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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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February 4, 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Mr. Donald Barrella
Napa County Planning, Building, and Environmental Services
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

Subject: Wappo Land Company LLC., Vineyard Conversion #P19-00037-ECPA, Draft
Mitigated Negative Declaration, SCH #2020019022, Napa County

Dear Mr. Barrella:

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) personnel have reviewed the draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Wappo Land Company LLC., Vineyard Conversion (Project). CDFW is submitting comments on the draft MND to inform Napa County, as the Lead Agency, of our concerns regarding potentially significant impacts to sensitive resources associated with the proposed Project.

CDFW is providing comments as a Trustee Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15386 and is responsible for the conservation, protection, and management of the State's biological resources. CDFW is also considered a Responsible Agency if a project would require discretionary approval, such as permits issued under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), the Native Plant Protection Act, the Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Program, and other provisions of the Fish and Game Code that afford protection to the State's fish and wildlife trust resources.

Environmental Setting

The Project will be located on a 41.8-acre parcel located at 141 Long Ranch Road, St. Helena, Napa County. The Project parcel is located within the Lake Hennessy and "Vinehill Creek" (unofficial name) drainages. Lake Hennessey lies approximately one mile to the north and "Vinehill Creek" lies approximately 0.6 miles to the south. The Town of Yountville lies approximately 4 miles to the south and the City of St. Helena lies approximately 6 miles to the northwest. Two unnamed streams exist on the southern portion of the property parcel, outside of the Project limits. Topography ranges from slopes of 5 percent to greater than 30 percent and elevations from 850 to 1,270 feet above mean sea level. Soils within the parcel are comprised of Henneke gravelly loam, Rock outcrop-Hambright complex, and Sobrante loam. The parcel consists of the following vegetation communities: 29.55 acres of chamise chaparral, 7.47 acres of coast live oak woodland, 3.18 acres of interior live oak chaparral, and 0.22 acres of grassland.

Surrounding land use consists of vineyard immediately to the west and east, and mostly undeveloped land immediately to the north and south of the parcel.

Project Description

The proposed Project will develop approximately 15.9 acres of vineyard within two vineyard blocks. Block A will be approximately 14.3 acres and Block B approximately 1.6 acres. The Project will also temporarily impact approximately 0.4 acres for water line installation from two Project wells to two existing water tanks located on an adjacent property. Vineyard development (i.e. vegetation removal, earthmoving, and installation of erosion control measures) will occur over a two-year period. During year one, land preparation and drainage improvements will occur. During year two, the vineyard will be planted. Approximately 40 trees with a diameter at breast height greater than 6 inches will be removed. Rock removed during land preparation will be reused on-site for erosion and runoff control measures, as well as for vineyard road base. The vineyard will be irrigated via a drip irrigation system with water from an existing on-site well. Deer fence will be installed along the perimeter of the development area, and the Project will install three new culverts along a roadside drainage.

Comments and Concerns

Special-Status Plants

The draft MND states that WRA botanists conducted protocol-level rare plant surveys over several months in 2018 on the Project parcel and found the following special-status plant species: narrow-anthered brodiaea (*Brodiaea leptandra*), hollyleaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus purpureus*), Greene's narrow-leaved daisy (*Erigeron greenei*), nodding harmonia (*Harmonia nutans*), Sharsmith's western flax (*Hesperolinon sharsmithiae*), and green monardella (*Monardella viridis*). With the exception of nodding harmonia and green monardella, all species found on the Project parcel are California Native Plant Society California Rare Plant Rank List 1B species, which are considered rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere, but are not listed under CESA. The proposed Project would permanently impact 5.56 acres of hollyleaf ceanothus, 0.06 acres of narrow-anthered brodiaea, and 0.48 acres of Sharsmith's western flax.

Mitigation Measure BR-1 (MM BR-1) revises the Project to reduce impacts to special-status plants as follows: impacts to hollyleaf ceanothus would be reduced to 3.56 acres, impacts to Sharsmith's western flax would be reduced to 0.15 acres, and there would be no impacts to narrow-anthered brodiaea. Impacts to coast live oak woodland will be reduced to 2.12 acres, chamise chaparral to 7.51 acres, and interior live oak chaparral to 2.76 acres. CDFW recommends revising the Special-Status Plant section, MM-BR-1 and Figure 4, to more clearly reflect project impacts and mitigation. For example, the Mitigated Proposed Vineyard Blocks in Table 5 is 12.39 acres, yet in Figure 4 it states 12.36 acres, and it is unclear where the remaining acres of preservation will occur. CDFW is available to assist in clarifying these sections.

