resource exploitation, was to find a water route from the Great Basin to the coastal areas of the Oregon Territory[2]. Such a waterway would have provided easier means to ship goods in and out of Oregon, as travel around Cape Horn in South America was necessary at that time to convey goods by water. Such a waterway does not exist, but large areas of Oregon were explored and opened up to European settlement as a result of trying to locate it.

The largest influx of European settlers to Southern Oregon, as with many other parts of the state, can be attributed to the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850. The sole purpose of the Act was to set up a system by which the Oregon Territory, comprised of present day Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, could be surveyed and equitably divided among homesteaders wishing to settle the newly opened lands. According to the Act;

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[1] Douglas County Historical Society, *Historic Douglas County*, Douglas County Historical Society (Roseburg, OR: 1982), 9.

[2] Stephen Dow Beckham, *Land of the Umpqua: A history of Douglas County*, Douglas County Commissioners (Roseburg, OR: 1986), 52.

> "there shall be, and hereby is, granted to every white settler or occupant of the public lands, American half-breed Indians included, above the age of eighteen years, being a citizen of the United States, or having made a declaration according to law, of his intention to become a citizen, or who shall make such declaration on or before the first day of December, eighteen hundred and fifty, and who shall have resided upon and cultivated the same for four consecutive years, and shall otherwise conform to the provisions of this act, the quantity of one half section, or three hundred and twenty acres of land, if a single man, and if a married man, or if he shall become married within one year from the first day of December, eighteen hundred and fifty, the quantity of one section, or six hundred and forty acres, one half to himself and the other half to his wife."[3]

Though there was settlement in many parts of Oregon prior to the wave induced by the Donation Land Claim Act, the Act led to the creation of more populous communities and broadened the types of activities taking place in many areas as herders, farmers, and miners began to stake claims throughout the state. By 1860, the population of the Umpqua watershed alone reached nearly 4500, a large percentage of which settled in and near the Roseburg area[4]. Nearly 15,000 settlers occupied this same area by 1900[5].

Because Southern Oregon is home to a healthy mix of mountains, valleys, forests, and rivers, all manner of people came to take advantage of the resources available in these lands. Due to the large amount of fertile valley lands in many areas, agricultural professions were common for new settlers. Grassy foothill meadows were ideal for pasturing animals, and in some places year round farming and gardening is possible. Carpenters, blacksmiths, and millers also grew in numbers as more people began to

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[3] Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, Ch. 76, 9 Stat. 496 § 4 (1850).

[4] *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1860: Summary Population and Housing Characteristics,* accessed November 17, 2011, http://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/1860.html.

[5] *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1900: Summary Population and Housing Characteristics,* accessed December 5, 2011, http://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/1900.html.

enter the area[6]. Stands of old growth timber became valuable and deposits of ore were sought as logging, milling, and mining began to take off. Timber and agriculture are still top industries for many areas of Southern Oregon today, as a large segment of the population is still located in rural areas outside of incorporated cities and natural resources and open space remain plentiful.

After attaining statehood in 1859, the desire to attract more people to the state grew. Settlement in Oregon during this period was furthered by the Homestead Act of 1862 which was similar in nature to the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850. This act allowed prospective homesteaders who lived on a tract for 5 years and made prescribed improvements the opportunity to purchase that land at 1.25 an acre for 160 acre tracts or 2.50 an acre for 80 acre tracts. This resulted in even less desirable lands being claimed and settled. This and other homesteading acts of the time also had the effect of increasing timber speculation as forested lands once held by the federal government were now opened. Today, a large percentage of unsettled lands in Southern Oregon fall under the jurisdiction of federal land management agencies such as the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Though these federal agencies do permit activities such as grazing, logging, and mining on lands that they hold, they do also work to preserve other areas for wildlife, habitat, and recreation, which helped some areas of Southern Oregon retain landscapes that communicate the variety that sustained many Native groups and attracted European settlers to the area.

[6] "1860 census"

Landscape and Social factors leading to desirability of Southern Oregon for Communal Groups

Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s and born out of social unrest that was growing in the United States, communes began to form across the country. Some of the largest concentrations of communes could be found in Northern California and Southern Oregon. Many factors led to this phenomenon, though some seemed more important than others when considering where to locate communities.

Obviously, not all intentional communities were formed with the same ideals. While some communities wished to participate in reform and activism, others wished to create separatist communities that didn't rely on mainstream cultural and societal institutions for support. Some intentional communities in Oregon popped up near cities and still participated in many aspects of mainstream life. Others took their separatist nature to heart and sought lands farther away from cities where there was little or no government oversight of their lands, accommodations, or activities. Southern Oregon became home to more communities taking the separatist road, and it was ideal for this type of pursuit for a number of reasons.

Many of the factors that sustained Native groups and attracted white settlers to Southern Oregon are also factors that were considered to be desirable among

communal groups trying to begin land-based separatist communities. Many lands available in Southern Oregon had access to water, were conducive to agricultural ventures, and were removed from city centers, creating both privacy and possibilities of self-sustainability. Because many intentional communities were born of the idea that mainstream society's ideals were not in the best interest of the people, the potential of being self sustaining provided a means of separation from mainstream culture. This was not always achievable, especially for intentional communities that had attracted larger populations, but the desire for this type of philosophical separation persisted along with a desire from many communities for a physical separation from city life as well as government regulation and oversight.

Three Southern Oregon counties, Jackson, Josephine, and Douglas were particularly attractive to individuals and communities seeking land on which to live outside of mainstream culture. Most communal activity in these counties was located in areas outside of but still nearer populated communities and with easy access to the north-south corridor created Interstate 5. This was important because complete self-sustainability was generally not possible for these groups and some members needed to take jobs or make trips to cities and towns for supplies. This would have also made it easier for new or prospective members to visit the communities and for networking between lands in the same area to take place.

At their core, many separatist living situations desired to be self-sustaining in the sense that they wished to rely on their land and skills to provide what was needed for the community members to subsist rather than rely on capitalist means of procurement. Often this necessitated planting of agricultural plots. As previously mentioned, many areas in Southern Oregon, especially areas situated between the Coastal Range and the Cascades, lend themselves well to farming due to fertile soils and long growing seasons. They also provide a host of other resources from which communities could draw. Douglas County alone is home to nearly a hundred separate low-lying valleys, many of which are situated east of the Coastal Range. These valleys experience ideal rainfall and have a good mix of forested areas and grasslands as well as easy access to water that runs for the majority of the year. These environmental conditions would be ideal for people hoping to live off the land. Valleys also provide some measure of isolation from other groups of people and provide a type of natural protection from the outside world, which is, in theory, what many communal groups were trying to achieve when formation of cooperatives was at its peak. Many added physical distance as an additional reflection of that sentiment.

Aside from the environmental factors drawing settlement to Southern Oregon, social factors were at play as well when groups were choosing land to establish communal groups. A number of the lands formed in Southern Oregon were owned by or set up to accommodate groups that already fell outside of the mainstream such as women, lesbians, gay men, and lesser known spiritual groups. The relatively small population of Southern Oregon, coupled with the fact that the rural population is still relatively spread

out, may have been a deciding factor in women's groups choosing to group lands in rural and unincorporated parts of Douglas County. The 1970 census recorded a 13.7% decline in the population of Canyonville, the closest town to OWL Farm and only a modest 4.8% gain in population for Douglas County as a whole during a time when other Southern Oregon counties such as Josephine and Jackson were experiencing nearly 30 and 20% growth respectively[7] . The 2010 population of Canyonville registered at about 1900, while the Census Block Group that OWL falls into recorded a population of just 914 despite it covering some 40 times as much area as that of the Block Group for the incorporated area of Canyonville[8]. These figures are in some ways a testament to how the small amount of growth that has taken place in this part of Oregon, especially in rural areas, contributes to the continued viability of separatist living as Southern Oregon is still home to one of the largest concentration of women's specific communal lands anywhere in the United States.

Slow growth was not the only factor in the grouping of so many women's lands in Southern Oregon. Many areas were also late in adopting and enforcing building codes and many places had not created these codes or stringently enforced them by the early 1970s, the time when many communal groups were establishing themselves in the area. Josephine County did not adopt a formal building code until 1974 and did not routinely enforce the code even after its adoption[9]. This was an important factor for

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[7] *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1970: Summary Population and Housing Characteristics*, accessed November 25, 2011, http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1970cenpopv1.html.
[8] *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2010: Summary Population and Housing Characteristics*, accessed December 12, 2011, http://www.census.gov/2010census/popmap/.
[9] Tee Corinne, *The Little Houses on Women's Lands* (Wolf Creek, OR: Pearlchild), 1.

groups hoping to operate in a more separatist fashion because it promised less government oversight or interest in what was happening on the lands, not only as far as structures were concerned but also as far as standards for systems such as water and electricity.

Because each community that was active was established by different people for different reasons each faced its own set of concerns. Many of the early women's lands in Southern Oregon were established under a number of the same principles, mainly that women should be active in supporting themselves, active in supporting other women, and active in supporting the land that sustained them. Many women's lands in Southern Oregon were established during the late 1960s and early 1970s which historically situates their founding among the many social movements of the time.

Growing unrest among many segments of the population during the 1960s and 1970s spurred the growth of many social movements including those for civil rights, gay and lesbian rights, women's rights, and anti-war activism. Activist groups, including separatist communities, came out of many of these social movements. The period of feminist activism that began in the 1960s focused on eliminating ways that women were oppressed by a patriarchal society, such as equality in employment, wage disparity, inadequate access to women's specific health care and health information, and fewer educational opportunities. Some women saw separatism and acquisition of skills in trades traditionally considered male work to be one way to achieve these goals. Beyond common gender identification, many women involved in land based living in

Oregon identified personally as lesbians. In a survey of land women conducted by Barbara Summerhawk and La Verne Gagehabib for their book *Circles of Power* nearly all respondents listed lesbian first in their words of self-identification[10]. One aspect of separatism in lesbian communities, both urban and rural, was the idea that male influence could be eliminated through the formation and support of women run services. While the word lesbian is now commonly associated with sexuality only in the current culture, the identification as lesbian was also commonly associated with a political orientation among second wave feminists. In that regard, someone may align themselves exclusively with women's causes and support women's endeavors to the greatest extent possible without necessarily having same sex romantic relationships. Oregon was home to many women owned and feminist businesses ranging from credit unions to health and counseling clinics and these ventures increased options for women who wanted to purchase goods and services from other women rather than established male owned businesses attain a greater degree of autonomy from men.

Supporting other women inside these land based living situations often meant trying to make living on land as accessible as possible to as many types of people as possible, but some of the largest conflicts surrounding women's land centered on its inaccessibility to many women. Women's lands dealt with many different issues of exclusion and power based relationships including racism, sexism, and classism. Only 1% of the population in Douglas, Jackson, and Josephine counties in 1970 was non-

[10] Barbara Summerhawk and La Verne Gagehabib. *Circles of Power: Shifting dynamics in a lesbian centered community* (Norwich, VT: New Victoria Publishers), 24.

white. As noted by Pelican Lee, people of color often did not feel safe relocating to the rural areas due to the racism present in the general population surrounding the lands[11]. The overall population of women's lands at the time was also predominantly white which resulted in some women of color who participated in the land movement to feel dominated in group discussions and decision making[12].

