



February 13, 2019

Kyra Purvis, Planner II  
County of Napa  
Planning, Building, and Environmental Services  
1195 Third Street, Suite 210  
Napa, California 94559

**RE: Response to Comments (Biology) – Three Twins Vineyard Agricultural Erosion Control Plan Application File No. P18-00435-ECPA; 704 Greenfield Road, St. Helena, APN 025-380-017**

Dear Ms. Purvis:

This letter provides a response to a request from Napa County for additional information/analysis regarding biological resources for the property located at 704 Greenfield Road (APN 025-380-017) in Saint Helena, Napa County, California. The request for additional information is outlined in a letter from the Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department, *Application Review Determination – Three Twins Vineyard Agricultural Erosion Control Plan (ECPA) File #P18-00435-ECPA*.

The proposed project is the installation of a new 2.47-acre vineyard block on the property. WRA analyzed the potential impacts to sensitive biological resources. The following addresses the County of Napa's follow-up requests for additional information.

## **Response to County Request**

The following section directly addresses the comments from the County point-by-point (with text from the County in *italics*); the relevant page from the County's letter is included as Attachment C.

### **2. Supplemental Environmental Information...**

#### **a. Biological Resource Information...**

*i. Contours indicate a potential drainage along the southern boundary of the property (see attached map). Please clarify if this area conveys water in a manner would qualify it as Waters of the State, Water of the U.S., a County definitional stream, riparian habitat, or any other potentially protected resource.*

The feature in question is indeed a linear concavity suggestive of surface water flow. WRA biologists revisited the feature on February 6, 2018 and determined that it does not meet the definition of a stream or other aquatic resource qualifying for a Water of the U.S., Water

of the State, Stream according to the California Fish and Game Code, or a Stream as defined by Napa County. There is no evident bed, bank, or water marks (i.e., indications of repeated, frequent, and energetic surface flows. Likewise, there are no surface indicators of wetland hydrology and the soils do not contain indicators of extended saturation (e.g., redoximorphic features). The lowest point in the concavity is vegetated with upland plants, including soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*, NL<sup>1</sup>), dogtail grass (*Cynosurus echinatus*, NL), and cutleaf geranium (*Geranium dissectum*, NL). Photographs are included in Attachment B. Furthermore, the project civil engineers have intentionally set back from this feature.

*ii. Revised Figure 2 to include the footprint of the proposed vineyard, such that the County may evaluate biological communities that may be impacted.*

See the revised figure attached (Attachment A).

The maximum grading limit totals 2.47 acres, of which 1.1 acres is non-native annual grassland and 1.37 acres of non-riparian blue oak woodland. Although blue oak woodlands are not considered sensitive by CDFW or included as sensitive in the Napa County Baseline Data Report; however, the Napa County General Plan Conservation Element Policy CON-24 requires that oak woodland be maintained and/or improved to the extent feasible to provide for oak woodland and wildlife habitat, slope stabilization, soil protection, and species diversity. Policy CON-24c specifically calls for the preservation of oak woodland (on an acreage basis) at a 2:1 ratio. The Study Area contains 8.41 acres of blue oak woodland; in order to ensure that a 2:1 ratio is maintained of 2 acres of oak woodland preserved for each 1 acre impacted, only 2.8 acres can be converted to vineyard. As noted, the proposed project will impact 1.37 acres, less than the allowable 2.8 acres.

*iii. Section 5.2.2 indicates that the trees within the project area may contain habitat appropriate for a number of special-status bat species. Please include in the report an evaluation of the individual trees proposed for removal, and whether or not they specifically provide bat habitat.*

Bats are typically considered during environmental review by Napa County and also protected by California Fish and Game Code, i.e., Sections 86, 2000, 2014, 3007, and 4150, along with Title 14 of California Code of Regulations. Bats are typically considered during environmental review by Napa County and also protected by California Fish and Game Code, i.e., Sections 86, 2000, 2014, 3007, and 4150, along with Title 14 of California Code of Regulations.

### Methods

A daytime roost survey was performed on February 6, 2018. The survey assessed all trees and substrates within the proposed vineyard block to determine if bat roosting habitat was present. This survey was completed by walking the entire Project Area, and surveying each tree scheduled for removal. During the survey the biologist noted conditions that may be favorable or unfavorable for bat use such as thermal conditions, frequency of disturbance, and evidence of potential predators. All trees were also investigated for fissures, cracks, or hollows that could provide roosting substrate for bats.