CDFW believes the measure outlines preserving parcels with chamise chaparral and coast live woodland over a total of 14.5 acres, of which 4.25 acres will be coast live oak woodland. Additionally, a 6.48-acre preservation area would be established immediately adjacent to the revised vineyard Block A; however, Figure 4 only shows a 4.78-acre mitigation area. CDFW believes these areas also contain populations of green monardella, Greene's narrow-leaved

daisy, and nodding harmonia. Please clarify whether the Project is proposing to preserve 20.98 acres or 19.28 acres.

While CDFW agrees with MM BR-1 reducing the Project impacts and preserving land, it is unclear the location of the plants within the preserved areas. Table 4 outlines impacts to 3.56 acres of hollyleaf ceanothus and 0.15 acres of Sharsmith's western flax. CDFW recommends clearly outlining preservation of these two plant species at a minimum 2:1 ratio. If the areas proposed for preservation in MM BR-1 do not meet a 2:1 ratio for mitigation goals, approximately 7.12 acres of hollyleaf ceanothus and 0.3 acres of Sharsmith's western flax, CDFW recommends enhancing preserved habitat or nearby habitat to mitigate for impacts. Enhancement could be removal of invasive species in appropriate habitat for the special-status plant species and/or additional plantings. Specifically, CDFW recommends the following language be added to MM BR-1 in order to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level:

The owner/Permittee shall consult with a qualified botanist to identify land containing special-status plant habitat, in-kind to what will be impacted by the Project, to preserve impacted species at a 2:1 mitigation ratio, which may include habitat enhancement activities. The qualified botanist shall prepare a Habitat Enhancement Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (Plan) to be reviewed and approved by CDFW prior to Project implementation. The Plan shall, at a minimum, include preserving or enhancing like habitat (i.e. similar in quality to what will be lost as a result of the Project) at a minimum 2:1 mitigation to impacts acreage ratio either on-site or off-site, or combination thereof. The Plan shall clearly describe the location of land(s) where habitat exists and enhancement activities will occur. The Plan shall describe activities that will be implemented in order to improve habitat conditions and shall provide specific success criteria to ensure habitat enhancement activities are effective. All habitat preservation land(s) shall be preserved in perpetuity under the form of a conservation easement and shall be monitored for a minimum of 5 years to ensure specific success criteria are met.

Streambed Alteration

Exhibit A-1 of the draft MND, the Project's Erosion Control Plan (ECP), shows the installation of three new culverts in a drainage that flows directly adjacent to and parallel with Long Ranch Road at the base of the slope of the proposed vineyard Block A. CDFW requires an entity to notify CDFW before starting any activity that will divert or obstruct the natural flow, or change the bed, channel, or bank (which may include associated riparian resources) of a river or stream or use material from a streambed. Ephemeral and/or intermittent streams and drainages (that are dry for periods of time or only flow during periods of rainfall) are also subject to Fish and Game Code section 1602. CDFW recommends that the owner/Permittee contact CDFW to schedule a site visit so that CDFW can determine if the roadside drainage is a stream. If CDFW determines that the roadside drainage is a stream, the owner/Permittee should notify CDFW of their Project (i.e. installation of 3 culverts in the roadside drainage) by submitting an LSA Notification to CDFW's Bay Delta Regional Office to see if an LSA Agreement is needed.

Issuance of an LSA Agreement is subject to CEQA. CDFW, as a Responsible Agency under CEQA, will consider the CEQA document for the Project. The CEQA document should identify the potential impacts to the stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance,

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mitigation, monitoring, and reporting commitments for completion of the agreement. To obtain information about the LSA notification process, please access our website at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/lsa>.

Filing Fees

CDFW anticipates that the Project will have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary (Fish and Game Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089). Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW.

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the draft MND for the proposed Project and is available to meet with you to further discuss our concerns. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Garrett Allen, Environmental Scientist, at (707) 428-2076 or garrett.allen@wildlife.ca.gov; or Ms. Karen Weiss, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory), at (707) 428-2090 or karen.weiss@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Gregg Erickson
Regional Manager
Bay Delta Region

cc: State Clearinghouse