Women who proved to be instrumental in the establishment of women's specific communities previously lived on lands where there were no gender or sexuality guidelines governing residency and found that issues of male privilege similarly affected their ability to be heard in those places[13]. The degree to which groups were successful in mitigating issues arising from race, class, and gender difference varied and there are instances where unresolved problems between residents or factions of the group led to dwindling numbers or changes in the structure and function of the community as a whole.

This theme is a common current in many personal writings of women who lived for a time at OWL and then either moved to more urban areas or transitioned to living on other women's lands. Pelican Lee, an early resident of OWL, has written much concerning the social, political and emotional climate at OWL as residents attempted to

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[11] Pelican Lee, "Nozama Tribe," in *Oregon Women's Land Trust Resource Book* (Roseburg, OR: Oregon Women's Land Trust, 2004), 14.
[12] Gagehabib and Summerhawk, *Circles of Power*, 28.
[13] James Kopp, *Eden Within Eden: Oregon's utopian heritage (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2009), 151.*

navigate differing views of what constituted ideal and/or feminist living situations and relationships. In her writing, Nozama Tribe, Lee states,

> "Many of us were constantly coming and going. It was emotionally draining to be continuously saying good-bye to our best friends. Women who we'd made agreements with left, and other women came who wanted to change the agreements. We got frustrated going over and over the same things in meetings. New women came who did not share our basic assumptions, want to take part in the collective process, or live by the agreements we had made. Many of us wanted more stability and space. We were all nourished at times by the continual flow of travelers, but at other times we could not relate to one more new woman. We scattered, as we needed space from each other. Our wounds needed time to heal and we needed to find out who we were as individuals separate from the group[14]."

While exclusionary practices regarding gender are not mentioned often in the literature, gender exclusion is a growing discussion between those that are active in the creation and continuation of women's space and a new body of LGBT and women's activists. Many women's lands operate under a 'women born women' policy meaning men, transgendered men, and transgendered women are typically excluded from becoming a resident of an established women's land or participating in activities associated with women's land or spaces. It is an emerging concern that may bear on the future of women's land and its ability to remain viable while continuing to operate under the ideals put forth by the women who have been involved in the lands throughout the years[15].

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[14] Lee, "Nozama Tribe", 16.

[15] While presenting aspects of this paper on a panel with land womyn and those involved in scholarly work with women's lands the most common question or topic put forth for discussion dealt with inclusion of transgendered individuals in spaces traditionally defined as 'women's spaces'. There is a clear generational divide between those who are for such inclusion and those who are against it. The idea of women's only space grows less and less appealing to younger generations and seemingly less politically correct to advocate for as queer and feminist ideals

The simple fact that land needed to be purchased in order to establish a land based community and paid for in some way for the community to continue is what led to some of the greatest conflicts within women's communities. Land was often purchased by one or a small collective and as such was privately owned land. Owners could make and exercise rules of their choosing as well as limit the number of inhabitants and types of structures suitable on the land if they so desired, and owners or members of the purchasing collective could also screen potential residents to decide who they wanted to live in their group when spots were available. This led to accusations of classism since a private ownership situation only extended access to those who could afford to purchase land or buy into a collective and favored those who had contributed financially when new residents were being considered. After a community was established it was sometimes the case that women with paying jobs outside of the community would complete less of the work on the land because their wages were being used to pay property taxes and purchase needed supplies creating another situation where wage earning was seen to be favored over laboring.

Women participating in discussions relating to class and access to money decided that there was a need among women for land that would be openly accessible for all who wished to benefit from a land based feminist community. From these discussions the Oregon Women's Land Trust (OWLT) was formed. OWLT would take donations from women all over the world in an effort to raise enough money to purchase a piece of land

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shift over time. This divide poses somewhat of a threat to women's lands as younger women will become necessary to continue the operation and stewardship of women's lands. OWL's position as an open land administered by a trust is especially unique as the land would not be inherited as privately owned land might.

that no one woman had more stake in than another. This land would offer open access to any who wished to say while still realizing that every piece of land has a threshold for permanent occupancy. Long term residents would be accepted and short term camping for visitors, passers-by, and those needing a place to stop and regroup for a while would also be available when camping was feasible. The community envisioned was one that wouldn't turn someone away for an inability to pay rent and one that would support any woman who needed access to land or a safe living situation.

OWL Farm

Overview

The Oregon Women's Land Trust (OWLT) was formed in 1975 with the primary goal of purchasing land for use by women. As it is written in Article II of the Oregon Women's Land Trust's original non-profit Articles of Incorporation:

> The purpose or purposes for which the corporation is organized are:
>
> A) 1) To acquire, administer, and hold in perpetuity land and other assets in trust for the benfit of women, particularly for women who would otherwise be denied such access.
>
> 2) To promote, explore, develop and maintain the spiritual, physical and cultural well-being of women by
>
> a) providing women access to land
>
> b) encouraging self sufficiency and the means to attain it
>
> c) fostering and exploring new patterns of human relations, and
>
> d) providing other experiences to promote the well-being of women
>
> 3) To encourage thereby the development of harmonious and ecologically sound land-based communities.
>
> 4) To preserve land and protect it from speculation and over-development, and to foster the recognition of land as a sacred heritage and resource belonging to all, and
>
> 5) To serve as a resource for individuals and groups of women with interests in any of the above[16].

[16] Oregon Women's Land Trust, "Nonprofit Articles of Incorporation of Oregon Women's Land" in *Oregon Women's Land Trust Resource Book* (Roseburg, OR: Oregon Women's Land Trust, 2004), 2.

The Trust was initially discussed and conceived of during a meeting at WomanShare in July of 1975 during which women agreed to donate a percentage of their money to the building of a land trust in Oregon[17]. At this time, other women's communities existed in Southern Oregon, most having been purchased privately by women with the financial means to buy acreage. It was recognized that this system of acquiring land left out a large subset of women who did not have the money to obtain property but were equally in need of access to such resources.

The first formal OWLT meeting was held in Vida, Oregon in October of 1975 where the Articles of Incorporation were ratified, a budget for the Trust was approved, a structure for the trust, which included working groups for was agreed upon. During this meeting it was also agreed that the first piece of land to be purchased with Trust funds was to be a communal land which would be open for all women to use. The procedure for deciding on a piece of land once identified was also set out at the October meeting:

> If a piece of land is found that seems suitable for our communal land, at least 13 women, including some (one) from each area of Oregon (Portland area, Eugene area, So. Ore.) and No. and So. Calif. must agree as well as one women from each work group, must that it is a good piece of land for us. Guidelines for the kind of land it should be were set up by one of the small groups that met at the Vida meeting and could be referred to in looking for this piece of land[18].

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[17] Guthrie and Roz, "Notes on a Land Trust" in WomanSpirit no. 11 (Wolf Creek, OR: WomanSpirit, 1977).
[18] Oregon Women's Land Trust, 1975 Winter Newsletter (Roseburg, OR: Oregon Women's Land Trust, 1975).

A subsequent newsletter from April-May 1976 outlined the criteria for the land desired for all who may be interested in helping with the land search. The land desired needed to be able to support festival and camping areas as well as more permanent homesteading areas and agricultural pursuits. A good water supply and access to major roads were also necessities for the chose tract. The area of interest for the first land was west of the Cascade Range, south of Eugene, Oregon, and north of California and $500 or less per acre was the desired price[19].

As of the April-May newsletter, the land that is now OWL Farm was already being considered among the list of potential purchases. Other parcels were also being looked at but many felt that the 147 acre tract near Days Creek, Oregon best met the criteria decided upon during previous meetings. The land in question cost $65,000 plus interest over 15 years and had a few existing structures including a large log cabin. A conditional decision was made to purchase the Day's Creek land was made at a meeting of the OWLT held in May of 1976. The group present agreed to the purchase of the land by the trust on the conditions that the trust make a commitment to attract women of color and women of other cultures, deal with issues surrounding an existing easement held by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to use the road through the

[19] News from Oregon Women's Land Report #4; April- May 1976, SO-CLAP! Collection, Coll 266, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

land to access BLM logging areas, and work on finding larger lands in order to support larger groups of women[20].

The first meeting of OWLT was held in July of 1976 on the newly purchased land, which was dubbed 'OWL Farm' and after that first meeting the land was inhabited by 17 women, 2 girl children, and 5 goats[21].

[20] Oregon Women's Land, General Meeting Notes May 22-2, Ruth Mountaingrove Papers, Coll 309, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.
[21] Tee Corinne, "Oregon Women's Land Trust" in *Oregon Women's Land Trust Resource Book* (Roseburg, OR: Oregon Women's Land Trust, 2004), 3.

Location and Physical Description

Figure 1: Aerial Photograph from Google Earth showing OWL Farm

OWL Farm sits on a tract of approximately 145 acres near Days Creek in Douglas County, Oregon. The county seat, Roseburg, lies 35 miles north of Days Creek on Interstate 5. The property is approached from the south via a gravel access road that traverses Bureau of Land Management Lands and logging clear-cuts. The access road

leads to a small gravel parking area at the south end of the property. Beyond the entrance gate, an unpaved drive leads to what is known as “downtown” OWL Farm. This area contains the majority of the infrastructure on the land, some of which is visible from the access road and parking area. Structures in downtown are situated in a rough horseshoe shape around the drive.

Figure 2: Aerial Photograph from Google Earth showing “Downtown” OWL

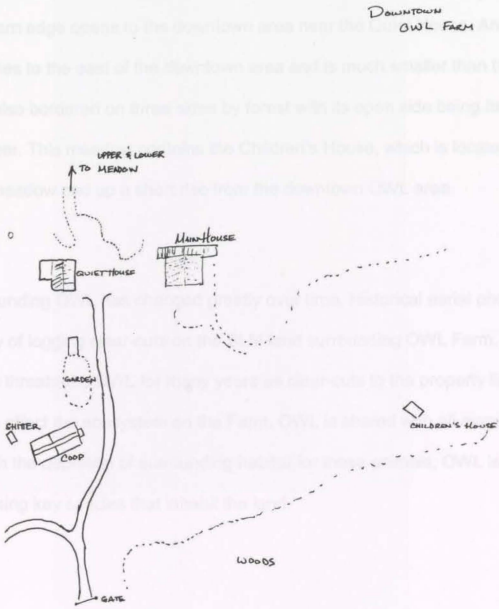

Figure 3: Downtown OWL Farm

Outside of downtown, there is a mix of forested and grass areas. One meadow area is located to the north and west of the living spaces and extends over 2/3 of a mile to the north; nearly the entire length of the property. This meadow is often referred to as the

Upper Meadow. A forested area surrounds this meadow on three sides, north, east and west. Its southern edge opens to the downtown area near the Quiet House. Another meadow area lies to the east of the downtown area and is much smaller than the Upper Meadow. It is also bordered on three sides by forest with its open side being its southwest corner. This meadow contains the Children's House, which is located in the middle of the meadow and up a short rise from the downtown OWL area.

