

La Selva Beach residents wouldn't trade their area



This picturesque view is one reason why La Selva Beach residents love their area.

Michael McGuire/Sentinel

LA SELVA BEACH — It's still called Rob Roy Junction by old-timers. But whatever one calls it, La Selva Beach is a nice place to be. Just ask the people who live there. They wouldn't trade it for anything.

To reach the attractive community, turn off Highway 1 to take winding, scenic San Andreas Road toward the bay.

Home to some 1,600 people, the area's name changed from Rob Roy Junction to La Selva Beach in 1936. "La Selva" means "the for-

est" in Spanish.

Greeting visitors in La Selva is a garden-divided main street. Playa Boulevard, with its huge palm trees lining each side, is widely known as one of the most beautiful streets in Santa Cruz County.

Neat gardens and attractive homes are the mean. There are a few stores, but most of the activity centers around the La Selva Beach Community Hall. Located a block off the boulevard, it contains a large hall and also houses the community's fire station.

The lone community organization — the La Selva Beach Improvement Association — meets four times a year there.

Much of the organization's discussion involves the private beach that sits behind the locked gate at the end of Playa Boulevard. The beach is the private domain of La Selva residents.

According to old-timers, the beachside community was developed about 1930 by David Batchler, a Scotsman from Petaluma. Batchler was drawn to

the area to look over a steel and sand reduction plant near Manresa Beach. He thought a plant that employs local people should have a residential section nearby.

Batchler, who named the area Rob Roy Junction, is credited with the foresight for including wide streets in the initial development, planting a large number of trees and building a sufficient sewage system for that time.

However, Batchler overextended himself, the steel plant went out of business, the Depression came

and he lost the tract in 1932. It eventually was taken over by Ed Burghard in 1937.

Burghard dumped a large amount of money into the area by hard-surfacing some streets, fencing the private beach and building some of the first homes along the boulevard. He later sold the tract during World War II to Clarence Jacoby, who sold most of the remaining lots.

The area originally was part of the old 13,000-acre San Andreas Rancho, a Mexican grant made to Joaquin Isidro Castro in 1883.