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<sup>1</sup> NL = not listed in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers National Wetland Plant List

## Results

Most of the trees scheduled for removal have no potential to support bats. The majority of trees are small diameter blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) or coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) which are healthy and did not provide suitable mass to maintain stable thermal conditions required by roosting bats. Several hollow stumps were also investigated but were deemed unsuitable for bats due to evidence of occupancy of bat predators (i.e., mesocarnivores).

One large snag located in the eastern portion of the Project Area has the potential to support roosting bats. The snag has a large cavity which was investigated to the extent practical; however, there was no way to fully investigate the upper sections of the trunk which contained fissures and basal cavities that appear to be suitable for bat roosting. The snag is featured in Attachment B.

## Recommendations

Because work to fell the snag is proposed to begin outside of the maternity season, and the snag appears to support suitable features for bat roosting we recommend the project proceed in the following fashion.

The snag should be removed outside of the maternity roosting season using a two-phase cut system described below.

- Day 1, Any surrounding trees should be removed, and any external limbs can also be removed. If any exfoliating bark has developed it may also be partially peeled off to cause disturbance to the snag.
- Day 2, The snag should be felled in sections and lowered to the ground under the observation of a bat biologist. The sections should be allowed to lie for 24 hours before being processed or off-hauled.

Please contact us if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Arthur'.

Aaron Arthur  
Associate Plant Biologist  
Certified California Consulting Botanist #0016  
arthur@wra-ca.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Brinton'.

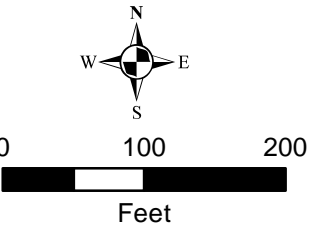
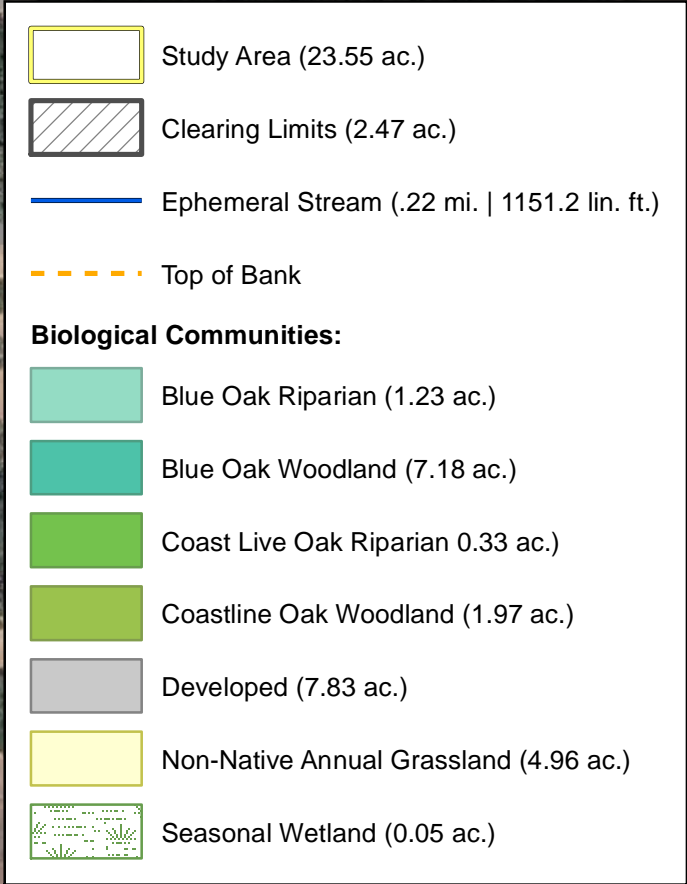
Nick Brinton  
Wildlife Biologist  
brinton@wra-ca.com

**Enclosures:** Attachment A – Updated Figure  
Attachment B – Photographs  
Attachment C – Excerpt page from County letter



PPI Yountville BRA  
Napa County, California

Biological Communtieies  
Located Within the  
Study Area



This map may contain data from publicly available sources including, but not limited to, parcel boundaries. These data sources may be inaccurate. They are intended for reference purposes only and do not represent legal boundaries or absolute locations.

Map Prepared Date: 2/4/2019  
Map Prepared By: aarthur  
Base Source: Esri Streaming - NAIP 2016  
Data Source(s): WRA





Photo 1: Linear feature in question. No evident bed and bank, no water marks or evidence of frequent, repeated flow; surface vegetated with upland plants.