The land surrounding OWL has changed greatly over time. Historical aerial photographs reveal a history of logging clear-cuts on the BLM land surrounding OWL Farm. Logging in the area has threatened OWL for many years as clear-cuts to the property lines have the potential to affect the ecosystem on the Farm. OWL is shared with all manner of wildlife and with the depletion of surrounding habitat for these animals, OWL is always in danger of losing key species that inhabit the land.

Figure 4: Historic Aerial Photographs from Google Earth Showing OWL and the Surrounding Area (1995,2005,2011)

On the Farm, women have made very few large scale changes to the landscape at OWL and take a more hands off management approach where the landscape is concerned. Regular mowing around buildings, tending of the garden, and laying gravel on the access roads when necessary are the only routine landscape alterations that residents of OWL have participated in. Even trails used to explore the land are not often cleared or improved. This is partly due to the fact that there is no longer a caretaker collective residing at OWL and most large scale projects are completed by organizing work parties. It is also a product of the land stewardship ethic set forth in the organization's bylaws.

Structures

When the property was purchased by OWL Trust, a number of structures already existed on the land. The women erected 3 tipis on the property while initial building projects were undertaken to make the structures suitable for the new population of OWL[22]. All of them were located just north of the gravel parking area. The main structure, a large log cabin, was built circa 1900 according to the OWL Trust Resource Book[23]. The Douglas County assessor lists a date of 1933 for the main living structure[24].

[22] Lee, "Nozama Tribe," 13.
[23] Corinne, "Oregon Women's Land Trust," 2.

A woodshed, a log barn, and a chicken coop were also extant on the property at the time of acquisition.

Main House

The large log cabin, or Main House, is a two story structure which is essentially square with a rear addition. The main two story body of the structure is roughly 26 feet by 26 feet and is 18 feet tall at the roof peak. The one story rectangular addition that houses the tool room and kitchen area adds an additional seven feet of depth to the structure and is 21 ½ feet wide across the rear (north) elevation of the structure. the Main House is located to the east of the driveway into the downtown area and lies across a small creek from the other substantial structures on site. It is accessed by a small wooden footbridge. A firepit and outdoor cooking area sits just south of the Main House porch and can be seen in many historic photos of OWL being used as a gathering place.

[24] "Property Details for Property ID: R56602." *Douglas County Assessor's Office*, accessed December 27, 2011, www.co.douglas.or.us/puboaa/puboaa_details.asp?propid=R56602&command=details.

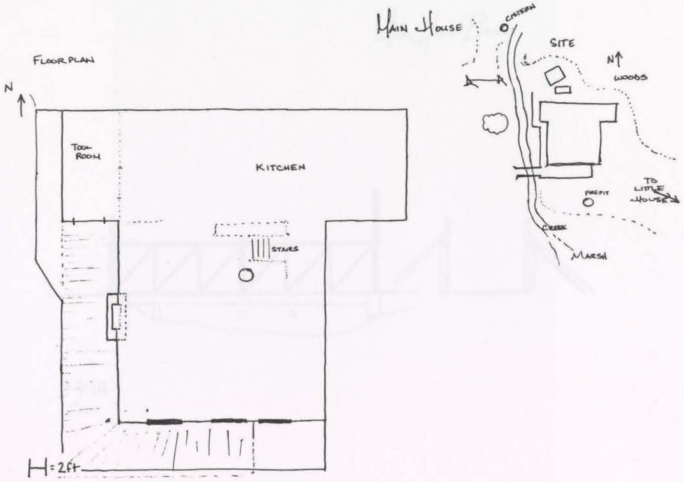

Figure 5: Main House Site and Floor Plans

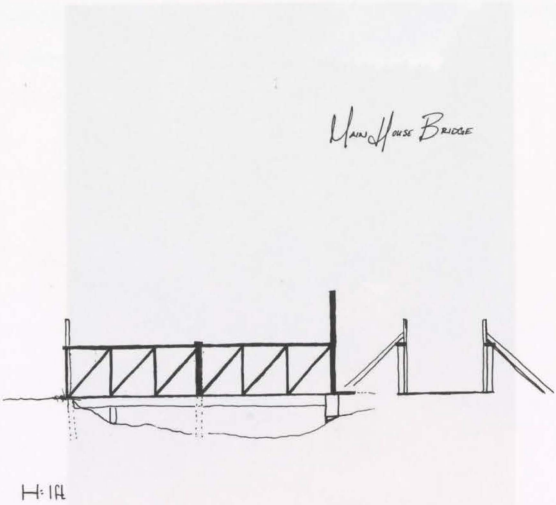

Figure 6: Footbridge

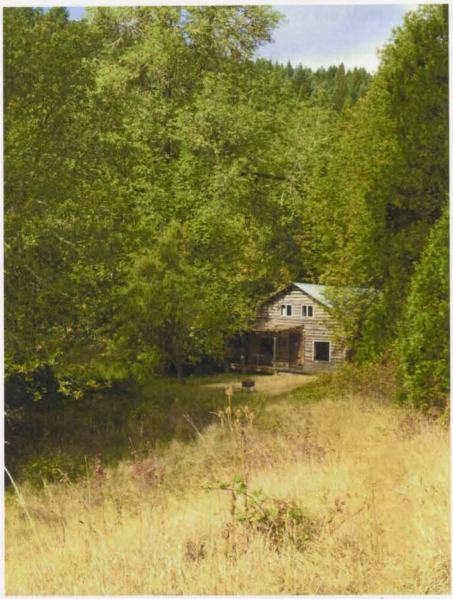

Figure 7: Main House from Children's House trail

The front of the house faces south and a covered porch extends across the front elevation as far as the entry door. This provides protection from the elements while entering and exiting the structure through the main door. The porch wraps around and runs along the west elevation as well, leading to a small tool room near the back corner of the structure. There is also a door leading to the kitchen inside the tool storage room, providing an additional means of access to the structure. Photos in the Ruth Mountaingrove Collection at the University of Oregon Special Collections show the

porch supports under construction in 1977.[25] Photos of the Main House also show operable divided light casement windows on the south elevation where inoperable picture windows are today[26].

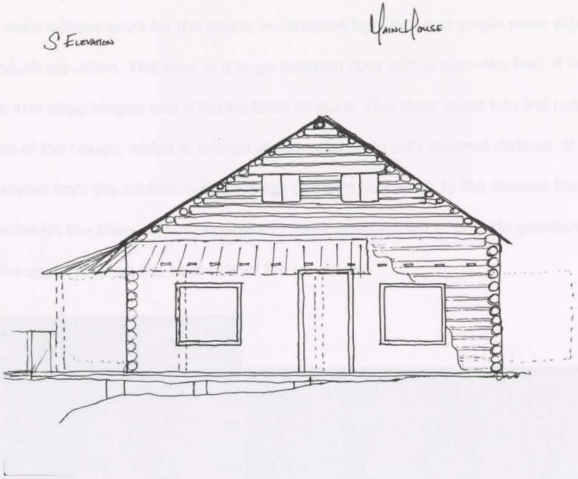

Figure 8: Main House South Elevation

[25] Ruth Mountaingrove, *"OWL Farm Council Gathering"*, Photograph. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon Libraries, 1977. From Special Collections, Ruth Mountaingrove Photographs. (accessed March 14, 2011) http://oregondigital.org/u?/comm,544.

[26] Ruth Mountaingrove, *"Stripping logs, Day's Creek, OWL Farm, kitchen, truck repair, main cabin"*, Photograph. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon Libraries, 1977. From Special Collections, Ruth Mountaingrove Photographs. (accessed March 14, 2011) http://oregondigital.org/u?/comm,121.

The Main House is constructed of logs which average 7 inches in diameter. The rear addition to the structure features 8 inch half log siding which matches the look and feel of the original body of the structure well. The Main House roof is made of corrugated metal while the porch roofing consists of corrugated plastic.

The main access point for the house is centered between two single pane windows on the south elevation. The door is a large wooden door with a barn-like feel. It features large iron strap hinges and a thumb latch closure. This door leads into the main living space of the house, which is a large rectangular area with minimal division. It is separated from the kitchen area by a set of stairs that leads to the second floor. Underneath the stairs, a post appears to have been added to provide additional support for the upper floor on the east side of the structure.

Figure 9: Main House Door and Latch Detail

Figure 10: Support Post for Upper Floor Near Stairs

The kitchen extends all the way across the north end of the house. Improvements began when residents moved to OWL in 1976 and included the addition of shelving in the kitchen[27]. There is also a small library and seating area between the main room and the kitchen under the rise of the stairwell and near the fireplace surrounds.

[27] Lee, "Nozama Tribe," 13.

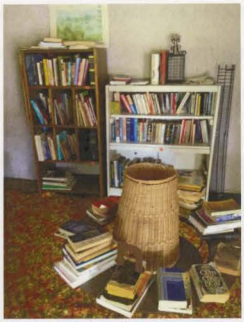

Figure 11: Main House Interior Views

The second floor is essentially an attic under the slope of the roof. The Douglas County assessor's office lists the Main House as a 3 bedroom structure and the upstairs division is described as being three small bedrooms at the time of acquisition[28]. It features the same 26 by 26 floor area as original portion of the bottom floor. For the purposes of this project, measurements and a floor plan for the second floor were not made due to possible health hazards caused by rodent nesting in the structure.

Due to its location near the creek, the Main House has been slowly sinking into the wetland area over time. Women have done work recently to bolster the east wall of the structure. The east wall sits furthest away from the wetland and is on slightly more stable ground. Because the rest of the building is sinking off to the west, the east wall

[28] Lee, "Nozama Tribe," 13.

has begun to bow out at its center. The wall has been reinforced with 4x4 posts running perpendicular to the logs on both sides of the wall. Large screws have been drilled through the logs and the 4x4 posts on either side in attempts to lessen the bowing.

Figure 12: Interior and Exterior Views of Wall Stabilization Efforts

Concrete blocks have also been placed under many of the foundation posts under the western portion of the structure as significant washout has undercut the structure over time. Other plans to improve the main house included foundation work in 1992 and reconstruction of the chimney and its wall (the west elevation) in 1994. To date, the chimney and its wall have not been reconstructed.

