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In Reply Refer To:
FWS/CDFW-WRIV-23-0036934

January 27, 2023
Sent by email

Mr. Darren Edgington
County of Riverside
Environmental Programs Division
Planning Department
4080 Lemon Street, 12th Floor
Riverside, CA 92501

Subject: MSHCP Joint Project Review 22-12-09-01 for the Proposed Haven Winery (HANS 220003 / PPT 220029), Temecula Wine Country, County of Riverside

Dear Mr. Edgington:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), collectively referred to as the Wildlife Agencies, received Joint Project Review 22-12-19-01 (JPR) from the County of Riverside (County) on January 19, 2023, for the County's Haven Winery Project (HANS 220003, PPT/PPN 220029) (Project), located in the Southwest Area Plan, Criteria Cell 6807, within unincorporated Riverside County east of Temecula. The Wildlife Agencies are providing the following comments on the JPR as they relate to the Project's consistency with the Reserve Assembly provisions of the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

Cell Group C (Southwest Area Plan)

The Wildlife Agencies have reviewed the JPR, and we concur with the findings of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) that the proposed Project would occur outside of the portions of Cell 6807 (part of Cell Group C) described for conservation in the MSHCP Plan, and that conservation of this site would not functionally contribute to the assembly of Proposed Core 7 or Proposed Constrained Linkage 24. The mid-range conservation goal for Cell Group C is approximately 1,157 acres; approximately 1,124.58 acres are still needed to accomplish the described reserve assembly, however, only 248.76 acres remain available within the areas described for conservation. While this is a significant conservation shortfall, only 3.98 acres of the Project site is located within Cell Group C, and the 3.98 acres would not help to address this shortfall.

The Wildlife Agencies are concerned about the inability of Cell Group C to meet its conservation target for the MSHCP Plan (Mid-range goal is 1,157 acres; Low-end goal is 1,068 acres). Therefore, the Wildlife Agencies request a meeting with the County and the RCA to discuss a

solution and a process to remedy the conservation deficit in Cell Group C so that the MSHCP's Proposed Core Reserve 7 will be made whole.

Additional MSHCP Requirements

To avoid and minimize certain potential impacts to offsite areas that are either conserved or are described for future inclusion in the MSHCP Reserve System, we support the measures identified in the RCA Joint Project Review in item "b." (Page 4) for Rough Step, "a." (Page 5-6) for Section 6.1.2 Riparian/Riverine Resources, "c." (Page 6-7) for Section 6.3.2, Burrowing Owl, "d." (Page 7-8) for Section 6.1.4 Urban/Wildlands Guidelines of the MSHCP, and "c." (Page 8-10) for MSHCP Volume I, Appendix C.

Please condition the Project to include these mitigation measures, specifically those related to rough step analysis, the deed restriction for the on-site riparian/riverine resources, burrowing owls, invasive species, and water quality.

Conclusion

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on JPR 22-12-09-01. We will be reaching out to schedule a meeting to discuss how to address the Reserve Assembly shortfall in Cell Group C. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact James Thiede of the Service at james_thiede@fws.gov or Katrina Rehrer of CDFW at katrina.rehrer@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Karin
Cleary-Rose
for
Rollie White
Assistant Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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for
Kim Freeburn-Marquez
Environmental Program Manager
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

cc:

Tricia Campbell, Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority
Zack West, Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority