



# MANUEL ALONSO-MARTINEZ

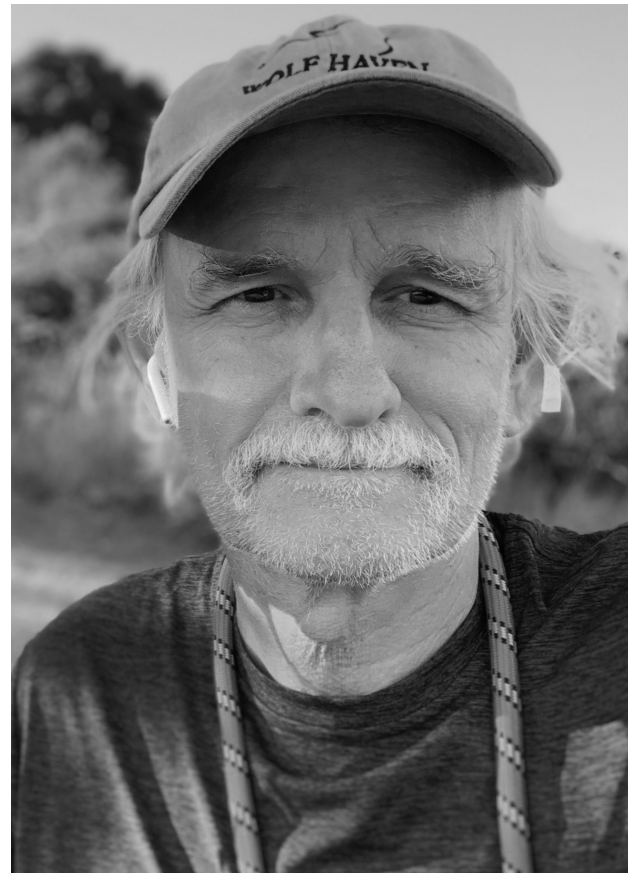
## Manuel Alonso-Martinez

35894 Seaward Reach  
The Sea Ranch, CA 95497  
(510) 213-4921  
[manuel.alonso@gmail.com](mailto:manuel.alonso@gmail.com)

**Why I'm Running:** I am running for a position on The Sea Ranch Board of Directors because I love this unique place. Environmental education is the foundation of environmental stewardship. Although The Sea Ranch has done an amazing job keeping up with its original values, given the current trends in climate change and loss of biodiversity (perhaps as much as 100 species are lost every single day to never come back), we need to double down on our commitment to environmental stewardship and the unequivocal affirmation of these values. Living lightly on the land happens only after people decide to, as the Inuit say, "go to the land." Our future depends on us changing our relationship with Nature.

When I say I love this place and it is unique, I am not using "unique" for literary flourish. TSR is part of the California Floristic Province. This is one of 5 areas in the world with a Mediterranean climate, and one of only 33 biodiversity hotspots. More than 60% of plants in this floristic province are found nowhere else in the world, and 25% of these plants are on Sea Ranch! The value of this for science, human health and medicine is immense, and its conservation for future generations is a mandate. We have 300 acres of nicely maturing forest, invaluable when understood in ecological and educational rather than in resource-extraction terms. I am sure many of you have seen *Fantastic Fungi* and the undiscovered resources that lie under the ground: sources of new medicines, compounds, spiritual and recreational values, carbon storage. All those are 21<sup>st</sup> century values that TSRA needs to re-affirm.

**The Role of the Board of Directors:** Given this amazing landscape, the wealth of talent available here, our well-



functioning committees, the spirit of volunteerism, and the highly unusual TSR Covenant that prioritizes the community over the individual in most decisions, the TSRA Board has the assets it needs to facilitate its role as a well-informed, community-based policy-making body. I have been on many boards, and this is rather unusual.

Before writing this statement, I carefully read key TSRA documents and then made a searchable indexed database on my computer incorporating these documents and Board meeting agendas found on the Board webpage. Collecting and systematizing information is one way I can help guide best practices for The Sea Ranch.

An important role of the Board is to work with management and the membership to develop a strategic plan. A strategic plan needs a good financial plan. I have worked for over 30 years in executive management positions in several nonprofits, and I have a good understanding of the financial aspects of

organizations and the importance of fiscal transparency and good forecasting practices. I have consulted with many nonprofits to help promote lean management practices and cost effectiveness. I have worked as a computer programmer and have a good understanding of technology. But I also understand its limitations.

A board member needs to be passionate about TSR mission and willing to work by building bridges, patiently relying on our capable staff and multiple committees and task forces, trusting that fact finding, due process, and financial stability are keys to success.

I am an anthropologist. In my field, what I see here is often called collaborative based community conservation (CBCC). This approach is taking root in many places in the US, bringing a new perspective on landscape management in an effort some call "stitching the West back together." This perspective relies on a deep understanding of the evolving landscape, of geological time scales, of "going to the land ourselves," getting involved with the dirty work in stewardship groups, enhancing that spirit of volunteerism that makes this place possible. In the face of extinction, we double up on restoration. I want to help manage our Commons with the same care that I manage my own lot. I want us to "go to the land" together as a way to learn, develop friendships, lend a hand, save money.

**About me:** I have lived here with my wife Martha for two years. We own a sod-roof house in management area 4, unit 20, adjacent to Commons. Martha used to be a community nurse in New York, and she now works helping elders and seniors with cognitive difficulties here at The Sea Ranch. We have two sons and one daughter.

I have lived and worked in Spain, Canary Islands, the Caribbean, South Carolina, New York, Seattle, Costa Rica, Colombia, and California. I have worked as a communications engineer in the military, as an archaeologist tracking ancient Phoenician colonies across the Mediterranean, as a college professor teaching humanities and social sciences, as director of a Micro Technology Unit in a big data center, and for the last 30 years as executive director of several environmental nonprofits.

We own a 75-acre farm in southern Spain with mixed oak and pine forest, meadow lands, olive and almond trees and 5 acres of Syrah grapes that make a decent red wine. There, I worked with local neighbors, ranchers and shepherds to annex our properties to a national park while maintaining farm productivity and co-management strategies to enhance biodiversity and conservation. We lived in a tin roof shack in the rain forest for 8 years. There I worked with loggers, gold miners, landowners, governmental agencies, nearly 70 national and international organizations, and a bunch of conflicting stakeholders. We succeeded where others had failed: saving 5 million trees in the Osa Peninsula, southern pacific coast of Costa Rica. I have worked with indigenous peoples in Central and South America to develop co-management plans for protected areas, introducing solar energy to make sure they benefit from biodiversity conservation. I am currently Executive Director of Earth Team, an environmental education nonprofit in the East Bay working with disadvantaged public high school students in a hands-on paid internship program that is restoring degraded watersheds and raising awareness of climate change on 20 campuses serving 50,000 students.

I am grateful every night to lie in my bed under the earth-sod roof above, voles working their tunnels while I fall asleep, aerating the soil so that my living roof will work properly. I imagine the intricate little ecosystem of organisms above my head and I am grateful to be here at TSR and to have good neighbors. I have found my place in the world here, and I want to use the energy that this place gives me to give back, to give my time and best effort to work together with a group of talented people that inhabit this place and who, like me, have accepted the invitation of Nature.