Figure 13: Photo Detail of Foundation Work

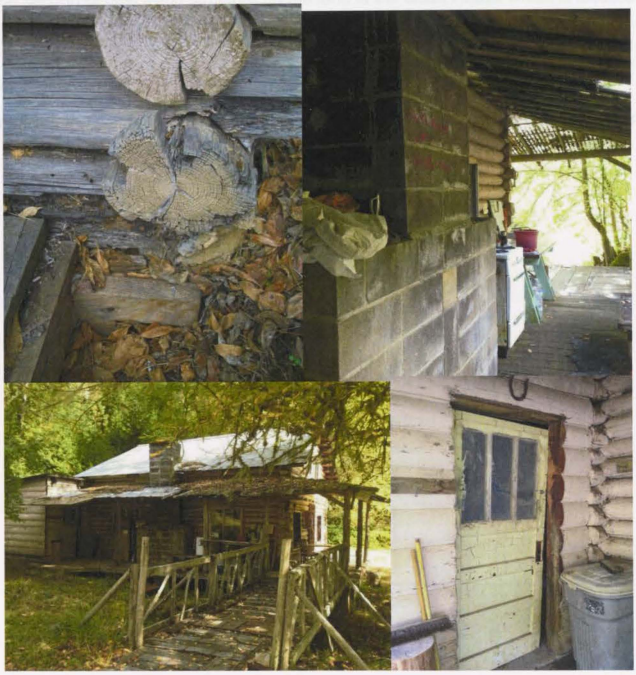

Figure 14: Exterior Main House Shots

The second largest living structure on the land is the Quiet House which is located just to the west of the Main House. The Quiet House is one of the more habitable and structurally sound buildings currently so it is where OWL meetings are held and is generally the first to house residents when women make requests to live on the land.

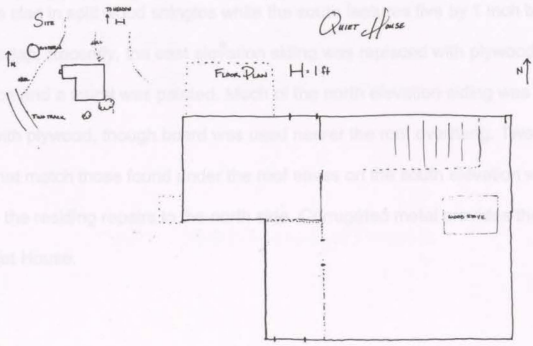

Figure 15: Quiet House Site and Floor Plan

The Quiet House began its life as a woodshed on the property and has been modified by years of residents at OWL. The woodshed was a small rectangular building. The first modifications took place in 1976 when women expanded the shed, built two loft spaces, and added windows to the structure[29]. Insulation was also added to the structure at this time.

The exterior cladding of the Quiet House consists of various types of wood. The west elevation is clad in split wood shingles while the south features five by 1 inch boards with no overlap. Recently, the east elevation siding was replaced with plywood due to deterioration and a mural was painted. Much of the north elevation siding was also replaced with plywood, though board was used nearer the roof overhang. Two triangular windows that match those found under the roof eaves on the south elevation were covered in the residing repairs to the north side. Corrugated metal provides the roofing for the Quiet House.

[29]Ni Aodagain, "The Buildings of OWL Farm," in *Oregon Women's Land Trust Resource Book* (Roseburg, OR: Oregon Women's Land Trust, 2004), 4.

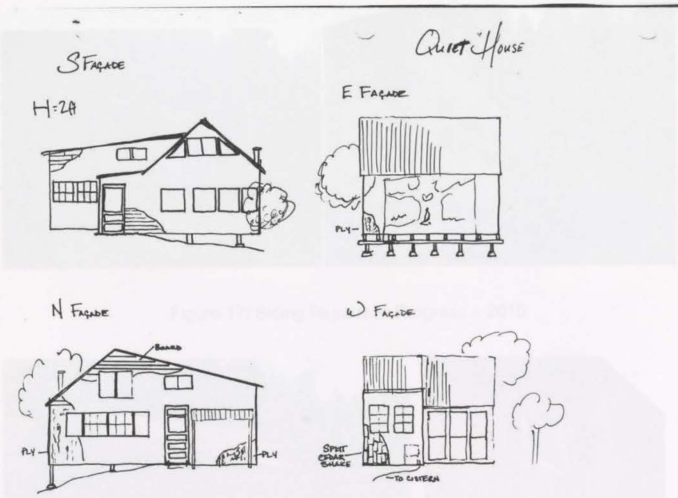

Figure 16: Quiet House Exterior Elevations

Figure 17: Siding Repairs in Progress – 2010

Figure 18: Repairs as Completed in 2012

The Quiet House is accessed mainly by a door on its west side. The door is protected by a glassed in roof area that provides dry wood storage and a storm barrier for the entry door. It opens into the main living space which spans the entire east-west length

of the house. This area is long enough for a twin bed and a small table. The main living space also has a small wood stove and the stairs to access one of the loft areas.

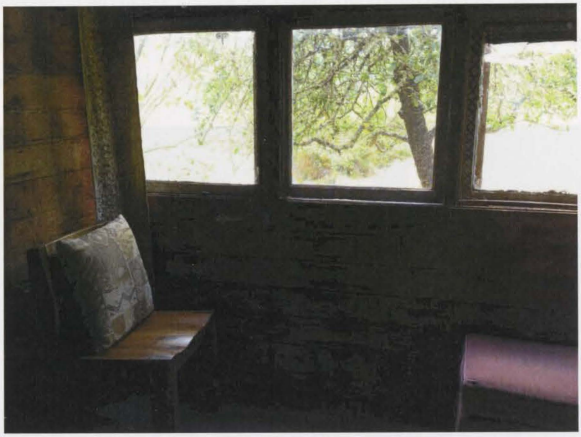

Figure 19: Quiet House Main Room

In 1989, an additional room was added to the west side of the Quiet House. It featured another lofted sleeping space and added more square footage to the structure[30]. It also added another entry door to the structure on its north elevation. While originally used as a sleeping space, it is now the kitchen area for the Quiet House. The small room was redone in 1993 when closet space was added, new insulation was put in. Sheetrock and

[30] Aodagain, "Buildings of OWL Farm," 4.

paint were also part of this large renovation of the Quiet House space[31]. There is no indoor plumbing at OWL, so a large water storage tank lies uphill from the Quiet house and is attached to an outdoor tub sink via a hose. The cistern provides gravity fed water for the Quiet House. Water can also be pumped from the well near the creek provided either testing has given the ok for drinking or the water is boiled.

Figure 20: Quiet House Loft Facing South

[31] Oregon Women's Land Trust, 1994 Winter Newsletter, Tee A. Corinne Papers, Coll 263, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Or.

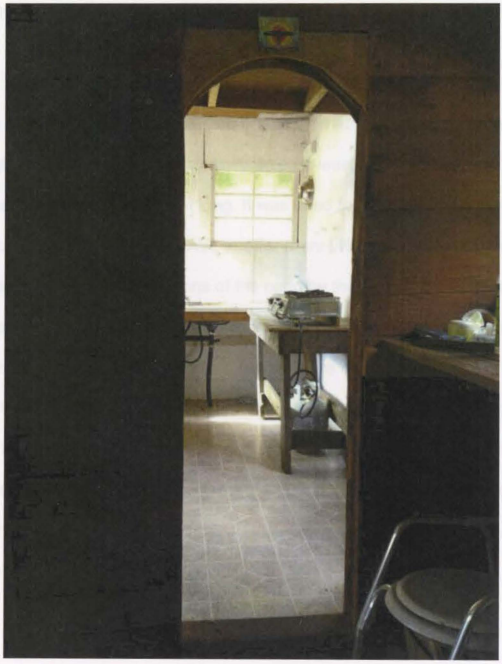

Figure 21: View of Quiet House Kitchen Area from Main Room

Coop and Shitter

The Coop is another structure that existed on the land at the time of purchase. It is a long rectangle and is situated on essentially an east-west axis. It measures 22 feet across on the short ends and 60 feet long. It was used for chickens and livestock but was rehabilitated by the women of OWL to offer more living space for the growing number of residents. Initial renovations of the coop by the women provided one livable room [32]. It has since been separated into the east end and west end and it offers two separate spaces. These additions and alterations were ongoing starting in 1985 and ending in 1995. There is an access door on both ends as well as one in the middle which leads first to a storage area and then to the respective living areas. The east end door is covered by a lean to which protects the door from weather while open. One resident of the east end of the coop added electricity by way of a solar panel and battery for 18 months in 1991-92[33].

[32] Lee, "Nozama Tribe," 13.
[33] Ibid

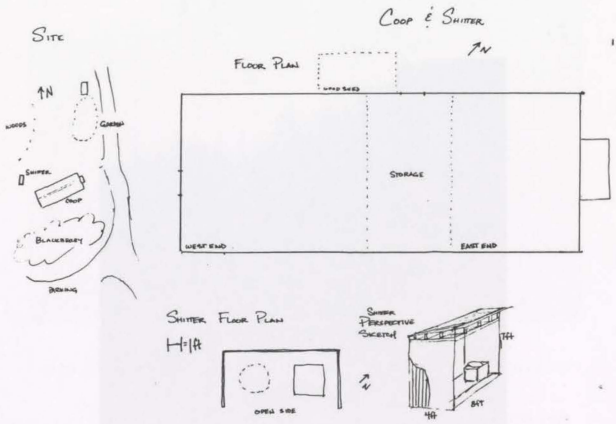

Figure 22: Coop and Shitter Site and Floor Plans

The Coop has two different roof types. The largest area of the room is semi-circular and has a set of clerestory windows that run the length of the roof at the circle's apex. The clerestory is also capped with a small curved roof. This would presumably have allowed for light and ventilation inside the structure when it was used to house chickens. The other roof is a simple front facing gable. This roof is over the east end living area. The

roof of the coop was redone in 1989 and the east coop roof was done again in 1995. Today both segments of roof are covered in tar paper roofing material.

Figure 23: Coop and Shitter as Seen from Children's House Trail – Looking West

Figure 24: West End of Coop Showing Curved Roofline and Clerestory

Figure 25: East End of Coop Showing Front Facing Gable and Lean-to Entrance Cover

The exterior cladding of the coop varies greatly. Both the east and west ends feature board and batten siding. The east end has two four by four pane windows, one on either side of the centered door. The west end has a board and batten door that appears to have been cut directly from this side of the structure and fitted with hinges. To the right of the door are one three panel window and an area to store tools. To the left are two differently sized windows. One of these windows is a two by four panel while the other is three by five. The north elevation is all board siding while the south elevation is clad mostly in composite roofing shingle on the west end and board near the east end. There are many different types of windows on the north and south elevations of the structure, all of which have been salvaged or purchased second hand.

