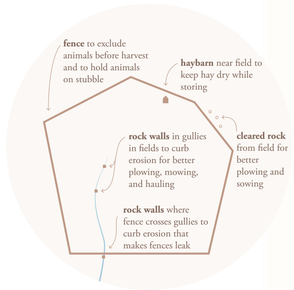
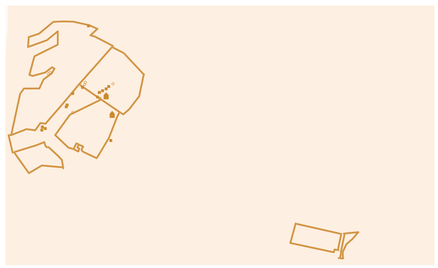
Palimpsest of Plans on Santa Cruz Island, California

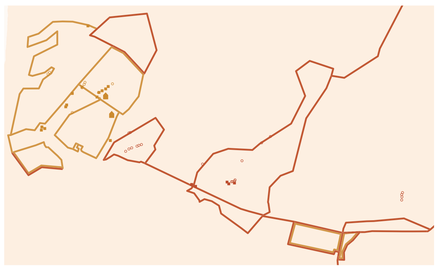
Our goal is to help people make sense of the material evidence from past human activities that they may encounter while visiting Santa Cruz Island, the largest island in Channel Islands National Park. Beginning in the 1850s, Americans transformed the island by implementing a series of plans. The plans began as scratches of ink on paper and became manifest through labor on the physical landscape itself. We envision creating a large format map (1:16,000) that shows all the artifacts from the past coded by feature type and by the era of the plan. This will represent the palimpsest of plans, where the patterns of the earliest plans are still visible, though faint, under the patterns of later plans. We also envision small multiples to help the reader interpret reasons for these patterns based on the purposes that people had for trying to configure the landscape as they did. Here we show two example of plans for cultivation and pasture and how these plans changed over time. Finally, we show subtle differences in the bedrock geology of the island so people can explore how the environmental impacts of past activities, in particular the gullies and arroyos etched into the terrain, vary spatially across the island's surface.



