

Section 2: Project Description

The Applicant is proposing the Preservation Ranch Project, a vineyard development and forest management plan for a large area in the northwestern corner of Sonoma County (Kleinfelder 2008a). As stated in the introduction, the Project involves development of 17 vineyard blocks, primarily on ridgetops, within the 19,652-acre Project Area. The vineyard development would require the conversion of about 1,671 acres of timberland to varietal grape production; the remaining vineyard area would be developed on grasslands. The Applicant is applying to Sonoma County for a rezoning, CUP and voluntary merger of the existing 160 parcels down to 63 parcels. The Project would also include applications to CAL FIRE for a TCP and associated THP.

The Applicant's general project proposal is set forth in its April 30, 2008 project description. The project description and/or project setting is further detailed in a number of supplemental materials and studies provided by the Applicant. The Applicant's April 30, 2008 project description and supplemental materials and studies may be accessed for review at PRMD's website at: <http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/> or the Applicant's website at: <http://preservationranch.org>. Project materials may also be reviewed during normal business hours at:

**Sonoma County, Permit and Resource Management
Department (PRMD)**
Public File Counter
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA

The Applicant has revised the Project after submittal of the project application; therefore, this project description is based on the project application and later communications and clarifications received from the Applicant. The IS project description is intended to describe the whole of the project beyond the immediate project application and describe the physical activities that have the potential to impact the environment.

Information in the Sonoma County 2020 County General Plan and its EIR was used for background information and as the basis for some of the analysis in the IS. The data from the General Plan, including cumulative impacts on traffic and air quality as well as other information from various sources listed in Section 4 (References and Technical Appendices), is incorporated by reference in this IS (CEQA State Guidelines Section 15150).

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Project Site (Site or Property) and surrounding area setting is rural, forested land within the ridges and intervening valleys of the Coast Range. The dominant land uses in the area are forestry and timber management (Figure 2-1).

The 19,652-acre site is currently comprised of 160 parcels ranging in size from 5 acres to 640 acres. Over 25 different soil types are present on the Property, with the predominant soils

within the potential vineyard sites being Josephine Loam, Goldridge Fine Sandy Loam, Laughlin Loam, Empire Loam, and Maymen Gravelly Sandy Loam. The Goldridge and Laughlin soil types are considered “highly erodible” under the Sonoma County Grading, Drainage, Vineyard and Orchard Site Development Ordinance, while the other soils are considered “less erodible.”

The physical setting of the Site is characteristic of the Coast Range of western Sonoma County, dominated by northwest-southeast trending ridges and intervening valleys. The Project Site lies within the Gualala River watershed and encompasses approximately 10 percent (about 30 square miles) of the total area (298 square miles) of the watershed. The geology, soils, and climate of the area result in steep, forested slopes with oak woodlands and grasslands on some ridgetops. The area is rural and relatively remote. The annual rainfall across the Site is variable but generally ranges between 50 to 60 inches per year. The population is sparse, affected by several factors including the relatively remote location, steep terrain, and marginal availability of groundwater. The area is served by few public roads and local commercial services are very limited.