Figure 26: North and South Elevations of Coop

The outhouse, known at OWL as the Shitter, was dug and constructed by OWL women and has been moved at least once to a new, clean location by its users. Today it

consists of a small platform with a closed wooden bench and toilet seat. It is open to its east side. It has a small lean-to roof so it is possible to use it in inclement weather. The Shitter is located off the northwest corner of the Coop on the property and is constructed with vertical boards

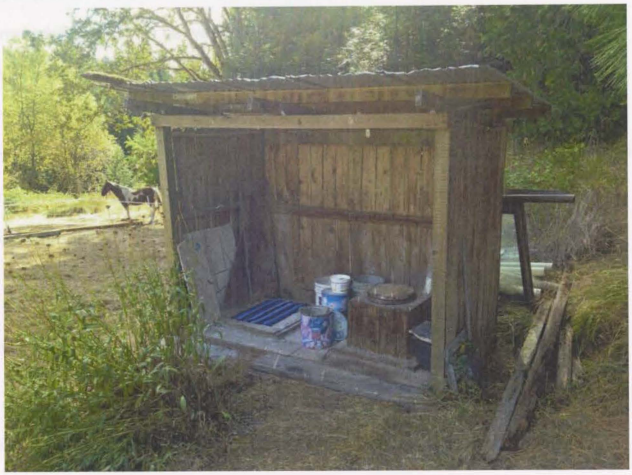

Figure 27: Shitter

Tree House

The Tree House is one structure on the land that was built entirely by the woman occupants of OWL Farm. It was built by Pelican Lee during the largest wave of building and remodeling at OWL; between 1976 and 1979[34]. It is located in the wooded area behind the main house. Women have lived in the Tree House at points in time, but it was originally envisioned by Pelican as an escape from the downtown area which during that time was home to dozens of women. When the land was heavily used, the downtown area could get quite busy, and the unimproved areas of the land were available for respite.

Children's House

The children's house was also built by the women of OWL. It is located on a ridge in the smaller meadow to the east of the Main House and overlooks downtown OWL. The Children's House measures roughly 12 ½ by 10 ½ feet. Today it is in a state of disrepair. There is a large hole in the flooring that makes entering the structure unsafe.

[34] Corinne, *Little Houses*, 39.

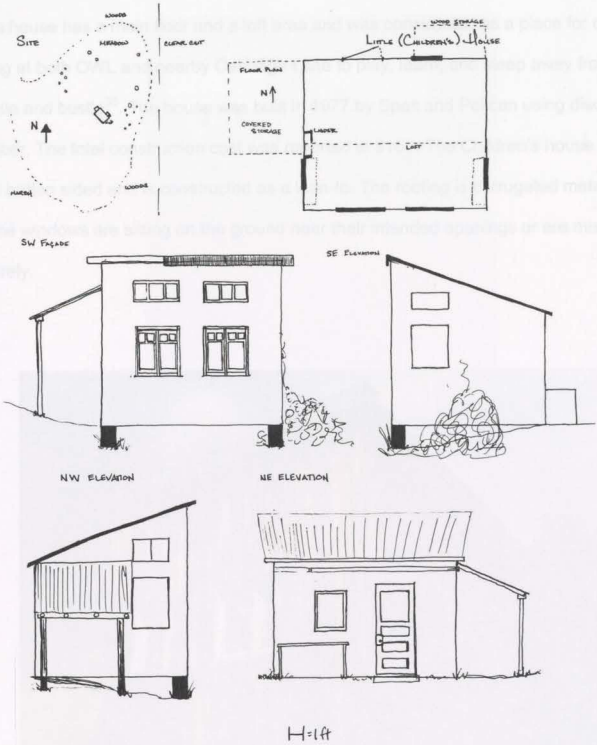

Figure 28: Children's House Site and Floor Plan and Elevations

This house has a main floor and a loft area and was constructed as a place for children living at both OWL and nearby Cabbage Lane to play, learn, and sleep away from the hustle and bustle[35]. The house was built in 1977 by Spes and Pelican using discount lumber. The total construction cost was reported at $150. The Children's house is board and batten sided and is constructed as a lean-to. The roofing is corrugated metal. Many of the windows are sitting on the ground near their intended openings or are missing entirely.

Figure 29: Children's House Looking North

[35] Aodagain, "Buildings of OWL Farm," 4.

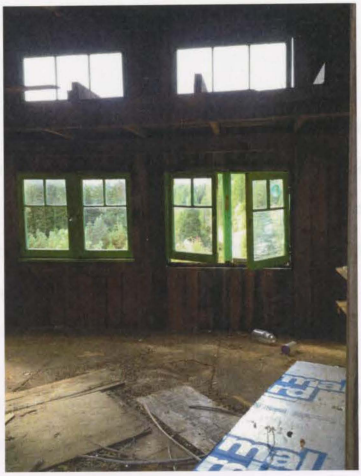

Figure 30: Interior Children's House

Figure 31: Door Hardware- Children's House

Other Structures

A log barn existed on the property when it was purchased and plans were being made as early as 1991 to dismantle and salvage the barn. However, in 1992 the summer newsletter stated that there were plans proposed to preserve the barn instead[36]. As of September of 1994, the barn was still standing but the intent was to demolish it[37]. The barn does not stand on the property today.

OWL has also seen a great number of temporary living spaces throughout its history. In 1992, members of the trust proposed a rule limiting the number of new 'soft structures' on the land to one per year so they could assess the impacts of these structures[38]. Vans, busses, trailers, tents, and tipis have all provided housing to residents and visitors over the years.

[36] Oregon Women's Land Trust, 1992 Summer Newsletter, Tee A. Corinne Papers, Coll 263, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Or.
[37] Oregon Women's Land Trust, 1994 Summer Newsletter Tee A. Corinne Papers, Coll 263, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Or.
[38] Oregon Women's Land Trust, 1992 Summer Newsletter.

OWL Farm Today

There are many differences between the OWL Farm of 1975 and what exists today aside from improvements to buildings and landscape. OWL Farm no longer has a large and consistent group of inhabitants to provide care-taking for the land and structures. This has opened many of the structures up to decay as well as habitation by small animals. The Main House is no longer used for gatherings or living due to its structural problems and years of infestation from mice and rats. OWL Trust is currently thinking of possibilities for the structure including rehabilitation and stabilization, 'demolition by neglect', and dismantling and repurposing of materials[39].

The Quiet House and Coop remain useable and are generally the spaces that house visitors and residents. The most time and resources have been invested in these two structures because problems with them generally present on a smaller and more manageable scale than the issues with the condition of the Main House. Recent work has made both of these structures sound and both are scheduled to house longer term residents in 2012-13.

Caretaking at OWL was generally in the hands of occupants and visitors to the land. Caretaking and landscaping has recently been put in the hands of one or a couple of

[39] Oregon Women's Land Trust, 2011 Retreat Meeting Notes, Unpublished, Personal Materials of Bethroot Gwynn.

women who are paid to do regular mowing and check-ups on the property as it is sometimes vandalized during periods where it sits unoccupied. The caretakers also organize work parties to do major projects such as spreading new gravel on the road or installing a new access gate. Work parties are publicized through the OWL email list and in quarterly newsletters. Short term visitors to the land are also able to offset the cost of their stay with work exchange.

New residents and scholarly interest in the history and continuity of OWL Farm are promising for the land as renewed interest could help alleviate financial woes and provide the land with a more regular presence. The extent to which that happens remains to be seen. OWL is certainly not the only women's communal land from its time still in operation, but it is unique in that it remains in the hands of a Trust and offers any woman who inquires the opportunity to participate in continuing land based living.

Interpretive Plan for OWL Farm

This section will present an interpretive plan for OWL Farm which centers on structural and landscape change throughout OWL's history. The interpretive plan aims to connect OWL to broader patterns of Oregon's settlement history as well the women's movement on a national scale through examination of the utilization of the land and structures by women involved in different periods of occupation at the farm. Wherever possible, first-hand accounts of events provided by land women themselves have been used. Other primary sources detailing landscape and structural change on the land include organization newsletters, archived writings of OWL Farm inhabitants, and photographs.

There are a number of unique factors that must be considered in preparation of an interpretive agenda for OWL Farm which will be discussed below. Many principles of collaboration in and design of exhibits will be incorporated into this plan in attempt to present a rich and engaging interpretive possibility while taking into consideration the distinctive limitations this project presents. The plan will draw most notably from planning principles espoused by Kathleen McLean and Freeman Tilden. McLean's work, Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions, is a contemporary source which offers perspectives on exhibition projects from their inception to their installation and execution, thus prompting the planner to consider all aspects of the project from start to finish. It was this model that was used in the beginning stages of research and collaboration surrounding this project and many of McLean's principles, while they are aimed at museum based interpretive projects, are applicable to the interpretation of

OWL Farm. Tilden's seminal work, Interpreting Our Heritage, as well as his subsequent writings regarding interpretive theory, was generated from many years of experience planning interpretive and public relations materials and displays for the National Park Service. This influential work is grounded in historic sites interpretation and brings insight into creating connections between people, past, and place. Because OWL Farm has more in common with specific historical site based interpretation, much of Tilden's approach is useful in considering interpretive strategies for OWL.

Process

In Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions, McLean borrows from Morris Asimow's Introduction to Design to formulate a flexible framework for exhibit planning. Asimow proposed a process which begins with formulating an idea and then assessing feasibility of the project as a whole. After deeming a project feasible and necessary, preliminary design begins. This is followed by detailed design and then planning for the production of the project. Actual production is the final stage in Asimov's process. McLean adds activities and constraints common to design for museum work to flesh out the proposed planning process and make it more specific to exhibit design[40]. This detailing by McLean is the model that this project has followed throughout.

[40] Kathleen McLean, *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions,* (Washington, DC: Association of Science-Technology Centers, 1993) 51.

Part I – Idea

The first step in the planning process for this project was to land on a concrete idea. The idea in this case is to provide some information about OWL Farm and its place in the history of feminist and women's action both in Oregon and in the U.S. in general. The current political and social climate threatens to undermine changes created by activism of the 60's and 70's women's movement. As measures affecting health care and reproductive rights for women have taken the spotlight and another swell of activism among women seems inevitable, it is important to recall the many strategies taken by women to effect change throughout the history of women's advocacy. At a time when anniversaries of women's suffrage are approaching in many states as well, this climate coupled with renewed scholarly interest in land based communal living make a project calling attention to the history and continuity of women's land communities timely and appropriate. They are an important and often overlooked segment in the arc of feminist and women's history, and because so many like OWL Farm still operate in some fashion, they could present a fascinating connector of past and present.

Part II - Feasibility

In assessing the feasibility of this idea the first step was to understand what resources would be available to provide information for the project. Many primary source documents related to the women's land movement in Oregon are available at the University of Oregon Special Collections. Many of these sources relate in some way to the change and utilization of the land and buildings by the women participating in creating community at OWL Farm, which make approaching this project from a preservation perspective and connecting changes in landscape and buildings on the land to changes in community needs throughout time a possibility. Because many women who participated in OWL and other land based communities are still living in Oregon or are easily accessible by phone or email and are still invested in women's land an even deeper and richer dimension is possible for the project. Upon contacting the general email address for OWL, it was indicated that women were very interested in telling the story of the land and in preserving the place and the idea and its history for future generations of women. As it says in the OWL bylaws, the purpose of the organization is to hold the land in perpetuity. This mission can only be accomplished if future generations of women are interested in taking on the responsibility of caring for the land. As a result of the resources available and the interest on the part of the women currently involved in supporting and participating in the project, feasibility has been determined.