Plan for cultivation

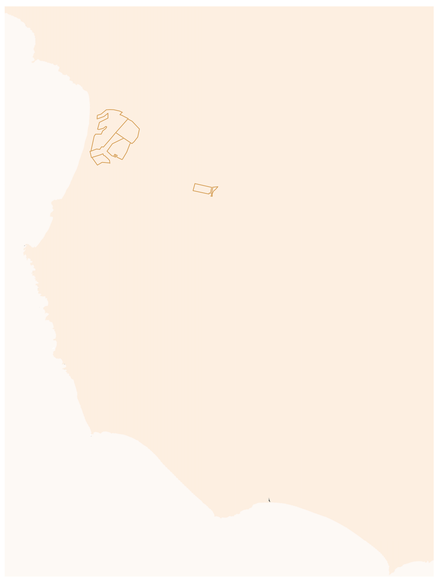


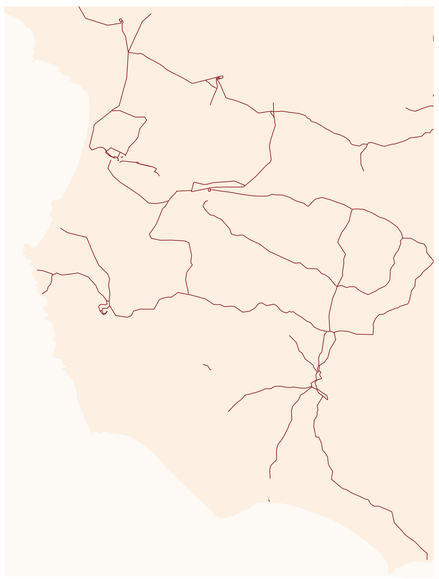
1880 -1900

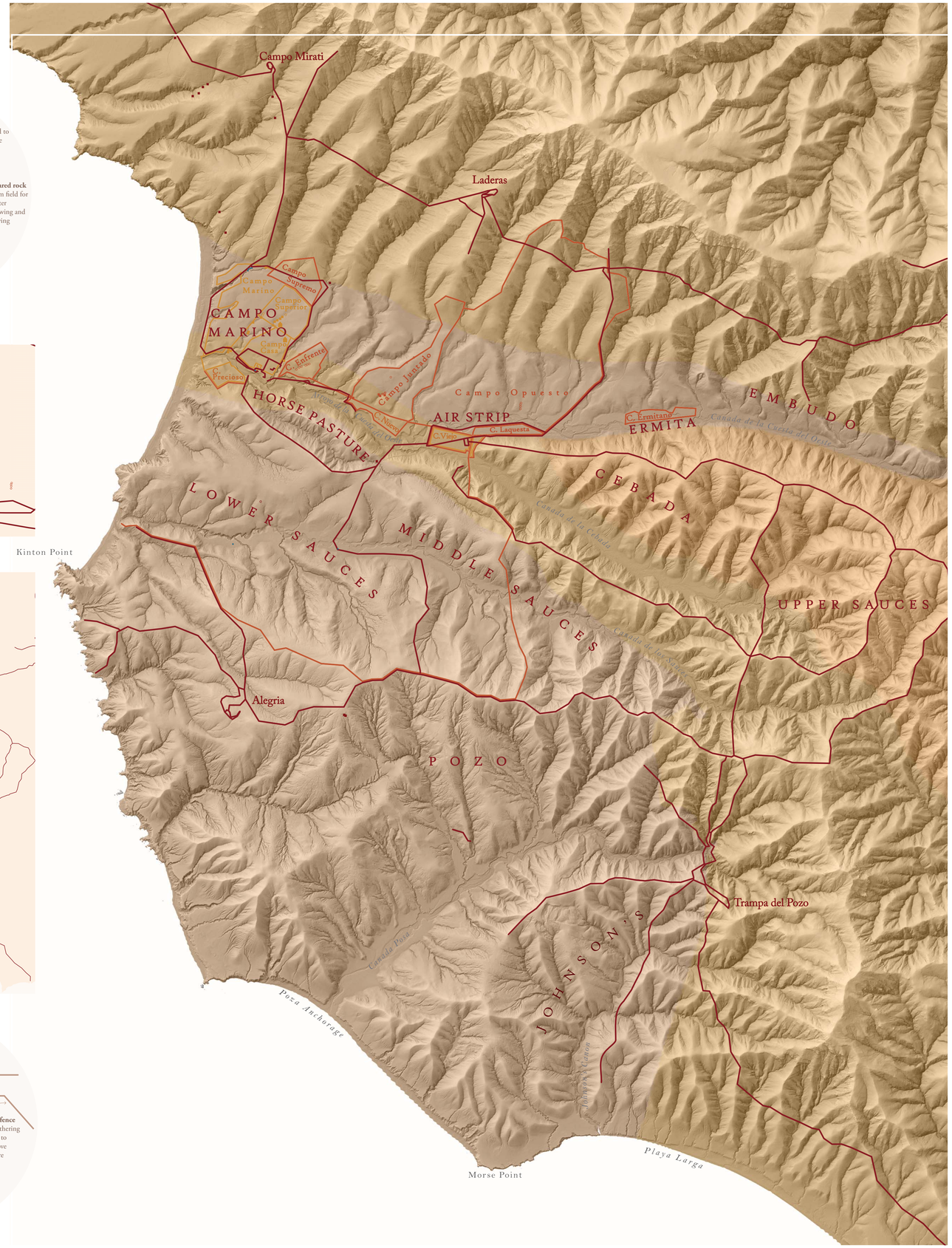


1900 -1920

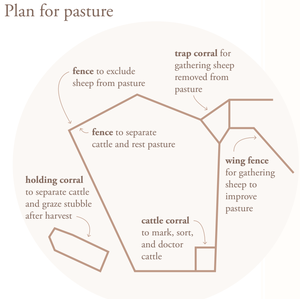
1954-1987







Plan for pasture



Sources and credits

Land use data collated from map collections of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation (Santa Barbara, California), the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the Channel Islands National Park, The Nature Conservancy, and the personal collection of John Gherini. Map collections consisted of a series of original sketches, plats, and maps created in 1883-1898, 1916-1918, and 1954-1987.

Field data collected by J. Howarth consist of GPS locations for material artifacts identified on the historical maps.

Terrain data from 2010 Channel Island Lidar Collection (survey data 3/11 - 4/8/2010) provided by the USGS partnered with The Nature Conservancy and National Park Service.

Geology from Weaver and Nolf (1964-65), "Geology of Santa Cruz Island," UCSB Geological Survey

Cartography by Jeff Howarth, Kat James and Madeleine Li, Geography Department, Middlebury College.

Questions, comments, and other thoughts should be directed to jhowarth@middlebury.edu. Thank you.