
BACKGROUND

From 1876 to 1940, the entire area including the Property was comprised primarily of separate homesteader claims, with the land used for orchards, cattle and sheep grazing, and limited timber harvesting. Beginning in 1940, timber companies slowly aggregated parcel ownership, and land use was converted strictly to timber production. Although California had forestry practice laws in the 1940s, the environmental protections were nowhere near as comprehensive as they are today. As a result, in the intervening years, the Property's forest has been completely cut-over at least twice and some areas have been harvested as many as four to five times.

The Property's first owners conducted unmanaged clear cutting. Successive cuts were very aggressive in nature, taking as much wood from the forest as possible without giving consideration to the long-term sustainability of the timber resource. As a result, the current forest is in a depleted condition, with degraded timber stand quality, poor wildlife habitat, high fuel load conditions that can result in catastrophic crown fires, a disproportionate stocking of low quality, small diameter tanoak, and many of the conifers not yet at financial or physical maturity.

For the past three years, Preservation Ranch has analyzed the environmental characteristics of the Property, as well as the preservation and restoration needs of the resources found thereon. Analysis of the Property's existing condition has involved extensive interaction with Federal, State, and Local regulatory agencies prior to submittal of any application. This agency interaction is ongoing to ensure that Project design addresses regulatory issues and the information being gathered and methodologies used will provide the necessary information to accurately evaluate the Project.

Preservation Ranch is submitting applications to Sonoma County for an immediate rezone, rezone, and conditional use permit (CUP) and will be submitting an application to the CDF for a Timber Conversion Permit (TCP) necessary to establish vineyards on approximately 9% of the Property. Preservation Ranch will also be submitting an associated Timber Harvest Plan (THP) to the CDF.

The following is a list of reports and studies prepared or being prepared for the Project applicant by a team of consultants. These reports and studies will be provided to Sonoma County, CDF, and other responsible or trustee agencies upon completion to support the Land Use, California Environmental Quality Act, and permitting process.

- Biology:
 - Protocol Surveys for Northern Spotted Owl
 - Protocol Surveys for Marbled Murrelet
 - Accipiter/Raptor Surveys
 - Botanical Survey
 - Mapping and Delineation of watercourses/wetlands for vineyards
 - Wildlife Habitat typing/value of vineyard sites
 - Wildlife Corridor Assessment

- Water Quality/Hydrology:
 - Evaluation of natural headwater drainages potentially affected by vineyard development

- Watershed scale sediment budget for evaluation of sediment sources and mitigation
- In-stream aquatic habitat surveys for assessing current conditions and long-term trend analysis, including physical habitat and macro-invertebrates communities
- Water quality sampling data for standard nutrients and water quality parameters
- Continuous turbidity monitoring and turbidity threshold sampling to measure suspended sediment yield in four separate watersheds representing a range of geologic and topographic conditions in the Project area
- Soil erosion monitoring at field plots representing developing vineyard and typical forest conditions
- Timber:
 - Timber Conversion Plan including mapping of forest vegetation types within the conversion footprint
 - Timber Harvest Plan necessary to implement Timber Conversion Plan
 - Timber Management Plan (includes vegetation type mapping of the entire Property)
 - Timber Inventory (2006) and growth and yield analysis
 - Forest Restoration Plan
- Vineyard:
 - Vineyard Development Plans
 - Hydrology studies
- Geology:
 - Landslide Hazard Evaluation for Project areas
 - Aggregate Borrow Site Reclamation Plan
- Roads:
 - On-site Road Improvement and Maintenance Plan
 - Road Assessment Reports
- Cultural Resources:
 - Cultural resources research/survey report for Project areas
- Mapping:
 - Extensive mapping, including 2-foot contours and GIS mapping of vineyards, roads, and studied resources.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Project's objectives are to:

- 1) *Plant 1,861 acres of vineyards on identified pockets of land with superb agricultural potential.*
- 2) *Utilize voluntary merger of existing parcels to limit future development potential and bring the property into consistency with the General Plan.*
- 3) *Rehabilitate and protect the remainder of the property for sustainable timber management and improved wildlife habitat.*

While there are multiple project objectives, all are interdependent from an environmental, planning, and economic standpoint. The financial contribution of, and balance between, commercial timber resource management and agricultural production makes possible and is necessary for funding voluntary merger, restoration, long-term timber and habitat enhancement, and proposed preservation programs. A balanced mix of uses helps capture the full economic value of the Property within the existing confines of environmental and public policy, and makes it financially feasible to undertake the public benefit elements of the Project.