Part III - Preliminary Design

The preliminary design phase of the plan is where many of the constraints placed on the project are addressed, since they necessitate certain variables to be considered when thinking about the final, more detailed planning phase.

McLean suggests the first step in the preliminary process should be bringing together stakeholders in the project[41]. The stakeholders I have chosen to work with in this case are the women currently involved in the management and caretaking of OWL Farm as well as contacts they have been able to provide me of women who have moved on but are still connected with the land community. I discuss below some issues with engaging stakeholders as far as this project is concerned, but as a source fact checking at the very least, their participation has been invaluable.

Because McLean is writing for museum professionals, her text assumes that the installation will be a traditional exhibit and the venue will be the museum for which the reader is designing. In this case, the factors of where an exhibit will be installed, if one will be installed, and what form it would take are unknowns so these are issues that need to be addressed in the preliminary phases as well. Because the project is being carried out on behalf of the community in a way, it seems fitting to include them in the thought process regarding the shape an exhibit would take and how they feel it could be most useful to the land and the Trust, but one major constraint of this project is the inability to interview the women in this way. All interview questions with the women

[41] McLean, *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*, 55.

interested in the project must produce responses and information that is factual in nature. With this in mind I have utilized meeting notes from planning and visioning retreats held by those currently involved in OWL Farm management. Thankfully they record discussions regarding what they would like to see in the future for OWL Farm and have included information about resources they would like to be available on the land for visitors. The recording of these discussions has given me a great deal of insight into what would be considered desirable trajectories for an interpretive project.

A product of one such discussion was a thought that it would be nice to have a clearly defined system of trails throughout the property. I used this as my jumping off point as it presents an opportunity to create something of value for the land that the women indicated would be useful and because trail based interpretation is accepted as an exhibit form and has many examples to draw from when considering design, planning, and visitor engagement. It is an opportunity to produce something that can serve multiple purposes for the land community. A trail is also something that could make a fairly easy transition to a web based exhibit should the women decide they would like to reach a broader audience with the information.

During the preliminary design phase, the main ideas of the installation are formulated. These are described by McLean as 'take-home messages' and she suggests nailing them down early in the process since it makes it easier, as a designer, to think of ways

that could be communicated to a visitor to the exhibit[42]. Below are the take-home messages that will inform the rest of the interpretive design process.

- OWL Farm is unique among women's land communities
- OWL Farm is worthy of protection and public knowledge
- OWL Farm and other women's land communities were and are created as a response to disagreement with overarching societal values
- Separatist responses play a unique role in social movements
- OWL Farm has changed throughout time to respond to different sets of needs
- Women of OWL Farm are stewards of their resources

Preliminary Research

Preliminary research for this plan was conducted in archival collections related to Southern Oregon women's land communities at the University of Oregon Special Collections, notably the Ruth Mountaingrove Papers and the Tee Corrine Papers, as well as through site visits and open meetings of the trust. Articles from periodicals retained in the Lesbian Periodical collection at U of O have also been used in this research.

The preliminary research has helped define the scope of the project by illuminating the resources available to draw information from. Much of the information related to personal feelings about experiences at OWL Farm has been drawn from materials

[42] McLean, *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*, 56.

published by women regarding OWL as well as updates on conflicts published in OWL newsletters and meeting minutes. Information regarding buildings and landscape at OWL was also gleaned from newsletters and has been bolstered by visits to OWL Farm to record landscapes and structures through drawings and photographs.

The interpretive plan focuses mostly on the development of the farm itself and how women impacted the buildings and landscape to fit their needs. This type of research is in the vein of vernacular architecture and vernacular landscape studies in that it focuses on a group of people that were apart from the general public, both physically and socially speaking and who did not generally have access to formal architectural, landscape, and construction training. As such, changes made to buildings and landscapes were needs based, rather than in response to trends in these trades and will exhibit different characteristics. The plan leaves room for women to add their own photos, anecdotes, and ephemera to the materials that the exhibit can display so that it may be representative of the feelings and opinions of the women involved and also ever changing, like the land itself.

Storyline/Conceptual Design

Developing storyline is the meat of the preliminary design process. The storyline takes the take-home messages and translates them into an outline for an exhibit and the conceptual design creates an overall feel and flow for the exhibit. Freeman Tilden's first principle of interpretive design comes into play in the storyline and concept development

stage as it is something to consider when deciding what to include and how to include it. That principle states, "Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile[43]."

This principle directs the interpreter to consider first the audience that will be utilizing the display and how the information contained within that display can connect to them. In this case, the audience is very specialized. Since this exhibit is intended to be installed and utilized on the land of OWL Farm, all audience members will be women and most will likely be self-identified feminists. There are not many ways to find out about OWL Farm and there are even fewer ways to gain access to the land. While this narrow audience is not ideal for disseminating information about the history of the land widely, a museum display does not seem a viable solution for the exhibition. First, it is difficult to get around the idea that subject of museum displays are only historical in nature. A key piece of the OWL Farm story is its continuity which is a message that is challenging to communicate in such an encapsulated way. Second, issues of privacy for the women and the land also arise when creating a more public display. The plan includes online components to widen the reach of the information and what will be included in that portion is left to each woman who participates in adding personal items to the project to decide. A traditional museum based exhibit has also been ruled out due to what I have foreseen as issues in finding a venue. It has been noted by some active in the community that there exists active suppression of knowledge concerning communal

[43]Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967) 34.

activities in Southern Oregon[44]. This seems to rule out the possibility of starting small with exhibits in local and regional institutions.

The narrowly defined audience for the on-land portion of the plan does have some advantages. It makes it easier to make the types of connections that Tilden speaks of in his first principle. Those who have sought out OWL Farm and have made the contacts necessary to gain access to the land for living, camping, or visiting likely share some of the same characteristics with the women who have shaped the land over time and will be able to relate to the material well.

McLean cautions getting too wrapped up in a seemingly logical progression of events when developing a storyline, so for this plan I have merely included the concepts and areas to be conveyed through the exhibition in no particular order[45]. Additionally, because this exhibit will be based on a system of trails it seems prudent to make a plan where each area does not necessarily rely on the information contained in another area as people can follow trails in whatever direction they choose. The intention of creating an exhibit based on a trail system is not to structure and guide a visitor's walking path through the land. The intention is to complement their enjoyment of the land, as that is the real experience of being at OWL and the easiest way to connect the women visiting to the women who have and do live on and visit the land regularly.

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[44] Tee Corinne, "Invisible Histories" in in *Oregon Women's Land Trust Resource Book* (Roseburg, OR: Oregon Women's Land Trust, 2004), 5.
[45] McLean, *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions,* 60.

activists in Southern Chagos[24]. This serves to rule out the possibility of starting small with entities in local and regional institutions.

The normally distinct audiences for the on-land portion of the plan have some advantages. It makes it easier to make the layers of conversations that Tilman speaks of in his last principle. Those who have sought out OWL Farm and have made the contacts necessary to gain access to the land for living, camping, or visiting likely share some of the same characteristics with the women who have stayed the land over time and left behind a trace to return to the relevant work.

Plot and outcome-oriented thinking can be expected to in a relatively logical progression of events when developing a plan, as for the plan I have already indicated the concepts and ideas to be conveyed through the exhibition in no particular order[25]. Additionally, because this activity will be located on a logistical affinity it seems prudent to make a plan which depends on close and intensively rely on the information contained in another area as people who have been in whatever direction they choose. The intention of creating an exhibit based on a trail system is not to structure and guide a visitor's walking path through the land. The intention is to complement their experience of the land, as that is the core expectation of being at OWL and the optimal way to connect the women visiting to the women who have and do live on and with the land regularly.

[24] See Gardner, "Invisible Islands," in Hodgson (Barnett) *Lost Tribe* Minority Rights Group Monitor Report Series, 2001, 4.

[25] Mikaela, Notes on visit to Chagos Conference, 06.

OWL is a land-based community for a reason which is evident in looking at their bylaws and the women who created this land and others throughout Oregon are stewards of the land. The fact that women can come and enjoy OWL today is thanks to those who saw the need to set land aside for future generations of women and who then became caretakers of that land. This is a major connection to be made in the final scripting of the exhibit.

The general storyline begins with the broader women's movement and the circumstances under which women were turning to land based communities and festivals as a retreat from and response to mainstream society. Oregon's history regarding communal groups will also be discussed. In this area of the exhibit it is also noted that OWL has a unique position among communal lands because it was the first women's land to be organized as open land, meaning it was intended to be accessible by any and all that needed to use it without taking into consideration issues of race or class. OWL was organized to eliminate some of the common barriers to land ownership and sought to level the playing field where access to land was concerned.

In the main living area of the land, there is much to be discussed and the content here could be divided into many thematic areas. Why the land was chosen by the group is one that could easily be addressed here, as could the original organization of the land and structures. How women gained construction skills in order to alter structures and build new ones must also be addressed in this area as it is the only spot on the acreage that has buildings. Each building will be able to be discussed in detail while relating its

original use and exhibiting items associated with each. Alterations and improvements to the landscape are also most apparent here as small agricultural fields have been added and improvements have been made to driveways and walkways and trails have been started.

One challenge in preparing this plan is to think of a way to overcome the fact that most of the activity and visible human impact on the place has occurred in one concentrated area. If the intention is for visitors to utilize and experience the land in its entirety, thematic areas must be identified outside of the downtown OWL area in order to draw visitors out and into the environment. One such area is the upper meadow located north of the downtown area. The meadow is used for gatherings, quiet time, and communing with nature. The tree house is also outside of the main area but not very far. Many notable workshops and activities took place in the meadow areas and a story involving the forced removal of a woman from the tree house by the sheriff were found in the archives and would be great pieces for inclusion at these areas. In the final scripting, ways of connecting all of these areas and including other thought provoking and engaging tidbits along the way will need to be found for there to be any flow pattern to the exhibit.

Other concepts will be addressed as well. Ways in which internal conflict and external pressures have affected the land will be very important concepts to include as each has a direct impact on the land both historically and now. Clear cutting of forests on all sides of OWL Farm has impacted the ecosystems there and compromised the original

seclusion and security that OWL land was selected for. Views on all four sides of the land have been altered as a result of logging. The land also currently faces pressure from natural gas interests as they fight a pipeline project slated to come through the developed part of OWL.

Internal conflict between the women of OWL led to ebbs and flows of inhabitants throughout its history and generational conflict has resulted in lack of interest in separatist land communities by younger generations of queer women today, which challenges the future existence of open women's land in Oregon. These changing ideals are what this exhibit hopes to connect to changes in use of the land and the alteration of it structures to fit different needs throughout its lifetime.