Photo 2: Linear feature in question. No evident bed and bank, no water marks or evidence of frequent, repeated flow; surface vegetated with upland plants. Soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), Dogtail grass (*Cynosurus echinatus*), and cutleaf geranium (*Geranium dissectum*).





Photo 3: Most of the trees within the vineyard block were small diameter, healthy trees which did not contain basal cavities, fissures or other features that might support roosting bats.



Photo 4: The arrow in this tall stump points to a small cavity that was investigated by the biologist. The cavity was found to be occupied by raccoons or other mesocarnivores based on droppings and as such was not suitable habitat.





Photo 5: The tall snag near the eastern edge of the Project Area which may have potential to support bat roosting. Arrows indicate openings in the trunk.

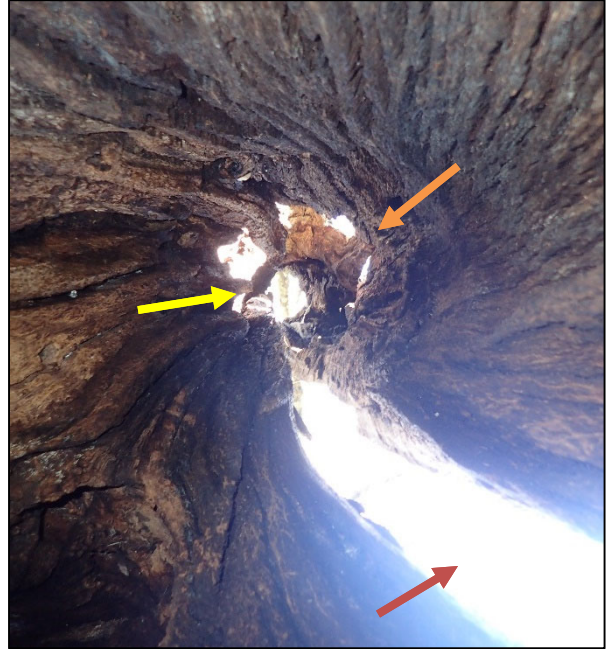


Photo 6: View looking upward into the cavity. The arrows correspond to the same arrows in photo 5.



Photo 7: Another view of the snag showing the very large basal cavity approximately 10 feet off the ground.



**EXHIBIT A**  
**APPLICATION COMPLETENESS DETERMINATION – INFORMATION REQUEST**  
**Three Twins Vineyard, File No. P18-00435-ECPA, APN 025-380-017**

1. **Agricultural Erosion Control Plan Application Completeness Items:** Please provide the following:
  - a. ECPA Plans and Narrative: Please provide finalized plans that include the information identified below:
    - i. Revise the plans to show the ephemeral drainage described in the Biological Resources Reconnaissance Survey Report, and associated recommended 50-foot setback.
    - ii. Attachment A states that chemical mixing will take place “near the large concrete water tanks in front of property.” Please show these water tanks on the plans.
    - iii. Include in your resubmission the number of trees planned for removal. Include a figure showing the location of trees proposed to be removed, and a table indicating species and dbh of each tree.
    - iv. If it is the scope and intent of the ECPA is to include Environmental Commitments as part of the project (such as project timing and bat avoidance measures) to reduce and/or avoid potential impacts, revise the Project Narrative to include Environmental Commitments, such as the recommendations described in the Biological Resources Reconnaissance Survey Report. In order for impacts of the project to be evaluated considering these recommendations, they must be included in the Project Narrative.
2. **Supplemental Environmental Information:** The following information is necessary for the County to adequately understand the totality of the project and evaluate potentially significant impacts pursuant to CEQA and to complete the ECP application to continue its review and processing:
  - a. Biological Resource Assessment:
    - i. Contours indicate a potential drainage along the southern boundary of the property (see attached map). Please clarify if this area conveys water in a manner that would qualify it as Waters of the State, Waters of the U.S., a County definitional stream, riparian habitat, or any other potentially protected resource.
    - ii. Revised Figure 2 to include the footprint of the proposed vineyard, such that the County may evaluate the biological communities that may be impacted.
    - iii. Section 5.2.2 indicates that the trees within the project area may contain habitat appropriate for a number of special status bat species. Please include in the report an evaluation of the individual trees proposed for removal, and whether or not they specifically provide bat habitat.