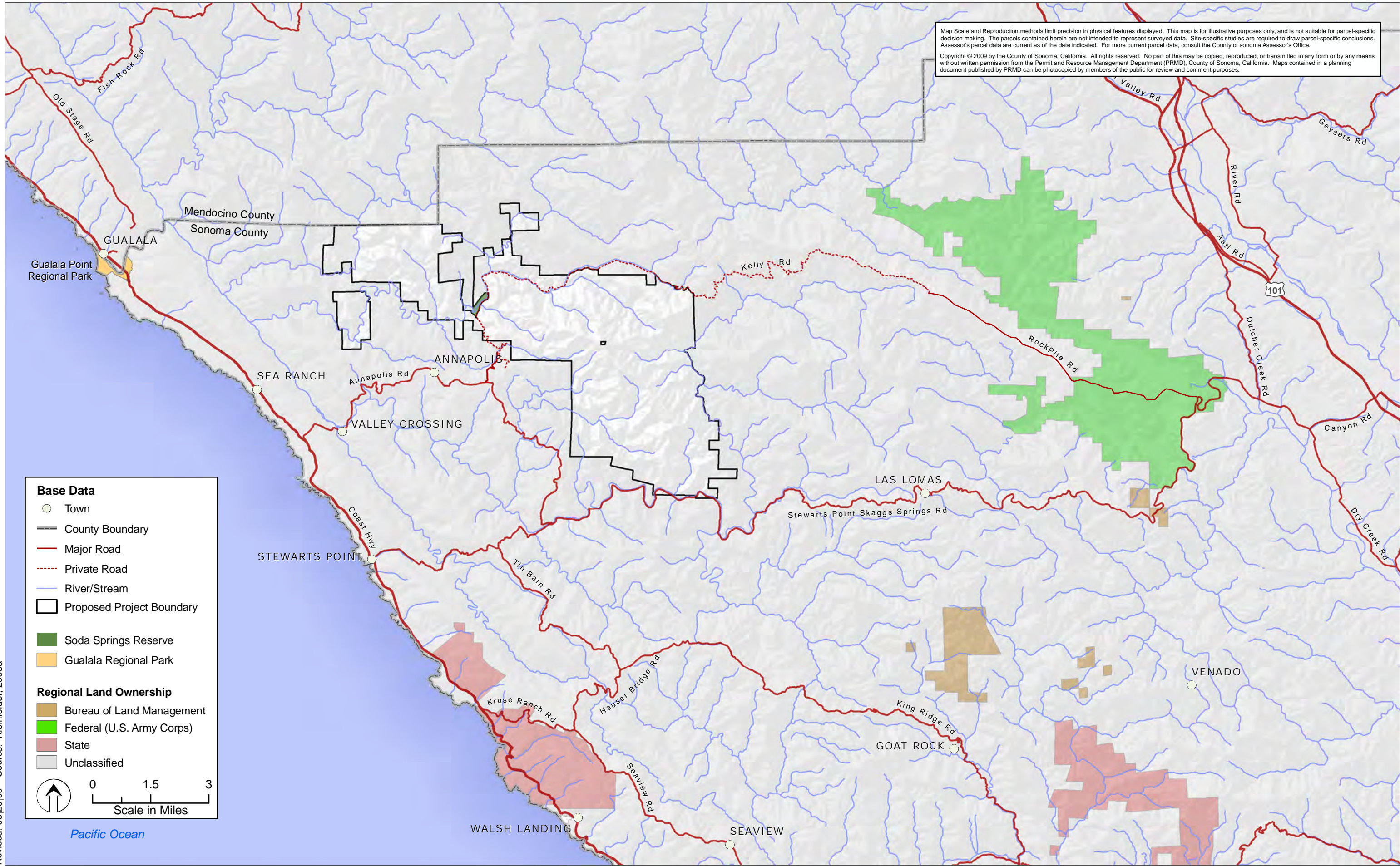
The primary tributaries to the Gualala River located within the Site include the Wheatfield Fork of the Gualala River in the eastern and southeastern portions of the Site; Buckeye Creek in the central and western portions; and Franchini and Rockpile Creeks in the northwestern portions. The primary drainage divides between the watersheds of these subwatersheds are formed by prominent ridges that include (from west to east across the Site): Stanley, Lookout, and Bear Ridges.

Access to the interior of the existing Project Site is provided by an extensive network (approximately 190 linear miles) of unpaved roads that have served timber harvesting and agricultural operations in the past. The Applicant has identified approximately 93 miles of existing on-site and adjacent roads that would be improved to provide access to the Project components described herein. Access to the Project Site by public roads is limited to Soda Springs Road that enters the south-central portion of the Site. Soda Springs Road connects with Annapolis Road, approximately 0.9 mile south of the Project Site. Annapolis Road runs between State Highway 1 (Hwy 1) and Stewart Point Skaggs Spring Road (refer to Figure 1-2). Skaggs Spring Road is one of the few public roads in the area that cross the Coast Ranges and provides access to central Sonoma County.

The northern portion of the Site is accessible from the east via Kelly Road, a private roadway. Kelly Road is owned by Kelly Road LLC that runs east-west through the Site. Kelly Road joins Rockpile Road, a County-owned road, approximately 6.4 miles east of the Site. Kelly Road is only accessible to authorized users and is controlled by locked gates. The Applicant and its representatives have access to Kelly Road through an easement agreement with the owner of the road. Kelly Road connects to Soda Springs Road near the southern boundary of the Site.

Map Scale and Reproduction methods limit precision in physical features displayed. This map is for illustrative purposes only, and is not suitable for parcel-specific decision making. The parcels contained herein are not intended to represent surveyed data. Site-specific studies are required to draw parcel-specific conclusions. Assessor's parcel data are current as of the date indicated. For more current parcel data, consult the County of Sonoma Assessor's Office.

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Revised: 03/20/09 Source: Kleinfelder, 2008a