In addressing the look and feel of the exhibit it is necessary to understand that the purpose of a trail system on the land would be primarily for the enjoyment of nature. Any signage or permanent fixtures related to the interpretive mission of the trail must be unobtrusive and blend well with the surrounding environment if they exist at all. Any fixtures must also weather well and need little maintenance as there is often no one on the land to take do such things. On the other hand, if no permanent on trail markings or interactivity is present, the options left for communicating the information are few. Booklets or binders can be cumbersome and may hinder the visitor's ability to enjoy their time about the land. If designed and utilized well, the ungainliness of a book for guidance could be minimized. One way would be to create a 'field guide' of sorts that could easily be carried or put in a pack and taken out when the visitor would like to

know more about something. The guide could identify the natural offerings along the trails along with the woman made resources in the same fashion. Such a guide would serve dual purposes and could encourage visitors to walk the trails in search of both nature and knowledge about the place they are in. The field guide method would also lend itself well to minimal on trail marking since a small symbol would be all that is necessary to signify the non-natural resources present in the interpretive piece. This may also encourage repeat trips out along the trails during an extended stay to find resources that may have been missed or overlooked as the visitors mind may wander as they are embraced by the outdoors.

Part IV – Final Design

The Proposal

To interpret OWL Farm, it is proposed that a self guided trail be created to encourage visitors to explore landscape and consider how land and community are tied together across time at OWL. The maps and interpretive materials are to be made available online to be printed in advance of arrival. The information will also be available as a small laminated booklet that is weatherproof and portable for inclusion on the information table near the Main House.

The trail will make use of existing landmarks and features to provide interpretation and the booklet will also include information about identifying flora and fauna in order to offer some unstructured elements to the interpretive package. The trail will utilize existing trail segments, overgrown two-tracks present on the land and open areas such as meadows where hikers can wander and experience views of the land.

All portions of the on-land interpretive trail will not be accessible, a reality that will be addressed in other portions of the proposal. The downtown areas are moderately accessible and visitors can elect to do only that portion. The booklet will include photographs from the all areas of the land not only to give visitors with limited mobility a sense of landscape, buildings, flora/fauna, and historical connections present but also to

provide a record in the event that any of the structures should be removed or succumb to the elements. The photos and included sketches will also create a booklet that will be effective even in the event that the land and structures are altered.

The on-land interpretive trail will be shadowed by an online component so those without ability to travel to the land can access the same types of information. An online exhibit has many possibilities to include a depth of material including audio-visual elements. Larger numbers of photos and videos will be utilized as part of the online exhibit. Photos of 'artifacts' and ephemera provided by land women will be included and audio clips of conversations and songs or poems that are used on land or were written with the land in mind will provide elements of the online portion of the interpretation.

The online component will be presented as a trail that users can 'walk' to discover different areas and see and hear documents, photos, videos and other related content. The trail will be created in a Google Earth environment complete with 3d modeling of buildings or in a Google Maps environment that utilizes these elements without the modeling component but is easier to update. In addition to providing online users a sense of scale, the modeling is useful as a method of documenting the buildings of the land and making information on the buildings themselves accessible. Done in Trimble SketchUp, 3d models can be imported into the publicly available 3d buildings layer in Google Earth and be viewed even by those that are not participating in the full exhibit.

provide a record in the event that any of the structures should be removed or succumb to the elements. The photos and detailed elevations will also create a basilal that will be effective even in the event that the land and structures are altered.

The on-line navigation tool will be accessed by an online companion in Boos without safety to travel to the land can access the same types of information. An online exhibit has many possibilities to create a depth of material including audio visual elements. Larger numbers of photos and videos will be utilized as part of the online exhibit. Photos of artifacts and information provided by land owners will be included and audio clips of conversations and songs or poems that are used on land or were written with the land in mind will provide elements of the online portion of the interpretation.

The online companion will be presented as a trail that users can "walk" to discover different areas and see their dimensions, photos, videos and other related content. The trail will be created in a Google Earth environment complete with 3d modeling of buildings or in a Google Sketch environment that allows basic elements without the modeling component but is easier to update. In addition to providing online users a sense of scale, the modeling is useful as a method of documenting the buildings of the land and adding information on the buildings themselves accessible. Data in Trimble Sketchup 3d models can be imported into the publicly available 3d buildings layer in Google Earth and be viewed even by those that are not participating in the AR aspect

Justification for Proposal and Detailed Design

In the winter of 2010, women currently involved in management of OWL Trust held a visioning retreat to discuss what they see in the future of both the trust and OWL Farm. This visioning process resulted in many ideas about the land, its use and its structures that, if followed through with, would have a tremendous impact on what currently exists at OWL Farm and the main uses of the land itself.

Many expressed the sentiment that it may be best for OWL to temporarily let go of the goal of being a residential community as it has been in the past and focus more on community building and short term involvement on the land. As part of that idea, a reimagining of the existing structures and layout was mentioned by some of the women as a means to bring about more involvement. As one woman noted, the sight of some of the structures is discouraging to first time visitors and with the focus turned to a gathering rather than living space, the door would be open to tear down some of the living structures that are deemed beyond repair and create something new as well as something that would be useful in facilitating the idea of bringing women together in a more temporary way.

Though the widely held thought seemed to be that this reimagining would be a way to draw women in the short term, there was still talk of returning to the original focus of maintaining a residential community on the land. With renewed interest and improved

infrastructure like water and solar systems, the goal of providing space for residence may be more attainable.

Regardless of the direction the trust decides to move, many of the buildings that exist at OWL Farm are approaching a state of demolition by neglect due in some instances to poor location and in others to an inability of those involved to provide resources, i.e. womanpower and money, to support them. A survey of the buildings was conducted in 2010 by the current care-taker and most of the buildings existing were deemed unsalvageable in the sense that they can no longer be used for their intended purpose and repairs to return them to a useable state would be too costly to the trust. If this assessment is taken at face value, then documentation of the buildings and landscape as it now exists will be an important record in the history of the land. Either these buildings will decay in place or they will be removed in favor of a new vision for OWL. Both create a need to more adequately document and disseminate information regarding what is currently there.

It is with the statements of the visioning process in mind that this exhibition proposal was developed. During the visioning process, women were prompted to give examples of the types of resources they would like to be available to future OWL visitors and of activities they would like to see take place on the land. Much of the response trended toward short term use activities such as workshops, guided hikes on the property, spiritual gatherings, sustainability demonstrations, and recreational use. Trail

improvement was mentioned specifically and presumably many of the other activities mentioned would make use of an established trail system.

The proposal for interpretation centers around improvement and use of existing trails to provide space for a land based exhibit that interprets pieces of the history behind OWL Farm. Such a trail would meet several of the stated desires from the visioning process. It could provide an on-land event for women to gather and introduce new women to the land and its purposes, it could provide space for recreation and quiet reflection and may be especially useful for those who are using the land as a stop-over and would feel more comfortable exploring on something marked and mapped, and it could provide a way to integrate the past realities of the land with what the visitor sees today. Sentimentality was mentioned often during the visioning retreat along with a need to move on. There is interest in capturing and holding on to pieces of the past while moving the land forward for the future which is something that an accompanying 'exhibition guide' could accomplish effectively.

Part of the greater need is for information regarding women's land to be more readily available both to the general public and to women who may be interested in continuing the tradition of women's land in Oregon. The extrapolation of this trail system to a richer online resource attempts to make basic information about the land and its history available and encourage renewed interest in women's land from generations accustomed to taking in information electronically. Access to primary and in many cases even secondary sources is limited to a handful of university archives and tightly

controlled public repositories. If one is able to visit land or attend a meeting of the Trust, other materials may become available through the women themselves, but those materials are even more highly privileged than those in archives. While everyone can access the archives, research fees and other costs are often charged to those who are not affiliated with the repository. Most published information regarding women's land are theses and academic papers that can be difficult to come by and many publications resulting from women's land are self published or small run books which are rare and often a part of the same archives that hold personal manuscript and photo collections associated with the lands. One great issue facing these lands and causing some degree of uncertainty about the future is the lack of visibility and knowledge surrounding the initial land movement, the aims and background of women's land, and the reality that many of the lands still exist and are operational. With the need for widely available information in mind, an online exhibition that mimics the on-land trail is also proposed as a component in interpreting OWL Farm.

The use of a trail as the on-site mode of interpretation helps to surmount a couple of the conditions present at OWL that make more traditional exhibitions problematic. Because there is not always someone on site, any form of interpretation must be primarily self guided. However, there have been guided hikes on the land in the past, so creating an exhibition centered on the existing trails could add another dimension to those events through the addition of historical information that can be presented in tandem with the ecological information available.

The natural setting presents not only accessibility issues, but also issues of maintenance of both the trail and any associated signage. As has been noted in the assessment of the current condition of the structures, there is not often someone available to complete these types of maintenance tasks, and even when someone is care-taking the property, their focus is generally on upkeep of structures and maintenance of access roads. Trail maintenance can be taxing work, especially when new trails are carved out of previously unimproved areas. To minimize these issues, the proposed trail system will make use of the already existing roads and trails on site as well as open areas where more free form walking is possible. Many of the existing trails are old two track roads that remain fairly open despite the surrounding vegetation.

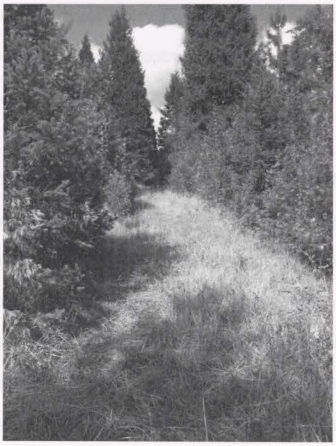

Figure 32: Existing Two Track Leading to Upper Meadow Via Woods on West Side of Property

This also aids in the planning by eliminating some of the need to take potential environmental impacts into account. When planning nature trails, it is important to take inventory of the proposed site from an environmental standpoint before planning a route[46]. Because the majority of the network already exists there will not be a need to cause additional disturbance to the landscape. Impacts on existing plants and animals will be minimal.

By using existing infrastructure, the proposal also eliminates the need for a time consuming and potentially costly trail design phase to the project. Cost is an important factor in any interpretive plan for OWL Farm as the trust has little money to expend beyond its property taxes and minor upkeep costs. Because the paths currently exist and will not be improved as part of the proposal, the costs remain low and the project can be implemented quickly.

Given the focus on land stewardship that has played a large role both in the formation of OWL Trust and in the use of OWL Farm over time, installation of permanent signage is not proposed as part of the interpretive package. Signage has the potential to obstruct nature views and detract from the experience of interacting with nature[47]. The position of the land as central to the interpretation of the past, present, and potential future of OWL suggests that installed signage would be inconsistent with the feeling that is intended as part of the exhibition. A hand rendered trail map that reflects the artistic and

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[46] Charles Flink, et. al., Trails for the Twenty-first Century : planning, design, and management manual for multi-use trails, (Washington, DC : Island Press, 2001) 14.

[47] Flink, et. al., *Trails for the Twenty-first Century,* 91.

creative traditions embodied in the history of OWL and Oregon women's lands will be made available at the information kiosk that is set up for visitors to the farm as part of the small guidebook that will provide the interpretive accompaniment to the trail system.

Elimination of dedicated signage is also proposed as a cost and maintenance saving measure. Much like the layout of a trail, signage requires a great deal of planning and design, which is often costly. Construction and maintenance of signage is also an expense that would be difficult to justify given the other land related expenses that the Trust manages in relation to OWL Farm. If signs were to be constructed, they would be exposed to the elements and would need routine cleaning. This would be an added task for the caretaker, assuming one exists, who is generally stretched thin with maintenance projects of more importance. Since the property at times goes without residents or a regular caretaker, signage may present another worry of infrastructure on the land that falls into disrepair or becomes dangerous. The proposal of minimal signage or markers based on landmarks fits not only the land stewardship focus that is historically important in the history of OWL Farm but also the cost and upkeep concerns that are presented by the reality present at OWL Farm today.

There are some drawbacks to the proposed trail system, notably it would not be accessible to all guests of OWL. However, inaccessibility of portions of the land is a reality that would not be worsened by the addition of a trail system. Presently, the only areas of OWL Farm that are in some way accessible to those with mobility concerns are the living areas. While none of the main areas are paved, the existing road and parking

are gravel and the path to the Main House consists of a plank bridge that connects directly to the porch without steps up or down. With some assistance, most of the existing buildings could be visited, and information about these structures composes a large part of the interpretation proposed. The online portion of the interpretive proposal aims to address issues of accessibility that are not surmountable on the land itself, such as non-ADA compliant paths and structures and restricted access to the Farm.

In addition to accessibility concerns, trail maintenance also presents a challenge. At present, trails in and out of the main living areas do not receive the level of maintenance that the areas around the roads and buildings do. However, many of the existing paths to follow are wide two-tracks previously used as roads or are minimally cleared of plant matter that would make them inaccessible. Once out of the main area, much of the land is meadow and open forest terrain that can be walked without following a designated trail. The natural processes present on the land maintain these meadow areas to the extent necessary for people to travel through them. The areas of deeper woods are relatively clear of undergrowth except near their borders with the meadows where sun can more readily penetrate to the forest floor level. This makes many areas of forest passable without much alteration. The proposed trail system follows these open areas that, for the most part, are self-maintaining to eliminate the need for regular trail clearing and maintenance. The plan does not propose any additional improvements to existing trails such as widening or chipping. This is proposed in order to lessen the visual impact on the land. While chipping does help to limit erosion through use, the level of trail use is unlikely to be enough of an increase over current volumes to make trail erosion a

concern. In addition, the land sees the most use during the summer months when it is drier and the land is less susceptible to impacts caused by walking than it would be in the wet winter months. The intent is that the plan gives visitors already coming to the land and groups hoping to utilize the land for gatherings under the future vision an outlet to explore the land. The online portion aims to make the land and its history more accessible to the general public, and is likely to see more use.

In addition to meeting the needs of making information more widely accessible, increasing visibility for the land and providing recreation opportunities for visitors to the Farm the plan also benefits from being easily updated. The on-land portion wouldn't need to be updated regularly except in the event that one of the structures is altered or removed. The online portion can be made in a format that invites collaboration among current members of the trust, interpretive designers, and former land women. Utilizing free and inexpensive resources, the online exhibit can be made in programs where many people can have administrative privileges and the exhibit can be added to and changed whenever the need or desire arises. Depending on the platform, the online exhibit could be part of a larger site for the trust and can serve to provide more general information for OWL Farm and other lands served by the Trust and be a place to post updates, work party calls, and events. It could also be a repository for important documents such as meeting minutes and booklets related to the trust that are currently only available in archives. Although not legally required of non-profits and trusts, many make bylaws, articles of incorporation, and meeting minutes publicly available, and

doing so could provide some access to important historical information related to OWL Farm and other women's lands.

Web exhibits can be expensive, but utilizing free tools available it is possible to set up something fairly interactive and professional looking with little to no investment. Almost all computers and many phones are capable of capturing good quality digital audio and most computers also come with some form of basic audio editing software so there would be no need to purchase expensive equipment to produce the elements proposed as part of the online exhibit. There are also more functional audio editing programs available for both computers and mobile devices that are open source such as Audacity, DJ Audio Editor, and Power Sound which go beyond the capabilities of audio editing software included with most computers.

Utilizing Google Maps or Google Earth to build and access tour type information is free and does not require a website to host. It can be created and accessed through any Google account. 3d models can be created, albeit with a somewhat steep learning curve, in Trimble's free SketchUp program and these models can be imported into the Google Earth environment. SketchUp Building models can be added to the 3d Building Layer so even those not accessing the exhibit info directly can see them in Google Earth. Again, this is hosted through a Google Account so there is no need to purchase a web domain to handle the hosting of information. There are many benefits to investing in ask domain and domain host where the plan is concerned and those will be discussed later in this section.

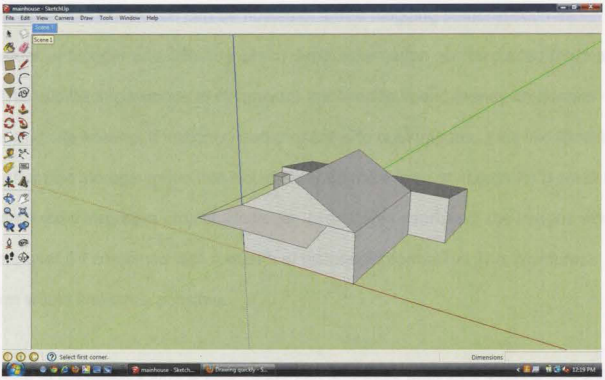

Figure 33: Main House Rendered in Google SketchUp

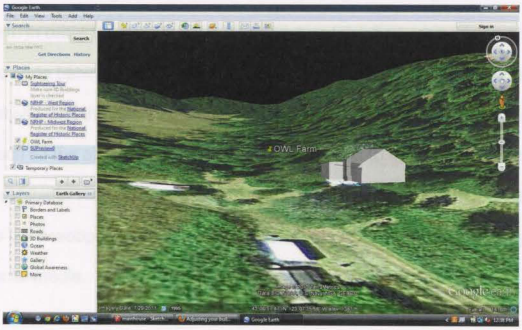

Figure 34: SketchUp Model Geolocated in Google Earth Terrain View

Images utilized in the exhibit can be hosted in a free blogging platform such as Wordpress or blogger and links to more in depth information can be placed there as well. This approach continues to circumvent the need to spend money on domain names and site hosting. If the only need present is to host images, sites like Picasa or Flickr offer free storage space that would likely be more than adequate for a small to medium sized interpretive project. However, even if well captioned, the images would be more useful if combined with a wealth of historical information. The Wordpress platform would make this possible.

While use of Wordpress.com is free, users can purchase their own domain and hosting services to utilize Wordpress.org[48]. Wordpress.org offers users a more customizable experience and the ability to turn their site into something that more closely resembles a website rather than a blog. This is one benefit to paying for hosting where the proposal is concerned. In order to offer a very professional and finished product, the ability to edit themes and code behind the site is necessary. The creation of something that functions as a full website with the exhibit being one component housed there has additional benefits, such as the ability to provide information related to the land but not necessarily part of the exhibit to visitors. There is currently a closed Facebook Group that provides this service but a webpage would be more accessible since many people may not be users of social media.

For an even greater degree of interactivity, photo documentation applications like Arqball spin can be used to create 3D images that can be manipulated by the user.

[48] *WordPress Support*, accessed June 2012, http://en.support.wordpress.com/com-vs-org/.

Arqball is a fee based service beyond a certain number of hosted images, but objects that would benefit from a 3D image more could be chosen so that limit would not be exceeded. The 3D images created in Arqball provide an almost museum-like feel as they give the user the opportunity to spin the object to see it from all sides and up close. More intricate objects could benefit from this type of treatment that provides another visual experience beyond simple static photos.

Implications of the Proposal

Using this proposal as a model, the idea of documentation and interpretation can be applied to other women's lands, especially where architectural and landscape documentation is concerned. Many other women's lands contain structures that were built by or altered by women to serve a particular purpose and each landscape that supports a women's community has a unique story to tell. Many of these lands have been documented in some way where their social nature is concerned but many have not been examined from the lens of land use and manipulation by women. If more documentation projects occurred on women's lands, networks for information sharing and patterns related to land use and construction may emerge. Comparison across women's lands could go a long way in creating an assessment of 'vernacular' architecture and land use among radical women's communities.

Following through with the proposal for interpretation would make a different kind of information about these lands more readily available. The subset of info exploring land

use, architectural skills, and how they are related to community building is present but not synthesized or explored deeply. Through their newsletters and independent publications, women involved in creating land communities documented existing buildings and alterations made during organized work parties and many of the buildings are also depicted in photographs of happenings as well as personal photographs of land women. The proposal uses these methods of documentation as a jumping off point and presents a timeline of the changes indicated while providing current condition assessment in attempt to preserve the memory of structures that likely will not be restored as well as the work embodied in them. How land women acquired the necessary skills and conceived of space when building structures could be more easily examined when this type of documentation work has been undertaken across women's lands and made available for scholarly use.

One foreseeable concern related to interpretation of OWL Farm would be that of privacy for the women, past and present, who have been involved in OWL Farm. For that reason, the proposal makes use only of documents and information currently published and artifacts and information that women have consented to display of. While compromising the location of OWL Farm may have been a concern, the location is published through social media pages and in archival materials and is already available to the public. The proposal does not focus on the specific location or surrounds, but this information would be easily discoverable if mapping programs are to be used to build a tour based exhibition.

Conclusions

Throughout its history, CWI, a land and structures have been altered and impacted by women to meet the changing needs of its community. The current state of the buildings is one piece of that history that risks being lost should the Trust decide either course of action being considered, a controlled deconstruction and repurposing of materials for the structures in the worst condition or a demolition by neglect situation.

Even if the structures are gone, the documentation and interpretation of them can be useful and because the plan is based on the land itself, it runs little risk of becoming obsolete. The buildings can be treated almost as archaeological sites in interpretation accounting they would be built in their present form and the interpretive pieces are easily adaptable to reflect any changes.

Conclusions

Throughout its history, OWL's land and structures have been altered and impacted by women to meet the changing needs of its community. The current state of the buildings is one piece of that history that risks being lost should the Trust decide either course of action being considered; a controlled deconstruction and repurposing of materials for the structures in the worst condition or a demolition by neglect situation.

Even if the structures are gone, the documentation and interpretation of them can be useful and because the plan is based on the land itself, it runs little risk of becoming obsolete. The buildings can be treated almost as archaeological sites in interpretation assuming they cease to exist in their present form and the interpretive pieces are easily updatable to reflect any changes.

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